



Local Plan Review

Sustainability
Appraisal Scoping
Report July 2013

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mid Devon is beginning the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the district. The document will set the levels and distribution of development and strategic policies for the period 2011-2031. The document will also set out infrastructure requirements to deliver the strategic objectives and will also state the policies by which development management decisions will be made when determining planning applications. It is anticipated that the process of preparing the plan will take two years, with the document ready for adoption in 2015. Once adopted, the single Local Plan will replace the three existing parts of the current plan:
- Core Strategy (adopted 2007)
 - Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan Document (adopted 2010)
 - Local Plan Part 3: Development Management policies (adoption anticipated in autumn 2013)
- 1.2 In order to be in accordance with EU and UK legislation, any plan must be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). SA/SEA (or SA for short) assists in promoting sustainable development through integrating sustainability considerations into plan making. It is an iterative, ongoing process and integral to plan making. The process helps to consider the effects of the plan (and the effect without the plan) on the environment, on people and on the economy. It helps planning authorities to consider the merit of a variety of options to help determine the most sustainable policy decisions.
- 1.3 The SA will highlight potential negative impacts of a plan, thereby providing the opportunities for these effects to be avoided or mitigated. However, the SA cannot ensure that development will be absolutely sustainable in all its aspects. Where harmful effects are noted, the SA can help to demonstrate how they can be mitigated. It is possible that in some cases development which is in some respects less sustainable may still have to take place, perhaps where the social and/or economic benefits outweigh environmental impact.
- 1.4 This scoping report is the first stage in the preparation of an SA. It will be developed and updated as the Local Plan is prepared and is broken down into five elements. First, there is an analysis of other plans or programmes that may impact on the Local Plan and need to be considered. Second, baseline information about Mid Devon is collated to highlight previous trends based on national and local data. Thirdly, a summary of sustainability issues or problems specific to Mid Devon has been provided based on the analysis undertaken from examining other plans and the baseline data. Fourth, a framework is provided by which the options within the Local Plan can be analysed for their sustainability impacts. The final element of the scoping report is a consultation process, offering interested organisations and members of the public the opportunity to comment on the sustainability considerations noted within the report.

2 Relevant plans and programmes

- 2.1 The first stage of undertaking a sustainability appraisal involves identifying and taking account of other relevant policies, plans and sustainability objectives. The Local Plan will not be a document developed in isolation – its content will be influenced by a large number of factors and policies defined by EU or UK legislation, national policies and other plans and strategies at a local level. Understanding the relationship between the Local Plan and these policies is important as it will influence the options considered in preparation of the plan. Information on these relationships will reveal where there are shared objectives or inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed.
- 2.2 The reviewed plans and strategies have been grouped into theme areas. Many of the themes will cut across each other, however to permit an analysis they have been collated under particular headings. Only the conclusions from the review of relevant plans are contained below; the full review of plans and strategies can be found within the appendix.

Air quality

- 2.3 All the air quality-related policies/strategies reviewed emphasise the need to reduce carbon emissions as a key action to mitigate the effects of climate change. Reducing emissions is also a requirement in areas that suffer from poor air quality, such as in Crediton and Cullompton. Reviewed policies also encourage increasing the use of low carbon vehicles as part of a strategy to reduce emissions. These messages must be clearly reflected within the new Local Plan. The document should ensure that new development does not unacceptably contribute to poorer air quality, and that opportunities for reducing emissions are incorporated. New development should encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling or the use of public transport. New development should also help to promote the market for low carbon vehicles by ensuring the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, or other latest technological infrastructure needed for low emission transportation.

Biodiversity and green infrastructure

- 2.4 The biodiversity and green infrastructure plans and strategies reviewed have at heart the need to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Policies should avoid the deterioration of habitats, and look to preserve, restore and recreate priority habitats, with no net loss in priority habitats. Development should provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, balancing the economic and social needs of development with the objectives of bio- and geo-diversity conservation. Policies should also give consideration to biodiversity enhancing development. A holistic approach to the provision of playing fields should be taken, considering all public and private landowners.

Climate change mitigation and energy

- 2.5 The UK is committed to achieving targets in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to tackle climate change, and development has a significant part to play to help achieve these targets. Planning needs to minimise vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy development. Improving the energy

efficiency of the fabric of buildings, particularly by encouraging low or zero carbon energy sources will limit CO₂ emissions.

Community and wellbeing

- 2.6 The reviewed plans and strategies set out the importance of delivering an integrated approach to new development. Building mixed inclusive communities, around a strong neighbourhood centre, with a mixture of housing, economic uses, community uses and services is a priority. Access to services, the creation of safe neighbourhoods and the availability of local greenspace and quality education and leisure facilities for young people are vital in the creation of healthy, inclusive communities. The provision of accessible, adaptable properties also allows older residents or those with disabilities to remain in their communities, close to family and friends, rather than having to move as their needs change. Residents should be able to influence decisions that affect them.

Economy and economic development

- 2.7 The planning system should support the development of strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth. Opportunities for meeting the needs of local and inward investment should be met by facilitating the growth of local businesses, both urban and rural, and providing sufficient land for employment. There should be sustained investment in business and transport infrastructure to improve connectivity. The regeneration of the market towns of the district should be supported with a particular aim to reduce the number of empty shops.

Historic environment

- 2.8 The planning system should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and protection of the historic environment, considering the value it plays in delivering sustainable, distinctive places that are enjoyed by local people. A balance needs to be struck where the priorities of maintaining and enhancing the built environment are balanced against the district's development needs. The impact on heritage assets of development should be proportionally considered in relation to their significance, with the most important nationally significant assets being given the utmost protection.

Housing

- 2.9 Nationally the country has not been building enough homes to house its population, and therefore significantly boosting the supply of homes is a priority. The proportion of the population of people above retirement age has increased and there is a need to provide appropriate housing in response. Providing for an ageing population or people with disabilities may need to be addressed through the delivery of homes that can be adapted as peoples circumstances change, or through the delivery of extra care housing. A wide variety of house types should be provided, across a range of tenures to meet the needs of the population. In response to the fact that house prices are nearly ten times local earnings, there is a need to provide affordable housing to address long social housing waiting lists and others with a housing need. Such issues are also acutely felt in some of the more rural locations of the district, where house prices may be even higher, and will need to be addressed through affordable housing delivery to meet an identified need. Provision for the needs of gypsies and travellers should be made planned for which seeks to balance their locational, economic and

social needs with the protection of amenity and the environment. There is a need for modern homes to be environmentally sustainable, and meet the consumer demands of the population, including provision of sufficient storage space and private outdoor space.

Infrastructure

- 2.10 The reviewed plans and strategies highlight the importance of delivering infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and new communities. The Government places great importance on the delivery of the following infrastructure as part of ensuring sustainable economic development: transportation, flood protection, communications, research, energy and waste. Community facilities and schools are important infrastructural elements that are required to meet the needs of local communities as part of the delivery of sustainable development.

Land

- 2.11 Soil is a fundamental natural resource that has often been degraded by human action. Soils should be protected and enhanced. Planning should consider allocating or developing land with the least environmental value, prioritising lower quality land. Consideration of the soil quality of best and most versatile agricultural land, and the need to remediate contaminated land should be a planning consideration. When considering development, the use of land should be optimised across a site to ensure the efficient use of building footprints whilst setting a density of development appropriate to local circumstances.

Landscape

- 2.12 Devon has a unique and valued landscape, which also contributes towards the tourism attraction of the county. Mid Devon has borders that are adjacent or in close proximity to two national parks, whilst the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty crosses the east part of the district. Planning policies should protect valued landscapes, offering protection and enhancement of the most valued such as national parks and AONBs. The protection of the landscape needs to be balanced against the challenge of mitigating the effects of climate change through the transition to a low carbon future, particularly achieved through the development of renewables technologies, which are often located in rural areas.

Minerals

- 2.13 There needs to be a sufficient supply of minerals to ensure the long-term ability to deliver infrastructure and development. The need for a supply of minerals needs to be balanced with the priority of protecting the environment. Planning for minerals extraction does not fall within the remit of Mid Devon District Council, being instead undertaken by Devon County Council. However, the consideration of the environmental impact of materials used in buildings and the desire to promote locally sourced materials is a district issue, as is the effect on local communities who are in close proximity to mineral workings.

Rural areas

- 2.14 The population in rural areas has grown at a greater rate than urban areas in the last decade. Rural businesses make a substantial contribution to the economy and should be supported to grow. Agriculture remains an industry that has faced many challenges in recent decades and such enterprises should be supported to diversify in order to benefit the rural economy. Rural

areas experience social issues such as poor access to services and facilities, whilst the growth of their economies may be hampered by poorer broadband speeds.

Transport

- 2.15 Reducing carbon emissions produced as a result of transportation is a national priority. This can be achieved by increasing opportunities for the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling; through the delivery of opportunities to increase the use of electric vehicles and improving the connections between various modes of transportation; improving the condition of the local transport network and protecting existing transportation assets. Ensuring safe and sustainable transport options are available to communities is also a priority.

Waste

- 2.16 National waste priorities are to protect human health and the environment whilst ensuring the delivery of sustainable waste management. Reducing the carbon footprint of waste will also contribute towards tackling climate change. New development should contribute to sustainable waste management, through the application of the waste hierarchy where disposal is the last resort, instead prioritising re-use, recycling or recovery.

Water

- 2.17 Managing flood risk and the effects of climate change is a key national and local priority, particularly as Mid Devon has suffered serious flooding in the past. There is also growing pressure on water resources and a need to improve resource efficiency. In particular new housing and commercial development should incorporate measures to improve water efficiency and reduce surface water run-off which can contribute to flooding. Water bodies should be protected from the effects of pollution, and there should be no reduction in their quality or status.

3 Baseline information about Mid Devon

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

Location

- 3.3 Mid Devon is an inland area in the south west of England, lying roughly equidistant between the Bristol and English Channel coasts. The significant urban areas of Exeter (population 117,800) and Taunton (63,000) are just beyond the southern and eastern boundaries of the district respectively. Major east-west transportation routes run through the district, including the M5, A361, A30 and the Great Western Mainline Railway.

Physical characteristics (including landscape)

- 3.4 The district of Mid Devon covers an area of 353 square miles (914 sq. km) in the heartland of Devon. It lies between Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills. From the centre of the district, the north and south coasts of Devon are each about 30 miles away. The majority of Mid Devon's settlements are nestled within the folds of the landscape, with many small historic settlements containing thatched cottages and ancient churches. Tiverton is the main town within the district, with the three smaller market towns of Cullompton, Crediton and Bampton.
- 3.5 The Mid Devon district forms the heart of the Devon countryside, linked to the south coast by the River Exe with its valley and surroundings. The intricate course of the River Exe is the most defining landscape feature in Mid Devon, providing a continuous thread flowing from the northern extremities of the district down to the south near Thorverton. To the east the Blackdown Hills have a unique geology and provide an often isolated and valued distinctive rural landscape.
- 3.6 The Culm Valley to the east is a low lying flat prosperous agricultural area, with good soil fertility. The north and northwest of the district is a high flattish landscape with a rather unsheltered windswept appearance, formed by the Culm Measures, so called for its underlying thin bed of coal known locally as 'Culm'. The farming hinterland to the north of Crediton, often referred to as the Mid Devon farming belt, has all the typical elements that make up the distinctive Devon landscape, with its varied patchwork of irregular shaped fields with green pastures.

Biodiversity and green infrastructure

- 3.7 The varied nature of Devon's geology and landform has led to a considerable range of biodiversity. There are various protected species found in Mid Devon, such as woodlark, bats and dormice. In comparison with the rest of Devon, Mid Devon has relatively little land designated as being of national importance and no designed or candidate European sites. Within Mid Devon there are 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), three local nature reserves and two nature reserves managed by Devon Wildlife Trust. Mid Devon has over 8 sq. km. of ancient woodland. The district supports a range of important wildlife including over 200 County Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites.
- 3.8 Changes in wildlife populations and habitat have occurred throughout the last century and show a general trend of decline. The main threats to biodiversity include environmental pollution, land use change, fragmentation and invasive species introduction. These pressures are likely to continue and biodiversity may also be affected by climate change and recreational pressure. Hedgerow removal and unsympathetic conservation of rural buildings can impact on important species identified in the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 3.9 In particular the RSPB's State of Nature Report (June 2013) stated that 60% of species on which they hold data are in decline, whilst 31% have declined strongly. Half of the species assessed have also shown strong changes in abundance or distributing, indicating that recent environmental changes are having a dramatic impact on the nature of the UK's land and seas. In particular species with specific habitat requirements are faring worse than generalist species that are better able to adapt to a changing environment. Action needs to be taken to save nature for its intrinsic value and for the benefits it brings to us that are essential for well-being and prosperity.
- 3.10 Natura 2000 sites, which are hierarchically the most important sites for biodiversity, are protected under European legislation. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated for species and habitats and Special Protected Areas (SPAs) designated for birds. Whilst there are no Natura 2000 sites within Mid Devon, there are six within 5km of the district's boundary. The six sites include:
- Hare's Down, Knowstone and Rackenford Moors (North Devon)
 - Exmoor Heaths (North Devon and West Somerset)
 - Exmoor and Quantock Oak Woodlands (North Devon and West Somerset)
 - Holme Moor and Clean Moor (Taunton Deane)
 - Quants (Taunton Deane)
 - South Dartmoor Woods (Teignbridge)
- 3.11 The Hare's Down, Knowstone and Rackenford Moors site is considered to be at greatest risk from development, due to its location on the A361 and proximity to the Mid Devon boundary. The A361 is the main route into North Devon from the M5 motorway, providing a vital tourism link as well as a certain amount of commuter and shopping traffic in either direction. Natural England has advised that any development that encourages through-traffic may impact on the SAC.

- 3.12 There are many other elements that form part of the district's green infrastructure. These include 476 miles of Public Rights of Way and two regional walking routes (Two Moors Way in the west and Exe Valley Way from North to South). These routes are used recreationally by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, but many rights of way provide short enough connections through and between towns and villages that they are realistic choices for people travelling to and from work and school.

Climate change mitigation and energy

- 3.13 Forecasting the future impact of climate change is particularly challenging, though there is extensive scientific evidence that the world's climate is changing. The UK Government has stated that if the global average temperature rises more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, significant negative impacts of climate change will be more likely and the cost of managing them will rise sharply. To have a 50% chance of keeping climate change to within 2°C of pre-industrial levels, global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak before 2020 and then decline steeply. Evidence suggests at present emissions are continuing to soar. On 10 May 2013, concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere passed 400 parts per million, the highest level in 50 years of data collection, and a peak not estimated to have been experienced for three-five million years (the Pliocene period, a time when the arctic was ice-free and sea levels were 40 metres higher than today).
- 3.14 There are many risks associated with increasing climate change. These include threats to agriculture as a result of higher demand for water resources, reduction in productivity in farming or forestry land as a result of drought or conversely as a result of flooding. Businesses are likely to be effected by increased risk of flooding, competition for water, energy and materials and the disruption of transport networks and communication links. The flooding and resultant disruption to the Great Western Railway line near Stoke Canon in December 2012 highlights the potential impact on the region. The natural environment could be affected resulting in increased concentrations of pollutants in low water levels or reduced river flows damaging freshwater habitats and other ecosystem services; warmer rivers, lakes and seas impacting on biodiversity; flooding impacting on key habitats; ocean acidification affecting species and habitats and changes in seasonal events.
- 3.15 These effects will be experienced at a time when national energy reserves are declining. Much existing energy infrastructure is in the process of closing as it reaches the end of its operational life, whilst domestic fossil reserves of oil and gas are declining. The amount of spare electricity capacity in the system could fall from 14% (in 2012) to 4% by 2015/16 (Statutory Security of Supply Report, 2012).
- 3.16 To ensure there is sufficient energy to meet the UK's energy needs, and to mitigate the impacts of climate change there is a need to increase our reliance on low carbon technology. In the last few years this has resulted in increased delivery of renewable electricity generation in Mid Devon, typically in the form of large scale solar photovoltaic farms and to a lesser extent onshore wind turbines. To date there has been less development of renewable heat. Mid Devon has also been able to ensure the delivery of solar PV cells on the roofs of all local authority owned housing.

- 3.17 Whilst Government pays subsidies in the form of tariffs for renewable energy and maintains a positive approach to moving to low carbon energy sources, pressure for such developments within Mid Devon is likely to increase – particularly given the district’s location (i.e. annually more sun in the south, and more wind as the area is exposed to the prevailing south westerly winds). However, this has implications for conflicts that may arise as a result of landscape impacts, particularly given the proximity to national parks and the Blackdown Hills AONB. Historically, large-scale renewable energy developments have often been vocally opposed by local communities.
- 3.18 Mitigating the effects of climate change will also require the use of lower carbon resources in the construction industry, particularly as part of the development of houses and other buildings. Buildings will need to use fewer resources through the use of materials with a lower lifecycle carbon use, whilst simultaneously increasing energy and resource efficiency. Building regulations have been gradually amended to improve the energy efficiency of homes which will have affected the carbon output of recent new builds nationally. However, within Mid Devon, the delivery of homes which meet the higher categories of the Code for Sustainable Homes has not been a priority. This trend may start to be reversed as a result of new policies within the Local Plan Part 3 requiring all new major housing development to meet code level 3, rising to code level 5 by 2016.

Community and wellbeing

- 3.19 The health of people in Mid Devon is generally better than the England average. However, life expectancy is 4.9 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of Mid Devon than in the least deprived areas. Over the last 10 years all-cause mortality rates have fallen. About 16.9% of Year 6 children are classified as obese, whilst levels of teenage pregnancy and smoking in pregnancy are lower than the England average. Priorities for Mid Devon include addressing healthy weight in childhood, cardiovascular skin disease, skin cancer prevention, alcohol use and smoking.
- 3.20 Despite the impact of the recession, incidents of recorded crime have continued to fall year on year since 2007/08. Furthermore, the area is one of the lowest for recorded crime within Devon and Cornwall. Should the economic downturn continue it is unclear whether this pattern will be able to continue. Social deprivation, however, has increased across the district since 2007, with approximately 1,900 children living in poverty (Mid Devon Health Profile, 2012). Deprivation is highest in Tiverton, Cullompton and in some of the more remote rural areas.

Economy and employment

- 3.21 The majority of Mid Devon’s employment falls within the service sector, which includes occupations where knowledge and time are offered to improve productivity. Examples include transport and distribution, retail and services such as accountants or building surveyors. This sector accounts for 76.7% of Mid Devon employment (Economic Trends Report, August 2012).
- 3.22 There are low levels of inward commuting and a strong ‘pull’ from neighbouring urban areas, especially Exeter. Forthcoming data releases from the 2011 Census will provide up-to-date information about travel-to-work patterns. The available information from the Annual

Population Survey (2008) estimates that of the people working in Mid Devon, only 25% commute in from outside the district, while only 57% of Mid Devon's working residents stay in Mid Devon for work.

- 3.23 The district profile produced for the Local Economic Assessment (2012) found that there is a high level of self-employment within Mid Devon, and the district is above the Devon average for business density (number of businesses per working age person) and business start-ups. While school-level attainment is above average for the county, this does not translate to a highly skilled resident workforce, implying that high-attaining school leavers are not staying in Mid Devon.
- 3.24 The Council commissioned a Retail Study in 2012, to assess both demand and the capacity of the local catchment areas to support different sorts of retail growth. The report highlighted that Mid Devon's market towns are in a vulnerable position, similar to other small-medium sized towns across the country. The study identifies common trends, such as national retailers consolidating their businesses in larger regional centres, while internet shopping also takes trade away from town centre shops. Retail forecasts predict weak growth in spending, resulting in possible reductions in town centre retail space, with these effects potentially being most acutely felt in Crediton and Cullompton. Out-of-centre retail development may be most attractive to developers due to lower land values but may harm the existing town centres. Regeneration of the town centres, particularly as Tiverton is in receipt of government regeneration funding as part of the 'Portas Pilot' programme, is a priority, but one that faces significant challenges.
- 3.25 Tourism also represents a small but important sector within the district. Devon is a popular destination for domestic tourism, though traditionally Mid Devon has not been a significant recipient of tourism spend as visitors bypass the district en route to other parts of the county, particularly those areas closer to the coast. Previously, tourism development focused on the small scale provision of visitor accommodation, often on farms that were diversifying their activities. A Mid Devon Peer Challenge undertaken in early 2013 highlighted tourism as an economic area on which the district could capitalise. Further detail on the type of tourism offer that should be pursued will be presented by the forthcoming Tourism Study. It is likely this will prioritise modest sized developments seeking to capitalise on existing assets, such as the district's location and rural nature, including its proximity to two national parks.

Historic environment

- 3.26 Mid Devon is a district with a rich historic and cultural heritage. There is a wealth of historic buildings and features throughout the district, with over 2680 listings of buildings, bridges and milestones. The district has three historic parks and gardens of national importance – Knightshayes, Bridwell Park and Shobrooke Park, with 16 of local value. The area also has 50 conservation areas and 49 scheduled ancient monuments, including castles, roman forts, stone crosses, bowl barrows, a henge, abbey, ring ditch, iron age earthworks, camps, a Romano-British villa, Neolithic causewayed enclosure and a hillfort. In addition there are a wide range of archaeological remains which are not scheduled.

- 3.27 The four main towns of the district all have a particular historic importance. Tiverton has its origins in a ford across the Rivers Exe and Lowman and has an attractive historic centre and a rich legacy of buildings of all periods. Crediton is a historic market town with medieval burgage plots that can still be discerned in the south side of the High Street. Cullompton is an old town with two grade I listed properties and some ninety grade II. Bampton was formerly a market town and has the mound of a former medieval motte and bailey castle.
- 3.28 However, whilst the heritage of the district is critical to local character, there is not comprehensive coverage of documents that provide an aide to protection. Of the 50 conservation areas, only 12 have conservation area appraisals and four have conservation management plans. Whilst the four main towns and a number of the larger villages are all covered, other villages and smaller settlements within the district have no coverage. Production of additional appraisals has slowed in recent years, with only two new CAAs adopted since 2008 (another is currently in draft). Cullompton has an Article 4 direction in place, which offers a degree of protection over and above that of the conservation area designation. Plans to put in place a similar directive in Bradninch were discussed but have not been adopted. There are currently 22 heritage assets in Mid Devon that are considered by English Heritage to be at risk of degradation for various reasons. The Heritage at Risk Register identified three conservation areas (Bow, Cullompton and Tiverton), two buildings and 17 scheduled monuments at risk.
- 3.29 There are also potential conflicts between the protection of heritage assets and mitigating the impact of climate change. In particular this is played out where home owners wish to install renewable energy features, such as solar PV arrays on roofs in a conservation area or on a listed building. Such developments may not positively contribute to local character or may reduce the significance of the heritage value of a building. This represents a potential conflict of sustainability objectives.

Land

- 3.30 Building on previously developed land, “brownfield land”, avoids the need to use greenfield land for new housing. In recent years, Mid Devon has developed a high proportion of new housing and employment on brownfield sites, with totals of 59% of new or converted housing and 57% of new employment development in 2011/12. This trend is not likely to continue as previously developed land is a finite resource, which is relatively scarce in a rural setting such as Mid Devon. Government policy encourages the effective use of brownfield land, provided that it is not of high environmental value; however this approach is less strict than previous national policy. Conversely, national policy now provides less support for the long-term protection of employment land for development for alternative uses. This could mean existing brownfield land being used for housing, potentially reducing the overall amount of greenfield that needs to be allocated.
- 3.31 Government guidance also states that planning should consider the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. A national grading system has been in place since the 1960s which classifies the quality of agricultural land based on factors based on

soil, climate and site. At the time of original mapping the breakdown of grades within Mid Devon was as follows:

Grade	Percentage land coverage
1	3.48%
2	11.01%
3	64.44%
4	19.86%
5	0.05%
Non-agricultural	0.28%
Urban	0.89%

Source: MAFF (1966)

- 3.32 This mapping, produced by Central Government, has not been updated on a district-wide basis since it was originally commissioned. However, it is unlikely to have changed significantly despite the growth in urban areas in the last forty years and it highlights the very low levels of the best quality agricultural land available within the district. Any loss of this resource would need robust justification.

Minerals

- 3.33 Responsibility for minerals planning is a function of Devon County Council. However, Mid Devon is the setting for a number of locations of mineral extraction. Strategic mineral sites producing minerals of national importance or making a significant contribution to delivering sub-regional aggregates include the winning of limestone at Westleigh.

Population and housing

- 3.34 The release of data from the 2011 Census has shed new light on population trends in Mid Devon. In combination with other data sources, this helps to build a picture of changing household composition and long-term needs. The population according to the census is 77,750, an increase of approximately 11% upon the 2001 figure, a rate of growth that has risen faster than the rest of Devon, the South West and England. The median age of Mid Devon residents has also increased, from 41 to 44 reflecting both regional and national trends of a population that is living longer. The number of households within the district has also increased by 13% within the last ten years, reflecting not only population growth, but changing societal demographics such as older people continuing to live independently in their own homes for longer and the growth in single parent households. Average household size has stayed consistent at 2.4 over the last decade.
- 3.35 House prices in Mid Devon are higher than the averages for Devon, the South West and England and Wales. While house prices have fallen slightly since the economic downturn, average 2011 were still 89% higher than they were in 2001 and there are signs that the ratio of house prices to earnings is rising again, with fewer people now in full-time employment.
- 3.36 Affordability remains a critical issue, and with the Mid Devon population having risen 11% between 2001 and 2011, there is a mismatch between the overall availability and the demand for affordable housing. The Mid Devon Local Housing Needs and Demand Survey 2011

indicated a need for 335 additional affordable dwellings each year to address the backlog of unmet need over the last 10 years. Over that 10 year period, total housing completions in Mid Devon averaged 349 dwellings per annum, the majority of these being market rather than affordable dwellings. Existing plans allocate sufficient land to meet the strategic target of 6,800 dwellings up to the year 2026, but other factors such as mortgage and developer finance availability will have had an impact on housing delivery since 2009.

- 3.37 The Council intends to commission a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment in partnership with some of our neighbouring district councils. This will provide definitive, up-to-date information on the level of housing need and demand across the Exeter Housing Market Area. Local planning authorities are required to cooperate with each other on strategic planning matters.

Resources

- 3.38 Energy is a crucial consideration in the functioning of the economy, and one area of concern is the future of non-renewable sources of energy, particularly oil. There has been much discussion about the notion of 'peak oil' in recent decades, the theory being that production of oil will peak in coming decades, with demand outstripping supply. Whilst there is academic disagreement on the reality of the peak oil theory, there is growing consensus that the age of cheap oil is coming to an end. Declining production of existing older oil fields will exacerbate production problems. As a result, more than two thirds of current crude oil production capacity may need to be replaced by 2030, simply to prevent production from falling. This is likely to be extremely challenging, and will likely result in necessary demand reduction and sourcing alternative sources of energy supply. Local effects of peak oil will include increased costs for fuel, with significant rises already having taken place, affecting motor vehicle users, but also passengers on public transport facing higher fare costs. As the government seeks to deliver a balanced future energy supply, there is likely to be greater desire to deliver renewable energy developments, with pressure particularly felt in rural areas for onshore wind and solar farms.
- 3.39 There is also uncertainty over the future supply of phosphorus, which is an essential ingredient in fertilisers, and plays a critical role in contributing to modern agricultural production. Some researchers have predicted that phosphorus reserves are expected to be completely depleted within 50-100 years, though this is not universally agreed. Such reductions will have a significant impact on farming productivity, land use and food supply.

Rural areas

- 3.40 National government statistics classify Mid Devon as a 'Rural-80' based on the location of the local population. This statistic refers to the fact that over 80% of the population are resident in rural settlements (including those with urban areas with between 10,000 and 30,000 population regarded as 'larger market towns'). Classifying Mid Devon as a 'Rural-80' local authority puts it in a category of the most rural local authorities within the UK.
- 3.41 Rural businesses are a key element of the local economy. There is a growing trend for individuals to set up their own businesses, particularly in rural areas where areas such as Mid Devon can provide a high quality of life and where transport costs and distances can encourage home-working. Broadband access and speeds can be a key issue for rural-based businesses. A

programme to connect Devon and Somerset with superfast broadband is underway which will result in speeds of at least 24Mbps to at least of 85% of homes and businesses by 2015. However, many rural areas currently receive less than 2Mbps at present, which may hinder the start up or expansion of rural businesses.

- 3.42 Access to services is also an issue for rural areas. Statistics for the whole of Devon show a decrease in the number of households within good transport access to key services or work. Levels of public transport providing services to 55 villages in Mid Devon have shown a decrease since 2006. In particular the number of daily services to these settlements has shown a steady decline across this period.

Transport and air quality

- 3.43 As a rural area, Mid Devon has a high dependency on the car, particularly as public transport provision and coverage is far from extensive, and has shown signs of contracting. These factors are reflected in the level of car ownership, which has increased at both national and local levels. The average household in Mid Devon now owns 1.47 cars, as opposed to 1.33 at the time of the previous census. The percentage of households owning 2, 3 and 4 or more cars has all increased, whilst the share of those who do not own a car has fallen. In particular, the ratio of cars owned per household in Mid Devon has continued to grow at a consistent rate whilst growth in the national level has shown signs of levelling off. High levels of car ownership have not been affected by planning policies to restrict parking provision in recent developments. This has led to inappropriate or anti-social parking, rather than a reduction in car ownership. Future developments should make suitable provision for parking in order to reflect the rural nature of the district and levels of ownership. Neither does it appear that higher fuel costs have had an effect on car ownership, though high levels of ownership do not always translate into high levels of usage.
- 3.44 High levels of car ownership and hotspots of poor local road infrastructure have impacted on local air quality. Both Cullompton and Crediton were designed as Air Quality Management Areas in 2006 and 2004 respectively. Principal actions to address the excessive levels of Nitrogen Dioxide and particulates in the air include the development of the Crediton Link Road and two relief roads within Cullompton. Work to provide the Crediton Link Road has already commenced, however to date there has been no progress on new roads in Cullompton. Funding is being provided by Central Government to undertake improvements to both junctions 27 and 28 of the M5, however this may only reduce some of the congestion experienced at the Cullompton turn-off.

Waste

- 3.45 National policy on waste prioritises reduction, re-use or recycling in order to prevent waste going to landfill. Local authorities will experience increasing costs as a result of waste going to landfill, which will need to be reduced by using alternative methods of waste management, particularly given the severe pressures that are on Council finances as a result of Central Government funding cuts. There are also implications for climate change as a result of how waste is managed. In many cases carbon acts as a good proxy for the overall environmental

impacts of waste: generally speaking, the higher up the waste hierarchy waste is treated, the smaller the greenhouse gas impacts.

Water

3.46 Mid Devon has suffered serious flooding in the past, and the risk of flooding is likely to increase in the future as a result of climate change. Forward planning must take account of this risk to ensure that new development is sustainable. Winter rainfall is predicted to increase by 15-30% by the 2080s as a result of climate change, with a concomitant 20% rise in peak river flow. Impermeable surfaces of buildings, roads and pavements limit infiltration and increase the volume and rate of surface water runoff. Future development may increase the area of impermeable surfaces unless a sustainable approach to water management is adopted that promotes sustainable urban drainage and improved water efficiency within buildings. A new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will need to be commissioned once options for future development have been produced, which will provide advice on the potential likelihood of flooding based on the location of sites proposed.

4 Sustainability issues and problems

4.1 The next stage in the appraisal process involves the identification of any sustainability problems that relate to Mid Devon. These issues will have been highlighted as part of the review of relevant plans and programmes and the baseline data for the district set out earlier in this document. The initial list may expand further as a result of consultations undertaken as the Local Plan is prepared. The issues identified will also inform the sustainability objectives which form the basis of the framework to appraise the Local Plan strategy and policies as set out in the next section of this document.

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

- Small areas of social deprivation within Tiverton, Cullompton and some of the remote rural areas (including high levels of child poverty)
- Large population growth within the last decade and demographic household change leading to the need for new housing, particularly affordable housing given the high ratio between prices and local earnings
- Houses have not previously been constructed of a sufficient size to meet the needs of the modern family
- Access to services and facilities for rural communities has worsened and may continue to do so
- Biodiversity levels continuing to fall, often dramatically for some species
- Low levels of the best quality grade 1 agricultural land across the district
- Pressure to develop primarily on greenfield sites as fewer brownfield sites remain or require costly remediation
- The need to avoid disposal of waste, instead prioritising re-use, recycling or reduction
- Rich historic environment across the district, though some heritage assets at risk
- Climate change objectives can conflict with the conservation of the area's historic environment, particularly in the installation of renewables technologies that may impact on heritage assets
- Pressure for the installation of renewable energy developments to meet energy shortage
- Increased risk of flooding as a result of climate change
- Low delivery of low or zero carbon homes to date
- High car dependency across the district, with levels of car ownership having grown and continuing to grow
- Traffic congestion and poor air quality within Crediton and Cullompton
- Low levels of inward commuting but strong out-commuting, especially to Exeter and the potential loss of employment within Mid Devon
- Low retention of high-attaining school leavers
- Rural self-employment or small business start-up is a growing sector, however this may be constrained by poor broadband speeds
- Declining town centre health with town centre with regeneration likely to be affected by any new out-of-centre development

5 A framework to assess sustainability

- 5.1 A framework is used to understand the sustainability effects of the Local Plan as it is being developed. This framework is central to the process of sustainability appraisal. A framework has been developed consisting of sustainability objectives, each of which includes a number of elements against which a policy will be appraised. The framework includes all those factors highlighted through this report that will affect the sustainability of the Local Plan.
- 5.2 The framework below represents a more simplified approach than that used in previous Mid Devon SAs. This approach is considered to offer greater flexibility as the new Local Plan will contain both high level strategic policies, site allocations and detailed policies to guide development management decisions. This new framework can be applied to all these policies equally.
- 5.3 The sustainability objectives proposed are distinct from the objectives of the Local Plan, though they may in some cases overlap with them. They will provide a way of checking whether the Local Plan objectives are the best possible ones for sustainability and will test the social, environmental and economic effects of the plan. The indicators are not fixed at this stage, and can be amended, if required, in response to input received as a result of the scoping consultation exercise.

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

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

5.4 In order to consider the impact of the Local Plan against the sustainability objectives, a scoring system is proposed to be used. A score will be provided against each of the objectives to highlight a policy or proposal's sustainability impacts. Collectively, this will allow consideration of a policy's overall impact and permit comparison with other policies or proposals. Where negative impacts are highlighted, it will also permit proposals or policies to be modified and then rescored in order to determine whether their sustainability impacts have been made more positive.

5.5 The use of a scoring system with a range from +3 to -3 will highlight the scale of any potential impact. This offers more scope than the approach taken in the most recent SA of the Local Plan Part 3 where only a positive, negative, zero or indeterminate outcome could be used – a system which could not easily differentiate between a marginal or significant impact.

5.6 The following table sets out the scoring system that will be used:

Score	Rationale
+3	The policy/proposal will have a significant positive contribution towards achieving the objective
+2	The policy/proposal will have a positive impact in contributing towards achieving the objective
+1	The policy/proposal will have a minor positive impact in contributing towards achieving

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

5.7 In addition to the scoring process, a summary of information will be provided. This summary will describe the impact against each of the sustainability objectives, setting out the nature of the impact, how each is experienced and whether any of the impacts noted are offset by other effects of the policy.

6 Consultation

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

7 Appendix: Reviewed plans and programmes (full list)

<u>Air quality</u>	
Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
The 2008 Climate Change Act	The Climate Change Act sets statutory emissions reduction targets to at least 80% below the level of net UK emissions of targeted greenhouse gases in 1990.
The Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future (HM Government, 2011)	The Carbon Plan sets out how the UK will achieve decarbonisation within the framework of energy policy. Within the next 10 years the plan requires the development and deployment of new technologies that will be needed to halve emissions in the 2020s. Domestic transport emissions account for nearly a quarter of UK emissions; to achieve target vehicles will need to run on ultra-low emission technologies such as electric batteries, hydrogen fuel cells and plug-in hybrid technology. These changes will bring environmental benefits including improved local air quality. Encouraging the use of public transport, cycling or walking will boost the reduction in emissions.
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – Volume 2 (DEFRA, 2011)	The Air Quality Strategy points to certain pollutants where national objectives are in some cases being met, and others not. Pollutants described include: lead, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulphur dioxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Levels for many of these emissions are closely related to transport use, which planning policies will need to consider means to reduce those reaching unacceptable levels.
The Air Quality (Standards) Regulations 2010	The Air Quality (Standards) Regulations transpose into English legislation the requirements of EU directives on air quality and cleaner air. It sets air quality standards for key pollutants and requires the UK to demonstrate how the standards will be achieved and maintained when compliance is breached. Particular attention is given to reducing particulate matter, a pollutant associated with transport emissions, exposure to which can exacerbate existing respiratory conditions.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The NPPF requires local authorities to encourage solutions that result in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable transport. Local plans should aim to minimise pollution, and should prevent new and existing development from contributing to or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes aims to reduce the emissions of gases with high global warming impact associated with the manufacture, installation, use and disposal of foamed thermal and acoustic insulating materials. Building elements affected include roofs, walls, floors, hot water cylinders, cold water storage tanks and external doors. Credits towards achieving levels of the code can be achieved by reducing the use of materials with a high global warming impact. Application of the code is one method for reducing emissions at point of manufacture, installation and disposal. Such actions can contribute to the achievement of building sustainable homes.
Local Transport Plan 3, Devon and Torbay Strategy 2011-2026 (Devon County Council, 2011)	The Devon Local Transport Plan states that technology has a key role to play in reducing emissions which affect air quality. To support the market for electric vehicles it requires a network of charging points to be delivered in convenient locations for residents. Capital priorities include improving air quality in Cullompton and Crediton through the delivery of relief/link roads.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2012-2015	The Mid Devon Corporate Plan notes that there are areas of poor air quality within the district, especially within the Exeter Road area of Crediton, and Cullompton High Street and Station Road. The Local Plan will need to consider how new development impacts on existing, and areas at risk of poor air quality.
Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	There are air quality issues within Crediton and Cullompton. Tackling these is a priority.
<u>Air quality – sustainability conclusions</u> All the air quality-related policies/strategies reviewed emphasise the need to reduce emissions as a key action to mitigate the effects of climate change. Reducing emissions is also a requirement in areas that suffer from poor air quality, such as in Crediton and Cullompton. Reviewed policies also encourage increasing the use of low carbon vehicles as part of a strategy to reduce emissions. These messages must be clearly reflected within the new Local Plan. The document should ensure that new development does not unacceptably contribute to poorer air quality, and that opportunities for reducing emissions are incorporated. New development should encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling or the use of public transport. New development should also help to promote the market for low carbon vehicles by ensuring the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, or other latest technological infrastructure needed for low emission transportation.	

<u>Biodiversity and green infrastructure</u>	
Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
'The Natural Choice' Natural Environment White Paper (DEFRA, 2011)	The paper set out a framework for protecting and enhancing the natural environment. It proposed the introduction of Nature Improvement Areas, in order to provide bigger, connected sites for wildlife to live in and adapt to climate change in both urban and rural areas. Local Nature Partnerships. It also proposed new ways for developers to provide biodiversity offsetting, to ensure wildlife sites are not lost. Also proposed were Local Nature Partnerships to strengthen joined up action across local agencies and government.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	The act places a duty on public authorities (replacing s74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to have regard to biodiversity as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions. The act also requires the government to publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitats in England that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Requires local authorities to have regard to nature conservation when performing rights of way functions, including power to divert ROWs away from SSSIs. The act gives greater protection to wildlife and natural features by making provisions for the conservation of biodiversity, and improving protection for SSSIs.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	The act sets in place protective measures for wildlife, including wild birds and plants. The act requires local authorities to take steps to bring the protection of wildlife to the attention of the public and schoolchildren. The act (though subsequently amended) allows designation of Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) setting their management and protection measures, and also allows the designation of national nature reserves.
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (and Amendment 2012)	Translates the EU 'Wild Birds Directive', requiring the protection of biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. It places a new duty on relevant authorities to protect and create bird habitats, and a duty to avoid pollution or deterioration of bird habitats. The document also states the list of European protected species of animals and plants. The regulations require land use to plans that are likely to have a significant effect on a European site to make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The local authority may only give effect to the land use plan after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (DEFRA, 2002)	The strategy sets a mission for the next decade requiring a halt to overall biodiversity loss, support to healthy well-functioning ecosystems and to establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. In particular, reducing environmental pressures on biodiversity is a specific concern. This will be undertaken through reforms of the planning system to ensure a strategic approach to planning for nature will be undertaken. The protection and improvement of the natural environment is a core objective of the planning system. Biodiversity offsetting will be piloted to assess its potential to deliver planning policy more effectively. Particular targets (to be achieved by 2020) include 90% of priority habitats in favourable or recovering condition, and at least 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition, while maintaining at least 95% in favourable or recovering condition. Additional targets include bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats by at least 200,000ha.
England Biodiversity Strategy – Climate Change Adaptation Principles (DEFRA, 2008)	The document sets out principles for conserving biodiversity and protecting them from the direct and indirect impacts of climate change. The principles include conserving existing biodiversity, conserving protected areas and all other high quality habitats, conserving the range and ecological variability of habitats and species, maintaining existing ecological networks, creating buffer zones and high quality habitats, understand change is inevitable, make space for the natural development of rivers and coasts and raise awareness of the benefits of the natural environment to society.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The planning system should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Distinctions in policies should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status. Policies should plan for biodiversity on a landscape wide scale; promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 9 (ecology) states that development can meet this element of the code by promoting the use of land that already has limited value to wildlife, and to discourage it from developing ecologically valuable sites.
The Nature of Devon – A Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan (Devon County	Objectives of the action plan include ensuring that planning policies recognise the importance of biodiversity and the geological features of Devon, to ensure consideration is given to nature conservation issues in the implementation of planning, to reconcile the objectives of bio- and geodiversity conservation with the need for economic and social development in achieving environmental sustainability and to maintain a dialogue with relevant authorities leading to the identification of all sites of national or international

Council, 2005)	geological heritage which do not benefit from SSSI status.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	The natural environment of Devon needs to be sustained and should continue to be a priority for all those involved in planning for the future.
Mid Devon Playing Fields Strategy (2010)	Priority action points include: using the development of new and replacement schools as a catalyst for appraising and improving playing field facilities; to adopt and/or continue strong statutory policies protecting existing pitches, including those on education sites; and when planning new and improved facilities, to look holistically at the whole settlement's sporting provision – embracing public, private and education landowners.
Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	Mid Devon is a beautiful area with a high quality natural environment, bordering two national parks and the Blackdown Hills AONB, whilst there are also many Sites of Special Scientific Interest, county wildlife sites and local nature reserves. Development will need to be balanced against the priority of maintaining and enhancing the natural environment.
<u>Biodiversity and green infrastructure – sustainability conclusions</u> The biodiversity and green infrastructure plans and strategies reviewed have at heart the need to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Policies should avoid the deterioration of habitats, and look to preserve, restore and recreate priority habitats, with no net loss in priority habitats. Development should provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, balancing the economic and social needs of development with the objectives of bio- and geo-diversity conservation. Policies should also give consideration to biodiversity enhancing development. Policies should take a holistic approach to the provision of playing fields, considering all public and private landowners.	

<u>Climate change mitigation and energy</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Climate Change Act 2008	The act sets a framework for the UK to achieve its long-term goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensures steps taken towards adapting to the impact of climate change. The act sets statutory emissions reductions targets to be achieved by 2050 and

	beyond. The act sets out procedures for assessing the risks of the impact of climate change and requires Government to develop an adaptation programme which contributes to sustainable development.
The Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future (HM Government, 2011)	The Carbon Plan sets out how the UK will achieve decarbonisation within the framework of energy policy. Within the next 10 years the plan requires the development and deployment of new technologies that will be needed to halve emissions in the 2020s. By 2050, all buildings will need to have an emissions footprint close to zero, using better insulation, energy-efficient products and having heating from low carbon sources. Manufacturing processes will need to deliver a fair share of emissions cuts. By 2050 emissions from the power sector will need to be close to zero, electricity likely being delivered by wind farms, nuclear power stations and gas and coal-fired power stations.
UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (DECC, 2011)	The UK can meet a target of delivering 15% of UK's energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020. Renewable electricity has become well established, however renewable heat is less well developed. Eight technologies have the greatest potential to help meet the 2020 target, these include onshore wind, offshore wind, marine energy, biomass electricity, biomass heat, ground source and air source heat pumps, and renewable transport.
UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)	The strategy for sustainable development aims to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. The strategy sets out measure to realise the vision of sustainable communities within England, in both urban and rural areas, which will ensure the delivery of sustainable development, by placing it at the centre of the planning system.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon technologies. Local authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. To support the move to a low carbon future, plan for new development in locations and ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; set standards that are consistent with Government's zero carbon buildings policy. New development should consider the inclusion of decentralised energy supplies; take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption. To increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy developments all communities should contribute to their generation.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 1 (energy and carbon dioxide emissions) of the code aims to limit CO ₂ emissions arising from the operation of a dwelling, improving the fabric energy efficiency of dwellings, encouraging the specification of low and zero carbon energy sources, promotion of cycling and the need for cycle storage. Category 3 (materials) aims to specify the use of materials with lower environmental

	impacts over their life-cycle.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	The county needs to reduce its carbon emissions, and incorporate necessary adaptations to manage the effects of climate change into new developments.
<u>Climate change mitigation and energy – sustainability conclusions</u> The UK is committed to achieving targets in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to tackle climate change. Development has a significant part to play to help achieve these targets for reducing carbon emissions. Planning needs to minimise vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy development. Improving the energy efficiency of the fabric of buildings, particularly by encouraging low or zero carbon energy sources will limit CO ₂ emissions.	

<u>Community and wellbeing (including equalities and health)</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Localism Act 2011	The aim of the act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government to local communities. The act contained a number of changes to the planning system, including the abolition of the regional strategies and the new ‘duty to cooperate’. The act contains more rights for communities, including the community right to bid for assets of community value, community right to build, and neighbourhood planning.
Lifetime neighbourhoods (DCLG, 2011)	The report contains guidance on the design of neighbourhoods to make them inclusive regardless of age or disability. The components that make up lifetime neighbourhoods include good access (enabling residents to get out and about in the area they live), services and amenities (neighbourhoods with a mix of residential, retail and employment uses and access to services including health, post officer, banking facilities or cash machines), safe and inclusive built environments, with locally accessible greenspace and a range of affordable housing choices (based on inclusive design principles with adaptable space/layout to meet changing

	needs).
Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (HM Government, 2011)	Housing and planning policies should widely positively reflect the wide range of circumstances and lifestyles of older people, who already occupy nearly a third of all homes. Planning for homes and communities where older people can remain involved with their families, friends and communities and able to choose where and how they live. New housing developments need to make suitable provision for ageing populations in the long-term, ensuring a mix of property types, including Lifetime Homes.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	Planning policies should aim to achieve places which promote opportunities for meetings between members of the community, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages; safe and accessible developments; high quality public space, which encourage the active continual use of public areas. Policies should deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services; ensure that local facilities can develop in a sustainable manner; and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services. Local authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to ensuring sufficient choice of school places to meet community needs. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 7 of the code (health and well-being) aims to provide homes that promote good daylighting thereby improving quality of life, improved sound insulation to reduce noise complaints from neighbours, provision of inclusive outdoor space which is at least partially private and construction of homes that are easily accessible and adaptable.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	The strategy values diversity, using equality of opportunity for everyone as a guiding principle. Another guiding principle is the need to improve access to services and opportunities. There is a wide range in life expectancy between different communities, whilst Devon has a higher proportion of older people than the rest of the South West, with the number of older people due to reach one third of the population in the next 15 years. People will also need the opportunities to influence decision making which affects them.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2012-2015	'Better Homes' and 'Empowering our Communities' are objectives of the plan. Actions to meet the objectives include working with partners to provide extra care schemes in Tiverton and Cullompton, improve the most deprived areas of the district, work with partners to look at issues around rural isolation and access to services.

Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	The population of the district has grown by 20% over the last 20 years and much of this increase is down to inward migration from other parts of the UK. The largest increase is among those of retirement age, and meeting the service needs of the ageing population is a priority. There also needs to be good quality education and leisure facilities for children and young people.
<u>Community and wellbeing – sustainability conclusions</u> The reviewed plans and strategies set out the importance of delivering an integrated approach to new development. Building mixed inclusive communities, around a strong neighbourhood centre, with a mixture of housing, economic uses, community uses and services is a priority. Access to services, the creation of safe neighbourhoods and the availability of local greenspace and quality education and leisure facilities for young people are vital in the creation of healthy, inclusive communities. The provision of accessible, adaptable properties also allows older residents or those with disabilities to remain in their communities, close to family and friends, rather than having to move as their needs change. Residents should be able to influence decisions that affect them.	

<u>Economy and employment</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
The Plan for Growth (HM Treasury/BIS, 2011)	The Government's economic policy objective is to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth evenly shared across the country and between industries. Goals include making the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business (through the implementation of a presumption in favour of sustainable development, liberalisation of use classes and guarantees on planning application decision timetable) and encouraging investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy (including through increased investment in low carbon technologies).
The Government's Response to the	High Streets have been left in a fragile state as people opt to visit out-of-town centres offering free parking and a range of outlets, or choose to do their shopping online. High Streets cannot rely on retail alone, and need to offer something new and different.

Mary Portas Review (DCLG, 2012)	
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth, by planning proactively to meet the needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21 st century. Local authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area, and set criteria or identify strategic sites for local and inward investment to meet anticipated needs. Local authorities should also support existing business sectors, whether expanding or contracting and be flexible in accommodating needs not anticipated in the plan. Long term protection of sites not likely to come forward for employment should be avoided.
Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Business Plan	Objectives include promoting infrastructure to connect markets. Priorities include addressing existing and future constraints on business growth (emphasising the need for ongoing public and private investment to improve connections into and within the area where current connectivity is impacting on productivity and competitiveness), encouraging the roll out of future electronic communication technologies for the region, encourage a joined up approach to future housing development to secure economic prosperity (including social infrastructure and appropriate affordable housing), ensure an integrated approach to economic development recognising the constraints the planning system can place on business growth, particularly affecting rural businesses wishing to expand.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	The conditions need to be created for the county to have a strong and growing economy, ensuring maximum opportunities are available for everyone to contribute and benefit from it. There needs to be sustained investment, including in business infrastructure, communications and transport infrastructure, whilst the development of the knowledge economy should be encouraged.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2012-2015	'Thriving economy' is one aim of the corporate plan, in order to create a prosperous economy, sure and well-paid jobs and a sustainable environment. The aims are to increase inward investment, provide start up, relocation and expansion opportunities for businesses, provide opportunities and support to new and existing businesses and regenerate and improve the market towns.
Mid Devon Economic Development Strategy (2012)	Priorities include: increasing inward investment in the district; providing start up, relocation and expansion opportunities for businesses; provision of opportunities to support new and existing businesses; regenerating and improving the market towns; and raising skill levels, education attainment and income.
Mid Devon Sustainable	The economy of the district is dominated by retail and manufacturing businesses primarily focused on the three market towns. Encouraging businesses to set up or locate within Mid Devon by providing sufficient land for development is a priority. Work needs

Community Strategy 2010-15	to be undertaken with local businesses to reduce the number of empty shops in the market towns.
<u>Economy and economic development – sustainability conclusions</u> The planning system should support the development of strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth. Opportunities for meeting the needs of local and inward investment should be met by facilitating the growth of local businesses, both urban and rural, and providing sufficient land for employment. There should be sustained investment in business and transport infrastructure to improve connectivity. The regeneration of the market towns of the district should be supported with a particular aim to reduce the number of empty shops.	

<u>Historic environment</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
National Heritage Protection Plan (English Heritage, 2012)	The plan seeks to ensure that England's historic environment is not needlessly at risk of damage, erosion or loss; is experienced, understood and enjoyed by local communities; contributes to sustainable and distinctive places to live and work; and helps deliver positive and sustainable economic growth.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	Local authorities should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, recognising that heritage assets are irreplaceable, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	The district has a rich cultural heritage with many listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. The district will need to balance development with the need to maintain and enhance the built environment.
Killerton Park Setting Study (Land Use Consultants, 2013)	The document sets out a 'zone of potential influence' around the historic park and garden which delineates its setting. The document identifies discrete areas within the setting that have a high significance to Killerton Park, and where impacts on the setting of the historic asset are most likely to occur.

Knightshayes Setting Study (The Parks Agency, 2007)	The document describes the setting for the historic park and garden, which it states extends beyond the visual envelope, and includes an assessment of the views into and out of the site and their designed or opportunist nature. The document notes that if the character and appearance of Knightshayes is to be preserved, it is necessary, as far as reasonable, for the setting to be protected from intrusive development, and that the effect on any development on the setting should be a material consideration in the planning process.
<u>Historic environment – sustainability conclusions</u> The planning system should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and protection of the historic environment, considering the value it plays in delivering sustainable, distinctive places that are enjoyed by local people. A balance needs to be struck where the priorities of maintaining and enhancing the built environment are balanced against the district's development needs. The impact on heritage assets of development should be proportionally considered in relation to their significance, with the most important nationally significant assets being given the utmost protection.	

<u>Housing</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (HM Government, 2011)	The document sets the strategy for getting the housing market moving. Priorities include increasing the supply of housing, by supporting locally planned large scale development; planning reforms to give communities more control over development, including through the Community Right to Build; stronger support for custom home building (self build); need to deliver more new affordable housing, both for rent and affordable home ownership; homes need to be well-designed, of the highest quality and environmentally sustainable; delivery of Zero Carbon Homes from 2016; new housing developments need to make suitable provision for ageing populations in the long-term, ensuring a mix of property types, including Lifetime Homes.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The supply of housing should be significantly boosted. In order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, local authorities should widen opportunities for home ownership, by planning for a mix of housing basing for different groups of the community; identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing required in a location and reflecting local demand; provide affordable housing where it is needed. Housing should be located where it accords with sustainable development, and new homes within the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances.
Planning policy for	There should be fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers

traveller sites (DCLG, 2012)	while respecting the interests of the settled community. Local planning authorities should work collaboratively to develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites, planning over a reasonable timescale. In doing so, the Green Belt should be protected, and plan-making should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments. New policies should be fair, realistic and inclusive, and should increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations, reducing tensions between settled and traveller communities and enabling provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure whilst having due regard to the protection of local amenity and the environment.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	The code sets nine categories of sustainable design against which new dwellings can be assessed to consider their environmental sustainability. The code sets minimum standards, which are in excess of building regulations, ranging from levels 1 to 6 (6 being the highest) against a range of criteria including energy and CO ₂ emissions, water, materials, surface water run-off, waste, pollution, health and well-being, management, and ecology.
The Way We Live Now (RIBA, 2012)	Consumers in the 21 st century have particular requirements within modern housing that have not always been met by housing developments in recent decades. These requirements include larger windows for natural light and higher ceilings; large main living areas for eating and socialising; layouts which take into account technology used within the home; space for private time away from other members of the household; private outside space, particularly for families, or access to green public space in urban locations; long-term and short-term storage for functional items; dedicated space for domestic utility tasks, including washing, drying and ironing clothes, as well as storing vacuum cleaners, rubbish bins and recycling; and, options for different layouts.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	The shortage of affordable housing is a significant issue as average house prices are nearly 10 times average earnings in Devon. Demand for affordable housing has increased. The county will need to deliver good quality, affordable housing, with sufficient development to respond to projected growth, and include provision for the homeless and vulnerable people.
Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care Housing (Devon County Council, 2010)	Increasing numbers of people are living longer, but with more complex conditions such as dementia and chronic illnesses. By 2022 20% of the English population will be over 65, and this figure is predicted to be even higher in Devon. The provision of Extra Care Housing for older people is an important element in preventing older people from moving into residential care and increasing choice and independence. Devon intends to develop an extra care housing programme to promote the health and well being of older people who wish to live independently.
A Community Housing Strategy for Mid Devon 2010-	Mid Devon's housing vision is to provide good quality housing both in terms of the condition and surroundings of existing stock and the supply of new housing. Large housing waiting lists indicate the existence of a problem with the availability of affordable housing, both in the social rental sector and home owner sector. Provision of rural affordable housing is also a priority, though local

2015	opposition to such development can be an issue, though good consultation has helped the process. The plan contains an objective of locating a suitable site in Tiverton for an extra care facility.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2012-2015	'Better Homes' is a priority for the corporate plan. High rates of inward migration from other parts of the country have led to house price inflation, with prices now far outstripping local average wages. This situation is even further felt within the rural parts of the district. An ageing population also needs support to live in their own homes and suitably adapted accommodation. The district needs to ensure that there is sufficient decent housing for local residents and key workers who cannot afford to pay market prices.
Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	High inward migration has led to house price inflation, where prices have more than doubled in the last ten years, making them unaffordable for many in the district. There needs to be sufficient decent affordable housing for local residents and key workers. Also, people need to be able to remain in their homes longer as they get older.
<u>Housing – sustainability conclusions</u> Nationally the country has not been building enough homes to house its population, and therefore significantly boosting the supply of homes is a priority. The proportion of the population of people above retirement age has increased and there is a need to provide appropriate housing in response. Providing for an ageing population or people with disabilities may need to be addressed through the delivery of homes that can be adapted as peoples circumstances change, or through the delivery of extra care housing. Wide variety of home types should be provided, across a range of tenures to meet the needs of the population. In response to the fact that house prices are nearly ten times local earnings, there is a need to provide affordable housing to address long social housing waiting lists. Such issues are also acutely felt in some of the more rural locations of the district, where house prices may be even higher, and will need to be addressed through affordable housing delivery to meet an identified need. Provision for the needs of gypsies and travellers should be made planned for which seeks to balance their locational, economic and social needs with the protection of amenity and the environment. There is a need for modern homes to be environmentally sustainable, and meets the consumer demands of the population, including provision of sufficient storage space and private outdoor space.	

<u>Infrastructure</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA

National Infrastructure Plan: update 2012 (HM Treasury & Infrastructure UK)	The plan outlines the government's vision for the future of UK economic infrastructure. It sets out the challenges facing the UK infrastructure and the government's strategy for meeting the infrastructure needs of the economy containing particular commitments for investment in important infrastructure projects and plans for attracting new private sector investment. Priorities include: ensuring the road network is fit for the UK's future transport needs; protecting homes and businesses from flooding and unlocking sites for development; enabling the UK to have the fastest and best connected communications networks in Europe; investing to ensure the UK has the facilities to maintain and develop its world class research base; ensuring the security of supply and shift to a diverse, low carbon power sector; moving to a 'zero waste economy'.
Gas Generation Strategy (DECC, 2012)	Gas is an integral part of the UK's generation mix and is a reliable, flexible source of electricity. The government expects that gas will continue to play a major role in our electricity mix over the coming decades, alongside low-carbon technologies as we decarbonise our electricity system. Measures outlined in the plan are designed to ensure that: adequate gas generation capacity is available, including ensuring we maintain an appropriate capacity margin to maintain security of electricity supply; flexible plant is available to meet the intermittency associated with renewables and that the necessary gas supply infrastructure is in place to support the role of gas in generation.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	Planning policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment including a lack of infrastructure, and should identify priority areas for infrastructure provision. Local authorities should work with neighbouring and transport authorities to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development, including large scale facilities such as rail freight interchanges, roadside facilities, and other major generators of travel demand. The provision of advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth, and local plans should support the expansion of electronic communications networks. To meet the needs of local communities, planning policies should plan positively for community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of workshop. Policies should also take a positive, proactive approach to ensuring there is a sufficient choice of school places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.
<u>Infrastructure – sustainability conclusions</u> The reviewed plans and strategies highlight the importance of delivering infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and new communities. The Government places great importance on the delivery of the following infrastructure as part of ensuring sustainable economic development: transportation, flood protection, communications, research, energy and waste. Community facilities and schools are important infrastructural elements that are required to meet the needs of local communities as part of the delivery of sustainable development.	

<u>Land (including agricultural land, brownfield land and contaminated land)</u>	
Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Safeguarding Our Soils: A Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2009)	Soil is a fundamental and essentially non-renewable natural resource, providing an essential link between the components that make up our environment. Soils vary hugely from region to region and even from field to field. Soils perform valuable functions including nutrient cycling, water regulation, carbon storage, support for biodiversity and wildlife, and providing a platform for food and fibre production and infrastructure. Soils have been degraded by human actions, and are vulnerable to erosion, compaction and loss of organic matter; such changes are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. By 2030 all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. Planning decisions must take sufficient account of soil quality, particularly when significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved. The document also considers the need for local authority officers to make proportionate and robust decisions regarding the remediation of contaminated land. Sustainable remediation that does not involve the wholesale removal and replacement of soil should be encouraged.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The planning system should contribute and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing soils. It should prevent new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil pollution or land instability. The planning system should, where appropriate, seek the remediation and mitigation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value. The re-use of land that has been previously developed (brownfield) should be encouraged (provided it is not of high environmental value). The development of lower quality land should be prioritised over the best and most versatile agricultural land. Local authorities can set their own approach to determining housing densities to reflect local circumstances.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 9 (ecology) of the code aims to promote development on land that already has a limited value to wildlife and discourages the development of ecologically valuable sites. An additional aim is to promote the most efficient use of a building's footprint by ensuring that land and material use is optimised across the development.
<u>Land – sustainability conclusions</u>	
Soil is a fundamental natural resource that has been degraded by human action. Soils should be protected and enhanced. Planning should consider allocating or developing land with the least environmental value, prioritising lower quality land. Consideration of the soil quality of best and most versatile	

agricultural land, and the need to remediate contaminated land should be a planning consideration. When considering development, the use of land should be optimised across a site to ensure the efficient use of building footprints whilst setting a density of development appropriate to local circumstances.

<u>Landscape</u>	
Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Places a duty on relevant authorities in exercising their functions, to have regard to the effect on land in an AONB, and to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and planning permission for major development in these designated areas should be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Note No. 2: Guidance on the siting, design and assessment of wind and solar PV developments in Devon (Consultation draft, 2012)	Devon is faced with a wide range of challenges arising from a changing climate. Balancing the need to support the transition to a low carbon future and the need for energy security with the management of Devon's unique and valued landscape is one of these challenges. The landscape is also a major contributor to a strong tourism industry. The conservation of special landscape character is a core principle of the NPPF. However, Devon also has good conditions to produce wind and solar electricity, but it is important that the characteristics of Devon's landscape are not unacceptably harmed by poor design or inappropriate siting of renewable or low carbon technologies.
Dartmoor National Park Authority Core Strategy (2008)	Purposes of the park are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park, and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The core strategy sets a vision for the park, highlighting the distinctive characteristics and special qualities of Dartmoor and points to the role of planning in sustaining those qualities.

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14	The plan highlights the special qualities of the AONB as the isolated, unspoilt rural area; the diversity of landscape patterns and pictures; the unique geology; and the architectural appeal. Priorities include maintaining and enhancing the features that make the landscape distinctive; the sense of tranquillity is enjoyed free from noise and visual intrusion; key wildlife sites and sites of geological importance are conserved and enhanced; key natural resources such as air, water and soils are protected and conserved; greenhouse gas emissions are reduced; sustainable agricultural practices that converse and enhance the landscape, environment, water quality and nature conservation; sustainable recreation and tourism, based on the qualities of the landscape; new development to be of the highest quality, in keeping with landscape, historic character and other special qualities; use of traditional, local materials and energy/water efficient technologies; restricting or reducing noise and light pollution; restrictions on major developments in or adjacent to the AONB; appropriate affordable housing to enable local people to remain in their communities; a sustainable rural economy that conserves and enhances landscape character; and access to appropriate local facilities, services and amenities for local communities.
<p><u>Landscape – sustainability conclusions</u></p> <p>Devon has a unique and valued landscape, which also contributes towards the tourism attraction of the county. Mid Devon has borders that are adjacent or in close proximity to two national parks, whilst the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty crosses the east part of the district. Planning policies should offer protect valued landscapes, offering protection and enhancement of the most valued landscapes such as national parks and AONBs. The protection of the landscape needs to be balanced against the challenge of mitigating the effects of climate change through the transition to a low carbon future, particularly achieved through the development of renewables technologies, which are often located in rural areas.</p>	

<u>Minerals</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. However, minerals represent a finite resource, and it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation.
Technical Guidance to the National	The technical guidance sets out planning considerations including those to protect communities in proximity of mineral workings, control of dust and noise emissions, stability in surface mine workings, restoration and aftercare of mineral sites, and the

Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	landbanking of industrial minerals.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 3 of the code (materials) states that consideration of the environmental impact of materials can contribute to the development of sustainable homes. This part of the code aims to specify materials with lower environmental impacts over their life-cycle; to promote the specification of responsibly sourced materials for the basic building elements, as well as finishing elements.
Devon Minerals Plan 2011-2031 (Options Consultation, 2011)	Devon has minerals that are of national, and in some cases, international importance. The objectives of the document include: securing mineral development with minimal transportation by road while conserving environmental assets; making prudent use of existing resources; reinforce the distinctiveness of Devon's built environment through appropriate use of local sources of materials; safeguard mineral resources and associated infrastructure; manage mineral development in a manner that protect Devon's communities from adverse impacts and conserves the environment.
Minerals Local Plan (Devon County Council, 2004)	Objectives of the plan including: striking a balance between the demand for minerals and the need to protect the environment, having regard to sustainable development; to maintain a stock of reserves; to re-use waste minerals to reduce the requirement for new resources; to protect the County's earth science and nature conservation interest, historic environment, water environment and landscape character; to identify Mineral Working Areas; to consult with communities; and to prevent sterilisation of mineral resources by other development.
<u>Minerals – sustainability conclusions</u> There needs to be a sufficient supply of minerals to ensure the long-term ability to deliver infrastructure and development. The need for a supply of minerals needs to be balanced with the priority of protecting the environment. Planning for minerals extraction does not fall within the remit of Mid Devon District Council, being instead undertaken by Devon County Council. However, the consideration of the environmental impact of materials used in buildings and the desire to promote locally sourced materials is a district issue, as is the effect on local communities who are close proximity to mineral workings.	

<u>Rural areas</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA

Rural Statement (DEFRA, 2012)	Rural areas are home to one-fifth of the English population, and 28% of England's businesses. The key priorities include wanting rural businesses to make a sustainable contribution to national growth; engaging directly with rural communities; wanting rural people to have fair access to public services and be actively engaged in shaping the places in which they live.
Rural Economy Growth Review (DEFRA, 2011)	Businesses in rural areas make a substantial contribution to the national economy, generating about 22% of employment. Between 2001 and 2009, the population of England's rural areas grew 10% faster than urban areas. There are strong interdependencies between market towns and their rural hinterlands. Smaller businesses play a relatively strong role in rural areas, accounting for over 50% of employment in rural areas, whilst home working rates are more than twice as high in rural than urban areas. Growth of rural businesses is restricted by broadband coverage, with 23% of rural household having no or slow connections. Populations of rural areas tend to be older than urban populations, and there are a substantially lower proportion of ethnic minority backgrounds.
Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming (Government Office for Science, 2011)	The global food system will experience an unprecedented confluence of pressures over the next 40 years. Population size will increase, raising demand, whilst competition for land, water and energy will intensify, while the effects of climate change will become increasingly apparent. Priorities for action include making sustainable food production central in development; working on the assumption there is little new land for agriculture; promoting sustainable intensification; including the environment in food system economics; reducing waste; anticipate major issues with water availability for food production and work to change consumption patterns.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	National planning policy encourages supporting economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity. This can be achieved through supporting sustainable business growth, development and diversification of agricultural activities, supporting rural tourism and retaining local services. The economic value of retaining the best and most versatile agricultural land should be considered.
Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	In a rural district, access to vital services can be a significant problem. Communities in rural areas need access to facilities and services they need. Isolated small rural communities experience issues with transport and declining services. Broadband speeds needs to be increased in rural areas.
<u>Rural areas – sustainability conclusions</u> The population in rural areas has grown at a greater rate than urban areas in last decade. Rural businesses make a substantial contribution to the economy and should be supported to grow. Agriculture remains an industry that has faced many challenges in recent decades and such enterprises should be supported to diversify in order to benefit the rural economy. Rural areas experience social issues such as poor access to services and facilities, whilst the growth of their economies may be hampered by poorer broadband speeds.	

<u>Transport</u>	
Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Department for Transport Priorities (gov.uk, 2013)	DfT priorities include: continuing to develop the preparations for a high speed rail network; improving existing rail network and creating new capacity; tackling congestion on roads; continuing to improve road safety; encouraging sustainable local transport; promoting lower carbon transport, such as walking and cycling; supporting the development of the market for electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles; supporting the development of aviation; and maintaining high standards of safety and security for passengers and freight.
Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration (DfT, 2013)	The government wants more journeys to be made by public transport, cycling and walking. The vision is for an inclusive, integrated and innovative transport system where the use of sustainable transport is made more attractive for the entire door-to-door journey. Specific actions to achieve these goals include investing in high-quality cycling and walking environment, particularly close to train and bus stations; and ensuring the future needs of society are considered at the beginning of any new developments, so that interchange facilities can be designed around expected customer needs from the outset.
Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: making sustainable local transport happen white paper (DfT, 2011)	The document sets a vision for a transport system that is an engine for economic growth, but is also greener and safer and improves quality of life. It notes that investment on its own is not enough, as people will need to make transport choices that are good for society as a whole. Two-thirds of all journeys are less than five miles – many of which could be easily walked, cycled or undertaken on public transport. Many drivers would be willing to drive less (particularly for shorter trips), if practical alternatives were available. The report highlighted key areas which needed to be addressed to encourage more people to use sustainable travel options including: making connections between different steps in the journey, and different modes of transport, easier; and providing better interchange facilities.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a choice about how they travel. Different approaches will be required within different communities. Developments that generate significant movement should be located where the need to travel is minimised and the use of sustainable modes of travel maximised. Developments should exploit opportunities for sustainable development and designed to: accommodate efficient delivery of goods; give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities; create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts

	between different transport groups; incorporate facilities for charging low emission vehicles; and consider the needs of people with disabilities.
Local Transport Plan: Devon and Torbay Strategy 2011-2026	Devon and Torbay's transport system will offer business, communities and individuals safe and sustainable travel choices. The transport system will help to deliver a low carbon future, a successful economy and a prosperous, healthy population living in an attractive environment. Objectives include: deliver and support new development and economic growth; making best use of transport network and protect existing transport assets; work with communities to provide safe, sustainable and low carbon transport choices; strengthen and improve the public transport network; and make Devon the 'place to be naturally active'.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 1 of the code (energy and carbon dioxide emissions) can be delivered in part by the provision of cycle storage space within new dwellings. The code states that the wider use of bicycles as transport reduces the need for short car journeys and the associated CO ₂ emissions.
<u>Transport – sustainability conclusions</u> Reducing carbon emissions produced as a result of transportation is a national priority. This can be achieved by increasing opportunities for the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling; through the delivery of opportunities to increase the use of electric vehicles and improving the connections between various modes of transportation. Improve the condition of local transport network, protecting existing transportation assets. Ensure safe and sustainable transport options are available to communities.	

<u>Waste</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA
Department for Communities and Local Government: Waste Priorities (gov.uk, 2013)	The main objective of government policy on waste is to protect human health and the environment by producing less waste and by using it as a resource where possible. Waste should be managed according to the 'waste hierarchy' of prevention, reuse, recycling and composting, and then using waste as a source of energy, with disposal (waste going to landfill) being a last resort. Objectives of government waste policy include: preparation of planning strategies by local authorities in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste; handling waste safely, without endangering human health and without harming the environment, and disposing of waste on one of the nearest appropriate places; assessing the suitability of waste sites, including the physical and environmental constraints on development and the cumulative effect of previous waste disposal facilities on the well-

	being of the local community.
Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (DCLG, 2011)	Key objectives for local authorities include: helping to deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy, addressing waste as a resource and looking to disposal as the last option, but one which must be catered for; providing a framework within which communities take more responsibility for their own waste; help implement the national waste strategy; help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and harming the environment; ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.
Waste Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2007)	Objectives of the strategy are to: decouple waste growth from economic growth and put more emphasis on prevention and re-use; meet and exceed landfill diversion targets; increase diversion from landfill of non-municipal waste and secure better integration of treatment for municipal and non-municipal waste; secure investment in infrastructure needed to divert waste from landfill; and get the most environmental benefit from that investment, through increased recycling of resources and recovery of energy from residual waste using a mix of technologies.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DCLG, 2010)	Category 5 of the code (waste) has the aim of providing adequate internal and external storage space for non-recycling waste and recyclable household waste. The code also aims to promote resource efficiency via the effective and appropriate management of construction site waste. Additional credits can be achieved by promoting the provision of compost facilities to reduce the amount of household waste sent to landfill.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	Waste production will need to be reduced so that resilience on landfill is decreased, whilst the need to process waste overall is reduced, whilst recycling of all types needs to increase.
Devon Waste Plan: Preferred Options (2012)	Objectives of the plan include: playing a major role in the development of an integrated approach to waste policy, waste-related behavioural change, waste collection and infrastructure delivery; enabling waste management to supporting a sustainable economy; tackling climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of waste management; meet the needs of Devon through the delivery of new waste management infrastructure; apply the 'waste hierarchy'; support the delivery of waste facilities that use a range of technologies; achieve a reduction in negative waste management impacts on the natural, built and historic environment; and minimise the negative transport impacts of waste management. Consider four sites within Mid Devon as potential locations for recovery and/or disposal.

Devon County Waste Local Plan (2006)	The objectives of the plan are: to promote encourage communities to take more responsibility for the waste they create; to minimise any adverse effects on human health and the environment caused by the introduction of waste management facilities, and to enhance the local environment when considering plans for site restoration, after-use and aftercare; to ensure than any proposal for a waste management facility is achieved in as sustainable a manner as possible; to ensure that the management of waste is undertaken in accordance with the 'waste hierarchy' of reduction, re-use, recycling and composting, energy recovery and disposal; to encourage the provision of waste management facilities at or close to major centres of population; to ensure Devon's waste is treated or disposed of within the County; and to promote the establishment of an effective and integrated network of waste management facilities to serve national, regional, sub-regional and local needs.
Mid Devon Waste Strategy & Recycling Plan 2008 to 2013	Priority 1 is to reduce waste, particularly the amount of municipal waste going to landfill, increasing the 'dry' recycling rate, offering opportunities to participate in organic waste composting, and work with Devon County Council to secure provision of a Recycling Centre in the Culm Valley area.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2012-2015	A priority of the plan is to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and increase recycling/composting.
Mid Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-15	The district needs to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill.
<u>Waste – sustainability conclusions</u> National waste priorities are to protect human health and the environment whilst ensuring the delivery of sustainable waste management. Reducing the carbon footprint of waste will also contribute towards tackling climate change. New development should contribute to sustainable waste management, through the application of the waste hierarchy where disposal is the last resort, instead prioritising re-use, recycling or recovery.	

<u>Water</u>	
Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA

Flood and Water Management Act 2010	The act gives the Environment Agency a strategic overview of the management of flood and coastal erosion risk in England. It also requires upper tier authorities (locally this is Devon County Council) responsibility for preparing a strategy for managing flood risk from groundwater, surface water and other watercourses. The act places a duty on local authorities to aim to make a contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development when discharging flood management functions. The act introduces standards for the design, construction, maintenance and operation of new rainwater drainage systems, including sustainable drainage systems, and introduces an approving body (which is generally the local authority).
Water for people and the environment – Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency, 2009)	The strategy sets out how the Environment Agency believes water resources should be managed to 2050 and beyond, to ensure that there will be enough water for people and the environment. The strategy sets out the EAs role to manage the water resources, and plan how to use them in a sustainable way. It notes that pressures on water resources are growing, given that more houses are being built, population is increasing and forecasts show we will use more water. The strategy sets out how the EA believes water resources should be managed to deliver a secure supply and safeguard the environment.
Water Resources Strategy Regional Action Plan for the South West (Environment Agency, 2009)	The action plan shows how the South West region will meet the challenges posed by pressures on water resources over the next 50 years. Actions include ensuring the water supply and demand is resilient to the effects of climate change, reducing carbon emissions associated with the supply of water, managing catchments better to protect water resources, enhancing biodiversity, reducing flood risk and improving the water efficiency of new housing and commercial developments.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)	The NPPF requires local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk and water supply and demand considerations. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the impacts arising from climate change. Local authorities should prevent new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from water pollution. Local authorities should plan strategically and work with other authorities for the provision of infrastructure for water supply and flood risk. Development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. Land should be safeguarded that is required for current and future flood management. New development should reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, and should not increase flooding elsewhere.
Technical Guidance to the NPPF	The overall aim should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1. Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities allocating land in local plans should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses, and

	consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 be considered.
South West River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency, 2009)	The plan is prepared under the European Water Framework Directive, which requires all EU countries throughout the European Union to manage the water environment to consistent standards. Priorities for local government include ensuring that local planning document take into account the objectives of the SWRBMP, actions to reduce the physical impacts of urban development on artificial or heavily modified water bodies, promotion of the use of sustainable urban drainage systems and promote sustainable water management best practice through pre-application discussions with developers.
Code for Sustainable Homes (DLCG, 2010)	Category 2 (water) of the code is mandatory, and requires a reduction of potable water in the home from all sources, through the use of water efficient fittings, appliances and water recycling systems. Category 4 (surface water run-off) is mandatory and requires the design of surface water drainage for housing developments which avoid, reduce and delay the surcharge of rainfall run-off to watercourses and public sewers using sustainable drainage techniques. This protects receiving waters from pollution and minimises the risk of flooding.
A Warm Response - Our Climate Change Response (Devon County Council, 2005)	A strategic objective of the plan is to adapt to climate change by 'climate-proofing' for current and future weather hazards, in particular the impact of flooding. Consideration of actions required for the maintenance or adaptation of strategic infrastructure such as the built environment, transport network and utilities.
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-18	The county will need to incorporate necessary adaptations to mitigate the effects of climate change and flooding into new development.
Mid Devon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009)	Mid Devon has suffered serious flooding in the past, and the risk of flooding is likely to increase in the future as a result of climate change. With more than 7000 homes to be built in the district over the next 20 years (at the time of writing), spatial planning must take account of this risk to ensure that new development is sustainable.
<u>Water – sustainability conclusions</u> Managing flood risk and the effects of climate change is a key national and local priority, particularly as Mid Devon has suffered serious flooding in the past. There is also growing pressure on water resources and a need to improve resource efficiency. In particular new housing and commercial development should incorporate measures to improve water efficiency and reduce surface water run-off which can contribute to flooding. Water bodies should be protected from the effects of pollution, and there should be no reduction in their quality or status.	

