

NORTHAM
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2024-2031

1 FOREWORD

1.1 Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this important document, which contains the policies your contributions have helped to create.

1.2 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan represents a significant step for the Northam Town Council in drawing together your views and aspirations for our beautiful area, and the delivery of planned development as set out in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan.

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans are an exciting way for communities such as ours to shape the future of the area we live in and are part of the Government's approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what happens in the area in which we live. Communities like ours have been granted this important power through the Localism Act of 2011.

1.4 The process of writing your Neighbourhood Plan has been led by our Northam Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group consisting of members of your community and Town Councillors. The group now reports to the Northam Town Council Planning and Development Committee. I am very proud of the time and effort they have devoted to the Plan.

1.5 Community engagement through consultation and public involvement is central to the neighbourhood planning process and the work undertaken by the focus group volunteers and public representatives on the Advisory Group merits special mention. They have not only helped to write the Plan and its policies, they have also explored a wide range of topic areas including future biodiversity, community, economic, environmental, housing, infrastructure, landscape, transport, and traffic options, and assisted with all the community engagement activities.

1.6 As Section 4 of the Plan explains, following the pre-submission consultation, which ended on 17th February 2023, the Advisory Group reviewed all the comments received, and numerous changes were made to the Plan. (Full details are given in the Consultation Statement that accompanied the submission version of the Plan). This version of the Plan was then submitted to Torridge District Council in May 2025. In August and September 2025 the Plan was subject to a six-week consultation followed by an independent examination in November 2025. The examination produced a positive outcome and subject to a local referendum the Plan will be adopted by Torridge District Council and achieve 'made status' as a legal planning document.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Cllr Louis Bach, Mayor of Northam Town Council.

Louis Back – Mayor of Northam Town Council

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2. The Neighbourhood Plan Area

2.1 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan area extends to the extent of the Civil Parish of Northam. The area is defined in the map on page 4. The Qualifying Body for the area in respect of neighbourhood planning is Northam Town Council and the total population of the area at the time of the 2021 census was approximately 12,278 residents.

2.2 The Civil Parish of Northam is part of the district of Torridge and is located north of Bideford, along the lower reaches and estuary of the River Torridge, on the western side of the estuary mouth and along the coast. The borders of the Parish stretch some 5.6 kilometres (3.5 miles) along the Torridge estuary to its mouth at the end of Greysands Beach, then south along the beach at the Northam Burrows and the seafront at Westward Ho! for another four kilometres (2.5 miles) until Kipling Tors is reached. The parish has three main settlements, Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho!

2.3 The three main settlements of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! are very distinct in character, but they have all been influenced through history by their location near to the Torridge estuary and the sea.

2.4 Northam has the largest population, with approximately 4,900 residents.
(This includes the ward of Orchard Hill, which has been counted as part of Northam since 2019.)
The original settlement of Northam remains, with narrow roads and terraced houses radiating from The Square and dominated by St Margaret's Church, which adjoins Bone Hill high above the surrounding countryside. Orchard Hill is somewhat detached from Northam and developed as a distinct residential area of large 18th/19th century houses straddling what is now the A39 with further housing built in the 20th century

2.5 Westward Ho! is the premier seaside resort of Torridge district, with a glorious Blue Flag beach and the natural Pebble Ridge protecting the Northam Burrows Country Park. The settlement was originally developed in the 19th century as an affluent resort with large properties. Although considerably expanded by modern development, some of the original large Victorian buildings still exist. These include the former United Services College where Rudyard Kipling was a pupil.
There are approximately 3,700 residents.

2.6 Following the coast road away from Westward Ho! and east towards Appledore one passes the famous Royal North Devon Golf Club, which is the oldest golf club in England. The golf course is situated on Northam Burrows. The Burrows are an extensive common and country park, a designated site of special scientific interest and part of the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere.



St Margaret's Church, Northam - Credit Graham Hobbs



Northam Burrows signage (Torridge District Council 2022)

2. The Neighbourhood Plan Area

Neighbourhood Plan; the Civil Parish of Northam.



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2. The Neighbourhood Plan Area

2.7 Appledore (approximate population 3,700 residents) is historically a maritime village, boasting an important trading and shipbuilding heritage. This heritage is continued today by skilled workers at one of the largest indoor shipyards in Europe. Appledore is geographically separated from both Northam and Westward Ho! by beautiful open countryside. Its narrow streets and 'drangs', containing many independent businesses, characterful houses and cottages, which are a major attraction for tourists.

2.8 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan area is notable for its high-quality heritage assets, landscape and seascape and its role as a tourism destination. Further details of the heritage assets are given in the Northam Parish Heritage Assessment, which forms part of the evidence base of the Plan.

2.9 As Table 1 (below) shows, population density of Northam Parish is significantly higher than Torridge District although deprivation levels are almost identical. As Appendix 2 Table 3 shows, Northam Parish also has a significantly older population profile.

Table 1: Northam Parish compared to Torridge District

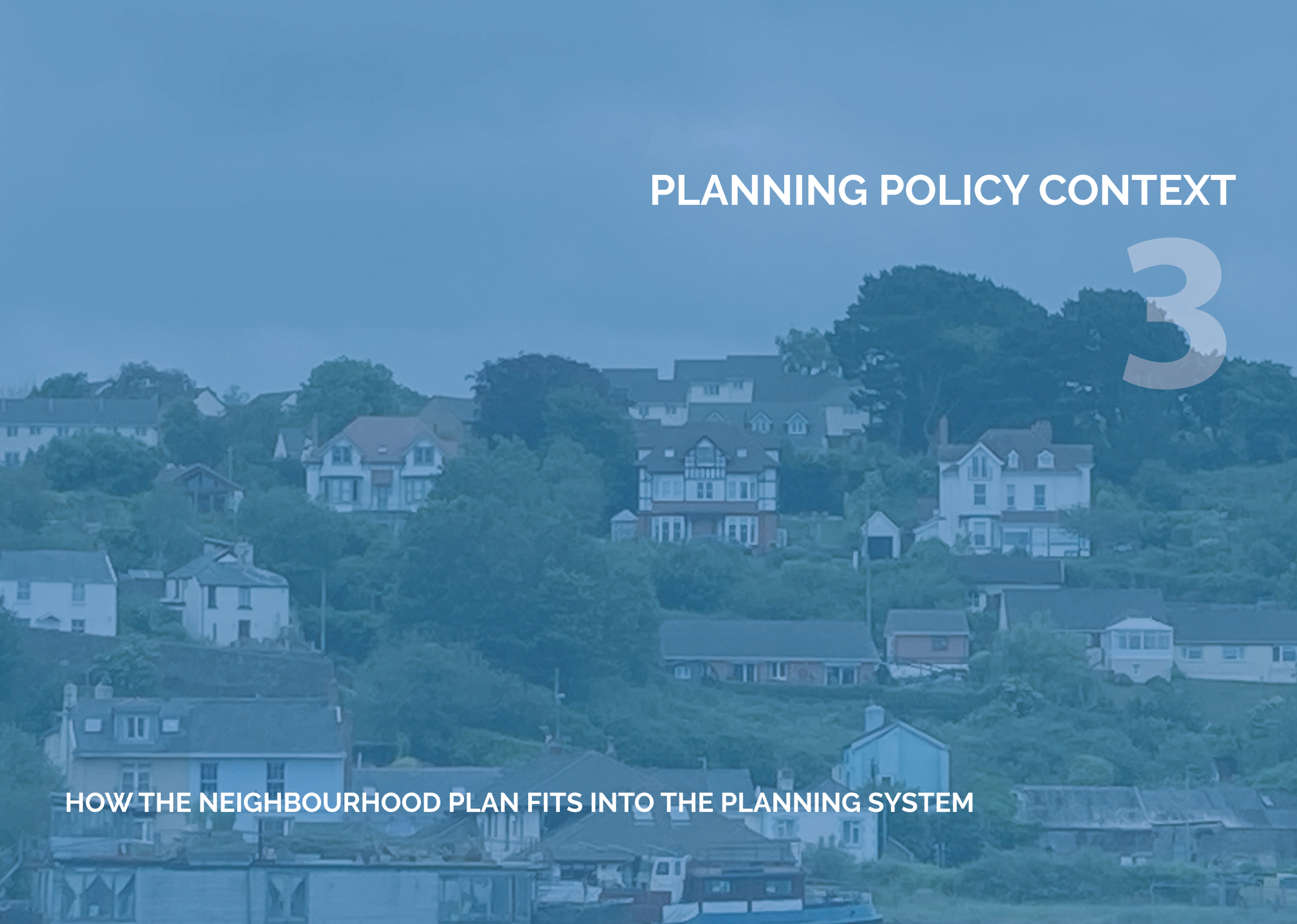
	Northam Parish	Torridge District
Density of population (persons per km2)*	771	69
Households in deprivation in at least one dimension as defined by ONS (Office of National Statistics).**	54%	53.9%

*Torridge Ward profiles 2022.
**Four dimensions of deprivation identified by the ONS in the 2021 Census relate to education, economic activity, health and accommodation.



PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3



HOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FITS INTO THE PLANNING SYSTEM

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 Neighbourhood planning is a UK Government initiative, which provides a means by which local people can influence planning and development in their local area. To support this initiative, neighbourhood development plans were introduced under the 2011 Localism Act, which became law in April 2012. The objective was to give local people more of a say in shaping the growth of their communities.

3.2 A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-driven document, supported by a range of evidence and community engagement, which can:

- Provide a shared vision for the neighbourhood area.
- Protect the neighbourhood area's unique heritage.
- Determine where new homes and other developments may be built through positive planning.
- Influence types and designs of new developments.
- Identify and protect important green spaces, valued landscapes, and treasured heritage assets.
- Identify the facilities and services needed for the community.
- Help ensure that our natural environment is conserved and protected and that the challenges of climate change are recognised in all aspects of the Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain 'basic conditions' set out in national legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (hereinafter NPPF).

3.3 The Northam Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereinafter the Northam Neighbourhood Plan) once made, in conjunction with the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031) (hereinafter NDAT Local Plan) will guide future development in the Parish of Northam and will be a primary consideration when determining planning applications in the area.

3.4 The Plan has been prepared in strict accordance with all relevant primary and secondary legislation – principally Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 190, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) – to ensure that it comprises a set of policies that are procedurally sound in their preparation and in accordance with the 'basic conditions'.

3.5 The basic condition for EU obligations includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which requires an assessment for neighbourhood plans that are likely to have significant environmental impacts. The District Council determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment were not required. However, since the screening determination and statement of reasons were not available at the Regulation 16 consultation stage for representors to comment on, commencing on 17th November 2025 Torridge District Council held a focussed consultation on these issues. This consultation concluded on 15th December 2025.

3.6 On 25th March 2026 changes to the legal compliance and basic conditions for neighbourhood plans were implemented. These changes are set out in Sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Since the revised legal compliance and basic conditions are applicable to the Northam Neighbourhood Plan, an additional focussed consultation to examine the implications of these changes was held between 16th April 2026 and 1st May 2026. In June 2026 an independent assessment determined that no revised modifications to the Plan were necessary as a result of the revised legal compliance and basic conditions. This assessment is set out as an addendum to the examiner's final report.



Wooda Road development looking towards Appledore.

3. Planning Policy Context

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF provides the basis for local planning authorities to prepare their local plans and for communities producing neighbourhood plans. The Basic Conditions Statement sets out in detail how the Plan has regard to the NPPF, and provides a set of paragraph references to the current iteration of the NPPF.

3.8 The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should conform with the presumption in favour of sustainable development; support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; be in general conformity with these strategic policies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. The NPPF goes on to state that 'Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.'

THE NDAT LOCAL PLAN

3.9 The Parish of Northam lies within the administrative area of Torridge District Council, in the County of Devon. Along with national policy, the District Council has policies and proposals that have a significant influence on the strategy and detailed content of the Plan.

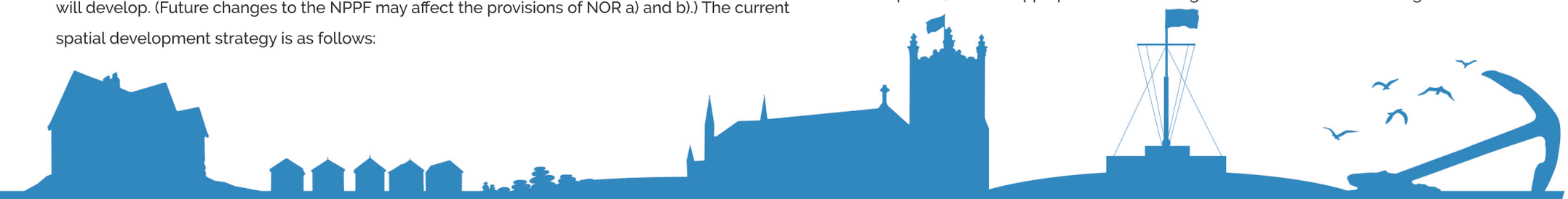
3.10 The NDAT Local Plan (2011-2031) was adopted on 29th October 2018. The NDAT Local Plan sets out a range of strategic policies relevant to Northam Parish and in particular, Policy NOR: Spatial vision and development strategy, which sets out a spatial vision and spatial development strategy for Northam. The spatial vision sets out how the Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore will develop. (Future changes to the NPPF may affect the provisions of NOR a) and b).) The current spatial development strategy is as follows:

a. The provision of a minimum of 1,916 new dwellings to meet the communities housing needs, together with associated infrastructure.
b. New site allocations to provide approximately 1,740 dwellings.
c. Urban extensions to the south of Westward Ho! and Northam to accommodate approximately 1,240 dwellings and infrastructure.
d. Safeguarding and developing important economic assets - Appledore shipyard, port facilities and tourism assets.
e. To capitalise on Assisted Area Status to deliver economic growth.
f. Support development in Westward Ho! to contribute to its role as a coastal resort and extend the tourism season.
g. Supporting development on Northam Burrows that improves the visitor offer.
h. Avoid development that contributes to coalescence between Appledore and Northam, and the designated 'green wedge' south of Northam.
i. Provision of social, community, recreation, sports, and educational facilities to support new development.
j. Development to meet its own infrastructure needs, in sustainable travel, road improvements. Sea defences needed in Westward Ho! to combat climate change.
k. Development to respect the landscape setting including the adjoining Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3.11 Under Section 58 (3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 local authorities developing planning documents for areas with a coastal influence must have regard to the UK Marine Policy Statement and the relevant Marine Plan (in the case of the Plan area this is the South West Marine Plan, adopted in 2021). The Marine Management Organisation is responsible for preparing this Plan and is a statutory consultee for the Northam Neighbourhood Plan.

SUMMARY

3.12 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat national or local policies but, where appropriate, to add local detail and value to those policies. It sets out the clear wishes of the community of the Parish of Northam in respect of the management and control of development, to attain appropriate sustainable growth within the Northam Neighbourhood Plan area.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4

PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4. Community Engagement

PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 The desire for a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Northam was established through public meetings with residents, starting in 2017. Aware that this was an opportunity to create a robust and evidenced community voice, Northam Town Council voted on 31st May 2017 to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.

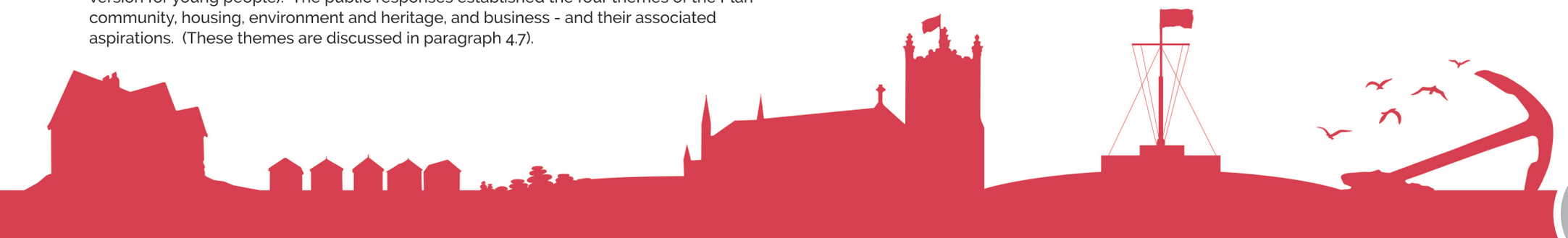
4.2 Community engagement through local involvement and consultation is at the heart of neighbourhood planning and the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up in 2017, with a membership of Town Councillors and public representatives from each of the wards. Its purpose, as set out in its Terms of Reference and Membership document, was: 'to produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Northam Parish that defines the planning policy priorities identified by the community and taking into account all representations made during the plan-making process and having regard to all existing plans and evidence.'

4.3 In August 2017 Torridge District Council recognised Northam Town Council as an appropriate Qualifying Body to submit a Neighbourhood Development Plan and approved the Civil Parish of Northam as the neighbourhood area that will be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 The process of community engagement and consultation for the Plan was guided by the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Community Engagement Strategy, an evidence base document which sets out in detail the values, standards and methods of community engagement used. The Record of Community Engagement, and the Consultation Statement that accompanies the Plan, provide greater detail regarding the community engagement and consultation process.

4.5 The process of community engagement and consultation may be summarised as follows:

- **2017** - Public meetings supported the establishment of Neighbourhood Plan and set up the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
  September 2017 - Initial engagement survey distributed to selected outlets.
- **March 2018** - Initial engagement questionnaire distributed to all households (with a separate version for young people). The public responses established the four themes of the Plan - community, housing, environment and heritage, and business - and their associated aspirations. (These themes are discussed in paragraph 4.7).
- **April 2018** - Initial engagement questionnaire responses informed the Plan's Vision statement. Focus groups consisting of Town Councillors and volunteer residents drafted the objectives and policies of the Plan.
- **November 2018 - January 2019** - An informal review of the Plan by Torridge District Council resulted in numerous modifications to the objectives and policies.
- **11th March - 24th April 2019** - Initial consultation with questionnaire and public meetings in each main settlement. There was a Focus group for young people in July 2019.
- **October 2019 - January 2020** - the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was reconstituted as the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group and became a sub-committee of Northam Town Council. The Terms of Reference for both groups are evidence base documents.
- **2019 - 2021** - the Advisory Group revised the objectives and policies in respect of the initial consultation responses. COVID restrictions slowed progress on the Plan.
- **March - October 2022** - Informal review of the Plan by Torridge District Council resulted in modifications to the objectives, policies and supporting text.
- **January - February 2023** - pre-submission consultation with questionnaire distributed to all households, public exhibitions and extensive social media engagement in each main settlement. The consultation also engaged with 82 local businesses and community stakeholder groups, and engaged with a range of prescribed consultees. During this process, an independent examiner appointed by Torridge District Council undertook a detailed health-check on the Plan and made numerous suggestions.
- **March 2024 - present** - The Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group reported to the Northam Town Council Planning and Development Committee.
- **March 2023 - November 2024** - Following the pre-submission consultation, all comments and suggestions received by the Town Council (including those made in the health-check) were reviewed and, as considered necessary, numerous modifications were made to the objectives, policies and supporting text of the Plan.
- **December 2024-January 2025** - Final consultation with landowners of proposed Local Green Space sites.
- **November 2024 - May 2025** - An independent examiner appointed by Northam Town Council gave the Plan a final health-check. The Final Health Check Report concluded: 'The Northam Neighbourhood Development Plan and the policies within it, subject to the recommended modifications would meet the Basic Conditions.' All the general recommendations and all the recommended policy modifications in the Final Health Check Report were accepted and the modified Plan was finalised as the submission Northam Neighbourhood Development Plan. Following finalisation, the submission Northam Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Torridge District Council and a six-week public consultation was held on the Plan.



4. Community Engagement

4.6 In November 2025 the Plan was subject to an independent examination. Following a satisfactory outcome to the examination and the adoption of all the recommended policy modifications in the examiner's report the Plan was submitted to Torridge District Council in March 2026. During the final stages of the Plan's progress a referendum is held within the Northam Parish followed by a vote by Torridge District Council to adopt the Plan. Once the Plan is adopted it achieves 'made' status as a legal planning document.



THEMES AND ASPIRATIONS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.7 As a result of responses to the initial questionnaire in 2017-2018, in April 2018 the Steering Group identified four themes: community, housing, the environment and heritage, and, business and employment. The responses also enabled the Steering Group to identify an associated set of community aspirations for each theme:

1) Community theme - Valued community facilities should be protected against loss to create sustainable and strong communities in each of the three main settlements of Northam Parish.
2) Housing theme - sustainable housing development should include appropriate infrastructure and include the provision of genuinely affordable housing to meet local needs. Any development should provide adequate numbers of car parking spaces for residents and reduce the adverse environmental impacts of traffic congestion, carbon emissions and pollution caused by having to travel out of the area.
3) Environment and heritage theme - the overarching priority must be that sustainable development should be delivered in a way that protects and enhances valued environmental assets including local green spaces, the coast, countryside and heritage assets, and resists the process of coalescence of settlements and the erosion of the rural character of the area between settlements.
4) Business theme - sustainable economic development should benefit the local economy and create local employment opportunities.

The four themes and their associated aspirations inform the Vision, objectives, and policy sections of this Plan.

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5



NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Vision

To maintain and enhance the individual characteristics of Northam, Orchard Hill, Appledore and Westward Ho! and to build a more sustainable, self-reliant community of collaboration, connection and a strong sense of collective purpose.

5.1 The vision for the Northam Neighbourhood Plan is that by 2031 by building on the diversity of our separate settlements, we will have built a more sustainable, self-reliant community. By respecting diversity, it becomes a source of strength and collective purpose. The Plan will therefore ensure the protection of the individual characteristics and distinct identities of Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho!

5.2 This vision and its associated objectives reflect the community aspirations identified through community engagement. As stated in its general objective, all the objectives and policies of the Plan seek to apply the principles of social, economic and environmentally sustainable development that underpin the NPPF and the NDAT Local Plan 2011-2031. Through applying these principles the Plan will support the achievement of sustainable development that makes a positive contribution towards the sustainability of Northam Parish and its community whilst minimising its environmental footprint.[1]

5.3 Sustainable new development will support Northam Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, seeking to achieve carbon net zero in its buildings and significant reductions in the carbon footprint of both households and commercial enterprises across the Parish. The Town Council's survey results are set out in appendix 10. For more information, scan the QR code or visit the Council's website at www.northamtowncouncil.gov.uk.

5.4 In social terms, the Plan will support a strong, vibrant, and healthy community in each settlement by the provision of facilities for sport, recreation, and socialising for people of all ages. Valued open spaces and green infrastructure for recreation, walking and cycling routes will be protected and enhanced to improve sustainable connectivity between settlements. There will be appropriate housing to meet local needs. New development will be well designed and of good quality, accommodating energy-efficient solutions.

5.5 In environmental terms the Plan will protect and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment of Northam Parish, including the valued landscape between settlements. Biodiversity will be enhanced. Valued local heritage assets will be protected and enhanced as places for residents and visitors to enjoy.

5.6 In economic terms, the Plan will help to build strong, responsive, and competitive economies in each of the three settlements by supporting the expansion of existing business and the emergence of new locally focused businesses, including maritime employment opportunities in Appledore Shipyard and the Appledore Employment Zone. Sustainable tourism will be encouraged by the provision and enhancement of tourism facilities, green infrastructure, walking and cycling routes.

[1] The Plan utilises the NPPF definition of sustainable development as: development 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



Objectives

General Objective

1) The Plan will achieve sustainable development by applying through its objectives and policies the three principles of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental - that underpin the National Planning Policy Framework and the NDAT Local Plan.

Community

2) The protection of existing community facilities, and support for the development of new community facilities in Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore.

Housing and Development

a) Residential development

3) Local housing needs will be met through the increased provision of dwellings of one or two bedrooms. These new dwellings should be accessible and adaptable to meet household needs.
4) To maximise the provision of affordable housing.
5) The design of residential development will ensure the amenity of new dwellings and protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.
6) To encourage appropriate provision of off-street residential parking.

b) Development, design and energy

7) The design of development should reflect and respect the character of the local built and natural environment.
8) The design of development should seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy.
9) Community-scale renewable energy production schemes will be supported.

Environment and Heritage

10) To improve, protect and enhance valued local green spaces.
11) To identify and protect local areas of open space and recreation.
12) To protect the distinct identity of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho!
13) To protect the rural setting of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! and the special character of the area provided by its coastal and estuarine location.
14) To reduce light pollution and preserve dark skies in the gap between settlements.
15) To preserve specified views of community value to maintain a sense of place, wellbeing and community identity in Northam Parish.
16) To identify non-designated heritage assets of considerable local significance and enable their conservation under national policies.
17) To support development that recognises, conserves and enhances the significance of heritage assets.
18) To protect and enhance areas of biodiversity and green corridors to ensure that the Parish of Northam continues to have a species-rich and diverse range of flora and fauna.
19) To increase the connectivity of settlements and reduce pollution by the protection, enhancement and introduction of new attractive and accessible walking and cycling networks for all residents and visitors to enjoy.

Business and Employment

20) To support the expansion of existing business and the emergence of new, and locally focused business in sustainable locations.
21) To protect and improve public car parking provision.
22) To support new, expanded, or enhanced tourism accommodation and attractions in sustainable locations.
23) To support sustainable development of Richmond Dock, Appledore for maritime-related purposes or small business use.
24) To support proposals for economic maritime-related development within the Appledore Employment Zone.



List of Policies

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NORTHAM
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2024-2031



COMMUNITY

6



NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

6. Community

OBJECTIVE: THE PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AND SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN NORTHAM, WESTWARD HO! AND APPLEDORE.

POLICY: CF1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals for the development or change of use of community facilities within the Plan area will be supported where:

i there is no loss of community facilities for which there is evidence of on-going demand and community value; and

ii the development adds new or enhances current provision of the community facilities; or

iii the development increases the availability of open spaces for sport and recreation purposes and children's play.

Community Facilities

6.1 In each of the three main settlements in Northam Parish, there are community buildings and locations that provide venues for activities and functions. A range of local community and interest groups use each facility. These facilities will be supported to provide enhanced services and opportunities for all residents and businesses of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Appendix 1 contains a purely indicative list to demonstrate the range of community facilities in Northam Parish.

6.2 The community facilities in Northam Parish are designated as "Community Hubs" to ensure a commitment to improve community facilities, locations for events and accommodation for local support services. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan also supports the provision of additional community hubs to provide services across the settlements of Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho!



6. Community

6.3 Development proposals will be supported which add new or enhance current provision of facilities. This will enable people to develop all forms of creative expression, performing arts, sport and recreational activities, personal and team-building challenges and contribute to the Plan's vision of strong communities in each of the three settlements.

6.4 Where there is evidence of on-going demand and community value, Community Hubs should be protected from loss through the planning process. In the context of Policy CF1 the phrase 'community value' refers to Section 88 (1) and (2) of the Localism Act 2011 relating to the circumstances that land and buildings may be considered to possess community value.

6.5 To demonstrate that a community facility is no longer required for communities and organisations seeking to further the social well-being or social interests of the local community, the local planning authority will expect that applications resulting in a loss of a community facility to be supported by robust and credible evidence demonstrating no demand for the community facility in the locality. Applicants will be expected to submit detailed information to show that the community facility (premises and/or land) has been marketed, at an appropriate price reflecting the existing or potential community use of the community facility, for a period of 18 months and that there was no legitimate buyer demand for the community facility over that period. The marketing strategy, along with the price at which the community facility will be marketed, should be agreed with the local planning authority prior to commencement of the marketing exercise.

6.6 Where necessary and appropriate to prevent the loss of a building or recreational space which would be detrimental to the well-being of the community, Northam Town Council may seek their listing as 'Assets of Community Value'. An Asset of Community Value (ACV) is land or buildings nominated by the Town Council or certain local voluntary or community groups which Torridge District Council decides meets the requirements to be listed as an Asset of Community Value.



6. Community

6.7 Indoor and outdoor facilities, providing locations for activities and creative pursuits accessible to local people are spread across the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the context of Policy CF1, the phrase 'children's play' refers to children's play space. The opportunity for formal and informal, structured, or less structured activities is more limited for people in full time education and of working age. To provide young people with access to a range of challenging activities, which help, foster growth mind-sets, it is intended that provision of sport and recreation facilities, and opportunities for creative expression across the Neighbourhood Plan area will be monitored on a regular basis, assessing how open spaces and future developments might better serve the needs and aspirations of young people.
It is the intention of the Plan to support proposals for business development and start-ups that directly benefit young people through Policy ED1: Business.



HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

7



NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

7. Housing and Development

Section a) Residential Development

OBJECTIVE: LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS WILL BE MET THROUGH THE INCREASED PROVISION OF DWELLINGS OF ONE OR TWO BEDROOMS. THESE NEW DWELLINGS SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE TO MEET HOUSEHOLD NEEDS.



7.1 It is clear that there is an established need for housing in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan area, and this need is accommodated by planned provision in the NDAT Local Plan, which includes a requirement for affordable housing on qualifying sites. In conformity to national policy, in 2018 Northam Town Council issued a call for sites for potential small and medium housing allocations through the neighbourhood plan. Six sites were considered as potential housing allocations but were discounted due to potential conflict with emerging NDAT Local Plan strategic policies. This process is detailed in the Record of Community Engagement and Consultation Statement, which accompany the Plan. Shortly after this process, the NDAT Local Plan was adopted and Northam Town Council consider that there has been no significant change in circumstances that would affect the housing requirement and allocations for Northam parish set out in the NDAT Local Plan. The Town Council therefore made no further call for sites for potential housing allocations. However, subsequently Torridge and North Devon districts have been assessed in having a shortfall in their five year housing land supply. Section 10 of the Plan allows for a review of policies in the Plan either after five years or sooner as set out in paragraph 10.4. This process would enable the Town Council to make housing allocations if so required in consultation with Torridge District Council.

7.2 The housing policies in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan are in-line with its vision and objectives, and seek to ensure that new residential developments contain a mixture of housing to meet the needs of local people. These developments are designed to be in keeping with the existing character of Northam Parish, and to create a strong sense of place. These policies are evidenced in Appendix 2 and consideration has been given to the data in the Report of the Devon Housing Commission, 2024, (hereinafter DHC Report).[2]

[2] **The Report of the Devon Housing Commission, (Exeter Innovation), 2024.**

7. Housing and Development

OBJECTIVE: LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS WILL BE MET THROUGH THE INCREASED PROVISION OF DWELLINGS OF ONE OR TWO BEDROOMS. THESE NEW DWELLINGS SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE TO MEET HOUSEHOLD NEEDS.

POLICY: HO1 SIZE OF DWELLINGS

1. On developments of more than 10 dwellings, at least 50 % shall have one or two bedrooms, subject to considerations of viability, site character and context.

2. On developments of more than 10 dwellings on sites which are well located in terms of access to social and community facilities, at least a third should be designed to meet Building Regulations Standard M4(2).

7.3 Policy HO1 supports proposals for one or two bedroom dwellings that meet the proven local need for an increased supply of smaller dwellings. Such dwellings benefit their occupants by being cheaper to buy/rent and maintain. In order to achieve this aim, subject to the considerations set out in the policy text, Policy HO1 clause 1 requires that at least 50% dwellings on developments of more than ten dwellings have one or two bedrooms. The meanings of 'viability, site character and context' are as defined in Policy ST17 of NDAT Local Plan.

7.4 The DHC Report shows that in both 2011 and 2021 Torridge District had the lowest percentage in Devon of one-bed accommodation per household (6.8%). The need for more one and two bed dwellings was forecast in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment: A Torridge and North Devon update for projected household types 2011-2031, and the North Devon Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (May 2016).

7.5 The Northam Town Council 2017 housing needs survey again demonstrated that there was a demand from residents for smaller properties with 15% of respondents requiring one bedroom properties and 54% requiring two bedrooms. Only 3% of respondents required four or more bedrooms.[3]

7.6 Table 1 of Appendix 2 demonstrates that the Parish of Northam has a higher proportion of one-person households than Torridge District and relatively fewer households consisting of three people or more. Likely continuing high demand for smaller properties is indicated in Appendix 2, Table 7, which shows relatively higher prices for smaller properties in Appledore, Orchard Hill and Westward Ho! and apparent shortages of available one-bedroom properties in these areas during the sample period.

7.7 The continuing unmet need for greater provision of smaller dwellings is further evidenced by Table 2 of Appendix 2, which demonstrates that in 2023 84% of applicants in Northam Parish registered with Devon Home Choice required smaller dwellings (one or two bedrooms) compared with only 3.6% requiring four or more bedrooms.

7.8 With reference to Policy HO1 clause 2, the sites considered 'well located' may be identified on a case by case basis especially considering walking or wheeling distance along sound pavements rather than travel times, with reference given to current guidance, such as in the 'National Design Guide'; 'Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure'; and 'Planning for Active Places'.

7.9 In 2023 Devon Home Choice noted that many applicants have mobility issues that require accessible accommodation but that there was a shortage of such accommodation across Devon.[4]

7.10 Table 3 of Appendix 2 shows that the population of the Parish of Northam has an older age profile than Torridge District. It is considered that older people are more likely to have a present or future need for accessible and adaptable dwellings. Table 4 demonstrates that a larger proportion of Northam Parish residents presently live with disabilities than residents in Torridge District as a whole. Table 5 shows that 23.1% of Northam Parish residents registered with Devon Home Choice require a dwelling with at least some accessible and adaptable features.

7.11 The NDAT Local Plan supports provision of the necessary numbers of smaller dwellings and accessible and adaptable dwellings where evidence of local need is demonstrated through the application of Local Plan Policy ST17: A balanced local housing market. Policy HO1 therefore conforms to ST17 in identifying and supporting the local housing need for greater provision of smaller dwellings, and accessible and adaptable dwellings.

[3] **The Northam Town Council 2017 housing needs survey is an evidence base document.**
[4] **Devon Home Choice Policy v.11.1, April 2023.**



7. Housing and Development

Affordable Housing

OBJECTIVE: TO MAXIMISE THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

POLICY: HO2 NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Proposals to provide affordable housing through infill plots and new builds within development boundaries will be supported.

2. Where planning permission is required, proposals to provide affordable housing through the re-use of empty or derelict buildings will be supported where the building is capable of re-use without compromising the standard of accommodation to be provided.

3. The tenure mix of new developments will reflect local need, which includes provision of socially rented accommodation and low cost home ownership opportunities.

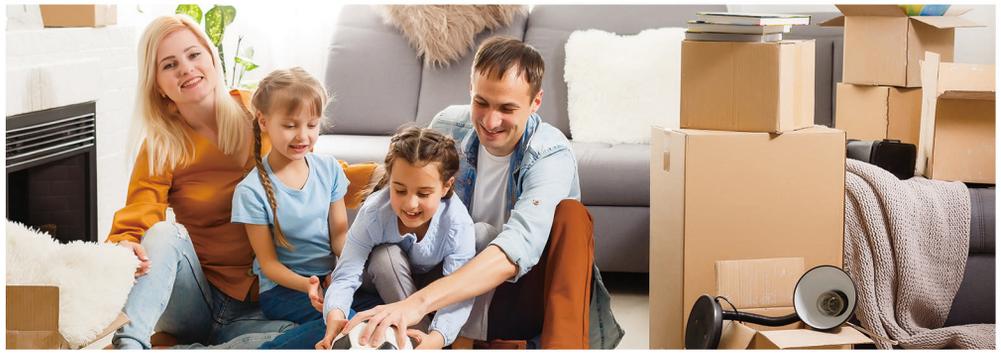
7.12 In June 2022 there were 6,774 properties registered with Torridge District Council for Council Tax in Northam Parish. Appendix 2, Table 8 shows that in 2023 around 10% of these properties were empty and a significant number of empty or under-used properties in Torridge District are located in the Parish of Northam. These properties included 455 second homes and anecdotal evidence suggests that the bulk of the second homes in the parish are located in Appledore and Westward Ho! These empty and under-used properties have the potential to be converted into affordable dwellings.

7.13 The NDAT Local Plan identifies 'a substantial need for additional affordable housing across northern Devon' and asserts that 'Open market housing is out of reach to many, due to a significant imbalance between wages, rental costs and house prices with evidence that residents have some of the lowest earnings in the UK.' In fact Office of National Statistics (hereinafter ONS) figures show that the ratio between median earnings and median house prices has increased in Torridge from 4.44 in 1997 to 9.8 in 2018 to 10.02 in 2023.[5]

[5] **ONS, house prices for small areas of England and Wales, ONS statistical bulletins.**

Appendix 2, Table 7 demonstrates that the prices of most types of dwelling are higher in Northam Parish than in Torridge District. These higher prices may in part reflect demand for dwellings in Appledore and Westward Ho! from in-migration and second home purchasers. Prices of smaller properties are significantly higher in Appledore, Orchard Hill and Westward Ho! and there appear to be shortages of one-bedroom properties in Appledore and Orchard Hill.

7.14 In 2023 the Torridge Ward profiles showed that 28.6% of households on Torridge District were in private or social rented accommodation compared to 26.4% households in Northam Parish. Table 9 of Appendix 2 demonstrates that whilst the numbers of people privately renting or living rent free in Northam Parish are broadly similar to the average for members of the Rural Market Town Group, significantly fewer households live in social rented accommodation. It is therefore considered that there is a relative shortage of social rented accommodation in Northam Parish compared to a comparable national average.



7. Housing and Development

7.15 Policy HO2 supports and strengthens NDAT Local Plan Policy ST18 and the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, and proposals for residential housing development will be supported where they conform to NDAT Local Plan ST18 and deliver the level of affordable housing stated in that policy. With reference to clause 1 of Policy HO2, the definition of 'affordable housing' is that set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF, and the required tenure mix set out in the NDAT Local Plan. The term 'infill' is defined in the Glossary of the NNP and the NDAT Local Plan.

7.16 In the context of Policy HO2 clause 2, where empty or derelict buildings and land are re-used for affordable housing, Vacant Building Credit may apply on sites of sufficient size for a proportion of affordable dwellings to be required under Local Plan policy. When Vacant Building Credit applies the site should not deliberately be made empty. The phrase 'standard of accommodation' relates to the standard of accommodation to be provided for affordable dwellings as specified in relation to Policies ST17 and ST18 of the NDAT Local Plan and any additional and successor documents.

7.17 In Policy HO2 clause 3 the phrase 'low cost home ownership opportunities' refers to those categories of affordable home ownership tenures defined by Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF as: 'c) Discounted market sales housing; and d) Other affordable routes to home ownership', and also as used in the NDAT Local Plan.

7.18 In addition to the provisions of Policy HO2, Northam Town Council will encourage and support the provision of social housing for rent, and actively investigate its provision directly, or by other organisations such as Community Land Trusts, Community-led housing initiatives, self-build projects and other means of provision.



Residential Design and Amenity

OBJECTIVE: THE DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL ENSURE THE AMENITY OF NEW DWELLINGS AND PROTECT THE AMENITY OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES.

POLICY: HO3 RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AND AMENITY

Residential development will be supported where:

- **i private and public amenity space is provided, where appropriate, to ensure usable outdoor space which creates a healthy environment meeting the needs of the occupants; and**
- **ii overlooking of neighbouring properties and gardens which would be significantly detrimental to residential amenity is avoided; and**
- **iii an increase in height over any replaced building does not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and safeguards the amenity of residents of adjacent buildings.**

7.19 The provision of amenity space is an essential part of the character and quality of the environment of residential properties. In terms of sustainable development, gardens provide a quality environment in Northam Parish because they give children room to play and exercise, and may be used to grow vegetables or improve biodiversity. However the provision of private and public amenity space may not be 'appropriate' where it is not necessary or reasonable and this will be determined on a case by case basis taking into account all relevant factors, such as the amount of existing readily accessible public amenity space; and whether the proposed development involves a change of use of an existing building.

7.20 A significant proportion of residential development proposals will have some degree of overlooking onto or from existing development. Therefore, Policy HO3 clause ii requires a balanced judgement to be made regarding the significance of any detrimental impact on residential amenity. Where a proposal does not maintain adequate levels of privacy for neighbouring occupiers or uses it would be considered significantly detrimental to residential amenity.

7.21 A proposal will be supported where it is considered appropriate and sympathetic to its setting, and in relation to existing buildings and landscape features. However, as stated in Policy HO3 clause iii, a replacement building of an inappropriate height that fails to respect its context may cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, especially where it has a detrimental effect on a listed building or conservation area.

7.22 If a dwelling is being designed to be adaptable over time to meet changing needs, then the impact of such future extension should be considered in its orientation, plot size and relationship to other properties. Allowance in the size of external amenity space also needs to be made, for the possible future extension or adaptation of the dwelling.



Residential Parking

OBJECTIVE: TO ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE PROVISION OF OFF-STREET RESIDENTIAL PARKING

POLICY: TR1 RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROVISION

Development will be encouraged to provide residential off-street parking designed to meet the anticipated needs of residents and visitors which is well integrated and accessible in order to maximise usage.

7.23 Whilst every effort is made to reduce the dependence on the car, it remains essential for many people in the Plan area, with 73% of households having one or two vehicles and a further 10.4% having three or more vehicles.[6] In the responses received to all of the questionnaires issued during the plan-making process, parking and road congestion featured prominently and the level of car parking provision on developments was an issue. The number of responses indicates that parking provision is a concern to residents of Northam Parish.

7.24 National planning restrictions in respect of parking provision were abolished in 2011 and the NPPF allows local parking standards for developments. In 2014 the Secretary of State called for new developments to be built with sufficient parking to reflect local market demand.[7]

7.25 Policy TR1 encourages provision for parking that enhances the visual character of a development by ensuring that cars are an unobtrusive part of the scene through the appropriate location, layout, and detailed design of the parking spaces. The use of trees and shrubs to soften the visual impact of on-street parking and cars parked in grouped parking areas would add greatly to the visual amenity of an area and support climate change objectives.



[6] **ONS, 2021 Census, Northam dataset.**
[7] **Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Technical Consultation on Planning (July 2014), sections 2.77 and 2.78.**

Section b) Development, Design and Energy

TWO OBJECTIVES: THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD REFLECT AND RESPECT THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: (and)

THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SEEK TO MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE TRANSITION TO A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY.

POLICY: DE1 QUALITY OF DESIGN

1 Development should reflect local character and context; create a strong sense of place; and include design of an environmentally friendly nature and will be supported where it:

- **i is sited and orientated to benefit from solar gain;**
- **ii incorporates rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling systems and water efficiency measures;**
- **iii has access to sustainable transport options;**
- **iv incorporates the use of and re-use of traditional materials and low ecological impact materials and techniques;**
- **v is visually attractive as the result of good architecture, layout and appropriate effective landscaping, and functions well adding to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term, but also over the lifetime of the development;**
- **vi has a minimum of one bat box, one bee brick and one nesting box or cup per dwelling and all fencing includes hedgehog gaps;**
- **vii avoids flood zones and coastal change management areas. Where these cannot be avoided a robust justification should be provided with the proposal.**
- **viii in the case of major developments it will be accompanied by a carbon reduction plan with substantial weight being given to the delivery of net zero carbon buildings.**

2. Proposals for development should include supporting information which clearly demonstrates how existing key features and assets of the site such as biodiversity, natural views, built structures, landmarks including mature trees, watercourses and hedges are impacted by the proposal. Any negative impact on these features must be accompanied by appropriate mitigation measures.

3. Residential development will be supported where household refuse storage space is externally accessible from the refuse collection point so that street clutter is avoided and so that occupants can recycle and manage waste without hindrance.

7.26 One of the most important features of any new development should be the quality of design. Policy DE1 applies to all development in Northam Parish, residential or economic. However it is considered to be of particular value in guiding housing development, and thereby enhancing the areas where people live.

7.27 Numerous negative comments regarding design of residential development in the 2018 initial questionnaire, the 2019 initial consultation questionnaire, and the 2023 pre-submission consultation questionnaire suggest that good design is of concern to many residents of Northam Parish. All applications, at the appropriate level, need to set out a design vision with as much clarity as possible, so that local people can consider what is likely to be acceptable.

7.28 New development should reflect local character and context and create a strong sense of place. Development applications should include proposals for greening the area under consideration, to include new tree-lined avenues, and stone and/or brick boundary walls where appropriate with more open grassed, shrub and flower planted areas. Tree-lined avenues are not only pleasing in appearance and to live on, but the trees provide shade and help to combat climate change by removing carbon-dioxide from the atmosphere.



7.29 Of crucial importance will be the density, massing, height, landscape, materials, arrangement of streets and spaces with appropriate landscaping. The defining characteristics of the area should be evaluated, taking into consideration the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. It is not the intention to discourage innovative change where appropriate, and it is accepted that new modern architecture can sit alongside the historic when sensitively designed.

7.30 Policy DE1 clause iv supports the use of 'traditional materials', which are rendered or natural stone or brick exteriors with natural slate roofing, although artificial slate roofing may be considered acceptable for undesignated buildings.[8]

7.31 Policy DE1 clause iv also supports the use of 'low ecological impact materials and techniques', which are re-used and/or recyclable and/or locally sourced materials, together with the traditional building techniques necessary to use and work with these materials.

7.32 With reference to DE1 clause vi., proposals should be supported by an environmental assessment completed by a suitability qualified specialist.

7.33 Given the predicted increase in extreme weather events including heavy rainfall, it is vital that new development is not sited in areas prone to excessive groundwater run-off and flash flooding and there is a need to adapt and be resilient to the effects of climate change. Water saving and the efficient use of water are priorities given predictions of more drought emergencies in the future due to climate change.[9]

[8] **Supporting evidence for the types of traditional materials utilised in the NNP area is found in two documents in the evidence base of the Plan: 'Northam Conservation Area, appraisal by Devon County Council' (1987); and 'Appledore 2003 A Conservation Area appraisal Supplementary Planning Guidance Torridge District Council' (2003). Additional supporting evidence is available in the listing reports of designated buildings in the NNP in the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) on the Historic England website.**

[9] **Further details are provided in the Torridge District Council, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 and 2).**

7.34 Northam Town Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to net zero carbon emissions in its operations and properties by 2030. Policy DE1 is designed to help achieve the aims of the Town Council carbon reduction plan.

7.35 Developments are increasingly carbon efficient as a result of increasing energy efficiency, use of renewable energy and promotion of sustainable transport modes, and development proposals should seek to minimise their carbon footprint both during construction and in use. The strategic need to reduce carbon emissions is set out in NDAT Local Plan strategic policies ST02, ST03, and ST05. In order to secure the aim of these Local Plan strategic policies, Policy DE1 seeks to maximise the opportunities for minimising energy use and securing carbon emission reductions in all new developments. A carbon reduction plan will be required for major developments (those for 10 or more dwellings or with 1,000 square metres or more of floor space) to indicate how this could be achieved, and the implications for development viability, including consideration of materials, construction methods, design, energy, water, waste management, travel planning and carbon offsetting.

7.36 The provision of adequate, suitable, and well-designed storage space is an important contribution to the amenity of well-designed dwellings. Development will be supported where suitable provision for general storage space is provided in all dwellings and externally accessible space provided for storing garden equipment and tools, play equipment and bicycles.



OBJECTIVE: COMMUNITY-SCALE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION SCHEMES WILL BE SUPPORTED.

POLICY: DE2 RENEWABLE ENERGY

1. Community scale renewable energy proposals (for example, wind generators) will be supported subject to the avoidance of significant impact on residential amenity, landscape setting or biodiversity.

2. Proposals should be accompanied by an independent assessment of their siting, scale and setting in the landscape and impact on biodiversity.

7.37 The IPCC report on global warming published in 2022 concluded that without radical measures to reduce emissions the world will suffer a catastrophic rise of 1.5˚ C in average global temperatures. According to one dataset this rise was recorded for the first time over a twelve-month period in 2023-2024.[10] The UK is committed under the Climate Change Act 2008 to significantly reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050, and this commitment is reinforced by support for the transition to zero net carbon in the NPPF, and in numerous policies in the NDAT Local Plan.

7.38 Energy conservation measures and alternative energy generation make a significant contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions and energy conservation will help contribute to a reduction in the cost of living. The renewable energy systems referred to in Policy DE2 may include solar panels, micro-wind generation or such new technologies as and when they become available.

7.39 Community scale energy systems may vary in ownership, size or location but they are designed to benefit a local community from their outcomes. With reference to Policy DE2 clause 2, proposals for community-scale renewable energy systems should be accompanied by an independent assessment of their siting, scale and setting in the landscape and impact on biodiversity. This independent assessment should be carried out by a suitably experienced and qualified professional.



[10] **Copernicus Climate Change Service cited in UN.org.**



ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

8

NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Environment and Heritage

8.1 The Parish of Northam is notable for its high quality environmental and heritage assets. The environmental assets include the North Devon Coast National Landscape (formerly the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), including Northam Burrows; and the countryside between Appledore and the largely conjoined settlements of Northam and Westward Ho! This includes the largely unspoilt banks of the River Torridge outside settlement development boundaries.

8.2 The landscape character of the Plan Area is identified in the North Devon and Torridge Joint Landscape Assessment Update, (hereinafter North Devon and Torridge JLA Update). The sections relating to the Plan area are an evidence base document. The North Devon and Torridge JLA Update divides the parish into two landscape character areas. The agricultural rural area is part of the Bideford Bay Coast Devon Character Area and is characterised by landscape type 5B Coastal undulating farmland. Northam Burrows, the seashore and shoreline of the River Torridge form part of the Taw-Torridge Estuary Devon Character Area. The Burrows are characterised as landscape type 4F Dunes, and the seashore and Torridge shoreline are characterised as landscape type 4E Extensive inter-tidal sands.

8.3 The environmental and heritage assets provide an environmental, social, and economic basis for the sustainable development of the settlements of Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! In social terms they provide focuses for community pride and identity, and areas for informal recreation. In economic terms, the environmental and heritage assets form an important part of the tourism offer of Northam Parish. The protection of the environment and heritage scored very highly in all the questionnaires issued for this Plan (further details are given in the Consultation Statement).

[11] **Natural England: Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles and Standards for England, (January 2023).**

8.4 The quality environmental and heritage assets that make Northam such an attractive place to live and visit, also encourage development proposals for residential and tourism accommodation. These applications are recorded on the database of planning applications on the Torridge District Council website. Many proposals are for premium-priced dwellings or tourism accommodation located to benefit from their proximity to the environmental and heritage assets. These types of development can have an adverse impact on the environmental and heritage assets affected. In addition, given that the extent and numbers of these assets are finite, the irreversible loss or damage of such assets is unsustainable.

8.5 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan seeks to achieve sustainable development regarding environmental and heritage assets through policies that add local detail and value to the relevant policies of the NDAT Local Plan. The environmental policies of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan also have regard to the Accessible Greenspace Standards set out in the Green Infrastructure Framework (2023).[11]



Historic view of Westward Ho!

8. Environment and Heritage

OBJECTIVE: TO IMPROVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE VALUED LOCAL GREEN SPACES.

POLICY: EN1 LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Local Green Spaces are designated in the following locations, as defined in Appendix 3a):

- **i Allotments south of Marshford, Churchill Way, Northam**
- **ii Land known as Blackies, Torridge Road, Appledore**
- **iii Humpty-Dumpty Field, Great Burrow Rise, Northam**
- **iv Westward Ho! Park, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!**
- **v Anchor Park, Appledore**
- **vi Village Green, The Backfield, Appledore**
- **vii Hillcliff Gardens, Irsha Street, Appledore**
- **viii Tors View, off Cornborough Drive, Westward Ho!**
- **ix The village green, Westward Ho!**
- **x Burrough Farm, Northam**

Inappropriate development* on any of the areas listed above will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

*Reference paragraphs 108 and 154 of the NPPF 2024

8.6 In 2012 the Government introduced a designation of Local Green Space through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which allows local communities to identify for protection local green areas of particular significance to them. This local significance could be because of the green area's beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity, or the richness of its wildlife. By designating land as a Local Green Space, communities will be able to prevent inappropriate development.

8.7 Within the Parish of Northam ten sites are designated as Local Green Spaces. Each of these sites has been assessed and found to meet the criteria in the NPPF for local green spaces. These criteria are as follows: 'being in reasonably close proximity to the community served'; these spaces hold a particular local significance; they are local in character and are not extensive tracts of land; and they are likely to endure beyond the period of the Plan. Appendix 3a) provides details of the designated Local Green Spaces and how they meet the selection criteria set out in the NPPF. Appendix 3a) also lists the purposes for designating each of the Local Green Spaces. The designated sites have no other designation except Hillcliff Gardens, which is located in a conservation area. After consideration as to whether this would be sufficient to maintain the site as open space, it has been determined that additional protection through Local Green Space designation is required.

8.8 Within each Local Green Space, Policy EN1 supports proposals for development where it preserves the openness of the Local Green Space and does not harm the purposes for its designation. Such proposals may include, for example, the construction of a new building providing essential facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries, allotments or other uses of the open land.

8. Environment and Heritage

8.9 Generally the construction of new buildings will be inappropriate in Local Green Spaces but exceptions to this can be development which conforms with those set out in the NPPF as it relates to Green belt sites. The exceptions are detailed in NPPF paragraphs 108 and 154 (or whatever paragraph numbers are assigned to these provisions in future iterations of the NPPF). In any other case very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to justify inappropriate development where harm resulting from the proposal would need to be clearly outweighed by other considerations.





OBJECTIVE: TO IDENTIFY AND PROTECT LOCAL AREAS OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.

POLICY: EN1a OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The following areas are identified in Appendix 3b) as areas of open space and recreation under paragraphs 103 and 104 of the NPPF December 2024:

- **i The Cricket Ground, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!;**
- **ii Appledore Football Club Ground, Churchill Way;**
- **iii Bideford Blues and Appledore Junior FC Sports Complex.**

8.10 The NPPF recognises the importance to communities of access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity whilst providing wider benefits for nature and supporting efforts to address climate change. It notes that: 'Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.' The NPPF further states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land including playing fields should not be built on unless: either an assessment clearly shows that they are surplus to requirements or; that any loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location or; that the development in question is for alternative sports or recreational provision the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use. The relevant NPPF paragraphs are set out in Appendix 3b).

8.11 Policy EN1a) identifies open spaces, sports and recreational land considered of local importance and value and subject to the provisions of paragraphs 103 and 104 of the 2024 iteration of the NPPF (or whatever paragraph numbers are assigned to these provisions in future iterations of the NPPF). The list of sites in Policy EN1a) will be reviewed and if necessary amended as set out in paragraph 10.3.



TWO OBJECTIVES: TO PROTECT THE DISTINCT IDENTITY OF APPLEDORE, NORTHAM AND WESTWARD HO! (and)

TO PROTECT THE RURAL SETTING OF APPLEDORE, NORTHAM AND WESTWARD HO! AND THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA PROVIDED BY ITS COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LOCATION.

POLICY: EN2 PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER AND IDENTITY OF SETTLEMENTS

Development will be supported within the Local Gap shown in Map N1 in the following circumstances:

1. **Where it does not detract from the unspoilt character, appearance and tranquillity of the area;**
2. **Where it maintains and enhances the separate identities of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! and maintains their visual and physical separation;**
3. **Where it conserves, restores, or increases the extent of traditional hedge banks or hedgerow boundaries where appropriate in order to integrate the development with the rural character of the area;**
4. **Where it does not significantly harm the setting of Northam Burrows or the South West Coast Path;**
5. **Where, in appropriate circumstances, it provides safe and convenient access to the development by foot, bicycle, vehicle and public transport; and**
6. **Where it is required because it cannot reasonably be located outside the Local Gap.**

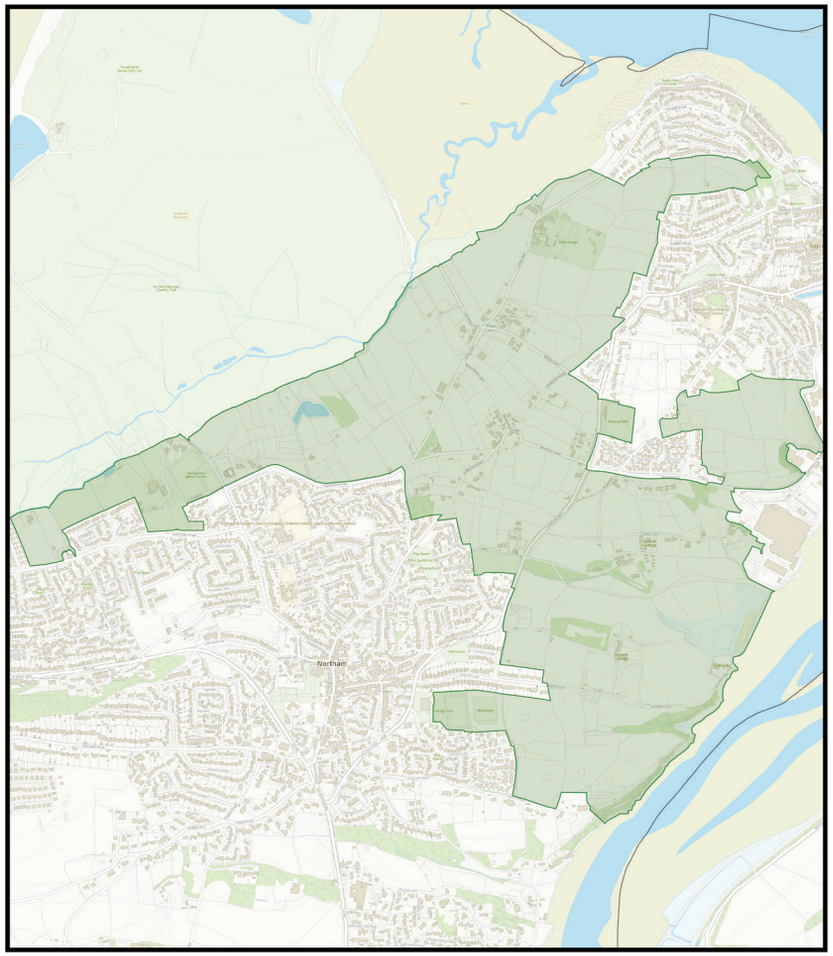
8.12 Historically the parish of Northam consists of three separate settlements, Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! Each settlement has a separate character, identity, and community. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement seeks to maintain and enhance the individual characteristics of the three settlements.

8.13 Over time the settlements of Northam and Westward Ho! have become largely conjoined. Appledore remains physically separate. The setting, identity, and distinctiveness of the three settlements are framed and protected by the area of countryside between Appledore and the largely conjoined settlements of Westward Ho! and Northam. This area is bounded in the north by the settlement development boundary of Appledore and in the south by the continuous settlement development boundaries of Westward Ho! and Northam.

8.14 Paragraph 10.348 of the NDAT Local Plan notes that the current forms of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! reflect the 'maintained desire to avoid coalescence between settlements' and, as set out in the Consultation Statement, this conclusion is strongly supported by consultation responses in 2019 and 2023 in favour of policies protecting this area. It is therefore considered that the rural area separating Appledore from the other two settlements is a 'valued landscape' under the relevant paragraph of the NPPF, this area, which is shaded green on Map N1 in Appendix 4, is designated as a 'Local Gap'. There have already been considerable pressures to build significant residential developments in this Local Gap and these have been resisted by both Town and District Councils and dismissed in several appeals. In the future there are likely to be further pressures which could result in the reduction or even the partial elimination of the Local Gap.



View from Northam of countryside between Northam and Appledore.



Map N1

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8.15 The rural landscape character of the Local Gap is identified in the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update as part of the Bideford Bay Coast Devon Character Area, and described as Landscape Character Type 5B Coastal Undulating Farmland. According to the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update the characteristic features of this landscape character type include:

- 'strongly rolling landscape with prominent ridges and hilltops, influenced by the close proximity of the sea.
- Pervading maritime influence with long coastal views, including to development at coastal settlements and to the north-west peninsula of the North Devon coastline.
- Linear bands of broadleaved woodland, occasional small mixed woods, ornamental parklands … combined with a strong network of hedges resulting in a well-treed appearance.
- 'dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and [clustered] villages/hamlets at road crossing points.
- Settlement and farms linked by a network of rural roads enclosed by high hedgebanks.
- Away from settlements, high levels of tranquillity are experienced with dark night skies.

The valued landscape attributes of Coastal Undulating Farmland are:

- Wide, uninterrupted sea views evoke a strong sense of openness.
- Strong field patterns (including medieval fields) with frequent crooked hedgerow trees provide a sense of time depth in the landscape.
- A working agricultural landscape of productive rolling farmland, with a strong rural character.
- Important coastal habitats valued for their nature conservation interest.
- The peaceful and tranquil qualities, with low levels of development.

All these features are readily identifiable in the landscape of the Local Gap and, in particular, the combination of long coastal views and less visible self-contained fields is considered to add interest and variety to this rural landscape.

8.16 Preservation of the rural character of the Local Gap is necessary to achieve the Plan's vision for sustainable development in social terms for its recreational value; in economic terms for its tourism value; and in environmental terms for its heritage assets and biodiversity. The Local Gap is of particular amenity value to residents and visitors because it is the only area of traditional Devon countryside easily accessible on foot or by bicycle from those settlements. For Appledore residents the Local Gap is the only area that meets the Accessible Green Infrastructure Standard of a sufficiently large neighbourhood-accessible natural green space within one kilometre of their homes as set out in the Green Infrastructure Framework (2023). The gap can be explored via a network of quiet lanes and Public Rights of Way (PRoW's), including the nationally important South West Coast Path. Appendix 9 provides details of the walking route/and associated quiet lane routes through the gap between Appledore and Northam/Westward Ho! (notably Long Lane/Appledore Road, Broad Lane and Wooda Road).[12]

8.17 With reference to the conservation of the rural character of the Local Gap, the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update Landscape guidelines include the following bullet points:

- Protect the landscape's high levels of tranquillity and dark night skies. Investigate opportunities to minimise light pollution from Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! which spills into the wider landscape.
- Protect the dispersed settlement pattern of the area, encouraging the sensitive location of new development (including farm buildings and tourism facilities) away from open skylines.

[12] **Natural England: Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles and Standards for England, (January 2023).**

8.18 The NDAT Local Plan identifies the entire area of the Local Gap between the settlement development boundaries of Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore as 'undeveloped' coast. Undeveloped Coast is the land within the coastal and estuarine area as defined by the NDAT Local Plan that is situated outside the Developed Coast as defined in the NDAT Local Plan Glossary. Strategic spatial policy ST09 (7) of the NDAT Local Plan states that development will be supported in the undeveloped coast 'where it does not detract from the unspoilt character, appearance and tranquillity of the area ... and it cannot reasonably be located outside the undeveloped coast and estuary.' Also relevant to the Local Gap between Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore is Policy NOR: Spatial vision and development strategy k) which states: 'Development to respect the landscape setting including the adjoining Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

8.19 As a spatial policy aimed at protecting the distinctive rural character of the area of undeveloped coast in the Local Gap, Policy EN2 supports and complements NDAT Local Plan policies ST09 (7) and NOR k), whilst providing local detail and value by adding provision for the protection of the traditional rural boundaries typical of the Local Gap; the setting of the South West Coast Path; and ensuring safe access to a site by walkers, cyclists and public transport.

8.20 The implementation of Policy EN2 clause 1 requires an assessment of the impact of a development proposal on a given area. This 'area' is the area of undeveloped land in which the unspoilt character, appearance, and tranquillity of the application site can be experienced. This 'area' will always include the site itself, and it may also include adjoining land within the undeveloped coast from which the proposed changes to the unspoilt characteristics of the application site may also be experienced. The assessment is purely concerned with whether the proposed development would detract from the existing unspoilt qualities and tranquillity of the assessed area and therefore the degree that these features have been impacted by any temporary uses or structures, or nearby existing or proposed development is irrelevant.



8. Environment and Heritage

8.21 NDAT Local Plan para. 10.355 states:
'Development that would contribute to coalescence between Northam and Appledore will be resisted to ensure the distinct identities of the respective settlements are maintained and in recognition of the value of the undeveloped coast which forms the countryside beyond the settlements' defined development boundaries.' To this end, NDAT Local Plan policy NOR h) seeks: 'avoidance of development that would contribute to coalescence between Appledore and Northam and the designated Green Wedge in Northam'. Policy EN2 is In conformity to Policy NOR h) in respect of the settlement development boundaries of Appledore and Northam, and adds local value and detail by Including the Westward Ho! settlement development boundary because it is continuous with the Northam settlement development boundary where the two settlements face Appledore.

8.22 Policy EN2 clause 2 seeks to maintain the separate identities of the settlements of Northam Parish by only supporting development where it does not reduce the physical separation of the settlement development boundary of Appledore and the continuous settlement development boundaries of Northam and Westward Ho! as viewed on a map; and where it does not reduce the visual separation of the settlements as seen when travelling between them, or from a given viewpoint located within or outside the area between the settlements Local Gap.

8.23 Assessment of the impact of a proposal on the visual separation of the settlements should also take into account the prominence of the proposed development, diminished rurality, diminished open-ness in the landscape, and the obscuration of wider or longer views of the Local Gap. This assessment should have regard for North Devon and Torridge JLA update or its successor documents.

8.24 Policy EN2 clause 3 has regard to the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update, which with reference to the rural character of Local Gap, seeks to: protect tranquillity and dark skies and; manage and protect the landscape's network of hedgebanks and characteristic wind-sculpted hedgerow trees, replanting ageing or diseased specimens (with climate hardy species of local provenance). Given the landscape value of hedgebanks in this area, any replacement earth bank should be of equivalent size to the earth bank it replaces.

8.25 With reference to Policy EN2 clause 4, proposals will be supported where they are sensitively located and designed in order to conserve and enhance the setting of Northam Burrows. Proposals that produce significant harm because they clearly detract from the special character and intrinsic beauty of the setting of Northam Burrows or the South West Coast Path will not be supported.

8.26 The provisions of Policy EN2 clause 5 are considered appropriate for residential and other forms of development that are intended to be publicly accessible. These provisions are not considered to be appropriate for proposals that do not generate a need for regular access or where specific forms of access such as tractors, or lorries are required. These provisions have regard to and conform to the proposals in the LCWIP outlined above and detailed in Appendix 9.

8.27 With reference to the area where a development proposal may reasonably be located, in Policy EN2 clause 6 the phrase 'outside the Local Gap' refers to the entire NDAT Local Plan area with the exception of the Local Gap as defined on Map N1.



OBJECTIVE: TO REDUCE LIGHT POLLUTION AND PRESERVE DARK SKIES IN THE GAP BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS.

Policy: EN3 Protecting Dark Skies and Reduce Light Pollution
Within the area defined on Map N1, proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, where external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution.

8.28 Since 2010 Devon County Council has implemented the Part Night Policy.[13] This policy allows for streetlights to be turned off for a period of five hours from approximately 12:30am each night. In addition, LED streetlights installed on the main roads have a stepped dimming profile, which reduces light levels in the late evenings and for much of the night. Although the data on dark skies in the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update dates from 2015, more recent and detailed data based on US satellite images on Google Earth (earth.google.com) demonstrates that the rural area of Diddywell west of the A386 has dark skies, whilst the rural area east of the A386 has dark skies typical of the area around rural settlements. In addition, informal observation on the ground, suggests that the enclosed nature of the landscape of the Local Gap blocks relatively distant light sources and produces localised dark skies in the fields.

8.29 Modern development in rural and undeveloped locations can result in considerably increased light spill into surrounding dark areas. As a result of light spill, developments may be highly visible from a distance. In addition when seen from elevated viewpoints after dark, light spill may cause modern developments in close proximity to appear as a single developed area. Such light spill can also limit views of the night sky typical of rural areas and harm biodiversity by reducing the ranges of nocturnal mammal and insect species that require dark habitats.

[13] **Devon County Council Street Lighting Service - Policy and Contract, Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste, (2019).**

8.30 The NPPF seeks to limit the impact of light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Policy EN3 adds local detail and value to the national policy by setting limits on light pollution from new development that would harm the dark skies intrinsic to the rural character of the area defined on Map N1. Where external lighting is required, proposals for development may protect the night sky from light pollution by considering the number and positioning of lamps; and in particular the use of shielding for brighter lamps, use of adaptive controls to limit periods of illumination, and avoiding brighter bluish lights. Further information and guidance is provided in 'Towards a Dark Sky Standard a lighting guide to protect dark skies from local need to landscape impact' v1.1. (UK Dark Skies Partnership) and its successor documents.



Dark skies adjoining Appledore settlement development boundary.

OBJECTIVE: TO PRESERVE SPECIFIED VIEWS OF COMMUNITY VALUE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PLACE, WELL-BEING AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN NORTHAM PARISH.

POLICY: EN4 PROTECTING VALUED VIEWS

1. Development will be supported where it does not detract from the character and appearance of the landscape and does not significantly harm the views identified on Map N3 (a) to (g) and detailed in Appendix 5. These viewpoints are:

- **i Pimpley Bridge, Northam Burrows looking north-east to Staddon Hill, Appledore and east towards Northam/Westward Ho!.**
- **ii Bone Hill, Northam looking north and north-east towards Appledore.**
- **iii Bidna Hill looking east and south-east along the South West Coast Path.**
- **iv Lookout Field, Staddon Hill, Appledore looking south-west towards Westward Ho!.**
- **v Windmill Lane, Northam, from the field access looking north and north-east in the direction of the ridge extending from Bidna to Diddywell.**
- **vi Village Green, Backfield, Appledore, looking north towards Blackies Wood.**
- **vii Staddon Road, Appledore, looking south-west towards Long Lane and Northam Burrows.**

8.31 The North Devon and Torridge JLA Update divides the Plan area between two Devon Character Areas: the Bideford Bay Coast and the Taw-Torridge Estuary. In both of these areas the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update identifies open views as distinctive features of the landscape. In the Bideford Bay Coast Devon Character Area the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update seeks to 'Protect the open vistas and important sea views, avoiding the location of new development and vertical structures on prominent skylines,' and in the Taw-Torridge Estuary Devon Character Area, the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update seeks to 'Protect the open character of the estuary and views from and to surrounding landscapes.'

8.32 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve sustainable development in social terms by enhancing community pride and identity and it is considered that an important way to achieve this aim is to preserve valued views. Policy EN4 seeks to achieve this aim by designating certain valued views and viewpoints, which have been identified through consultation, as set out in the Consultation Statement that accompanies this Plan. All the views listed in this Policy are accessible to the public. The detailed justification for retaining and protecting these views are set out in Appendix 5: Detailed Justification for Valued Views. Appendix 5 also contains maps and photo vistas of the views. Some of these views - such as Lookout Field, Staddon Hill, Appledore and Bone Hill, Northam are historic viewing points. They, like the other views detailed in this Policy, are of demonstrable value to the communities of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! and visiting tourists.

8.33 The NDAT Local Plan emphasises the importance of preserving views in numerous instances. Policy EN4 is consistent with these policies and supports the NPPF, which states that planning policy and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Policy EN4 has regard for SW-SCP-1 of the Seascape and landscape policy of the South West Marine Plan, which aims to manage significant adverse impacts on the seascape and landscape of the South West Marine Plan area. Policy EN4 also has regard for the recommendations in the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update for the protection of views noted in paragraph 8.31.

8.34 Policy EN4 supports development that does not detract from the character and appearance of the landscape and does not significantly harm the valued views listed in the policy. In this context the phrase ' the character and appearance of the landscape' (of a proposed development) refers to the environs of a given application site visible in the valued view. These environs include the built structures and/or natural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the valued view. Significant harm to a valued view will be determined on a case by case basis with all relevant factors considered, including how the character of the view would change; the extent to which the view would be obstructed and/or; the adverse impact on the aesthetic, special features or interest of the view as set out in Appendix 5.



8. Environment and Heritage

TWO OBJECTIVES: TO IDENTIFY NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS OF CONSIDERABLE LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ENABLE THEIR CONSERVATION UNDER NATIONAL POLICIES: (and)

TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT THAT RECOGNISES, CONSERVES AND ENHANCES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS.

POLICY: HE1 CONSERVATION OF HERITAGE ASSETS

1. The non-designated heritage assets listed in the Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (NPLLIHA) have considerable local significance. When considering proposals for development which may affect a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement has to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

2. Where a heritage asset listed in the NPLLIHA shows signs of neglect or deliberate damage, the harm done to the asset will be accorded no weight in any decision on its future.

3. Development proposals for sites where there is potential for effect on designated or non-designated heritage assets (including those heritage assets listed in the NPLLIHA) and their settings should be accompanied by proportionate heritage impact assessments. These should identify the significance of heritage assets, along with any potential archaeological remains, and the nature and degree of those effects, and demonstrate how any harm would be avoided, minimised or mitigated. Where appropriate, development should take opportunities within the setting of any heritage assets to better reveal their significance.

4. Proposals will be supported where:

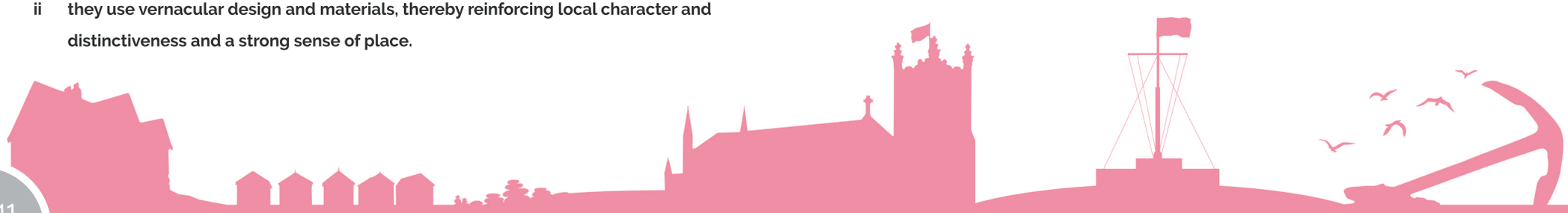
- **i they demonstrate increased opportunities for access, education, and public appreciation of the historic environment, or propose other viable uses for the asset consistent with its conservation.**
- **ii they use vernacular design and materials, thereby reinforcing local character and distinctiveness and a strong sense of place.**

8.35 The Parish of Northam has a rich heritage represented by numerous historic buildings, structures and sites of archaeological interest. Further information is set out in the Northam Parish Heritage Assessment, which is an evidence base document. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing heritage assets to achieve its general objective of achieving sustainable development in environmental terms. Such development additionally contributes to strong communities by ensuring links to the past and community pride, and offers economic tourism benefits.

8.36 For planning purposes all heritage assets may be divided into designated and non-designated heritage assets. In the parish of Northam, the National Heritage List of England contains seven scheduled monuments and approximately 161 listed historic buildings entries (some comprising multiple buildings) and other structures.[14] Of the listed buildings and structures, one is grade 1 and five are grade II*. These heritage assets include the scheduled Civil War fort at Riversmeet in Appledore and the grade II* listed Richmond Dry dock in Appledore. All the scheduled monuments, and historic buildings and structures at grade II* and above are listed in Appendix 1 of the Northam Parish Heritage Assessment. Of the remaining listed historic buildings and structures at grade II, 112 are located in Appledore, 41 in Northam, one in the countryside and one at Westward Ho! The vast majority of these listed buildings and structures are residential properties, however they include two phone boxes, three functioning places of worship, three memorials and some structures associated with RAF Northam.

8.37 The Parish of Northam also contains three conservation areas: Central Northam, Central and West Appledore, and East Appledore. The three conservation areas are mapped in Appendix 8. The North Devon and Torridge JLA Update includes these conservation areas amongst the special qualities and features of the Taw-Torridge Devon Character Area.

[14] **The National Heritage List of England is the official list of designated heritage assets in England. It is available at historicengland.org.uk.**



8. Environment and Heritage

8.38 The non-designated heritage assets in Northam Parish are listed in the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (hereinafter HER). There are over 300 of these heritage assets ranging in time from Mesolithic find spots to traces of Second World War coastal defences. They collectively form a physical record of the entire history of the area. The HER set outs independently reviewed evidence about these non-designated heritage assets, however there is no parish history of Northam to place the non-designated assets in their historical context. They are therefore vulnerable to development that could harm their significance and/or setting, and the historic environment of Northam Parish.

8.39 The NPPF states that in assessing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

8.40 Within Northam Parish selected non-designated heritage assets have been given a local designation through inclusion in the Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (hereinafter NPLLIHA). Each heritage asset in the NPLLIHA has been assessed to have at least considerable local significance. The scale of any harm or loss to the considerable local significance of a heritage asset listed in the NPLLIHA should be included in the balanced judgement required by the NPPF. [15]



Appledore Fort



Appledore Church

[15] **Non-designated heritage assets included in the NPLLIHA may additionally possess a degree of regional or national significance. Where applicable, this additional significance is set out in the NPLLIHA and it should be included in the balanced judgement required by the NPPF.**

8. Environment and Heritage

8.41 Each heritage asset in the NPLLIHA has been selected using the criteria detailed in Appendix 6 (which includes the standard Historic England criteria set out in the publication: 'Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage'). Criterion c) requires that the heritage asset must possess at least considerable local historical significance. The assessment of the historical significance of a candidate heritage asset for criterion c) is based on the independently reviewed historical evidence set out in the HER.

8.42 The five heritage assets currently listed in the NPLLIHA are described in Appendix 6, which includes an assessment of significance and detailed justifications for each heritage asset based on the selection criteria referred to in paragraph 8.41. The locations of the heritage assets are identified on maps N4(a) and (b).

8.43 Policy HE1 supports and adds local detail and value to NDAT Local Plan Policy ST015: Conserving Heritage Assets, which seeks to identify and protect locally important buildings that contribute to local character and identity.[16] Policy HE1 additionally supports NDAT Local Plan policies ST15 and DM07 in seeking to protect and enhance designated and non-designated historic sites.

8.44 Policy HE1 supports the Heritage Assets Policy of the South West Marine Plan, SW-HER-1, which aims to conserve and enhance marine and coastal heritage assets by considering the potential for harm to their significance. Like Policy HE1, Policy SW-HER-1 extends to non-designated assets that are or have the potential to become, significant. Policy HE1 also has regard for the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update which seeks to 'Protect (and sensitively restore if necessary) heritage features such as mills, limekilns and quays, providing low-key interpretation where appropriate.'

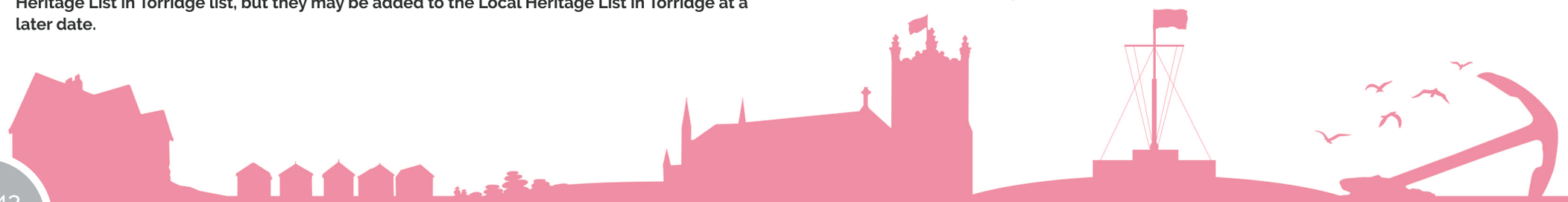
8.45 In order to reflect on-going historical and archaeological research, the NPLLIHA will be reviewed and if necessary, amended as set out in paragraph 10.3. It is intended that the on-going review process will stimulate continuing engagement in the Neighbourhood Plan by the community and heritage experts. At review, additional assets identified by historical research and/or archaeology as meeting the inclusion criteria may also be added to the NPLLIHA. At the same time heritage assets that have since received other protective designations may be removed from the NPLLIHA. When the NPLLIHA is reviewed, the List and all its maps and supporting information will be stored in a separate NPLLIHA document.

8.46 With reference to Clause 2 of Policy HE1 the phrase 'harm done to the asset' refers to harm done to the heritage asset deliberately or through neglect prior to any decision on its future.

8.47 Clause 3 of Policy HE1 seeks to ensure that where there is an application for development with potential to affect a designated or non-designated heritage asset (including assets listed in the NPLLIHA), the balanced judgement required by national policy tests is informed by a proportionate and comprehensive heritage impact assessment.

8.48 Clause 4 of Policy HE1 refers to all designated and non-designated heritage assets. Clause 4 is consistent with Policy DE1: Quality of Design and seeks to ensure that a development that impacts on a heritage asset respects local character and distinctiveness.

[16] **Torridge District Council holds a local list entitled 'The Local Heritage List in Torridge'. In 2024 the Local Heritage list in Torridge contained seven heritage assets in the Parish of Northam (four in Northam, two in Appledore, and one in Westward Ho!) All these heritage assets appear to be residential properties post-dating 1500. None of the NPLLIHA assets are included in the Local Heritage List in Torridge list, but they may be added to the Local Heritage List in Torridge at a later date.**



OBJECTIVE: TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE AREAS OF BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN CORRIDORS TO ENSURE THAT THE PARISH OF NORTHAM CONTINUES TO HAVE A SPECIES-RICH AND DIVERSE RANGE OF FLORA AND FAUNA.

POLICY: EN5 PROTECTION OF GREEN CORRIDORS AND BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT

Development proposals will be supported where:

- **i if adjacent to or within primary green corridors as defined on Maps N5(a), N5(b), N5(c), N5(d) and N5(e) they maintain and enhance the corridors' function and demonstrate measures to secure connectivity of the corridor, thus supporting continued free movement of species through the site;**
- **ii biodiversity net gain is provided in accordance with national policy, and including such features as mature trees, hedgerows, hedge banks and areas of woodland. The net gain in biodiversity will be achieved by an agreed, enforceable and monitored Management Plan with the applicant specifying what is to be protected and enhanced;**
- **iii they conserve, protect, and enhance non-statutory and undesignated wildlife areas as listed in Appendix 7; and**
- **iv they incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs), where appropriate, to not only minimise flood risk but to increase biodiversity on the site.**

8.49 The Parish of Northam is home to a rich and diverse range of habitats, wild plant and animal species. The biodiversity of this area is shown by the Wildlife Site Resource Map for Northam,[17] which identifies much of the undeveloped land adjoining the Burrows and the River Torridge as a Strategic Nature Area. The statutory areas of wildlife significance include the Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering the Northam Burrows and the Taw-Torridge Estuary, and the Local Nature Reserve in Kenwith Valley. The non-statutory areas comprise four County Wildlife Sites, four Strategic Nature Areas and ten Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites. The Wildlife Site Resource Map document also lists 51 development control species and 70 other legally protected and notable species observed in the Parish.

8.50 The different types of habitat land in Northam Parish are mapped in the NDAT Local Plan. More detailed information on habitats in the Plan area is set out in the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update, which may be summarised as follows:

- In the Taw-Torridge Estuary Devon Character Area (including Northam Burrows, the seashore, and the shoreline of the River Torridge, there are extensive areas of active sand dunes and maritime grasslands on both sides of the estuary, framing a rich diversity of estuarine habitats including saltmarsh, sand spits, lagoons and reclaimed farmland. These areas have high biodiversity interest, supporting major populations of migrating and overwintering wading birds, fish (including sea trout and salmon), and rare plants and flowers. Northam Burrows is a Site of Scientific Special Interest and part of the North Devon Coast National Landscape.

- In the remainder of Northam Parish, semi-natural habitats include the rocky foreshore, wooded and heathy cliffs, pockets of unimproved grassland and marshland. Coastal locations include patches of maritime grassland, wet flushes and bracken scrub. In the area characterised by coastal undulating farmland, the area's network of woodlands and hedges, unimproved species-rich grassland and scrub interspersed within the farmland provide nature conservation interest.

[17] **Further details are given in the Wildlife Site Resource Map and species information for neighbourhood planning – Northam (Devon Biodiversity Record Centre). The Wildlife Resource Map is an evidence base document.**

8. Environment and Heritage

8.51 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is an important component in achieving sustainable development in environmental terms. However, notwithstanding the biodiversity and rich ecology of Northam Parish, the relatively high population density and the loss and fragmentation of natural habitats caused by new and allocated development sites are considered to offer significant threats to biodiversity. Problems of note include the loss of saltmarsh in the Torridge Estuary, threats to valuable scrub habitat, fragmentation of habitats, which reduces the resilience of ecosystems, and pressure for development along the coastline. These issues have been noted in ecological reports relating to development applications in the Plan area.[18]

8.52 Policy EN5 has regard for and supports the recommendations in the Wildlife Resource Map – Northam, in particular the aim to protect the statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites identified in the document; and to retain, restore and where necessary recreate habitat linkages between wildlife sites. In order to achieve this latter aim, Policy EN5 identifies a network of primary green corridors in the Plan area, which provide the connectivity to enable wildlife to travel between habitat sites and thereby increase biodiversity. These primary green corridors are identified on Maps N5 a), N5 b), N5 c), N5 d) and N5 e) in Appendix 7. Appendix 7 also lists the non-statutory designated wildlife sites referenced in the Wildlife Resource Map – Northam, and Policy EN5 clause iii.

8.53 The Government is committed to halting the decline in biodiversity in the UK, and there is a duty for public authorities under legislation such as (Town and Country Planning (Trees) regulation 1999 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). The NPPF requires the planning system to contribute to minimise impacts on biodiversity and where possible to provide a net gain. A minimum 10% biodiversity net gain became part of the NDAT Local Plan for larger sites from January 2024 and smaller sites from April 2024. The 2021 Environment Act also seeks to set a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain as an automatic condition on nearly all planning proposals.

8.54 With reference to Policy EN5 clause ii., in accord with national policy and guidance the first preference is always that biodiversity net gain should be provided on-site to preserve and enhance the existing species habitats and networks in the local area; nonetheless, where this is not always possible national policy allows for other forms of mitigation.

8.55 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan supports green infrastructure within developments that promote biodiversity whilst incorporating sustainable urban drainage schemes. In addition new water or wet features such as rain gardens or the opening up of previously culverted areas may further promote biodiversity gain and mitigate flood risks.

8.56 Policy EN5 conforms to national policy and seeks to protect, maintain, and increase a diversity of native plant and animal species in their varied habitats and green corridors that exist in the Plan area. Policy EN5 therefore supports and provides local value and detail to NDAT Local Plan Policy ST14: Enhancing Environmental Assets. Torridge District Council also supports the North Devon Biosphere Natural Capital Strategy and Nature Recovery Pledge. Policy EN5 also has regard for the biodiversity policies SW-BIO-1,2,3 of the South West Marine Plan. These policies support proposals that enhance the distribution of priority habitats and priority species, enhance or facilitate native species or habitat adaptation or connectivity and that conserve, restore or enhance coastal habitats, where important in their own right and/or for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services.

[18] **Appendix to Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. For example, John Day: Ecology Report, Planning Appeal No.: APP/W1145/A/14/2224155, April 2015).**

OBJECTIVE: TO INCREASE THE CONNECTIVITY OF SETTLEMENTS AND REDUCE POLLUTION BY THE PROTECTION, ENHANCEMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW ATTRACTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE WALKING AND CYCLING NETWORKS FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO ENJOY.

POLICY: TR2 CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

1. Major residential and economic development proposals will be supported on the following basis:

i The provision of safe, accessible and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes, providing permeability through the site and connectivity to the wider community.

ii they incorporate public cycle parking facilities where appropriate.

2. Proposals to upgrade or extend existing footpaths and cycleways will be supported as included in the Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan [LCWIP].

3. Support will be provided to the creation of a traffic separated pedestrian and cycle route leading from Heywood Road to the Torridge Bridge and on to the Tarka Trail.

8.57 The Government want walking and cycling to become the norm for short journeys by 2040. To this end numerous policies in the NPPF and the NDAT Local Plan 2011-31 require developers to provide good linking pedestrian and cycle routes to and from developments. Policy TR2 is consistent with these polices and has regard to the North Devon and Torridge JLA Update which seeks to: 'Plan for the expansion of nearby settlements (Westward Ho!, Northam, Appledore and Bideford), incorporating green infrastructure links to contribute to nature recovery networks and provide sustainable opportunities for travel, access and recreation.'

8.58 In 2020 the Government introduced an Active Travel strategy and offered financial incentives and other forms of support. Survey results show that the impact of cars in the NNP area is of great concern, leading to traffic congestion and pollution, including carbon emissions impacting on global warming, and it is accepted that walking and cycling would help to reduce those impacts. Following on from the Government strategy, Devon County Council engaged consultants in 2021 to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam.[19] The LCWIP contains numerous proposals for upgrading and improving identified walking and cycling routes in the area. Northam Town Council is one of the local authorities that supports this project. The LCWIP proposals were adopted by Devon County Council in January 2024. Policy TR2 has regard for and is consistent with the routes for Northam Parish as set out in Appendix 9.



[19] **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2022.**

8.59 Northam Parish has an extensive network of PRoW and quiet lanes suitable for walking, although many of the PRoW's are very muddy in wet weather and at some points difficult to access for people with diminished mobility. To achieve the Northam Neighbourhood Plan's vision of greater connectivity between the settlements of Northam Parish, Policy TR2 seeks to improve, upgrade, and extend the network of footpaths and cycleways. The Plan recognises the value of these routes in achieving sustainable development in social terms by promoting recreational walking and cycling; in environmental terms by enabling sustainable transport; and in economic terms as sustainable tourism assets. With reference to Policy TR2 clause 1, the term 'major development' is as defined in the NDAT Local Plan Glossary.



8.60 In addition to the routes within Northam Parish, the Plan supports proposals for a dedicated cycle and pedestrian route separated from traffic from Heywood Road to the A39 Torridge Bridge, with cyclists wheeling bicycles along the pavement across the bridge before the cycle and pedestrian routes continue to the Tarka Trail. Informal consultation with local pedestrians and cyclists has established that this route would be safer than expecting pedestrians and cyclists to walk along the hard shoulder of the A361 and create their own unmarked routes from the A361 to the Tarka Trail.

8.61 To help reduce the use of cars and carbon emissions, to encourage walking and cycling for exercise and to provide links to public transport and main settlements, the routes provided for pedestrians and cyclists should be laid out and designed to be as direct as practicable in relation to local facilities, and bus stops. They should accommodate conveniently and safely the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists likely to use the routes, minimising the hazards associated with vehicular traffic. Within a housing development, to help enhance its visual attractiveness, space for planting should be provided along the routes, which should use the easiest practicable gradients (considering the special needs of people whose mobility is impaired). In the Northam Town Council Climate Emergency Survey (Appendix 10), 'promote cycle/pedestrian routes' came third in the list of actions that respondents wanted the Town Council to take on climate change.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

9



NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

9. Sustainable Economic Development

OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW LOCALLY FOCUSED BUSINESS IN SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS.

POLICY: ED1 BUSINESS

1. Within development boundaries economic development will be supported in the following order of preference:

- **i On brownfield sites;**
- **ii Elsewhere within the development boundary if it has been clearly demonstrated that no brownfield sites are appropriate.**

2. Outside development boundaries and the Appledore Employment Zone, small-scale proposals for business enterprises that require a rural location will be supported providing that: an economic need is demonstrated which cannot reasonably be met within development boundaries.

9.1 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises that the provision of local employment opportunities is crucial to achieving its over-arching objective of achieving sustainable development in economic terms. This development will be environmentally sustainable, and create well-paid jobs for residents, without harming the distinctive character of the three settlements.

9.2 Sustainable economic development will support a thriving community and minimise the number of people who must take long journeys to work. There is a need to increase well-paid and quality employment opportunities across all sectors in the Plan area. This would reduce the need to travel for work, thus helping to reduce pollution and traffic congestion.

9.3 The Plan will therefore seek to encourage business and employment development to secure a prosperous economic future by supporting and encouraging more business start-up development to broaden the economic base. There is a shortage of modern employment sites, with good connection to high-speed broadband. This is essential in supporting local job opportunities.

9.4 NDAT Local Plan Policy ST11: Delivering Employment and Economic Growth supports growth and training in a flexible and locally responsive fashion. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan provides local support and focus for Policy ST11 by supporting existing businesses and encouraging the establishment of new businesses in appropriate locations. A prime aim is to enable residents to work in the area, including from their homes. Therefore within areas where residential development is normally permitted, proposals for new-build live-work units will be supported provided they are supported by robust evidence of business demand and likely on-going business need for such units.

9.5 The Plan seeks to support the reinvigoration of maritime and coastal business, including the fishing industry, hospitality, aquaculture, ship and boat building and repair, tourism, community business hubs and workspaces, agriculture and rural business, and camping and caravan sites.

9.6 It is also the intention of Policy ED1 to ensure that any future business development respects the sensitive landscape setting of Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! and its heritage assets, community spirit and distinct sense of place between those settlements. Therefore, the most sustainable location for economic development is within settlement development boundaries. The brownfield sites referenced clause 1 i. are those sites listed on Torridge District Council Brownfield Land Register. Outside settlement development boundaries and the Appledore Employment Zone, Policy ED1 supports small-scale proposals for economic development that require rural locations such as farm diversification schemes. In the Local Gap between settlements defined on Map N1, Polices ED1 and ED2 are consistent with and are intended to work alongside Policies EN2 and EN3.



OBJECTIVE: TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE PUBLIC CAR PARKING PROVISION.

POLICY: TR3 PUBLIC CAR PARKING

1. Proposals for alternative uses of public car and motorcycle parking spaces serving the three centres will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the loss of any such spaces would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of that centre as a retail, service, and visitor destination.

2. Support will be given to improving the quality of public parking in the centres so that it is convenient, safe, secure, and available for short-stay use to protect the vitality and viability of the centres as retail, service, and visitor destinations.

3. Proposals for the development or redevelopment of any privately owned or controlled car parks within the centres will only be acceptable where they will not result in additional on-street parking or reliance on public car parking provision.

4. Proposals to improve the availability of a public electric vehicle charging infrastructure in existing car parks will be supported.

9.7 The 'three centres' referred to Policy TR3 are Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! Public car parks are available in all three centres.

9.8 Current car parking provision is mostly in public ownership across the Plan area, though some private car parking areas do exist. The old centres of Northam and Appledore were laid out before cars. This causes problems for residents and visitors alike, with some roads so narrow that parking restrictions are in place on both sides. In both Appledore and Northam, the main retail and service centres are the same areas. The public car parks close to each centre are Bone Hill in Northam; and Odun Road, Churchfields and Appledore Long Stay in Appledore. All these car parks see significant numbers of day-long and overnight users, limiting access for quick trips to the commercial centres. In Westward Ho!, the village centre and seafront are more modern in layout and served by several car parks, two public and one private.

9.9 National and local planning policy seeks to promote sustainable transport modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. It seeks to move away from the use of private cars to help tackle climate change, pollution, and congestion. (It is notable that only Churchfields car park in Appledore provides publicly accessible electric vehicle (hereinafter EV) charge points.) However, many residents, visitors and tourists will continue to rely upon use of the private car to get around. The ambition to grow the three centres as retail, service and visitor destinations therefore requires adequate, accessible, convenient, safe, and secure car parking provision.

9.10 The responses to the initial consultation questionnaire, and the initial and pre-submission consultation questionnaires issued for the Plan identified the provision of car parking across the Neighbourhood Plan area as an important issue, and residents identified on-street parking as a barrier to effective pedestrian access to the centres (further details are provided in the Consultation Statement).

9.11 In order to improve the vitality and viability of the centres as retail and service destinations, Policy TR3 seeks to ensure that the number of car parking spaces serving those centres should be safeguarded. Policy TR3 also supports additional public parking provision on brownfield and other under-used sites, although these should be within settlement development boundaries. Combined with efficient public transport, a two-stage approach of improving sustainable travel linkages to the centres and safeguarding existing car parks will help to support the role and function of these centres.



9. Sustainable Economic Development

OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT NEW, EXPANDED OR ENHANCED TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND ACCOMMODATION IN SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS.

POLICY: ED2 TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND ACCOMMODATION.

1. Within the defined settlement development boundaries, proposals for sustainable tourism attractions, leisure developments, a diverse range of new tourist accommodation, and associated tourism facilities and services will be supported where they do not detract from the character of the area or affect protected landscapes, residential amenity, environmental or heritage assets.

2. Within the area defined on Map N1 only proposals which provide for the expansion of existing tourism attractions or tourism accommodation will be supported provided that:

- **i they cannot reasonably be located outside the area defined on Map N1; and**
- **ii in the case of tourism accommodation, they are for the reuse or conversion of existing buildings; and**
- **iii proposals comply with NDAT Local Plan policy DM17.**

3. Outside the defined settlement development boundaries and the area defined on Map N1, only proposals for small scale tourism attractions or tourism accommodation that respect the rural character of the area will be supported provided that:

- **i they cannot reasonably be located within settlement development boundaries; and**
- **ii proposals comply with NDAT Local Plan policies DM17 and DM18.**

9.12 Tourism is a major employer and economic driver for the local economy of Northam Parish. In Westward Ho! tourism activity centres on Westward Ho! beach, its vibrant village centre, and the Burrows Country Park and Visitor Centre. In Appledore tourism activity centres on the heritage assets of central Appledore and its quayside. Recreational walking occurs in the undeveloped coast between the settlements and on Northam Burrows. The estuary attracts visitors for recreational activities such as fishing, wind surfing and yachting.

9.13 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of tourism to achieving sustainable economic development that maintains and enhances the individual characteristics of each settlement. When providing sustainable tourism, it is essential that development is delivered without detriment to the environmental and heritage assets that make the area attractive to visitors.

9.14 Policy ED2 therefore seeks to manage pressures for tourism development by guiding development towards sustainable rather than unsustainable locations. In this regard the Policy identifies three different areas each with its own NDAT Local Plan policy context. These are: the area within settlement development boundaries; the Local Gap between settlements and shaded green on Map N1; and the remainder of the open countryside beyond settlement development boundaries.

9.15 In adopting different principles to guide tourism development in each of these three areas, Policy ED2 has regard to and is intended to work alongside NDAT Local Plan policies DM17 and DM18.

9.16 Within settlement development boundaries, sustainable tourism, offering high-quality year-round provision of accommodation and attractions is crucial. The intention of Policy ED2 is therefore to protect, enhance and support the existing tourism facilities, as well as attracting new ones, ensuring the provision of modern holiday accommodation and year-round facilities in the area.



9. Sustainable Economic Development

9.17 In the Local Gap between settlements shaded green on Map N1, Policy ED2 is consistent with and is intended to work alongside policies EN2 and EN3 in supporting proposals for the small scale expansion, or the rationalisation of existing tourism attractions provided they comply with these policies and NDAT Local Plan Policy ST09. Policy ED2 does not support new-build tourism accommodation development in the Local Gap between settlements because neither the Northam Neighbourhood Plan nor the NDAT Local Plan (at paragraph 4.53) regards this area as a sustainable location for such development. The term 'small-scale economic development' is defined in the Glossary of this Plan.[20]

9.18 Policy ED2 has regard to the tourism and recreation policy SW-TR-1 of the South West Inshore Maritime Plan, which supports proposals that promote or facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation activities, or that create appropriate opportunities to expand or diversify the current use of facilities.



[20] **In support of NDAT Local Plan spatial strategic policy ST09: Coast and Estuary Strategy, para 4.53 states:**
'4.53 ... There are pressures for new tourist accommodation, including caravan and camping sites. New tourist accommodation should help to improve the quality and range of accommodation types available. The most sustainable location for them is within the main coastal resorts and other towns and villages where key services and facilities are available, in order to reduce the need to travel by car .... Tourism accommodation, which does not utilise existing buildings, should be located outside the Undeveloped Coast. Desire for proximity to the coast and estuary is inadequate justification for new tourism accommodation being located in the Undeveloped Coast.'

OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RICHMOND DOCK, APPLEDORE FOR MARITIME-RELATED PURPOSES OR SMALL BUSINESS USE.

POLICY: HE2 RICHMOND DOCK

Redevelopment of Richmond Dock will be supported for maritime-related or small business use provided that:

- **i the integrity of the structure and setting are retained; and**
- **ii the dry dock remains capable of its original use, with sufficient vehicular access and clear working space; and**
- **iii the construction methods do not adversely impact on the historic structure and setting.**

9.19 Richmond Dock is a prominent site in the centre of Appledore. The local and national importance of this site is recognised with a Grade II* listing. However, despite its great contribution to the character and identity of Appledore, this historic dock has been neglected and is in a state of disrepair. Over the past 40 years there have been numerous applications to build housing on the site, and one Planning Appeal in 2011 (APP/W1145/ E/11/2144897).

9.20 Any proposal for redevelopment of Richmond Dock should have regard for the historical significance of the site, its value to the community of Appledore and the complexity of the issues affecting development of the site'. These include:

- The site's Grade II* listed status.
- The site is located within the Coastal Change Management Area and the flood zone.
- The site is located adjoining the North Devon Biosphere Reserve and Taw-Torridge Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- The site's strategic economic importance as one of the few dry docks on the Bristol Channel capable of use for ships.
- The potential adverse impact of development on the two adjacent conservation areas.
- The potential conflict with NDAT Local Plan Policy DM01 caused by the adverse impact in terms of pollution and traffic of some industrial maritime uses on the amenity of residents.
- The likelihood of significant archaeological remains of dock buildings, historic shipbuilding and other maritime activities.

These issues make imperative a locally focused site-specific policy in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan.



9. Sustainable Economic Development

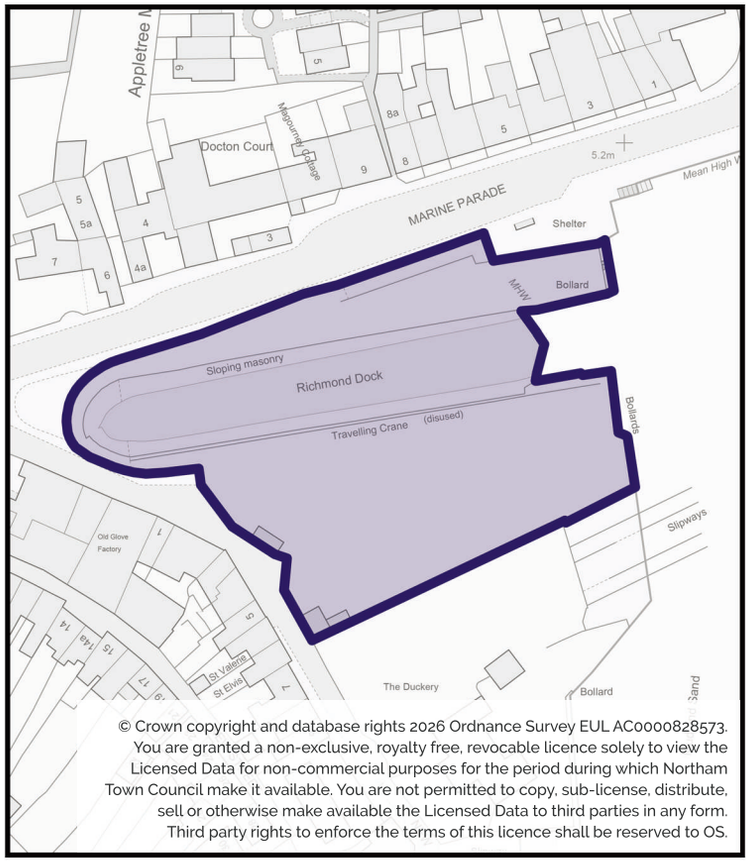
9.21 The vision and objectives of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan are to help to build strong, responsive, and competitive economies in each of the three settlements by supporting the expansion of existing business and the emergence of new locally focused businesses. Policy HE2 seeks to do this in Appledore through the re-development of Richmond Dock for maritime or small business uses in a fashion that retains the structure and setting of the historic dry dock. This policy supports the NDAT Local Plan Spatial Vision for Northam which states that 'Appledore will develop further as 'a centre for maritime activities'.

9.22 The maritime uses described in Policy HE2 may include ship or small boat work. It may also include uses relating to maritime heritage. The maritime and small business uses are not mutually exclusive and may be combined in a single redevelopment proposal. However, proposals should demonstrate how they would limit or mitigate any adverse impact on the amenity of residents of the adjoining areas of Appledore or on the existing flood defences on the site.

9.23 To maintain Richmond Dock's strategic economic importance, Policy HE2 requires that proposals ensure that the Dock remains capable of its original function. Furthermore developer contributions will be required from any renovation or development works at the site to ensure the future maintenance of the curtilage walls, dry dock, and dry dock gate mechanisms. Policy HE2 is therefore consistent with the ports, harbours and shipping policy SW-PS-1 of the South West Inshore Maritime Plan, which supports sustainable port and harbour development in line with the National Policy Statement for Ports and aims to ensure that proposals do not restrict current port or harbour activity, or future growth.

9.24 The dock is sited on reclaimed land, and it is likely that any large-scale construction on the site will involve the excavation of material and possibly deep-piled foundations. Policy HE2 provides for the protection of the historic dock and the historic buildings surrounding the site from structural damage caused by building work or on-going activities on the site.

9.25 Policy HE2 also seeks to protect the significance and setting of these surrounding historic buildings. Therefore, any changes to the retaining wall and any internal structures should not detrimentally affect views of, and sight lines between the adjacent conservation areas.



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MAP OF RICHMOND DOCK (POLICY HE2)

OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT PROPOSALS FOR ECONOMIC MARITIME-RELATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE APPLEDORE EMPLOYMENT ZONE

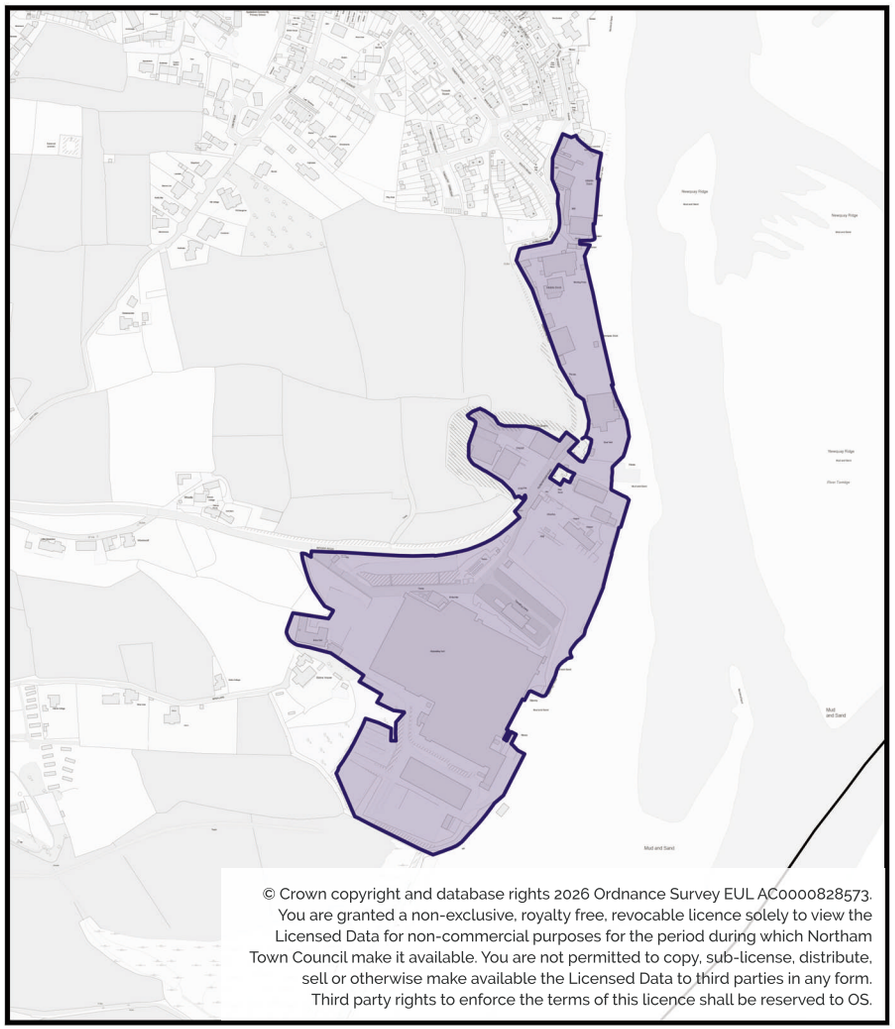
POLICY: ED3 APPLEDORE EMPLOYMENT ZONE

Within the employment zone defined on Map N6, employment development will be supported, particularly where it requires a coastal location, subject to the following criteria being met:

- **i the design, massing and materials used on any building does not harm the setting of Tapeley Park, or the character of the Undeveloped Coast; and**
- **ii any development proposal must include traffic and transport assessments, detailing measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the highway network.**

9.26 The Appledore Employment Zone is shaded in blue on Map N6 and includes Appledore Shipyard, the Fish Dock, the sand and gravel dock and Middle Dock. The responses to the initial and pre-submission consultation questionnaires demonstrate that local support for the continued use of Appledore Shipyard for shipbuilding was very high. Appledore Shipyard is designated as maritime-related employment land in the NDAT Local Plan. The Appledore Employment Zone extends to include two Mineral Safeguarding Areas in this case relating to minerals infrastructure and transportation. Accordingly, proposals should have regard for policy M2 of the Devon Minerals Plan and seek advice from Devon County Council as the relevant Minerals Planning Authority.

9.27 The Vision and Objectives of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan are to build strong, responsive, and competitive economies in each of the three settlements by supporting the expansion of existing business and the emergence of new locally focused businesses, including maritime employment opportunities in Appledore Shipyard and the Appledore Employment Zone. In order to achieve this outcome maritime economic development proposals will be particularly supported within the Appledore Economic Zone.



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Map N6 Appledore Employment Zone

9. Sustainable Economic Development

9.28 Policy ED3 supports NDAT Local Plan Policy NOR Northam Spatial Vision and Development Strategy section (d), which states: 'employment will be supported by safeguarding and developing upon important economic resources, significantly in relation to Appledore Shipyard, port facilities and tourism assets'; NDAT Local Plan Policy ST09 clause 2 in support of maritime-related development; and NDAT Local Plan Policy DM13, which seeks to retain designated employment land. Policy ED3 also has regard for the employment policy SW-EMP-1 of the South West Marine Plan, which supports proposals that result in a net increase in marine related employment.

9.29 Proposals for redevelopment within the Appledore Employment Zone could be for small business units or larger-scale redevelopment to maximise maritime-related employment and economic maritime development in area.

9.30 The docks and slipways within the Appledore Employment Zone are strategic economic resources, and redevelopment proposals should ensure that they remain capable of their original function with sufficient working space to enable future use for ship-related work when required. Policy ED3 is therefore consistent with the ports, harbours and shipping policy SW-PS-1 of the South West Inshore Maritime Plan, which supports sustainable port and harbour development in line with the National Policy Statement for Ports and aims to ensure that proposals do not restrict current port or harbour activity, or future growth.

9.31 Any redevelopment in the Appledore Employment Zone would need to take account of its prominent riverside position. It is highly visible from the east side of the River Torridge and impacts on the setting of listed Tapeley House and grounds. The zone also adjoins the Taw-Torridge Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve.

9.32 Any economic redevelopment of the Appledore Employment Zone would need to limit or mitigate possible adverse effects on the amenity of residents who may be affected by noise or environmental pollution, including the impact of any increased traffic flows onto Newquay Street, Wooda Road, Churchill Way and Heywood Road.



IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

10



NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

10. Implementation And Monitoring

10.1 When the Northam Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan for the area, its policy provisions will be considered alongside the relevant policies of the NDAT Local Plan, when development proposals located in the Parish of Northam are subject to consideration.

10.2 The Plan will be a public document displayed on the Northam Town Council website and Torridge District Council Planning Portal. As a reference document it will serve as a justification for all Town Council planning consultation advice.

10.3 As part of its Annual Review and Report, the Town Council will monitor its planning application recommendations against District approval decisions in order to evaluate and reflect on how each of the Neighbourhood Planning policies are achieving the stated objectives of the Plan. At this time changes may be made to the Plan including changes to the list of local areas of open space and recreation under Policy EN1a): Open Space and Recreation; and changes to the Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (NPLLIHA) under Policy HE1: Conservation of Heritage Assets.

10.4 Where necessary, the Plan will be subject to future reviews, particularly if there are significant changes to national policies (notably the NPPF), and District Council polices. In addition once five years have passed the Town Council will conduct a review to establish whether the policies should be changed or revised. The review will the conducted sooner if in consequence of its annual monitoring of planning application recommendations it appears to the Town Council that the Neighbourhood Plan policies are having unintended consequences that are detrimental to the objectives of the Plan. Such changes and revisions will follow the process of consultation and inspection as required under the test of meeting the basic conditions of the Plan to be adopted.



Glossary

Affordable Housing – housing for purchase or rent provided for households whose needs are not being met by the local housing market and defined as 'Affordable housing' in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (or any subsequent revised definition provided through updated national planning policy or guidance).

Amenity - quality or character of an area or its elements that contribute to the overall enjoyment of that area.

Asset of Community Value (ACV) - land or buildings with a main current or recent use that furthers the social wellbeing and interests of the local community, meets the requirements of the 2011 Localism Act, and is registered with a Local Planning Authority as an Asset of Community Value.

Biodiversity – the variety of living species including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms in the world.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – an approach to development land and marine management introduced through the Environment Act 2021 that leaves the site in question in a measurably better state than before development took place.

Brownfield Site – previously developed land as defined by the NPPF that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation ground and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Coalescence - the merging or coming together of separate towns or villages to form a single entity.

Community facility - a building or space accessible to members of the public that provides social, cultural or recreational services: for example, play spaces, public toilets, schools, libraries, local shops, healthcare facilities, places of worship, meeting halls, public houses, sports facilities and public open spaces.

Community Land Trust - a democratic, non-profit organisation that owns and develops land for the benefit of the community.

Community Value – see Section 88 of the Localism Act 2011.

Coastal and Estuarine Zone – term used in NDAT Local Plan for the extent of the area adjoining the coastline and Taw-Torridge estuary with a broadly coastal and estuarine landscape character extending inland to the A39, A361 and A3123 and upstream to the normal tidal limit.

Dark Skies – dark night skies without light pollution from sky glow. Dark skies contribute to the unspoilt character and tranquillity of the Local Gap between Appledore and Northam/ Westward Ho!

Developed Coast – term used in NDAT Local Plan for areas within the Coastal and Estuarine Zone with a predominantly developed character, which are the areas within settlement development boundaries as identified on the Policies Map; the principal built form and sites allocated for development in defined Settlements without settlement development boundaries; rural settlements; defence estate sites; and large previously developed sites or those parts of sites with a substantial level of permanent structures such as sewage treatment works and the developed part of static caravan sites.



Glossary

Economic Development – development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (excluding housing development).

Green Corridor - a strip of land that acts as a bridge for separated habitat populations of animals and plants. By enabling animal movements and the transfer of seeds, green corridors contribute to biodiversity and the genetic diversity of individual species populations.

Green Growth and Sustainable Development – fostering economic growth and development, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies (OECD).

Green Infrastructure – a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which can deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments and private gardens

Heritage Asset – a building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. It includes designated and non-designated heritage assets including heritage assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Infill – development of a small gap in an otherwise developed frontage between two existing buildings and sufficient to accommodate a maximum of three dwellings at a sensible density.

Local Gap – spatial planning tool to define and maintain the separate identity of settlements. Designation of a local gap does not refer to landscape quality or character.

Local Green Space – an open area of local significance which is demonstrably special to a local community because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity and/or the richness of its wildlife, as defined by the NPPF.

Net Zero Carbon - the zero balance achieved when the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere matches the amount of carbon removed from it..

Residential Amenity - those elements of amenity particularly relevant to the living conditions of a dwelling.

Rural Settlement - a small, closely grouped cluster of housing that contains at least one identified local service or community facility.

Small-Scale Economic Development - development for employment or commercial purposes of a scale not exceeding 250 square metres gross external floor area or a site area of 0.1 hectares.

Social Rented Accommodation - accommodation that meets all the defining conditions for social rent set out in the NNPF as follows: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Undeveloped Coast - term used in the NDAT Local Plan for the area within the Coastal and Estuarine Zone that is outside the Developed Coast.





NORTHAM

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2024-2031