



# **NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2023 - 2031**

**(PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION 6TH JANUARY TO 17TH FEBRUARY 2023)**

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

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# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

## 1 Foreword

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

1.2 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan (NNP) represents a significant step for the 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 (NDAT Local Plan).

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans are a new and exciting way for communities such as ours to shape the future of the area we live in. I am very proud that our Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group has developed your plan to this pre-submission stage.

1.4 The process of writing your Neighbourhood Plan is being led by members of your community and Town Councillors and is part of the Government's revised 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. This draft of the Neighbourhood Plan has been published for comment through the Northam Neighbourhood Plan webpage, scheduled consultation events in February 2023 and a mailout to all households in the area. Ultimately you will all be able to decide whether to support this Neighbourhood Plan through a referendum. In the event of a positive vote, the District Council is responsible for adopting the Neighbourhood Plan, so the Plan will then help to guide planning decisions.

1.5 The work undertaken by the focus group volunteers and Advisory Group, who merit special mention. They have explored a wide range of current and possible future biodiversity, community, economic, environmental, housing, infrastructure, landscape, transport, and traffic options. Thank you all for your continued support.

**Cllr. Nick Laws, Mayor of Northam Town Council.**



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# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

## 2 Introduction

### Northam Parish

2.1 The Parish of Northam 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. In 2021, the Parish has a combined population of 12,425.

2.2 Northam Parish is made up of three distinct settlements, each with its own character, Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! Its borders 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 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) until Kipling Tors is reached.

2.3 This Neighbourhood Area covers the full Northam Town Council area, shown on the plan on page 5, opposite.

### Neighbourhood Planning

2.4 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 of which was to give local people more of a say in shaping the growth of their communities.

2.5 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.

2.6 A Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with strategic local planning policies set out in the local development plan for the area and the Government's wider policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Following a successful local referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for the area it covers.

2.7 For Northam Parish this means that the Northam Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (NDAT Local Plan) adopted in 2018. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan will add value to the NDAT Local Plan and will be used to shape future development in Northam.

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## Process

2.8 The desire for a Neighbourhood Plan was established through 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.

2.9 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up in 2017, with a membership of Northam 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.'* (Northam Parish Council, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference and Membership, (2017)).

In October 2019 the Steering Group was re-named the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group.

2.10 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 (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Northam Neighbourhood Plan 'Plan Area'

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## Consultation

2.11 This draft Neighbourhood Plan is published by the Town Council as a consultation document, comment on which is sought from those who live and work within the Parish. The process of community engagement and consultation was guided by the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Community Engagement Strategy, which sets out in detail the values, standards and methods of community engagement used. The details of this process are in the record of community engagement with a detailed summary in the Consultation Statement drawn up to accompany this Plan.

2.12 In brief the community engagement has comprised:

- ⇒ Posting of successive drafts of the Neighbourhood Plan on the Northam Town Council website, and a Facebook page.
- ⇒ In March 2017 a public meeting was held in Appledore to explore the possibility of a Neighbourhood Plan for Northam. Subsequent public meetings in June and July 2017 identified the plan-making process and established the Northam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- ⇒ In spring 2018 an initial engagement questionnaire was sent to all households in Northam Parish. The questionnaire was designed to identify the issues and priorities of concern to residents. A second distribution targeted younger age groups. The return rate was 5%.
- ⇒ Focus groups including volunteers from the public were established to consider housing, business and the environment/heritage issues. The focus groups produced the initial drafts of the policies in this Plan.
- ⇒ In March-April 2019 there was an initial consultation on the draft Northam Neighbourhood Plan. This consisted of a form for comments on the draft policies, and a programme of public meetings in each major settlement. In July 2019 there was a focus group for young people.
- ⇒ In 2020-2021 face-to-face engagement was curtailed by the COVID pandemic although videoconference meetings of the Advisory Group continued.

2.13 As a result of the process of community engagement the Steering Group identified four themes: community, housing, the environment and heritage, and, business and employment. These four themes form the structure of the Vision objectives, and the policy sections of this Plan.

2.14 In terms of the four themes, the process of community engagement highlighted the following community aspirations:

- ⇒ Community - valued community facilities should be protected against closure to create sustainable and strong communities in each of the three main settlements of Northam Parish.
- ⇒ Housing - 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

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pollution caused by having to travel out of the area.

- ⇒ Environment and heritage - 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.
- ⇒ Business and employment - sustainable economic development should benefit the local economy and create local employment opportunities.

## Community Profile

2.15 The Neighbourhood Plan Area comprises three main settlements which are very distinct in character, but which are all influenced through history by their location near to the Torridge estuary and the sea. The settlements are Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore. The Neighbourhood Plan area has a total population of 12,425, according to Torridge District Council ward profiles (2011)<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 2: St. Margaret's Church, Northam.

2.16 Northam has the largest population, with 4,980 residents recorded in the 2020 Torridge District Council ward profile. The original settlement remains, with narrow roads and terrace houses radiating from The Square and dominated by St Margaret's Church, which adjoins Bone Hill high above the surrounding countryside. Since 2019, Northam ward has included that of Orchard Hill. Orchard Hill developed as a distinct residential area of large 18th/19th century houses straddling what is now the A39, followed by further housing built in the 20th century. Orchard Hill is somewhat detached from the other settlement areas.

2.17 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 nineteenth century as an affluent resort with large properties. Although considerably expanded by modern development some of the original large Victorian buildings still exist, including what was previously the United Services College where Rudyard Kipling was a pupil. The population is 3,652, recorded in the 2020 Torridge District Council ward profile.

2.18 Following the coast road away from Westward Ho! 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.

2.19 Located on the Torridge estuary,



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

<sup>(2)</sup> Torridge Ward profiles available at <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/20093/Torridge-Ward-Profiles>

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Appledore (population 3,793) 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



Figure 4: (Left, Right and above) Appledore streets.

beautiful open countryside. Its narrow streets and 'drangs', containing many independent businesses, characterful houses and cottages which are a major attraction for tourists.

2.20 The NNP area is notable for its high-quality landscape and seascape and its role as a tourism destination. Compared to Torridge District, the population density is considerable considerably greater (777 compared to 68 person per square km). In addition the average age of residents is significantly higher. (The percentage of residents aged 65 and over is 35.7% compared to 27.2% for Torridge District as a whole.

## 3.0 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.**

3.1 The vision for the Northam Neighbourhood Plan is that by 2031 we will have built a more sustainable, self-reliant community, building on the diversity of our separate communities. This vision and its associated objectives will contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.

3.2 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan will ensure the protection of the individual characteristics and distinct identities of the Northam, Orchard Hill, Appledore and Westward Ho! The Plan recognises that the diversity of the communities is a source of strength and common purpose than that will benefit them all.

3.3 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



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households and commercial enterprises across the Parish. Northam Town Council's survey results are at appendix 10. For more information, scan the QR code or visit the Council's website at [www.northamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.northamtowncouncil.gov.uk).

3.4 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 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.

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## Objectives

### Community

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

### Housing

2. Local housing needs will be met in a sustainable fashion through the provision of smaller dwellings (up to three bedrooms). These new dwellings should be flexible, adaptable, and accessible to cater for changing household needs.
3. The provision of affordable housing through viability assessments will be maximised.
4. The design of residential development will ensure the amenity of new dwellings and protect the amenity of neighbouring properties. The design of development should reflect and respect the character of the local built and natural environment.
5. The design of new dwellings should include the provision of suitable and well-designed storage space.
6. Sustainable development should be energy efficient to the required standard and include renewable energy and water recycling systems.
7. Community-scale renewable energy production will be supported. In new dwellings parking for cars and bicycles will be provided in proportion to the number of bedrooms.
8. Provision for public and private electric charging points in new developments will be supported.

### Environment and Heritage

9. To improve, protect and enhance valued local green spaces.
10. To resist the process of coalescence between the built forms of Appledore and Northam/Westward Ho!
11. 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.
12. To preserve specified landscape views and vistas of community value to maintain a sense of place, well-being and community identity in Northam Parish.
13. To protect and enhance buildings and places of heritage and community value,

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ensuring that the Parish of Northam retains its rich historic environment and sense of place.

14. 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.
15. To increase the connectivity of settlements and reduce pollution by
  - (i) the protection, enhancement of existing walking and cycling networks, and
  - (ii) the introduction of new attractive and accessible walking and cycling networks for all residents and visitors to enjoy.

## **Business and employment**

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

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## HOW THE NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN MEETS 'THE BASIC CONDITIONS'.

3.10 'The Basic Conditions' are the conditions that a draft Neighbourhood Plan must meet before it can be put to a referendum. The Basic Conditions are set out the paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In summary the Plan should:

- ⇒ have regard for national policy and advice;
- ⇒ contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development;
- ⇒ be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
- ⇒ be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

3.11 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in strict accordance with all relevant primary and secondary legislation to ensure that it comprises a set of policies that are procedurally sound in their preparation and in accordance with 'the Basic Conditions'.

3.12 Although the UK is no longer a member of the EU, the requirements to comply with EU obligations will continue to apply until further notice. 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, as is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement. Although as the Plan allocates sites for development and the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets a Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared.

3.13 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group has produced a Basic Conditions Statement that accompanies this Plan. This document explains in detail how the Plan meets each of the basic conditions. The Statement sets out the Plan has regard for the 2021 NPPF and the NDAT Local Plan.

3.14 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.

3.15 Northam Parish lies within the administrative area of Torrridge District Council, in Devon. The NDAT Local Plan (2011-2031) was adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018; it 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.

In outline, the spatial vision sets out how the settlements of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore will develop. The spatial development strategy sets out a plan for:

- a) The provision of a minimum of 1,916 new dwellings to meet the communities housing needs, together with associated infrastructure.
- b) New site allocations to provide approximately 1,740 dwellings.

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

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

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## LIST OF NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

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## 4.0 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**

**Development 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. it adds new or enhances current provision of community facilities; or**
- iii. it increases the availability of open spaces for sport and recreation purposes.**

### **Community Facilities**

4.1 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.

4.2 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!

4.3 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.

4.4 Community Hubs should be protected from loss through the planning process where there is evidence of on-going demand and community value. The 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.

4.5 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*.

4.6 Listing as an ACV gives the local community an opportunity to make a bid for the asset when it comes up for sale. To qualify as an ACV the actual current (or recent past) use of the nominated

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land or building must further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. It must also be realistic to think that there can continue to use of the land or building that will further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. Examples of land of buildings that might qualify as ACVs include village shops, public houses, community centres, libraries and playing fields.

4.7 Once listed as an Asset of Community Value, the local community will be informed if they are put up for sale within the five-year listing period. If they express a wish to do so, local community interest groups then have the chance to 'pause' the sale for a period of six months so they can prepare to bid for it, known as the Community Right to Bid. The property cannot be sold within this six-month period, but at the end of this time the owner still has the right to sell to whomever they choose.

4.8 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.

4.9 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.

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## 5. HOUSING

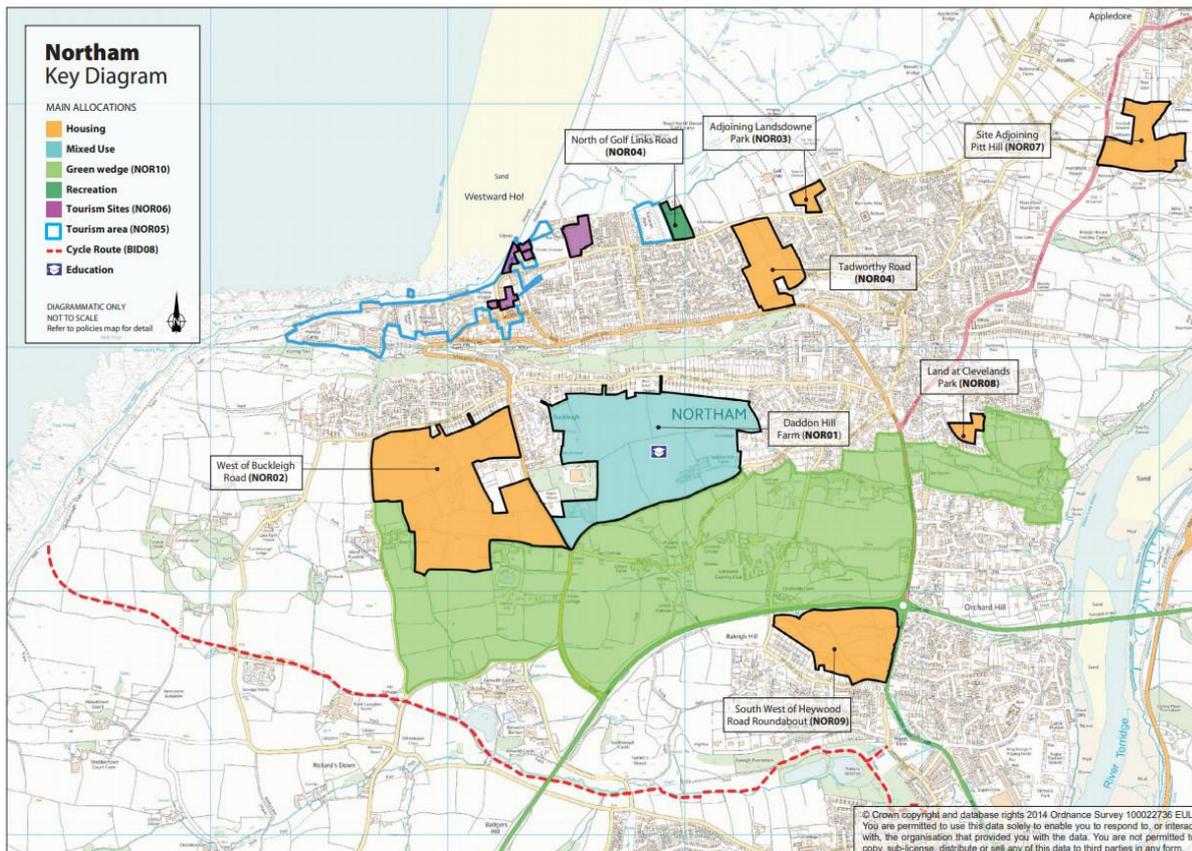


Figure 6: Northam Development Areas as identified in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2031

5.1 There is an identified need for housing in the area covered by the Northam Neighbourhood Plan. This is evidenced in the Local Plan. The Northam Town Council housing needs survey 2017 highlights the need for affordable dwellings, for either purchase or rent, and an identified need for more bungalows, dwellings with step-free access.

### Housing Need by Band and Accessibility

	General Needs	Maximum of 3 Steps	Part Wheelchair	Step Free	Wheelchair Accessible	Total
Band B	10	5		4	2	21
Band C	24	11	1	4		40
Band D	72	8		6	1	87
Band E	85	11		8	1	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>253</b>

Table 1 - courtesy of Devon Home Choice (7th November 2022)

5.2 However, analysis of achieved levels of affordable development in housing allocation developments in Northam Parish to 2022 suggest that levels of affordable housing are considerably lower than the 30% target set in the NDAT Local Plan.

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5.3 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.

## Housing Needs

5.4 One of the main issues regarding the provision of dwellings for families and retired people is the size of the property. Policy HO1 aims to provide housing that is less expensive to buy/rent and maintain.

5.5 The Northam Town Council 2017 housing needs survey demonstrated that there was a demand from residents for smaller properties with 54% of respondents requiring two bedrooms, 28% three and 15% one. Only 3% required four or more bedrooms.<sup>3</sup> Data from the 2021 census shows an increase in the older population of Torridge district and emigration of younger people from the district and the likely increase in downsizing of property as the population ages will accentuate future demand for smaller homes and bungalows (see Appendix 2).

**OBJECTIVE: LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS WILL BE MET IN A SUITABLE FASHION THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SMALLER DWELLINGS (UP TO THREE BEDROOMS). THESE NEW DWELLINGS SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO CATER FOR CHANGING HOUSEHOLD NEEDS.**

### **POLICY: HO1 SIZE OF DWELLINGS**

- i. The provision of smaller dwellings (those with one, two or three bedrooms) will be supported, with particular emphasis on the provision of more bungalows. (Rooms otherwise designated on plans, but clearly capable of use as bedrooms, will be counted as bedrooms for the purposes of this policy)**
- ii. New dwellings should be designed to be flexible, adaptable, and accessible to cater for the changing needs of a typical household.**

5.6 Anecdotal evidence in the consultation responses and the relatively higher proportion of people over 65 in Northam Parish compared to the rest of Torridge district suggest there is a need for more bungalows this would provide suitable homes for those who wish to downsize possibly freeing-up family sized homes. People with some physical disabilities also require ground floor living provision (see table 1 above).

5.7 The conclusion that there is an increasing need for more one and two bed bungalows and houses is supported by the forecast in the SHMA Torridge and North Devon update for projected household types 2011-2031, which shows a large increase in one person households, one parent with dependent child/children, a couple with no dependent children, a couple, and one or more adults.

<sup>(3)</sup> Northam Town Council, Housing Needs Survey, (2017).

<sup>(4)</sup> North Devon and Torridge Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2012 update). Document available at <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/11264/Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-SHMA>

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## Affordable Housing

5.8 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.'

5.9 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.

**OBJECTIVE: THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGH VIABILITY ASSESSMENTS WILL BE MAXIMISED.**

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

- i. Viability assessments that make affordable housing levels subject to returns expected by developers will only be accepted where:**
  - (a) they are based on an 'open book' financial appraisal open to public scrutiny, including the developer's justification for the expected level of return; and**
  - (b) the benchmark land value is the existing use value of land plus a reasonable premium based on the circumstances applicable to the development.**
- ii. If the return provided for in the viability assessment is exceeded, then an additional financial contribution towards affordable housing shall be paid to the LPA in accordance with a formula set out in a developer obligation attached to the planning permission.**

5.10 To ensure that viability assessments are fair they are subject to independent review and when considered by the LPA 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 if the site comes forward and on multi-phased schemes it may be appropriate for a viability review.

5.11 Some developers have used viability assessments to reduce the provision of affordable housing for a site. In such cases, the assumptions made in assessments may prove to be incorrect or outdated by changing market conditions, with larger profits made than forecast and the affordable housing quota unjustifiably reduced.

5.12 Accordingly, Policy HO2 is intended to ensure that viability assessments, including Section 106 commitments, are carried out to high standards of transparency, open to public scrutiny and including the developer's justification on the expected level of return, to ensure that affordable housing quotas are not unfairly reduced because of ill-founded or outdated viability assessments.

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5.13 Since policy HO2 supports and strengthens NDAT Local Plan Policy ST18 and addresses the identified problem with viability assessments, 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.

5.14 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.

5.15 Policy HO2 conforms to PPG (Planning Practice Guidance) standards of transparency for viability assessments. It is expected that these assessments and all supporting documents will be published online. Genuinely confidential passages may be redacted, but the methodology for valuing land conforms to that set out in Ministry of Housing PPG Viability 2014, as updated 1 September 2019.<sup>5</sup> Existing use value (EUV) refers to the open market land price, assuming it continues in its existing use with no expectation of that use changing in the foreseeable future, other than in line with any permitted development rights or allocations applicable to the site.

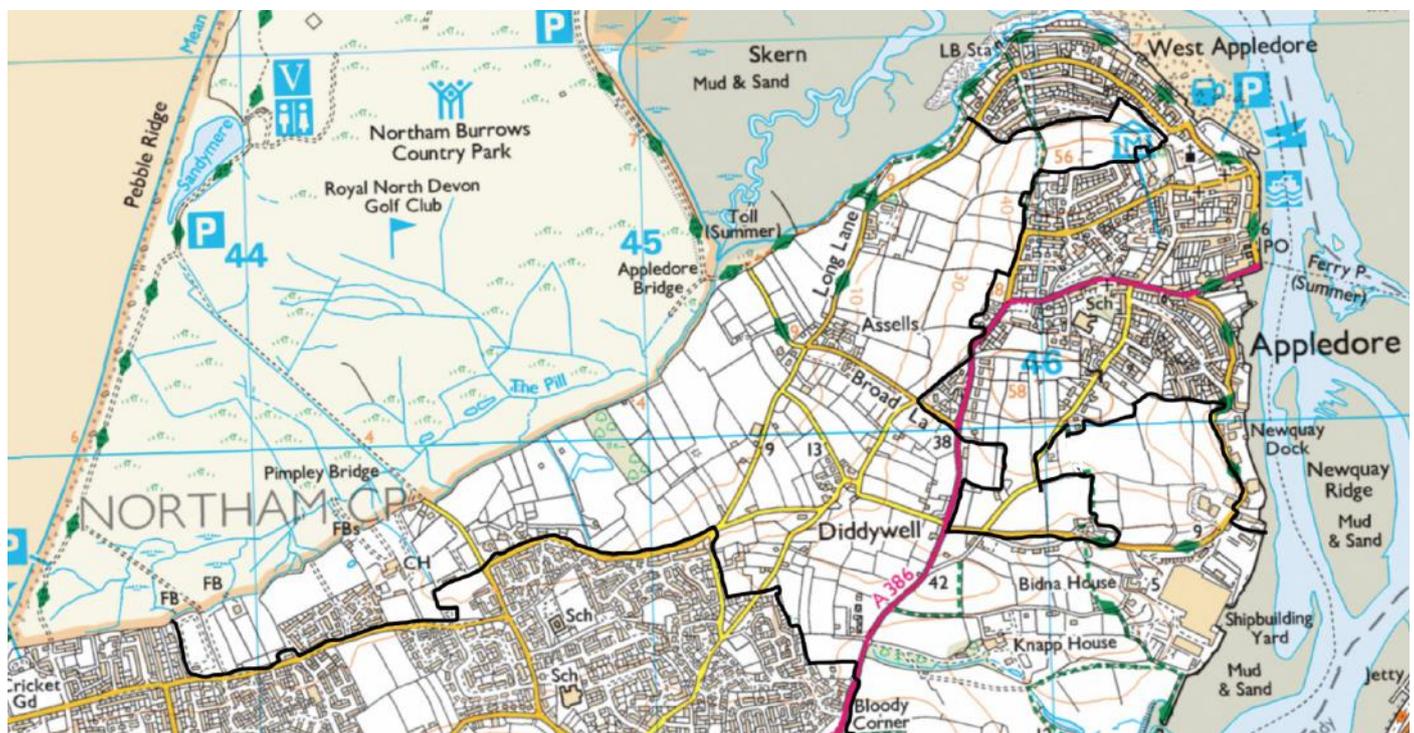


Figure 7(a): Northam/Appledore development boundaries—north (as identified in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2031).

<sup>(5)</sup> Ministry of Housing PPG Viability 2014, as updated 1 September 2019 available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability>

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5.16 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.

5.17 Provided they comply with all other relevant Northam Neighbourhood Plan policies, proposals brought forward by Community Land Trusts, Community-led initiatives, self-build projects and other means of provision will be supported for the re-use for affordable housing of empty or derelict buildings, infill plots and new builds within development boundaries (see figures 3(a) and (b) below and opposite). The tenure mix of such developments is expected to reflect local needs. The development boundaries of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore are those defined in the NDAT Local Plan and shown in figures 7(a) and 7(b), below. The red line in figure 7(b) denotes the southern boundary of the NNP area.

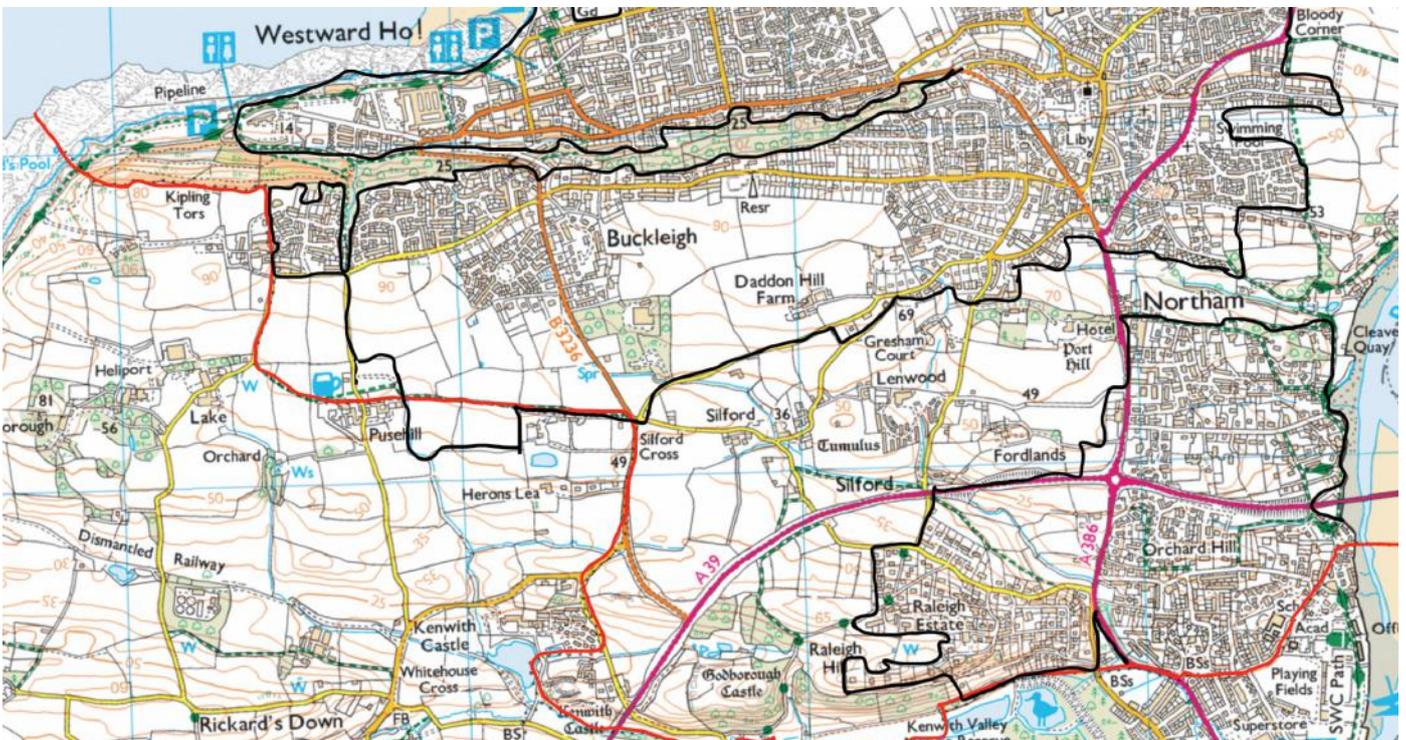


Figure 7(b): Northam/Appledore development boundaries—south (as identified in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2031).

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## 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. Sufficient 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.**

**2. 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.**

5.18 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.

5.19 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.<sup>6</sup>

5.20 Allowance in the size of external amenity space also needs to be made, for the possible future extension or adaptation of the dwelling.

<sup>6</sup> National Design Guide (2021). Document available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide/national-design-guide-accessible-version>

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## Housing Quality

**OBJECTIVES: THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD REFLECT AND RESPECT THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. THE DESIGN OF NEW DWELLINGS SHOULD INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF SUITABLE AND WELL-DESIGNED STORAGE SPACE.**

### **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.**

**i the use 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; and**

**iii. includes 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, water courses and hedges are impacted by the proposal. Any negative impact on these features must be accompanied by appropriate mitigation measures.**

**2. Residential development will be supported where:**

**i. suitable provision for general storage space is provided in all dwellings and externally accessible space provided for storing garden equipment and tools, as well as play equipment and bicycles; and**

**ii. 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.**

5.21 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.

5.22 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.

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5.23 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.

5.24 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.

5.25 It is not the intention to discourage innovative change where appropriate, and is accepted that new modern architecture can sit alongside the historic when sensitively designed.

5.26 The provision of adequate, suitable, and well-designed storage space is an important contribution to the amenity of well-designed dwellings.

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

**OBJECTIVES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCLUDE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WATER RECYCLING SYSTEMS.**

**COMMUNITY-SCALE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION SCHEMES WILL BE SUPPORTED.**

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

**1. New residential development or improvement to existing dwellings will be supported where:**

- i. increased energy efficiency measures are incorporated with the aim of increasing the number of zero carbon dwellings;**
- ii. alternative energy systems are incorporated and in the case of new dwellings, to promote energy efficiency, consideration is given to the orientation of dwellings in order that living rooms can**
- iii. benefit from passive solar gain.**

**2. Development of new dwellings and other buildings will be supported where:**

- i. electric car charging points are incorporated; and**
- ii. rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling systems are incorporated.**

**3. Proposals for community scale alternative energy systems (for example, wind generators) will be supported where there is no adverse 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.**

**4. To reduce carbon emissions and pollution provision must be made for accessible public transport to serve all new developments.**

5.27 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.

5.28 Energy conservation measures and alternative energy generation make a significant contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions and energy conservation will help contribute to

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a reduction in the cost of living. In a comparison of UK local authorities, Torridge has the sixth lowest average gross weekly pay (£385 in 2018) and the second lowest gross domestic household income in Devon.<sup>7</sup>

5.29 Northam Town Council has declared a Climate Emergency and aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions in the area by 2030. Policy HO5 is designed to help achieve the aims of the Northam Town Council carbon reduction plan.

5.30 The alternative energy systems referred to clause 1 ii. of this policy may include solar panels, micro-wind generation or such new technologies as and when they become available.

5.31 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**

**Residential development will be supported where:**

**i. it provides off-street parking spaces as follows:**

- 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 off-street car parking space per four dwelling units.**

**ii. it incorporates provision of publicly accessible and private electric vehicle charging points within the curtilage of the development; and**

**iii. it incorporates secure and accessible cycle parking, preferably covered from the weather, and providing one space per bedroom for each dwelling and one space per five dwellings for visitors' bicycles.**

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5.32 Whilst every effort is made to reduce the dependence on the car it remains essential for many people, with 76.5% of households having one or two vehicles (TDC Ward Profiles 2020). In the two consultation leaflets issued, parking and road congestion featured prominently in responses received, 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.

5.33 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.

5.34 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.<sup>8</sup>

5.35 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.

5.36 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 whilst providing shade and increasing the take-up atmospheric carbon.

5.37 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.

<sup>(7)</sup> Torridge Profile 2020 available at <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/20091/Torridge-Profile>

<sup>(8)</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, Technical Consultation on Planning (July 2014), sections 2.77 and 2.78. Document available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/339528/Technical\\_consultation\\_on\\_planning.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/339528/Technical_consultation_on_planning.pdf)

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## THE ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

6.1 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).

6.2 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 the first round of consultation for the NNP respondents voted the joint option of heritage and green spaces second in importance out of eleven options listed. In the second round of consultation, heritage and green spaces came first out of seven options listed. In total 42% of respondents listed the environment as the aspect of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan area they valued most. In economic terms the environmental and heritage assets form an important part of the tourism offer of Northam Parish.

6.3 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.

6.4 To achieve sustainable development regarding environmental and heritage assets, the Northam Neighbourhood Plan will support relevant policies of the 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.

6.5 In 2012 the Government introduced a designation of Local Green Space through the National Planning Policy Framework, which allows local communities to identify for protection local green areas of particular importance to them. Planning permission will only be granted for development of a Local Green Space in very exceptional circumstances.

6.6 The Parish of Northam includes various pieces of land that meet the requirements for designation for Local Green Spaces. During the plan-making process each candidate LGS site has been assessed and found to meet the criteria in the NPPF 99-101 for local green spaces '*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.<sup>9</sup> Appendix 3 provides further information.

6.7 The intention of Policy EN1 is that proposals for development in these areas will only be

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## Local Green Spaces

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

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

- 1. The following locations are designated as Local Green Spaces and potential Assets of Community Value:**
  - Rectory Gardens, Fore Street, Northam
  - Allotments South of Marshford, Churchill Way, Northam
  - Land known as Blackies, Torridge Road, Appledore
  - The Cricket Ground, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!
  - Humpty-Dumpty Field, Great Burrow Rise, Northam
  - Westward Ho! Park, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho! (owned by Northam Town Council)
  - Escarpment Woodland between Bay View Road and Atlantic Way
  - Anchor Park, Appledore (owned by Northam Town Council)
  - Village Green, The Backfield, Appledore
  - Hillcliff Gardens, Irsha Street, Appledore
  - Tors View, off Cornborough Drive, Westward Ho!
  - The village green, Westward Ho!
  - Appledore Football Club Ground, Churchill Way
  - Bideford Blues Junior FC Sports Complex
  - Knapp Wood, Churchill Way
  - Burrough Farm, Northam (owned by Northam Town Council)
- 2. Development that does not enhance the value of these areas as Local Green Spaces will not be supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.**

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Map N1—supporting policies EN2, EN3 and ED2



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supported where there will be no adverse impact on these Local Green Spaces.

6.8 The responses to the 2018 questionnaire showed general concern at the loss of green space in Northam Parish. The responses to the 2019 consultation demonstrated strong public support for this policy, and respondents suggested several additional candidate sites for Local Green Spaces.

6.9 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.

## Community Identity

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

**POLICY: EN2 PREVENTION OF COALESCENCE**

**OBJECTIVE: TO RESIST THE COALESCENCE BETWEEN THE BUILT FORMS OF APPLIEDORE AND NORTHAM/WESTWARD HO!**

**Development that would lead to or contribute to coalescence between the development boundaries of Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! as defined on Map N1 will not be supported to ensure the distinct identities of the respective settlements are maintained.**

6.10 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 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.

6.11 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 Way (PRoW), including the nationally important South West Coast Path. Despite its amenity value, the area has been seriously reduced by development, and its rural character eroded. Any further new development risks uniting the settlements of Northam and Appledore and removing their separate identities.

6.12 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement seeks to maintain and enhance the individual characteristics of the communities of Northam Parish. To this end Policy EN2 seeks to resist the process of coalescence between the development boundaries of Appledore and Northam/Westward Ho! The area in which Policy EN2 applies is the area shaded green on Map

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N1 (above).

6.13 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. Policy EN2 supports NDAT Local Plan Policy NOR(h) and makes it clear that policy applies to the entire area between the development boundary of Appledore and the development boundaries of Northam and Westward Ho!

6.14 The development of any land situated between these development boundaries will contribute to the process of coalescence between Appledore and the conjoined development boundaries of Northam and Westward Ho! For this reason, policy EN2 applies to all proposed development sites in the area shaded green on Map N2 even if the site in question is bordered on one or more sides by housing and/or a development boundary.

6.15 Neither Policy EN2 nor Policy EN3, which also applies to the area between the development boundaries of Northam/Westward Ho! and Appledore. stipulates the types of development that will be supported in the area to avoid pre-judging or unduly restricting applications. However, Policies ED1 and ED2 provide guidance for economic and tourism-related development in this area.

6.16 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'. This conclusion is supported by the Northam Neighbourhood Plan consultation in Spring 2019, which gave strong support for Policy EN2.



Figure 8: The Northam Burrows and Appledore peninsular  
(extract from Devon County Council Environment Viewer)

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## Rural Landscapes

**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**

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

- i. it does not detract from the unspoilt character and appearance, dark skies and tranquillity of the area;**
- ii. 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;**
- iii. it does not harm the setting of Northam Burrows or the South West Coast Path;**
- iv. there is safe convenient access to the development by foot, bicycle, vehicle and public transport; and**
- v. it is required because it cannot reasonably be located outside the area defined on Map N1.**

6.17 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 nucleated villages/hamlets and hamlets, a main road, and urban and recreational uses in the landscape'.<sup>10</sup>

6.18 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.

<sup>(10)</sup> Land Use Consultants, Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon and Torridge, (2011). Document available at: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/11273/Joint-Landscape-Character-Assessment-for-North-Devon-and-Torridge-Districts>

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6.19 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.

6.20 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.

6.21 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.'

6.22 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.

6.23 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.

6.24 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

<sup>(11)</sup> Street Lighting Service - Policy and Contract, Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste, (2019). Document available at <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s23170/Street%20Lighting%20Policy.pdf>

<sup>(12)</sup> Data available at <https://earth.google.com/web/>

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

## **POLICY: EN4 PROTECTING VALUED VIEWS**

**Development will be supported where it does not detract from the character and appearance of the environment, and does not harm the views identified on Map N3 (a) to (g) and detailed in Appendix 2 with the photo-vistas attached.**

**These viewpoints are:**

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

6.25 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 5 B. (In fact there are long estuarine and rural views in Northam Parish too.)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>(13)</sup> Land Use Consultants, Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon and Torridge, (2011). Document available at: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/11273/Joint-Landscape-Character-Assessment-for-North-Devon-and-Torridge-Districts>

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6.26 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. 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 N3 (a) to (g) and photo vistas of the views.

6.27 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.

6.28 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.<sup>14</sup>

6.29 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.

6.30 The Parish of Northam includes over 470 heritage assets that are listed in the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER). These heritage assets range in time from Mesolithic find spots to traces of Second World War coastal defences and collectively form a physical record of the entire history of the area. The heritage assets may be grouped in thematic terms as follows:

- A small group of heritage assets pre-dating 1066. These assets provide evidence of human activity in the area over thousands of years.
- Heritage assets relating to agriculture.
- Heritage assets relating to maritime activities. These assets include wreck sites and sites relating to fishing, shipbuilding, and maritime safety.
- Heritage assets relating to coastal defence. These assets include fortifications and identified conflict sites ranging in time from the Norman Conquest to the Second World War.
- Heritage assets relating to housing after 1500. These assets include many listed houses in the historic centres of Northam and Appledore.

<sup>(14)</sup> Document available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)

<sup>(15)</sup> Data accessible from [https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/advanced\\_search.aspx](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/advanced_search.aspx)

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

## 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**

- i. Great weight will be given to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets listed in the Northam Parish List of Local Heritage Assets (NPLLHA). Development will be supported only where it conserves and enhances the archaeology and/or fabric, setting, and significance of a heritage asset listed in the NPLLHA, and;**
- ii. Development which impacts upon a heritage asset listed in the NPLLHA will be supported providing those 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.**
- iii. Where a heritage asset listed in the NPLLHA shows signs of neglect or deliberate damage, the harm done to the asset will be accorded no weight in any decision on its future.**
- iv. Development of any designated or non-designated heritage assets will be supported where it uses vernacular design and materials, thereby reinforcing local character and distinctiveness and a strong sense of place.**

- Religious sites and buildings.<sup>15</sup>

6.31 Although the HER describes their significance, many of these heritage assets are not scheduled or protected by any other designation such as Conservation Areas. Nor is there any Parish History of Northam to place the assets in historical context. They are therefore vulnerable to development that would harm their significance and/or setting, and the historic environment of Northam Parish.

6.32 The NDAT Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance heritage assets through Policy ST15: Conserving Heritage Assets. The policy also seeks to identify and protect locally important buildings that contribute to local character and identity. The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing heritage assets to achieve its vision of

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

sustainable development in environmental terms. It is considered that the protection and enhancement of heritage assets also contributes to strong communities by ensuring links to the past and community pride whilst offering economically viable tourism benefits.

6.33 Policy HER1 supports NDAT Local Plan Policy ST15, whilst considering Northam's uniquely rich heritage by enhancing the protection ST15 offers to the significance and setting of otherwise unlisted heritage assets considered to be of especial local importance. These Heritage assets are listed in Northam Parish List of Locally Important Heritage Assets (NPLLHA) in Appendix 6.

6.34 The list 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.<sup>16</sup> Appendix 6 includes detailed justifications for each of the heritage assets listed based on these criteria and the location of the heritage assets are identified on maps N4(a) and (b).

6.35 To support the on-going work of assessing the significance of heritage assets, it is intended that the list will be reviewed and if necessary, amended on a regular basis. It is intended the on-going review process will stimulate continuing community engagement in the Neighbourhood Plan. To further this process, the evidence base of this Plan includes a list of candidate sites for future inclusion in the NPLLHA. All candidate sites meet the criteria for inclusion. Additional assets identified by historical research and/or archaeology as meeting the criteria for inclusion may be added to the NPLLHA at this review. At the same time heritage assets that have since received other protective designations may be removed from the NPLLHA. It is the intention that the Northam Parish List will eventually form part of a Local Heritage List produced by Torridge District Council.

6.36 In the first round of consultation for the NNP respondents voted heritage and green spaces second in importance out of eleven options listed. In the second round of consultation heritage and green spaces came first out of seven options listed. Public consultation in spring 2019 showed strong support for this policy.

6.37 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.
- 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

<sup>(16)</sup> Local Heritage Listing: identifying and conserving local heritage, Historic England Advice Note (2nd edition), 2021. Document available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>

<sup>(17)</sup> NDAT Local Plan Ecological Network Key Components and Devon Nature Map (2016). Document in the NDAT Local Plan examination library reference, CE30. Document available at [https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/examination/#copy\\_3931816\\_ID\\_119829](https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/examination/#copy_3931816_ID_119829)

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

## Environmental Protection

**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**

**Proposals which are likely to have an adverse impact on local biodiversity, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that full consideration has been given to the biodiversity on the development site and its protection and enhancement. When there is no alternative which would cause a less harmful impact, mitigation measures should be introduced which result in a net enhancement to the site's biodiversity. As a last resort, acceptable local alternative habitat must be provided which increases biodiversity compared to the development site.**

**Development proposals will be supported where:**

- i. They retain and/or enhance the biodiversity of the site, including mature trees, hedgerows, hedge banks and areas of woodland; they improve the connectivity of wildlife areas through green corridors; and/or improve the wildlife value of the landscape, including domestic garden habitats.**
- 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 6 and listed in the Devon Biodiversity Records for Northam.**

Ecological Network Key Components and Devon Nature Map (2016).<sup>17</sup>

6.38 Notwithstanding the biodiversity and rich ecology of Northam Parish, the relatively high population density and the evident pressures for new development are considered to offer significant threats to biodiversity to the extent that that the 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 N5 b) 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; fragmentation of habitats, which reduces the resilience of ecosystems; and

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

pressure for development along the coastline.

6.39 Various surveys show that the maintenance and encouragement of biodiversity plays a very important role in people's quality of life, and this is reflected in the strong support for the draft biodiversity policy in the consultation of spring 2019. Wildlife is also an important factor in the attraction of the plan area to tourists. The Government is committed to halting the decline in biodiversity in the UK (Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services)<sup>18</sup> and there is a duty for public authorities under legislation such as (Town & Country Planning (Trees) regulation 1999 and the Countryside & 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 (NPPF 8 c). Alongside the existing legal duty of public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity the 2021 Environment Act seeks to set a 10% biodiversity gain as an automatic condition on nearly all planning proposals. Some Local Authorities have adopted higher standards - for example Lichfield District Council seek 20% for biodiversity net gain on development sites.<sup>19</sup>

6.40 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises that the protection and enhancement of biodiversity is an important component in achieving sustainable development in environmental terms. Policy EN5 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.

6.41 Proposals which are likely to have an adverse impact on local biodiversity will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is no alternative which would cause a less harmful impact, or mitigation measures which can be introduced resulting in a net enhancement to the sites biodiversity. A 10% net gain in biodiversity should be regarded as a minimum rather than a maximum objective. Proposals should work to accommodate, develop, and improve the biodiversity of a given site. Only where this is impossible, as a last resort, acceptable local alternative habitat must be provided which increases biodiversity compared to the development site.

6.42 The Government want walking and cycling to become the norm for short journeys by 2040 (Cycling & 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

<sup>(18)</sup> Document available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>

<sup>(19)</sup> Lichfield District Council, Biodiversity and Development, Supplementary Planning Document, 2016. Document available at <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1112/supplementary-planning-document-biodiversity-and-development>

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

## Sustainable Transport

**OBJECTIVE: TO INCREASE THE CONNECTIVITY OF SETTLEMENTS 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 where:**
  - i. they deliver safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes, within and from the site to main settlements, local facilities, bus stops, existing footpaths, and cycleways in the area;**
  - ii. they incorporate cycle parking facilities;**
  - iii. Dedicated footpaths and cycleways are provided where this would create safer and more convenient routes than pavements and roads: and**
  - iv. new pedestrian and cycleways serving the development 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 (including the Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan [LCWIP]) providing such proposals, including their materials and any lighting, do not harm the character of the area.**
- 3. The creation of a dedicated cycle and pedestrian route separated from traffic and leading from Heywood Road to the Torridge Bridge and across to the Tarka Trail will be supported.**

to provide good linking pedestrian and cycle routes to and from developments.

6.43 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

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

Government and other sources in order to implement its proposals.

6.44 Northam Parish has an extensive network of PRow and quiet lanes suitable for walking, although many of the PRow are very muddy in wet weather and at some points difficult to access for people with diminished mobility.

6.45 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.

6.46 In addition to the routes within Northam Parish, the Plan supports proposals a dedicated cycle and pedestrian route separated from traffic from Heywood Road to the 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.

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



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

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## 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 provided that**

- i. proposals demonstrate they will benefit the local economy and;**
- ii. for live/work home units, they are not detrimental to the amenity of neighbours.**

**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:**

- i. an economic need is demonstrated which benefits the local economy, and which cannot reasonably be met within development boundaries; and**
- ii. they do not conflict with other Neighbourhood Plan policies.**

**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.**

in a list of eleven possible actions respondents wanted to see the Council take in response to climate change.

7.1 The Northam Neighbourhood Plan recognises that the provision of local employment opportunities is crucial to 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.

7.2 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 NNP area. This would reduce the need to travel for work, thus helping to reduce pollution and traffic congestion.

7.3 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.

7.4 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

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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.

7.5 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.

7.6 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

## **Public Car Parking**

**OBJECTIVE: TO PROTECT, IMPROVE AND ENHANCE PUBLIC CAR PARKING PROVISION.**

### **POLICY: TR3 PUBLIC CAR PARKING**

- i. 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.**
- ii. Proposals for the development of additional car parking provision will only be supported where it is through the redevelopment of existing brownfield and grey-field sites, amending or adding to existing public car parking provision.**
- iii. Support will be given to improving the quality of public and on-street 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.**
- iv. Proposals for the development of any privately owned or controlled parking provision within the centres will only be acceptable where it will not result in additional on-street parking or reliance on public car parking provision.**

farm diversification schemes. In the area between settlements Policy ED1 and Policy ED2 are intended to work with Policies EN2 and EN3.

7.7 Current car parking is mostly in public ownership across the Northam Neighbourhood Plan area, though some private car parking areas do exist. The old centres of Northam and Appledore

# NORTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 - 2031

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.

7.8 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 EV charge points).

7.9 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.

7.10 The community consultation exercises in 2018 and 2019 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.

7.11 Therefore, 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 grey-field and brownfield sites, although these should be within settlement boundaries. Combined

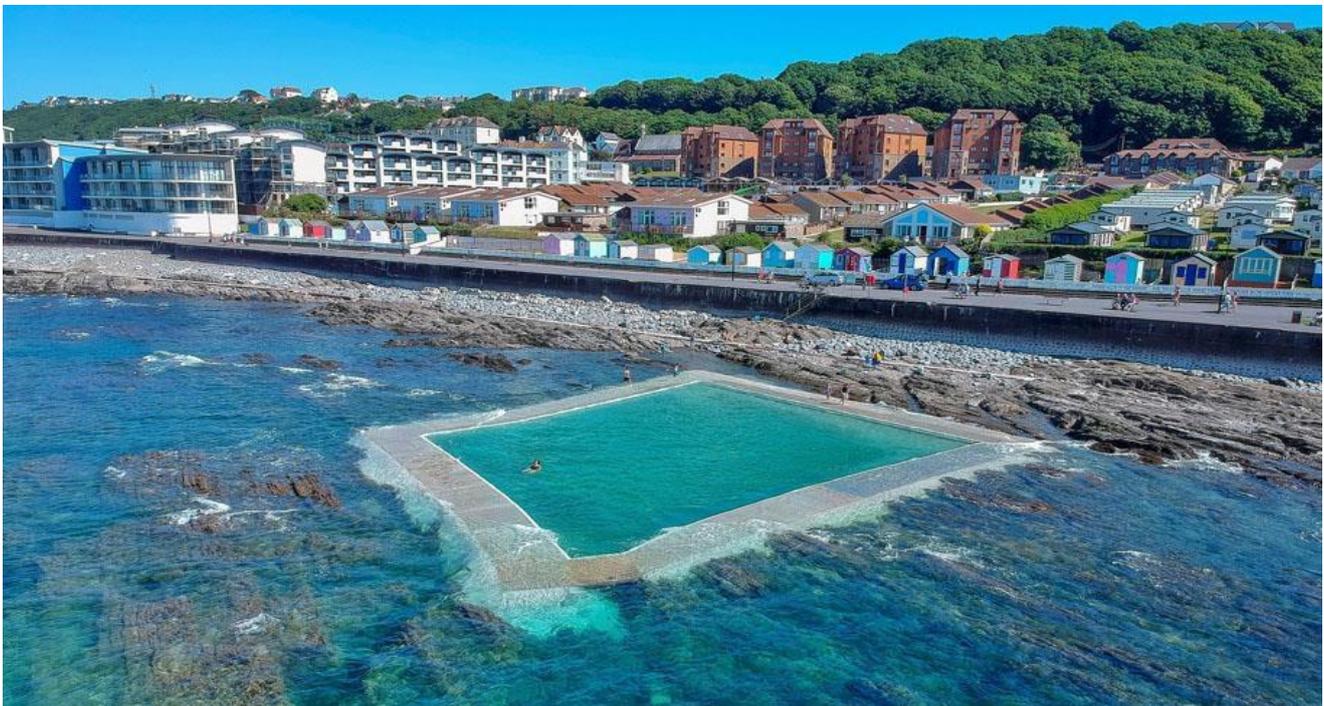


Figure 10: Westward Ho! Promenade and seafront (Photo credit Alex Hall at Golden Bay Holiday Village).

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

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.

7.12 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

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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.

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

7.14 Policy ED2 therefore seeks to manage pressures for tourism development by guiding development towards sustainable rather than unsustainable locations. In this regard the Policy identifies three different areas each with its own NDAT Local Plan policy context. These are: the area within development boundaries, the area between settlements covered by policies EN2 and EN3 and shaded green on Map N1; 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.

7.15 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.

7.16 In the area between settlements shaded green on Map N1, Policy ED2 is intended to work

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



<sup>(21)</sup> 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.' North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031. Document available at: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/11251/North-Devon-and-Torridge-Local-Plan-2011-2031>

<sup>(22)</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/W1145/E/11/2144897) Richmond Dock, New Quay Street, Appledore, Devon EX39 1PJ. Decision document sets out site constraints in detail. (Document available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/legal/appeal-decision-richmond-dock-pdf/>)

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

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

## **POLICY: HE2 RICHMOND DOCK**

**Proposals that secure the preservation of Richmond Dock for maritime-related purposes or small business use will be supported provided the integrity of the structure and setting are retained; and**

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

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.<sup>21</sup>

7.17 Richmond Dock (left and 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).<sup>22</sup>

7.18 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.

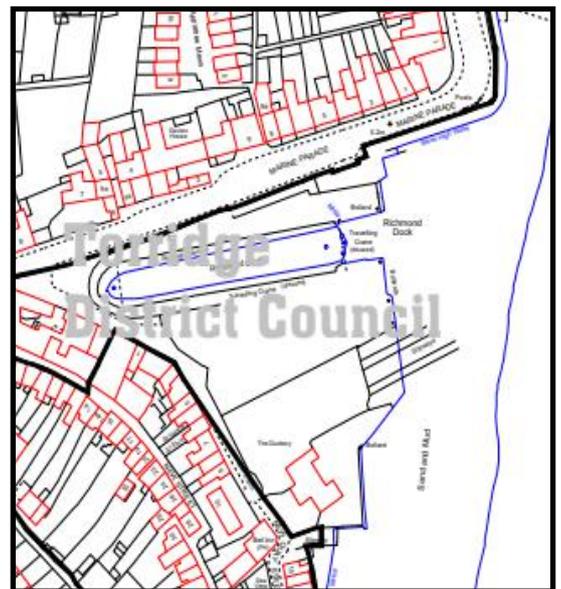


Figure 12: Extracted from Appledore Conservation Area Map. Available from [Conservation Areas | Torridge District Council](#) (see appx. 7)

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- The position of the dock in the centre of Appledore and overlooked by numerous properties ensures that those industrial maritime uses of the dock will probably impact adversely 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.

7.19 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'.

7.20 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 or on the existing flood defences on the site.

7.21 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.

7.22 The dock is sited on reclaimed land, and it is likely that any large-scale construction on the

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## 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 House, or the character of the Undeveloped Coast.**
  - ii. Any development proposal must include traffic and transport assessments, detailing measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the highway network.**

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.

7.23 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.

7.24 The Appledore Maritime Employment Zone identified shaded in orange on Map N6 in Appendix 9, the Map at appendix 8 includes Appledore Shipyard, the Fish Dock, the sand and gravel dock and Middle Dock. The responses to the 2018 consultation questionnaire 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.

7.25 The vision and objectives of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan is 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.

7.26 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

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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.

7.27 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.

7.28 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.

7.29 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



Figure 13: Appledore Shipyard (extract from Google Earth image, 2022).

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adjoins the South West Coastal Footpath, UNESCO Biosphere Buffer and Transition Zone and a Torridge SSSI.

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

## **8.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

8.1 When the Northam Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan for the area, the Plans' 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.

8.2 Implementation of this Plan will depend on the coordinated activities of a number of agencies. It is essential that necessary infrastructure related to development is provided in a timely manner. The relevant bodies will manage the precise timing and phasing of such

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## GLOSSARY

**Affordable housing** - housing 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 nominated by Northam 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*.

**Brownfield site** - previously developed land that is no longer being used.

**Coalescence** - the process of settlements coming together through development. This process is cumulative and usually piecemeal. The development of any land situated between the development boundaries will contribute to the process of coalescence.

**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 Tav-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 of a site for business activity (excluding housing).

**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 is can deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

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Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments and private gardens

**Grey-field site** - buildings or developed land in built-up areas that are demonstrably underused.

**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.

**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.

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