

## PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE NNP 2023

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## **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 (hereinafter NDAT 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, and 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. The Plan will be subject to a six-week consultation followed by an examination, and if it achieves a positive outcome it will be subject to a local referendum. Thank you all for your continued support.

Cllr. (add name), Mayor of Northam Town Council.

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 Figure 1. The Qualifying Body for which in respect of neighbourhood planning is Northam Town Council and the total population of the area is approximately 12,300 residents.

Neighbourhood Plan; the Civil Parish of Northam.

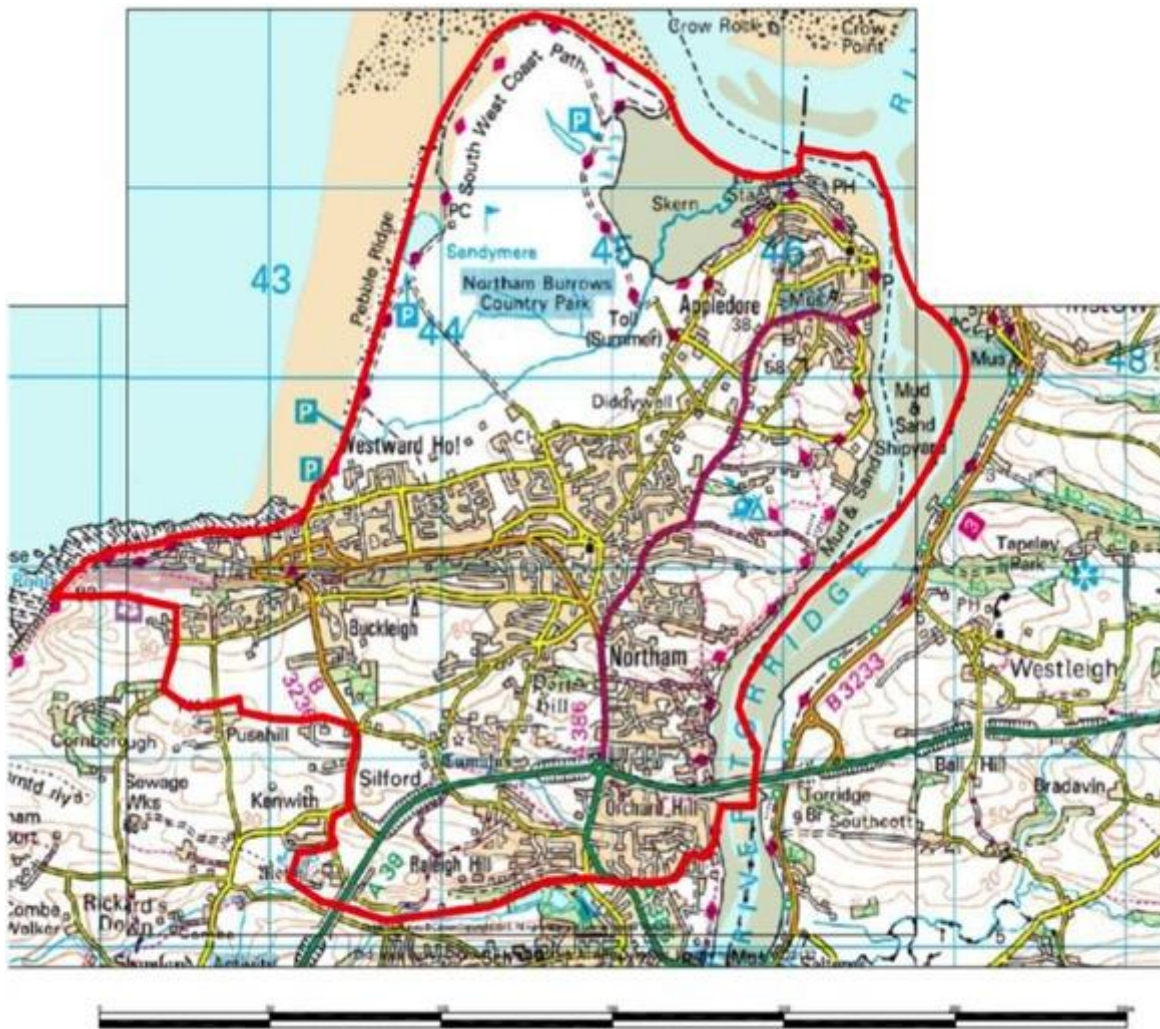


Figure 1: Northam Neighbourhood Plan 'Plan Area'

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.) (editorial note – add footnote to the 2021 Census data first returns for Northam Parish also please update if a more exact figure is available.) 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 the 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.

Figure 3: Northam Burrows signage (Torridge District Council 2022)

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 Torrington 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 Torrington District

	Northam Parish	Torrington District
Density of population (persons per km <sup>2</sup> )*	771	69
Households in deprivation in at least one dimension as defined by ONS (Office of National Statistics).**	54%	53.9%

\*Torrington Ward profiles 2022.

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



### **3. Planning Policy Context**

#### **HOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FITS INTO THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

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.

3.3 A Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with strategic local planning policies set out in the local development plan and the Government's wider policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (hereinafter NPPF).

3.4 The Plan, once made, in conjunction with the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031) (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.

3.5 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 1990, 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'.

3.6 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, in consultation with prescribed consultees determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required (editorial note add footnote reference to the TDC SEA Screening

report), as is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement. In addition the District Council determined that a Habitat Regulations Assessment was not required, as is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement.

### **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. How the Plan has regard to the NPPF is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement.

3.8 The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; 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.

- a. In outline, the spatial vision sets out how the settlements of Northam, Westward Ho! and
- b. Appledore will develop. The spatial development strategy sets out a plan for:
- c. The provision of a minimum of 1,916 new dwellings to meet the communities housing needs, together with associated infrastructure.
- d. New site allocations to provide approximately 1,740 dwellings.
- e. Urban extensions to the south of Westward Ho! and Northam to accommodate approximately 1,240 dwellings and infrastructure.
- f. Safeguarding and developing important economic assets - Appledore shipyard, port facilities and tourism assets.
- g. To capitalise on Assisted Area Status to deliver economic growth.
- h. Support development in Westward Ho! to contribute to its role as a coastal resort and extend the tourism season.
- i. Supporting development on Northam Burrows that improves the visitor offer.

- j. Avoid development that contributes to coalescence between Appledore and Northam, and the designated 'green wedge' south of Northam.
- k. Provision of social, community, recreation, sports, and educational facilities to support new development.
- l. Development to meet its own infrastructure needs, in sustainable travel, road improvements. Sea defences needed in Westward Ho! to combat climate change.
- m. Development to respect the landscape setting including the adjoining Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### **SUMMARY**

3.11 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat national or local policies but, where appropriate, to add local detail 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.



## **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 neighbourhood area that will be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan; the Civil Parish of Northam (see Figure 1).

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 Consultation Statement that accompanies the Plan, provides 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 (re-named the Northam Neighbourhood Advisory Group in 2019).
- September 2017 – Initial engagement questionnaire 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 4.9).

- 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 - an informal review of Plan by Torridge District Council resulted in modifications to the objectives and policies.
- 11th March and 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.
- 2019-2021 – the Advisory Group revised the objectives and policies in respect of 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. In addition, the consultation engaged with a range of prescribed consultees and 82 local businesses and community stakeholder groups. Independent consultants undertook a health-check on the Plan and made numerous suggestions.

4.6 Following the pre-submission consultation, all comments received by the Town Council were reviewed and, as considered necessary, changes were made to the Plan. Following finalisation, the submission Northam Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Torridge District Council. The District Council will then undertake a six-week consultation on the draft Plan. An independent examiner will be appointed to examine the draft Plan to ensure it accords with the ‘basic conditions’.

4.7 The examination will generally be conducted by means of written representations; oral hearings will not normally be required to ensure a neighbourhood plan is adequately examined. The examiner will issue a report to the District Council and Town Council. The report will state if he/she is minded to recommend that the draft Plan should proceed to referendum.

4.8 The final stage towards achieving a neighbourhood plan is the referendum. The District Council will hold a referendum on the Plan, where all persons entitled to vote in a local election for the area will be entitled to participate. If the majority of those who vote in the referendum are in favour of the draft Plan, the District Council will give the Plan legal force, at which point the Plan would form part of the development plan for the area. With development plan status, the Plan, along with the NDAT Local Plan, will be the first consideration in decision making on planning applications in the parish of Northam.

## **THEMES AND ASPIRATIONS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

4.9 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.

## 5. Northam Neighbourhood Plan – Its Vision and Objectives

### 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 and seeks to apply the principles of social, economic and environmental 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.

*\*Sustainable development has been defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations of future generations to meet their own needs.'*

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 at appendix 9. For more information, scan the QR code or visit the Council's website at [www.northamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://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 Maritime Employment Zone. Sustainable tourism will be encouraged by the provision and enhancement of tourism facilities, green infrastructure, walking and cycling routes.



Figure 5: an example of the signage at the borders of the parish.

## **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**

- 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) The design of development should reflect and respect the character of the local built and natural environment.**
- 7) The design of development should seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy.**
- 8) Community-scale renewable energy production schemes will be supported.**
- 9) In new dwellings parking for cars and bicycles will be provided in proportion to the number of bedrooms.**
- 10) Provision for public and private electric charging points in new developments will be supported.**

### **Environment and Heritage**

- 11) To improve, protect and enhance valued local green spaces.**
- 12) To protect the distinct identities and rural setting of the settlements.**
- 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 preserve specified landscape views and vistas of community value to maintain a sense of place, well-being and community identity in Northam Parish.**

- 15) To protect and enhance buildings and places of heritage and community value, ensuring that the Parish of Northam retains its rich historic environment and sense of place.**
- 16) 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.**
- 17) 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**

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



## **LIST OF NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES**

**POLICY**

**PAGE**

### **COMMUNITY:**

**CF1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **HOUSING:**

**HO1 SIZE OF DWELLINGS**

**HO2 NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**HO3 NEW, REDEVELOPED AND REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS**

**HO4 QUALITY OF DESIGN**

**HO5 ENERGY CONSERVATION AND CARBON REDUCTION**

**TR1 RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROVISION**

### **ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE:**

**EN1 LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

**EN2 PROTECTING THE GAP BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS**

**EN3 PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER**

**EN4 PROTECTING VALUED VIEWS**

**HE1 PROTECTION OF HERITAGE ASSETS**

**EN5 PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY**

**TR2 CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES**

### **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

**ED1 BUSINESS**

**TR3 PUBLIC CAR PARKING**

**ED2 TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND ACCOMMODATION**

**HE2 RICHMOND DOCK**

**ED3 APPLEDORE MARITIME EMPLOYMENT ZONE**

## **6. COMMUNITY**

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

### **POLICY: CF1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**1. Proposals for new development 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 listed in Appendix 1; 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 several community buildings and locations that provide venues for activities and functions. The community facilities are listed in Appendix 1. A range of local community and interest groups use each facility. Except for Northam Hall, these facilities are in the ownership of either charitable bodies, community organisations or local faith groups. These facilities will be supported to provide enhanced services and opportunities for all residents and businesses of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.2 These assets 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 additional community hubs to provide services across the settlements of Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho!

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 Community Hubs should be protected from loss through the planning process where there is evidence of on-going demand and community value. Northam Town Council may seek their listing as 'Assets of Community Value' 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 Indoor and outdoor facilities, providing locations for activities and creative pursuits accessible to local people are spread across the Neighbourhood Plan area. The opportunity for formal and informal, structured, or less structured activities is more limited for people in full time education and of working age.

6.7 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 Neighbourhood Plan to support proposals for business development and start-ups that directly benefit young people through Policy ED1: Business.

## 7. HOUSING

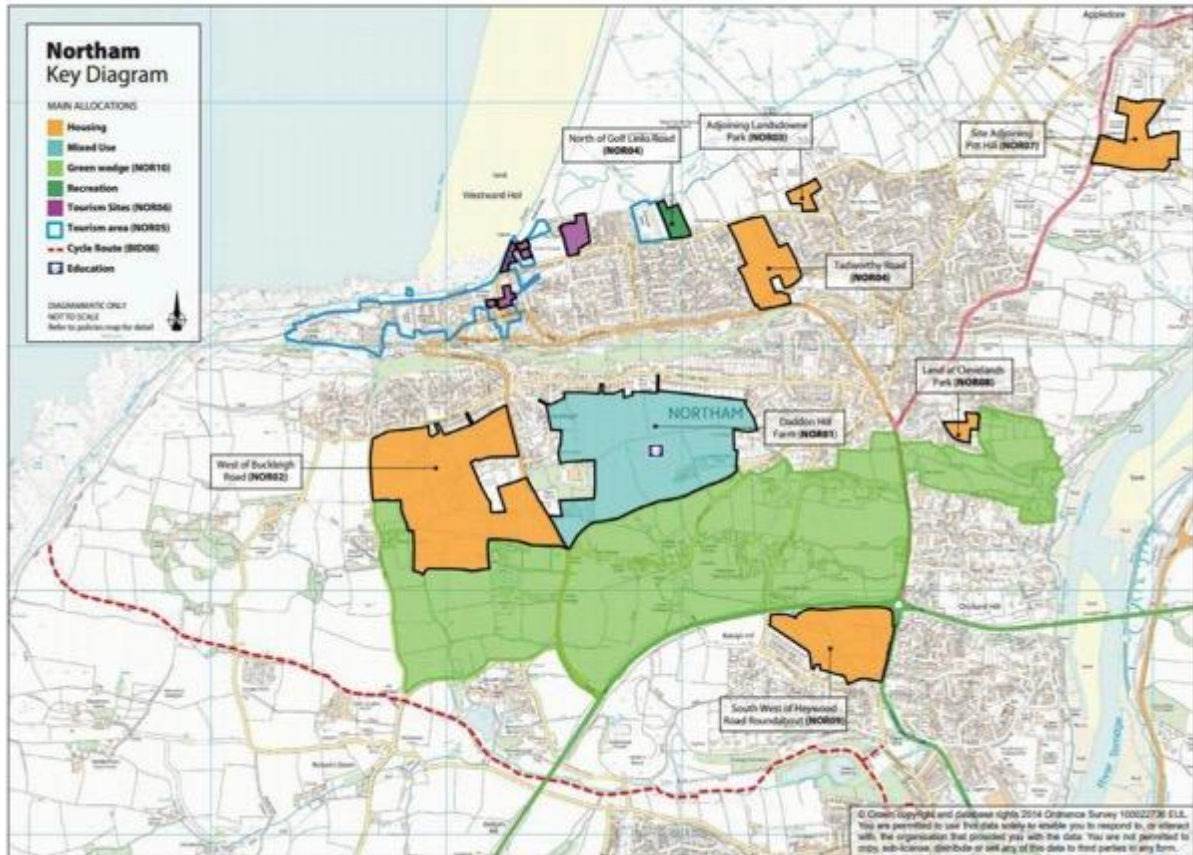


Figure 6: Northam Development Areas as identified in the North Devon and Torrington Local Plan 2031

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.

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, and to create a strong sense of place.

**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. The provision of one or two bedroom dwellings will be supported.**

**2. New dwellings will be supported where they are designed to be accessible and adaptable and to cater for the changing needs of occupants over their lifetime.**

7.3 Policy HO1 supports proposals for one or two bedroom dwellings that meet the proven local need for more smaller dwellings. Such dwellings benefit their occupants by being cheaper to buy/rent and maintain.

7.4 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 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.

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 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 Accessible and Adaptable dwellings are defined in The Building Regulations Document M as an optional standard M4(2). The use of this standard is supported in a footnote to NPPF130. (editorial note add footnotes to the Building Regulations Document M and NPPF130.)

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.

(footnote to Devon Home Choice Policy Document (Devon Home Choice Policy v11.1 effective from 1st April 2023))

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.

## **Affordable Housing**

### **OBJECTIVE: TO MAXIMISE THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

#### **POLICY: HO2 NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- 1. Proposals will be supported for the re-use for affordable housing of empty or derelict buildings, infill plots and new builds within development boundaries. The tenure mix of such developments is expected to reflect local needs.**
- 2. If, in a development of ten dwellings or more, the return provided for in a viability assessment is exceeded and an additional financial contribution is paid to the Local Planning Authority, such payment will be regarded as an overage and will be spent on the provision of additional affordable housing in Northam Parish.**
- 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 for Council Tax in Northam Parish. (editorial add footnote: Torridge District Council figures 21.6.23) Table 8 of Appendix 2 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 ONS figures show that the ratio between median earnings and median house prices has increased in Torrington from 9.8 in 2018 to 10.2 in 2022.

7.14 Appendix 2 Table 7 demonstrates that the prices of most types of dwelling are higher in Northam Parish than in Torrington District. These higher prices may in part reflect demand for dwellings in Appledore and Westward Ho! from in-comers 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.

7.15 In NDAT Local Plan strategic policy ST18: Affordable Housing on Development Sites, the expectation is that for proposals of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total number will comprise affordable housing. However, the NDAT Local Plan, reflecting national planning policy, enables schemes to come forward with a reduced proportion of affordable housing subject to viability considerations.

7.16 In 2022 Torrington District Council adopted a supplementary planning document on affordable housing, which sets out policy on viability assessments in developments exceeding 100 dwellings. Policy HO2 supports this document and in recognising the locally greater shortage of affordable housing in Northam Parish, extends its provision to developments exceeding ten dwellings.

7.17 Since policy HO2 supports and strengthens NDAT Local Plan Policy ST18 and the North Devon and Torrington Local Plan 2011-2031 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, 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.

7.18 The definition of 'affordable housing' in Policy HO2 is that set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF, and the required tenure mix set out in the NDAT Local Plan.

7.19 To ensure that viability assessments are fair they will be subject to independent review and when considered by the Local Planning Authority they should relate to current market conditions. It is recognised that market conditions may alter during the lifetime of the consent and during site construction and, if the site comes forward and on multi-phased schemes, it may be appropriate for a viability review.



7.20 If the return provided for in the viability assessment is exceeded, then an additional financial contribution towards affordable housing shall be paid to the Local Planning Authority in accordance with a formula set out in a developer obligation attached to the planning permission.

7.21 In 2023 28.6% of households on Torridge District were in private or social rented accommodation compared to 26.4% households in Northam Parish. Since the proportion of households in rented accommodation in Northam Parish and Torridge District are similar, demand for affordable rented accommodation is likely to be broadly similar.

7.22 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**

#### **1. Residential development will be supported where:**

- i private and public amenity space is provided to ensure usable outdoor space which creates a healthy environment meeting the needs of the occupants; and**
- ii overlooking of neighbouring properties and gardens detrimental to residential amenity is avoided; and**
- iii an increase in height over any replaced building is consistent with the height and form of neighbouring properties, fits unobtrusively with the character of the street scene and safeguards the amenity of residents of adjacent buildings.**

7.23 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, etc. and may be used to grow vegetables or improve biodiversity.

7.24 Garden space should not be reduced to a point where it is out of scale or fails to meet the present and future occupiers need for adequate useable private amenity

space. All residential properties require some in-curtilage private open space, usually to the rear, compatible with the overall size of the plot, for normal domestic activities, such as, bin storage, clothes drying, sitting out and play space. This space should enjoy a high degree of privacy from the public street and from any other public places and will be considered having regard to national guidance.

7.25 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.

## **Housing Quality**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD REFLECT AND RESPECT THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

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

### **POLICY: HO4 QUALITY OF DESIGN**

**1. Development will be supported where it reflects local character and context; creates a strong sense of place; and includes design of an environmentally friendly nature where it:**

- i incorporates the use of and re-use of traditional materials and low ecological impact materials and techniques;**
- ii 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;**
- iii has a minimum of one bat box, one bee brick and one nesting box or cup per dwelling and all fencing includes hedgehog gaps.**

**2. Development will be supported where it avoids flood zones and coastal change management areas. Where these cannot be avoided a robust justification should be provided with the proposal.**

**3. 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.**

**4. Residential development will be supported where household refuse storage space is externally accessible from the front of the house and is accessible from the kitchen without having to go through a living room.**

7.26 One of the most important features of any new development should be the quality of design. Policy HO4 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 and 2019 consultation questionnaires 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.

7.30 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.

7.31 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.

7.32 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.

## **Buildings, Energy Conservation and Carbon Reduction**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SEEK TO MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE TRANSITION TO A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY. COMMUNITY-SCALE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION SCHEMES WILL BE SUPPORTED.**

**POLICY: HO5 ENERGY CONSERVATION AND CARBON REDUCTION**

- 1. Development will be supported which delivers net zero carbon dwellings.**
- 2. Development of new dwellings and other buildings will be supported where:**
  - i it is sited and orientated to benefit from solar gain;**
  - ii rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling systems and water efficiency measures, which reduce demand, are incorporated;**
  - iii it has access to sustainable transport options.**
- 3. 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. Proposals should be accompanied by an independent assessment of their siting, scale and setting in the landscape and impact on biodiversity.**

7.33 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 in the NPPF and in the NDAT Local Plan. However, 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.

7.34 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.

7.35 Water saving and the efficient use of water are priorities given predictions of more drought emergencies in the future due to climate change.

7.36 The Town Council has declared a Climate Emergency with the aim of securing net zero carbon emissions area parish activities by 2030. Policy HO5 is designed to help achieve the aims of the Town Council carbon reduction plan.

7.37 The renewable energy systems referred to clause 3 of this policy may include solar panels, micro-wind generation or such new technologies as and when they become available.

7.38 Community scale energy systems may vary in ownership, size or location but they are designed to benefit a local community from their outcomes. 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.

## **Residential Parking**

**OBJECTIVES: IN NEW DWELLINGS PARKING FOR CARS AND BICYCLES WILL BE PROVIDED IN PROPORTION TO THE NUMBER OF BEDROOMS. PROVISION FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE SUPPORTED.**

### **POLICY: TR1 RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROVISION**

**1. Development will be supported where residential off-street parking provision, designed to meet the anticipated needs of residents and visitors, is well integrated and accessible to encourage maximum usage.**

**2. Residential off-street parking will be supported where it is**

**i based on the following minimum levels per dwelling:**

**1 bedroom dwellings – 1 space**

**2 bedroom dwellings – 2 spaces**

**3 bedroom dwellings – 2 spaces**

**4 bedroom dwellings – 3 spaces**

**Developments of four or more dwellings provide one further car parking space per four dwelling units; and**

**ii it incorporates provision of vehicle charging points.**

7.39 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. In the responses received to all three consultation 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.

7.40 The main objective in making provision for parking is to enhance the visual character of the development by ensuring that cars and bicycles are an unobtrusive part of the scene through the appropriate location, layout, and detailed design of the parking spaces.

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

7.42 Policy TR1 sets numerical standards for the provision of car and cycle parking in new development to reduce the use of cars and conserve land by providing no more than the minimum number of vehicle parking spaces required to meet future demands, and to encourage cycling, by providing enough bicycle parking spaces to meet future demands. The need for more spaces will be based on the views of the Highway Authority.

7.43 To help make parking provision visually unobtrusive the layout of the development should be designed to make building plots wide enough and deep enough to plant trees and shrubs to soften the visual impact of in-curtilage parking provision located in front of the building line. 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.

7.44 Development with lower off-street parking provision may be considered acceptable where the type of residential development proposed is likely to generate less demand, with proposed levels of parking unlikely to increase demand for parking in the surrounding area or where sufficient capacity or alternative public car parking provision is available. Examples include development proposals such as sheltered accommodation and/or development in the centre of the main settlements.

7.45 The provision of cycle storage facilities may be private or communal. Where communal cycle storage facilities are provided, they should be preferably covered from the weather, and providing one space per bedroom for each dwelling and one space per five dwellings for visitors' bicycles.

## **8. 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 AONB, including Northam Burrows; the countryside between Appledore and the partly conjoined settlements of Northam and Westward Ho! and the largely unspoilt banks of the River Torridge outside development boundaries. The heritage assets include the scheduled Civil War fort at Riversmeet in Appledore and grade II\* listed Richmond Dry dock in Appledore, and almost 150 listed buildings or structures, many of which are in conservation areas in the historic centres of Appledore and Northam (Appendix 8). Further details are provided in the Northam Parish Heritage Assessment, which is an evidence base document.

8.2 The environmental and heritage assets provide an environmental, social, and economic basis for sustainable development of communities. 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 three consultation questionnaires issued for this Plan (further details are given in the Consultation Statement).

8.3 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 located to benefit from their proximity to the environmental and heritage assets. This type of development can have an adverse effect 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.

8.4 To achieve sustainable development regarding environmental and heritage assets, the Northam Neighbourhood Plan will support relevant policies of the NDAT Local Plan through policies that focus on issues and sites relating to Northam Parish. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan will thereby manage and guide development to sustainable locations; it will protect and enhance valued assets, and mitigate any adverse effects of development on these assets.



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

### **POLICY: EN1 LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

1. Local Green Spaces are designated in the following locations, as defined in Appendix 3:
  - i Rectory Gardens, Fore Street, Northam
  - ii Allotments South of Marshford, Churchill Way, Northam
  - iii Land known as Blackies, Torridge Road, Appledore
  - iv The Cricket Ground, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!
  - v Humpty-Dumpty Field, Great Burrow Rise, Northam
  - vi Westward Ho! Park, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!
  - vii Escarpment Woodland between Bay View Road and Atlantic Way
  
  - viii Anchor Park, Appledore
  - ix Village Green, The Backfield, Appledore
  - x Hillcliff Gardens, Irsha Street, Appledore
  - xi Tors View, off Cornborough Drive, Westward Ho!
  - xii The village green, Westward Ho!
  - xiii Appledore Football Club Ground, Churchill Way
  - xiv Bideford Blues Junior FC Sports Complex
  - xv Burrough Farm, Northam
2. Development within a Local Green Space will only be supported where:
  - i it preserves the openness of the Local Green Space; and
  - ii it does not harm the purposes for its designation as set out in Appendix 3; or very special circumstances are demonstrated that justify the development.

8.5 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 richness of its wildlife. By designating land as a Local Green Space, communities will be able to prevent inappropriate development.

8.6 Within the Parish of Northam fifteen sites are designated as Local Green Spaces. Each of these sites has been assessed and found to meet the criteria in the NPPF 101-102 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. (editorial note – add footnote to NPPF paras 101-102) Appendix 3 provides details of the designated Local Green Spaces and how they meet the selection criteria set out in the NPPF. Appendix 3 also lists the purposes for designating each of the Local Green Spaces.

8.7 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.

8.8 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 policies for managing development within green belts are set out in the NPPF 147-151). 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 PROTECT THE DISTINCT IDENTITIES AND RURAL SETTING OF THE SETTLEMENTS**

### **POLICY: EN2 PROTECTING THE GAP BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS**

**1. Within the area shown on Map N1 development will be supported provided it does not contribute to coalescence between any of the development boundaries of the settlements of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho!**

8.9 Historically the parish of Northam consisted of three separate settlements, Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! Each settlement has its own character, identity, and community. Over time, development has resulted in coalescence and today the built forms of Northam and Westward Ho! are largely conjoined. Appledore, however, remains physically separate. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement seeks to maintain and enhance the individual characteristics of the communities of Northam Parish

8.10 The setting, identity, and distinctiveness of Appledore and Northam are framed and protected by the area of countryside between them. This area is bounded to the west by the coast and Northam Burrows, and to the east by the River Torridge. It is roughly 1.5 km (0.93 miles) from east to west and at its narrowest point (along the line of the A386) the gap between the built forms of Northam and Appledore is approximately 400 metres.

8.11 The relatively small green gap between Appledore and the partly conjoined settlements of Northam and Westward Ho! is of particular amenity value to residents and visitors alike because it is the only area of traditional Devon countryside easily accessible on foot or by bicycle from those settlements and it can be explored via a network of quiet lanes and Public Right of Ways (PRoW's), including the nationally

important South West Coast Path. 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 this conclusion is strongly supported by consultation responses in 2019 and 2023 in favour of policies protecting this area. It is therefore considered that this area is a valued landscape under the NPPF.

8.12 Despite its amenity value and sensitivity, the area has been seriously reduced by development and there is continuing pressure to develop this area further. As the gap is diminished by development it becomes increasingly sensitive to incremental coalescence. In the future new development risks uniting the settlements of Northam and Appledore and removing their separate identities. For these reasons development in this area that contributes to incremental coalescence is regarded as unsustainable.

(editorial note include artwork of burrows from above from v.3.5 here)

8.13 The 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, the NDAT Local Plan provides a range of protections to maintain the distinct settlements within the Parish of Northam, including a Green Wedge to the south of Northam and a strategic objective (Policy NOR h) that seeks to avoid coalescence between Northam and Appledore. NDAT Policy ST09 also sets development limitations within the Undeveloped Coast.

8.14 Policy EN2 (together with policies EN3 and ED1) conform to these NDAT Local Plan policies and will work alongside them in seeking to enable development that is considered appropriately located beyond the defined development boundaries whilst safeguarding the integrity and rural setting of the three settlements. In order to ensure this outcome and to maintain the Northam Neighbourhood Plan's overarching objective of achieving sustainable development, Policy EN2 enlarges the area protected against the process of incremental coalescence from the area between Appledore and Northam to the entire area outside the development boundary of Appledore and extending to the conjoined development boundaries of Northam/Westward Ho! (The area in which Policy EN2 applies is the area shaded green on Map N1. A larger copy of this map is reproduced in Appendix 4.)

8.15 The application of Policy EN2 requires a site-specific judgement of the extent to which a proposal contributes to spatial and perceptual coalescence. This judgement

is necessary irrespective of the location of the proposal in relation to a development boundary.

8.16 Spatial coalescence can be measured as the extent to which a proposal site diminishes the distance or area between the development boundaries of settlements. Also relevant is the impact of the development in terms of its scale, density, massing, height, layout and appearance.

8.17 Perceptual coalescence is the extent to which the incremental coalescence resulting from a proposal would be evident to an observer travelling between the settlements and as seen from other viewpoints. A number of criteria are relevant in assessing perceptual coalescence. These criteria include the prominence of the proposed development, diminished rurality, diminished open-ness in the landscape, and the obscuration of wider or longer views of the rural gap.

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

**POLICY: EN3 PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER**

**1. Within the area shown on Map N2 development will be supported provided that:**

**it does not detract from the unspoilt character and appearance, dark skies and tranquillity of the area;**

- i it conserves, restores, or adds traditional earth banks or hedgerows as boundaries, with the use of native broadleaf tree and hedgerow species, to integrate the development with the rural character of the area;**
- ii it does not harm the setting of Northam Burrows or the South West Coast Path;**
- iii there is safe convenient access to the development by foot, bicycle, vehicle and public transport; and**
- iv it is required because it cannot reasonably be located outside the area defined on Map N1.**

8.18 The rural landscape character of the area between the development boundaries of Appledore and the conjoined boundaries of Northam and Westward Ho! is described in the Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon and Torridge Councils as Landscape Character Type 5B Coastal Undulating Farmland. The most important features of this landscape type include:

- 'strongly rolling landscape with prominent ridges and hilltops, heavily influenced by underlying geology'.
- 'pervading maritime influence and long coastal views'.

- 'linear bands of woodland' and a 'strong network of hedges' produce 'a well-treed appearance' of this landscape.
- 'dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and [clustered villages] and hamlets, a main road, and urban and recreational uses in the landscape'.

8.19 All these features are visible in the landscape between Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore. Although the Joint Landscape Character Assessment dates from 2010, the landscape character of this area has not changed since then. This combination of long coastal views and less visible self-contained fields is considered to add interest and variety to the rural landscape.

8.20 Although the Joint Landscape Assessment does not note dark skies between Northam/ Westward Ho! and Appledore, since 2010 Devon County Council has implemented the Part Night Policy. This policy allows for streetlights to be turned off for a period of five hours from approximately 12:30am each night. In addition, LEDs installed on the main roads have a stepped dimming profile, which reduces light levels in the late evenings and for much of the night. 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 does indeed have dark skies whilst the rural area east of the A386 has dark skies typical of the area around rural settlements. (editorial note insert footnote to: Data available at <https://earth.google.com/web/> ) In addition, informal observation on the ground, suggests that the enclosed nature of the landscape blocks relatively distant light sources and produces localised dark skies in the fields.

8.21 Preservation of the rural character of the area between Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore 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.

8.22 The NDAT Local Plan identifies the coastal and estuarine zone (CEZ) of North Devon and Torridge districts, which divides this zone into the 'developed' and 'undeveloped' coast. The undeveloped coast is the land in the CEZ without a significant level of permanent structures, and this includes the area between Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore. Strategic spatial policy ST09 (7) 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.'

8.23 Policy EN3 is a spatial policy aimed at protecting the distinctive rural character of the area between Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore. Policy EN3 therefore supports NDAT Local Plan Policy ST09 (7), whilst providing a local focus on the issues affecting the area between Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore by adding

provision for the protection of the dark skies, traditional rural boundaries typical of this area, and the setting of the North Devon Coast AONB and the South West Coast Path. The Policy also seeks to encourage sustainable travel options for development in this area.

8.24 The implementation of Policy EN3 (i) requires an assessment of the impact on a development proposal on a given area. This 'area' is the area of undeveloped land in which the unspoilt character, appearance, dark skies 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 changes to the unspoilt characteristics of the application site may also be experienced. The assessment is purely concerned with whether a proposed development would detract from the existing unspoilt qualities, dark skies and tranquillity of the assessed area, and therefore the degree that these features have been impacted by nearby existing or proposed development is irrelevant.

8.25 Whilst Policy EN3 (ii) supports the provision of traditional boundaries, it should be noted that such provision or other landscaping will not overcome the situation where the proposal would detract from the existing unspoilt qualities, dark skies and tranquillity of the assessed area or it could reasonably be located outside the area.

**OBJECTIVE: TO PRESERVE SPECIFIED VIEWS OF COMMUNITY VALUE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PLACE, WELLBEING 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 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-west towards Appledore.**
- iii Bidna Hill looking east and south-east along the South West Coast Path.**
- iv Lookout Field, Staddon Hill, Appledore looking southwest 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.**

8.25 The Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon and Torridge Districts divides the rural area of Northam Parish into two landscape character types: 4F Dunes and 5B Coastal Undulating Farmland. The Assessment identifies Northam Burrows as Landscape 4F and the remaining area of the parish outside the settlements as Landscape 5B. The Assessment also noted the long coastal views created by Landscape Character Type 5B. (In fact there are long estuarine and rural views in Northam Parish too.)

8.26 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.

8.27 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.

8.28 The NDAT Local Plan also emphasises the importance of preserving views in numerous instances and Policy EN4 supports NPPF 170 (a), which states that planning policy and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

8.29 Policy EN4 supports development that does not detract from the character and appearance of the environment and does not harm the valued views listed in the policy. In this context the phrase 'character and appearance of the environment' (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.



## Local Heritage Assets

**OBJECTIVE: TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE BUILDINGS AND PLACES OF HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY VALUE, ENSURING THAT THE PARISH OF NORTHAM RETAINS ITS RICH HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND SENSE OF PLACE.**

### **POLICY: HE1 PROTECTION OF HERITAGE ASSETS**

**1. Significant weight will be given to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets listed in the Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (NPLLIHA). Development which impacts upon a heritage asset listed in the NPLLIHA will be supported providing:**

- i it conserves and enhances the archaeology and/or fabric, setting, and significance of the heritage asset, and;**
- ii proposals 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.**

**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 which impact on heritage assets will be supported where they use vernacular design and materials, thereby reinforcing local character and distinctiveness and a strong sense of place.**

8.30 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing heritage assets to achieve its over-arching 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.

8.31 The Parish of Northam has a rich heritage represented by numerous historic buildings, structures and sites of archaeological interest. For planning purposes all these heritage assets may be divided into designated and non-designated heritage assets. The Northam Parish Heritage Assessment is an evidence base document that provides a general overview of Northam's heritage, its heritage assets, the threats it faces and the purpose of Policy HE1.

8.32 The official list of designated heritage assets in England is the National Heritage List of England (NHLE), available at [historicengland.org.uk](http://historicengland.org.uk). The NHLE contains seven scheduled monuments and approximately 161 listed historic buildings and other structures in the Parish of Northam. Of the listed buildings and structures, one is grade 1, five are grade II\*. The scheduled monuments and historic buildings and structure 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 Northam Radar Station.

8.33 The Parish of Northam also contains three conservation areas: Central Northam, Central and West Appledore, and East Appledore. These three conservation areas are mapped in Appendix 8.

8.34 The non-designated heritage assets in Northam Parish are listed in the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (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.

8.35 Although the HER describes their significance, the non-designated heritage assets have more limited protection from development than designated assets. Nor is there any parish history of Northam to place the non-designated assets in historical context. They are therefore vulnerable to development that could harm their significance and/or setting, and the historic environment of Northam Parish.

8.36 The NDAT Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance heritage assets through Policy ST15: Conserving Heritage Assets and Policy DM07: Historic Environment. Policy ST015 also seeks to identify and protect locally important buildings that contribute to local character and identity. Torridge District Council is preparing a local list entitled 'The Local Heritage List in Torridge'. In 2023 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.

8.37 Policy HE1 supports NDAT Local Plan Policies ST15 and DM07 and provides a local focus that recognises Northam's rich heritage by providing enhanced protection for selected non-designated heritage assets of demonstrable local importance.

8.38 The selected heritage assets are included in the Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (NPLLIHA). The NPLLIHA is therefore a local heritage designation. It currently consists of the six heritage assets listed in Appendix 6 although these may change on review.

8.39 The selection of historic assets for the NPLLIHA is based on a standard set of selection criteria based on Historic England advice in the publication: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage. editorial note – add footnote to

Historic England 'Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage', (Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition 2021) These criteria are listed in Appendix 6, which also includes detailed justifications for each of the heritage assets listed based on these criteria. The locations of the heritage assets in the NPLLIHA are identified on maps N4(a) and (b).

8.40 In order to reflect on-going historical and archaeological research the NPLLIHA will be reviewed and if necessary, amended on a regular basis as set out in paragraph 10.3. It is intended the on-going review process will stimulate continuing community engagement in the Neighbourhood Plan. To further this process, Appendix 2 of the Northam Parish Heritage Assessment includes a list of candidate sites that meet the criteria for future inclusion in the NPLLIHA.

8.41 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. It is the intention that the NPLLIHA will eventually form part of the Local Heritage List in Torridge produced by Torridge District Council.

8.42 Under clause 1(i) proposals are required to demonstrate that they have avoided or minimised harm to the significance of a heritage asset through the design of a development; and preserving the setting of an asset or an aspect of its setting that contributes to its significance; and undertaking the repair and conservation of the asset.

8.43 Under clause 1(ii) proposals are expected to include elements of design or promotional material that will enhance the enjoyment and understanding of the historic environment.

8.44 Clause 3 refers to all designated and non-designated heritage assets. Clause 3 is consistent with Policy HO4: Quality of Design and seeks to ensure that a development that impacts on a heritage asset respects local character and distinctiveness.

## Local Biodiversity and green corridors

**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 BIODIVERSITY**

#### **1. Development proposals will be supported where:**

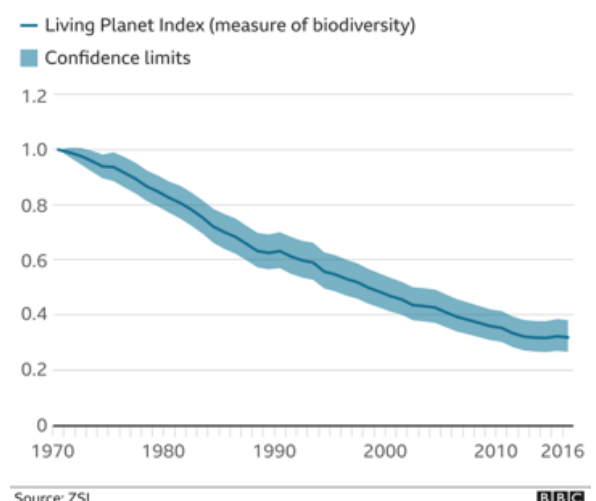
- i they provide a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% on the site (including that which existed prior to any clearance of the site for development) and including such features as mature trees, hedgerows, hedge banks and areas of woodland. The net gain in biodiversity will be achieved by an agreed, enforceable and monitored Management Plan with the applicant specifying what is to be protected and enhanced;**
- ii if adjacent to or within primary green corridors as defined on Maps N5(a) and N5(b) 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;**
- 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) to not only minimise flood risk but to increase biodiversity on the site.**

**2. If it is demonstrated that the required biodiversity net gain cannot be achieved on a given site then an acceptable local alternative site must be provided within the Parish of Northam or within 16 km (10 miles) of the Parish where there will be a minimum net gain of 10% on that site and achieved by an agreed, enforceable and monitored Management Plan specifying what is to be protected and enhanced.**

8.45 The Parish of Northam is home to a rich and diverse range of habitats, wild plant and animal species. The Joint Landscape Character Assessment for Torridge and North Devon Districts assesses the biodiversity of the Parish as follows:

*Northam Burrows is Landscape Character Type 4F Dunes. This area is notable for species-rich grassland, wildflowers and scrub and supports numerous species. Northam Burrows covers 253 hectares. It is a Site of Scientific Special Interest and part of the North Devon Coast AONB.*

How wildlife has declined, 1970-2016



Graph showing drastic decline in wildlife in UK since the 1970s

The remainder of the rural area of Northam Parish is Landscape Character Type 5B Undulating Coastal Farmland. A network of woodlands and hedges provide biodiversity in this area, and there is some isolated scrub, and unimproved grassland. Adjoining the coast there are maritime grasslands, wet flushes, and broken scrub. The different types of habitat land in Northam Parish are mapped in the NDAT Local Plan.

8.46 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.

8.47 In particular, undesignated areas require urgent protection, with particular emphasis on the network of wildlife corridors in the plan area, which provide the connectivity enabling wildlife to flourish. These wildlife corridors are identified on Maps N5 a) and N5b) in Appendix 7. Appendix 7 also lists the undesignated and non-statutory wildlife areas referenced in Policy EN5 clause iii. 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.



Saltmarsh and lagoon by Torridge estuary

8.48 The Government is committed to halting the decline in biodiversity in the UK (editorial note - add footnote or reference in Appendix to Biodiversity 2020: a

strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services) 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. (editorial note - add footnote or ref in appendix to NPPF 8c).

8.49 A minimum 10% biodiversity net gain will be 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.

8.50 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 a distinctive local focus 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.

**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. 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;**
- iii dedicated footpaths and cycleways are provided where this would create safer and more convenient routes than pavements and roads that use the easiest practicable gradients and include planting schemes to create attractive routes.**

**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.**

8.51 The Government want walking and cycling to become the norm for short journeys by 2040 (Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017) (editorial note: add footnote to this document). 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.

8.52 In 2020 the Government also 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 and Northam Town Council is one of the local authorities which supports this project. It is hoped the Plan will attract financial support from national Government and other sources in order to implement its proposals.

8.53 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.

8.54 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.

8.55 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.

8.56 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 9), 'promote cycle/pedestrian routes' came third in the list of actions that respondents wanted the Town Council to take on climate change.



Figure 9: The Tarka Trail (picture Courtesy of Devon County Council).



## 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 with preference given to brownfield sites.**
- 2. Outside development boundaries and the Appledore Marine Employment Zone, small-scale proposals for business enterprises that require a rural location will be supported providing that: an economic need is demonstrated which benefits the local economy, and which cannot reasonably be met within development boundaries.**
- 3. Loss of existing employment uses will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer required or viable, and that the premises/site/ business has been actively marketed for at least twelve months at an appropriate market price.**

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.

9.5 The Plan seeks to support the reinvigoration of maritime and coastal business, including 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 boundaries. Outside settlement development boundaries and the Appledore Marine Employment Zone, Policy ED1 supports small-scale proposals for economic development that require rural locations such as farm diversification schemes. In the area between settlements Policies ED1 and ED2 are consistent with and are intended to work alongside Policies EN2 and EN3.

## **Public Car Parking**

### **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 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. There are public car parks close to each centre, 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 provides publicly accessible electric vehicle (hereinafter EV) charge points).

9.10 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.

9.11 The responses to all three consultation questionnaires issued for the Plan identified that 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).

9.12 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 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.



Figure 10: Westward Ho!  
Promenade and seafront (Photo credit Alex Hall at Golden Bay Holiday Village).

## Meeting the Needs of the Visitor Economy

**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 extensions to existing tourism attractions or tourism accommodation will be supported provided that:**

- i they cannot reasonably be located outside the area defined on Map N1;**
- 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 which provide for extensions to existing tourism attractions or tourism accommodation will be supported provided that:**

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

9.13 Tourism is a major employer and economic driver for the local economy of Northam Parish. In Westward Ho! tourist activity centres on Westward Ho! beach, its vibrant village centre, and the Burrows Country Park and Visitor Centre. In Appledore tourist 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.

9.14 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 which make the area attractive to visitors.

9.15 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 development boundaries, the area between settlements covered by policies EN2 and EN3 and shaded green on Map N1; and the remainder of the open countryside beyond settlement boundaries. In adopting different principles to guide tourism development in each area, Policy ED2 has regard to and is intended to work alongside NDAT Local Plan policies DM17 and DM18.

9.16 Within settlement 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.

9.17 In the area between settlements shaded green on Map N1, Policy ED2 is consistent with and is intended to work alongside policies EN2, EN3 and ED1. Policy ED2 does not support new-build tourism accommodation development in the area 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.\*

*\*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.'

### **Appledore's Maritime past, present and future.**

**OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RICHMOND DOCK, APPLIEDORE 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.**

9.18 Richmond Dock (below) 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).



Figure 11: Aerial view of Richmond Dock (extract from Google Earth 2022)

9.19 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'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 DNN01 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 docks buildings, historic shipbuilding and other maritime activities.
  - These issues make imperative a locally focused site-specific policy in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan.

9.20 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'.

9.21 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.

9.22 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.

9.23 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 from damage of the historic dock and the historic buildings surrounding the site.

9.24 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 and sight lines between the adjacent conservation areas.

## **Maritime Employment and Enterprise Zone**

### **OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT PROPOSALS FOR ECONOMIC MARITIME-RELATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE APPLIEDORE MARITIME EMPLOYMENT ZONE**

#### **POLICY: ED3 APPLIEDORE EMPLOYMENT ZONE**

**1. Proposals for the redevelopment of any part of the zone identified on Map N6 for non-employment uses will not be supported unless such proposals meet all the requirements of policy DM13 of the NDAT Local Plan.**

**2. Within the zone employment development related to maritime industries will be supported, subject to the following 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.**

9.25 The Appledore Maritime Employment Zone is shaded in orange 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.

9.26 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 Maritime Employment Zone. Policy ED3 seeks to achieve this outcome by supporting the employment potential and economic importance of maritime, engineering, and allied trades or associated industries in the Appledore Maritime Employment Zone.

9.27 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'; and NDAT Local Plan Policy DM13, which seeks to retain designated employment land.

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

9.29 The docks and slipways within the Appledore Maritime 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.



Figure 12: Appledore Shipyard (extract from Google Earth image, 2022)



9.30 Any redevelopment in the Appledore Maritime 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).

9.31 Any economic redevelopment of the Appledore Maritime 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.

## **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 also be made to the Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (NPLLIHA) under Policy HE1.

10.4 Where necessary the Plan will be subject of future reviews, particularly if there are significant changes to national policies (notably the NPPF), and District Council policies. 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 be 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 Land Trust** - a democratic, non-profit organisation that owns and develops land for the benefit of the community.

**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 undeveloped area 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 development boundaries as identified on the Policies Map; the principal built form and sites allocated for development in defined Settlements without 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.

**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 heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**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.

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

**Viability assessment** - a process of assessing whether a site is financially viable, by looking at whether the value generated by a development is more than the cost of developing it. This includes looking at the key elements of gross development value, costs, land value, landowner premium, and developer return.