



Crediton Draft Neighbourhood Plan September 2021 (Referendum Version)

2018-2033 June 2022

Crediton Neighbourhood Plan

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Supporting documents online

www.creditonnp.co.uk

Crediton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide

Community consultations

Crediton Town Council household survey 2015

Business survey 2015

Queen Elizabeth Academy School survey 2015

Primary Schools survey 2015

The following documents have informed the development of this plan:

Crediton Flood Resilience Group leaflet 2016

Sustainable Crediton Seminar Jan 2012

Devon Association for Renewable Energy: Crediton Community Renewable Energy Feasibility Study, 2015

The following statutory documents have informed the development of this plan

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019

National Planning Policy Guidance

MDDC Air Quality Management Plan 2006

MDDC Annual Air Quality Status Report 2018

MDDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2014

MDDC Town Centre Retail Survey 2012

MDDC Landscape Character Assessment 2011

MDDC Town and Village Character Assessment 2012

MDDC Crediton Conservation Area Appraisal 2003

Devon County Historic Environment Record—Historic Market and Coastal Towns Survey 2016

Comments are invited on this plan until Monday 10th June 2019. They may be sent to:

Crediton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group,

Crediton Town Council Offices,

8a North Street, EX17 2BT

Or emailed to: townclerk@crediton.gov.uk

Forward

Crediton is a small market town (pop. 7,835 2011 census) in the west of the district of Mid Devon, situated between the rivers Yeo and Creedy. High grade agricultural land surrounds it; the farming communities and villages look to the town for local services and these communities continue to be important to its economy. In return, the tranquillity of our rural surroundings of green hillsides and river floodplains is one of the qualities most valued by residents.

All our research and consultation for this plan show that we are a strong community with a sense of identity and a commitment to growing as a sustainable

town, with pleasant built and open environments where people will be pleased to live, work and spend their leisure time. This plan represents this vision and priorities.

Land use policies are not just about housing estates and industrial sites. They also include ensuring social spaces, green spaces and respecting our heritage. Policies in this document therefore aim to strengthen all the positive aspects of the town, to integrate the new within it, and to create a healthier and more sustainable community that works for everyone.

Sometimes, planning is seen as a discredited process, creating car-dependent estates where residents have little need or opportunity to relate to other parts of the town or to each other. Like other communities, we need to face the reality of health and well-being challenges. Nearly 30% of residents over 16 are overweight or obese [1]. Depression and anxiety figure highly as mental health issues for young people [2] and loneliness is a factor across the age ranges.

Planning can impact on all aspects of our lives, how we live and how we feel. 'Improving wellbeing was at the heart of the original mission of planning. But the planning system has lost its way... A wellbeing approach can help planning to rediscover its sense of purpose'.[3] We have high expectations of the contribution that good planning can make to our town.

We would like to thank all those who have responded to surveys, consultations and sent in comments; all the Crediton schools for enabling students to take part; organisations and individuals who have given advice on specialist areas.

Crediton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

[1] NHS Locality stocktake Jan-June 2018

[2] Healthwatch Devon, Crediton Health and Well-being Hub, Youth Engagement Report 2015

[3] 'Well being in four policy areas' Report of the All-Party Parliamentary group on Wellbeing Economics

1 Introduction to the Plan

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The Plan Context

A Neighbourhood Plan is a relatively new addition to the planning system that was introduced as part of the Localism Act (2011). It allows a community to add local detail to national planning policies and the district planning policies which are laid out in the Local Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan can be specifically tailored to the needs of the community that creates it but we can't just do what we like. Whilst we must consult our community for its views, our plan must also conform with national, and district policies.

National policies are presented in the National Planning Policy Framework. (NPPF) Its emphasis is on sustainability. Our plan must show how it contributes to sustainability and national policy strongly supports it. People sometimes wonder what the term means. The NPPF has this definition:

'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'
NPPF 2019

The Local Plan is created by Mid Devon District Council and applies across the whole mid-Devon district. It too must conform to national planning policy.

The following paragraphs explain in detail:

- the legal status of Neighbourhood Plans;
- how our Neighbourhood Plan relates to district and national planning policies;
- why we have chosen to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Crediton;
- how we have done it and our overall approach;
- our vision, aim and objectives for what we are trying to do through this plan.

1.1 Neighbourhood Plans in law

The 2011 Localism Act gives local communities the power to produce their own neighbourhood plans which will influence future development in their local area.

Such plans are focused on shaping the built environment and can:

- Identify a shared vision and common goals for a neighbourhood.
- Influence what new buildings should look like and set design standards.

A Neighbourhood plan must fulfil Basic Conditions to ensure that it is in conformity with national planning policy and district local plans.

Once made, a Neighbourhood Plan has legal status. It is a document that then guides development in a neighbourhood and stands alongside national and district planning policy documents.

1.2 National Planning Policy

The NPPF interdependent objectives in planning for sustainable development are:

An economic objective- to help to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing; and

An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy

Our plan is strongly focused on sustainability throughout so the above principles have been applied to our choice of policies.

1.3 District Planning Policy

Mid Devon District Council - The Local Plan

The previous Mid Devon Local Plan included three parts – Core Strategy adopted July 2007, Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan Document adopted January 2011, and the Local Plan Part 3 Development management policies adopted October 2013. This was accompanied by a Policies Map which was adopted October 2013. It allocated development across the whole of Mid Devon District, including Crediton where most development was located to

the north east of the existing settlement area. As circumstances change, plans need to be revised and updated. The District Council adopted the Mid Devon District Plan Review in July 2020 to cover the period 2013-2033. The plan brings forward sites that are deliverable within the plan period.

Development in Mid Devon focuses on the M5 corridor, specifically with extensive residential and economic development at Junction 28 and economic development at Junction 27. The towns of Cullompton and Tiverton are both planned to have significant housing development over the plan period.

A Neighbourhood Plan can put forward more sites for development but it cannot propose fewer than in the Local Plan. Because of its topography and other environmental constraints, Crediton is expected to have less development and fewer new houses than Tiverton and Cullompton. The Neighbourhood Plan accepts the development allocations identified in the adopted Mid Devon District Plan Review. For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, the settlement limit and land allocations shown on the Proposals Map for Crediton which accompany the adopted Mid Devon District Plan Review are carried forward and used in the NP.

1.4 Neighbourhood Planning Policy

Crediton Town Council - the Neighbourhood Plan

Why have a Neighbourhood Plan for Crediton?

Crediton Town Council has regularly held consultation events since 2009. These events enabled us to create a Town Plan in 2011 which identified clear issues within the town. Many of these issues remained unresolved years later with no planning route to resolve them. The lack of legal status of the Town Plan had meant that the wishes of the town were being overlooked when planning applications were assessed. In 2013, the town council therefore took the decision to create a Neighbourhood Plan which would become a legal planning document for the town.

The Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area:

The town council, as the 'qualifying body' and authorised for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, applied to Mid Devon District Council on 20th February 2014 to designate the Neighbourhood Area, as required by Part 2, Regulation 5 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Following a public consultation period of at least 6 weeks, our Neighbourhood Area was formally approved by Mid Devon District Council on 2nd July 2014. The approved Neighbourhood Area is the same as the parish boundary of the Town and is shown as figure 1 (Page 11).

What does the plan do?

Our plan represents the community's vision and priorities for how they would like to see Crediton develop over the plan period to 2033. It sets out planning policies against which development coming forward in the town, will be considered – helping to shape the town and reflect the community's aspirations.

Policies contained within a Neighbourhood Plan, once 'made', form part of the development plan for the area and applications for planning permission must be considered in accordance with these policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Community Engagement and Consultation

The Plan has been developed through extensive community engagement with residents, schoolchildren and students, businesses, community groups and organisations. For details, please see the Consultation Statement that will be produced following this consultation and that will accompany the draft plan when submitted to the Local Planning Authority at Part 5, Regulation 15 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Since these policies have been produced through extensive consultation with the residents of the town, development will meet the needs of our community for the plan period.

2 Guiding principles underpinning the Neighbourhood Plan for Crediton

Community cohesion

Crediton's strong sense of community sets it apart. It engenders the community spirit that residents say is an essential part of their life in the town. Social activities create opportunities for community cohesion. This plan aims to integrate new developments into town life in both social and planning terms. Connectivity is a key theme in this plan to continue and enhance community cohesion.

Community involvement

This Neighbourhood plan has been drawn up with participation from all sections of the population in the belief that everyone has the right to be involved in the future development of their town. Going forward, we aim to be a town that actively involves local residents and businesses in shaping it and in the on-going process of plan making, monitoring and delivery.

Sustainability

Crediton people care a lot about the town environment: we value the rural setting of the town, the parks, open spaces and seasonal planting around the town. We notice degradation of the environment from litter to loss of green spaces. In particular, we notice the effects of heavy traffic in the town centre – noise, smell and air pollution. Pollution of our town leads to chronic ill health, which is unsustainable in the long term. Dealing with litter and waste is expensive and much of what is thrown away is reusable or recyclable. Using more energy than we need is expensive for everyone as well as affecting our environment.

The term 'sustainability' includes but goes beyond these more visible effects on the environment. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy *Securing the Future* (2005) sets out five features of sustainable development:

- living within the earth's environmental limits,
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society,
- achieving a sustainable economy,
- promoting good governance,
- using sound science responsibly.

See also our Sustainability Statement, Appendix 2 (page 60)

More widely, the Neighbourhood plan sits in the context of international efforts (through the Paris Climate Accord) and national commitments (through the 2008 Climate Change Act) to keep global temperature rises to below 2 degrees Celsius this century and to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 respectively.



A summary of the steps we have taken to achieve this plan

2013 Crediton Town Council agreed to produce a Neighbourhood Plan

2014 Mid Devon District Council approved the Neighbourhood Plan area

The town council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

2015 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering group and volunteers conducted surveys

2016 The Steering group produced and publicised the Vision and Objectives for the plan
Specialists and interest groups were consulted for specific input

2017 The Steering group drafted objectives and policies for 8 topics

2018 **March** The Steering group produced a draft plan and presented a summary to the
Annual Town Meeting

2018 **October** An exhibition and consultation on the draft plan was held and comments invited. These were reviewed by the group, resulting in the
inclusion of Affordable Housing and Custom and Self-build Housing policies.

2019 **March** Public consultation to confirm the draft policies.

Community Action Plan

This plan deals with land use policies. We have incorporated community aspirations that cannot be included in a land use policy in our Community Action Plan, see Appendix 3, page 64

Mid Devon Area profile

Employment

1.3% primary sector, e.g. agriculture

23.9% secondary sector, e.g. industrial/manufacture

74.8% tertiary sector, e.g. distribution, retail, services

Car ownership

1+ car/van 86%

Population increase 1991-2010

16%

Forecast population changes to 2033

65+ population, 54.3% increase

65+ living alone, 64.7% increase

75+ population, 81.8% increase

Home ownership

Privately owned 70.9%
 Private rented 15.6%
 Social rented 14..5%

The rise in the elderly population over the plan period is likely to impact on housing, social and health services. There is a consequent risk of the needs of young people and families having a lower priority and a smaller share of the budget. Local organisations have a key role in identifying community needs. While these are not planning issues, the planning system can help to deliver facilities that meet the needs of all sectors of the community.

The high level of car ownership means that achieving sustainable transport is a significant challenge.

3 Vision, aim and objectives

Vision

We are a creative and sociable community that is committed to developing, over the plan period, a sustainable town alongside our valued heritage and environment.

‘Let’s make it work better!’ (Crediton Neighbourhood Plan inaugural meeting)

Aim

We aim to fulfil our community’s aspirations to make Crediton an even better place to live, work and play, while retaining our distinctive assets of arts-based social projects and events, our St Boniface heritage, sustainable transport connectivity and our rural valley setting.

To achieve our aim and reach our vision we have key objectives to be achieved by eight policy topics

Our Objectives

to facilitate housing, businesses and infrastructure that fulfil our economic, social and environmental ambitions for the town - **Policy 1 – Development- Page 14**

to encourage our strong community spirit by fostering an active community life with town events for all – **Policy 2 - Community and Facilities- Page 20**

to create a vibrant town where people enjoy living, working and spending their leisure time - **Policy 3 - 3 Town centre – Page 22**

to improve the quality and quantity of sustainable transport options, especially for walking and cycling – **Policy 4 – Transport – Page 29**

to move towards becoming a more low carbon economy and more resilient in the face of climate change – **Policy 5 – Sustainability – Page 33**

to promote a wide range of business opportunities, and facilities for home-working – **Policy 6 – Employment – Page 35**

to maintain our heritage of historic buildings and enhance their use with well-designed additions and refurbishments – **Policy 7 – Heritage – Page 40**

to maintain the town’s setting between the rivers Yeo and Creedy, and all its green infrastructure with enhanced biodiversity – **Policy 8 – Environment –**
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Section 1 Development

Key objective: to facilitate housing, businesses and infrastructure that fulfil our economic, social and environmental ambitions for the town.

Context

Mid Devon District Council’s Forward Planning Team began identifying sites for development across the district more than ten years ago and produced early proposals in 2006. Since then the Mid Devon Local Plan has been developed with a series of consultations across the district and subsequent alterations. The Local Plan Review has now been completed and will set the framework for growth for Crediton until 2033. Crediton’s housing allocation is 10% of the district’s total requirement. The Local Plan explains that this amount is ‘lower than might be expected for a town of this size, but environmental constraints limit Crediton’s expansion...’. This gives us the opportunity to maintain the small market town character of Crediton, which is so highly valued. At the same time, it gives us challenges in terms of job opportunities within the town as employment land is also limited by the town’s geography. Furthermore, road access to the town for HGVs by the A377 and A3072 is not as good as other locations elsewhere in the district.

1.1 Development principles

The issues

Housing sites seem to be more easily deliverable in Crediton than are industrial sites. However, an imbalance reduces the opportunity to start or develop a business locally. The Household Survey, 2015, showed that jobs and businesses was the highest expectation of sustainable development among the under 40s. The survey also showed that many people appreciate being able to work in the town where they live. Limited local employment space is an issue for us. We run the risk of being a convenient dormitory town with many residents commuting out of the area. As it is, of the current working age population, just over half work outside of the town. Of those, approximately two thirds commute to Exeter, generally by car. With higher productivity jobs increasing in the Exeter area, this travel to work could increase, with implications for sustainable principles.

Our Household Survey, 2015 and consultation event in October 2018 show support for new housing and local jobs. However, development in Crediton is often seen in a negative light. Developments of more than 10 houses, even on allocated sites, are usually opposed by nearby residents when they come forward. Large developments are usually opposed by entire neighbourhoods. The prospect of dense and badly designed buildings on green field sites, compromising the town's landscape and setting, and generating traffic around the town raises concerns. Many of these can be addressed if development is designed on sustainable principles, fits within the existing landscape, respects any existing green infrastructure or enhances it, and includes infrastructure of benefit to the whole community, for example, including pleasant and practical walking/cycling routes and amenity land. To resolve these issues, and to ensure our plan meets the town's needs for sustainable development, we have the following objective

Objective 1.1 to support a balance of mixed-use development of high-quality design in keeping with the town character (see Design Statement), that achieves a high level of sustainability (see *Section 5 Sustainability* and Sustainability Statement) and is well-integrated into the town in social, design and connectivity terms

This objective accords with the Local Plan 2013-33, S1 b) h) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Ch 2.7, 2.8.

Objective 1.1 is to be achieved through policy D1.

Policy D1 Development principles

Achieving sustainable development is at the heart of the Crediton Neighbourhood Plan. New development in Crediton will be supported, subject to other policies in the development plan*, where it can be demonstrated that the following sustainable development principles have been addressed:

- the development is appropriately located for its purpose and is well-connected to the town centre by sustainable transport means.
- the development contributes to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

- the development makes effective use of land, delivers biodiversity net gain and wherever possible, includes proposals that contribute to the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan.

- the development takes into account the effects of climate change and the plans show what has been included that will help to mitigate and adapt to these changes.

Housing development will be supported where it provides the appropriate type and variety of housing to meet local housing needs and the social objectives of the NPPF and is able to demonstrate how it will help to achieve them.

** 'development plan' refers to all the planning documents applying to Crediton, including the National Policy, the Local Plan, any Supplementary Planning Documents and the Neighbourhood Plan*

1.2 Allocated sites

The issues

Large sites have a significant impact on the townscape and how the surrounding area, especially access and transport, will function once the development is completed. In order to make them function well, and to increase all aspects of sustainability of the site, an overall plan that clearly addresses these issues is needed. If the development is well managed it is more likely to be positively received by the community.

Town Plan consultations 2009, 2012 and Household Consultation 2015 show how much we appreciate the town's rural areas.

Losing open green fields and hedgerows to buildings, roads, and hard landscaping has a significant impact on our community and development can be seen as a negative. Natural features are appreciated by us all. The more these are retained where possible or introduced into the development, the more it blends into the landscape and its visual impact is softened. The existing community is keen to walk and cycle more and these are the sustainable options for the incoming community and businesses, as well as contributing positively to health and well-being, so we know these are crucial facilities to achieve. To resolve these issues, we have this objective:

Objective 1.2

to create new developments that incorporate provision for wildlife habitat and biodiversity and, where possible, improve wildlife corridors and green infrastructure, and that are well-connected to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists, improving and extending existing pedestrian and cycling routes wherever possible.

These sustainable principles are in accord with Local Plan 2013-33 S1 e), i); NPPF Ch 8, 91 a), b), c)

Objective 1.2 is to be achieved through policy D2.

Policy D2 Sites allocated in the Mid Devon Local Plan as shown on the Adopted Policies Map for Crediton

Full planning applications and reserved matters applications for allocated residential sites and mixed use sites should be supported by detailed plans and proposals which include:

- the type and location of open space and other green infrastructure, landscaping design and features, especially the greening of building frontages/private green spaces, gardens, fences, hedges, walls, retaining walls, paving, street trees, public open space trees and other features in the Crediton Design Guide
- how veteran trees, existing hedges, Devon banks and other landscape features will be incorporated and protected, replaced or enhanced by the development
- accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to, into, through and out of the site
- how drainage will be dealt with on site including, where appropriate, suitable SuD schemes on site in order to contain surface water run-off
- community and other infrastructure needs

Planning applications for commercial sites, including industrial and business developments, should follow policy D2, excluding the requirement for private gardens and community infrastructure.

1.3 Affordable housing

The issues

The Household survey 2015, and consultation in October 2018 show a desire to see affordable housing being built, even by those already housed, suggesting that residents support a range of households, ages and incomes being accommodated in new developments of different kinds.

At the present time, there are 66 households in Crediton in Bands B and C (High and Medium Housing Need) who are unable to find affordable accommodation in the current housing market.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 for the Exeter Housing Market Area (HMA) calculates that in Mid Devon, as in other authorities, there are likely to be fewer affordable homes delivered through market led development than are needed.

The report mentions other methods of delivering affordable housing such as making better use of housing stock, empty or sub-standard buildings, and conversion.

It nevertheless concludes that there is evidence that the 30% average policy target across the HMA is justifiable, subject to viability. Mid Devon's Viability Assessment recommends 25% and the Local Plan Review policy is 28%.

Given that the SHMA's conclusion is that more than one method will be required in order to meet affordable housing need, we feel strongly that market led development must play its part along with the rest. We therefore support the Local Plan Review in its 28% target.

We also note that a higher percentage of affordable homes can be achieved through Housing Association and community land trust developments, which could be appropriate for Crediton and could be identified as part of a Housing Needs Assessment specific to Crediton. See Community Action Plan, Appendix 3, p64

To address this issue we have this objective

Objective 1.3 to support all means of achieving a sufficient supply of affordable housing, including in new developments. This objective accords with LPR S3 b) NPPF paragraph 5.62. Objective 1.3 will be delivered through policy D3.

Policy D3 Affordable Housing

Developments that meet the Local Plan Review policy target of 28% affordable housing will be supported, subject to other applicable policies in the development plan.

1.4 Custom and Self Build Housing

The issues

Housing developments from small to large scale are often delivered by a single developer. This can mean that large developments are comprised of a limited number of different designs, of differing sizes, arranged around the site. There is a price range but even the lowest price can be beyond local people. As well as being unaffordable to many, the completed estate has a homogenous appearance. What variety of design there is, is often subsumed in the limited palette of colours and materials.

The average price of a 2-bedroom starter home in Crediton is £190,000-£200,000 which requires a deposit of 10% or 5% through the help to buy scheme. The buyer would need an income of £35,000-£40,000. The average wage in mid Devon is £24,031. This puts house purchase out of the reach of many local people, especially where there is only one income. Custom and self-build housing can offer an affordable route to achieving a home as well as offering opportunities for innovative and energy efficient design and could be a feasible solution for some residents.

The district council has a list of interested applicants for custom and self-build housing sites in Crediton so there is evidence of demand. Supporting evidence is also set out in the Local Plan Review evidence base, such as the Custom and Self Build Demand Assessment Framework (Three Dragons, July 2018). Other useful sources of supporting evidence could include local housing needs surveys or secondary data from external sources such as Buildstore (www.buildstore.co.uk)

To resolve these issues, we have this objective:

Objective 1.4 to support and encourage custom and self-build developments to increase the variety of housing available. This approach to achieving social integration and design variety accords with Local Plan 2013-2033 S1 g). Objective 1.4 is to be achieved through policy D4.

Policy D4 Custom and Self-Build Housing

Custom and self-build housing, especially where supported by locally specific evidence, can provide a more affordable housing solution and will be supported subject to other policies in the development plan.

1.5 Design

The issues

Over recent years, residential developments that have not, in the public view, achieved compatible design have remained unpopular. Those that paid attention to setting, detail and compatibility have been commended for the sense of place that has been achieved or, for smaller developments, their contribution to the integrity of the townscape.

We aspire to a housing stock of good quality to achieve sustainability. We support innovative design, especially any which aims for resilience to climate change. As a community we are critical of bland developments of a minimum standard. Growth will always be more acceptable where developers work with communities to achieve the best possible result in design, standard of accommodation and facilities for the residents. We welcome consultations with developers and actively encourage approaches.

Gateway sites are an emerging issue. Two of them are located next to river valley floodplains. Development is restricted to non-residential uses, and where these are industrial, they can have a particularly strong impact on the valley setting. We aim for these town edge sites to act, as far as possible as a transition between urban and rural so that the flood plains and the rivers themselves are protected from degradation.

To resolve these issues, we have this objective:

Objective 1.5 to achieve development of high quality, with aspirational green infrastructure and landscaping, and gateway sites that are designed with an impact and density that forms a transition between the townscape and the open countryside This accords with Local Plan Review 2013-33 DM1; NPPF Ch 12, pp38-39 Objective 1.5 is to be achieved by policy D5.

Policy D5 Design

Proposals for new development should have regard to the Crediton Design Guide and, subject to the scale and size of the proposal:

- be locally distinctive, reflecting and complementing the local traditional housing design. Contemporary housing designs, including small or individual developments, should demonstrate how they relate to the existing built environment and make a positive contribution to the townscape especially within the conservation area and/or impacting on heritage assets.
- use materials which reflect and complement existing development
- include safe, practical and well-designed walking and cycling access to public transport points, where achievable.
- include adequate storage for recycling bins for each property that does not impact negatively on the street scene.
- be supported by a landscaping scheme that is sustainable, that includes native species in keeping with the character of the area, that contributes to the biodiversity of the area, supports green corridors wherever possible and contributes positively to green infrastructure of Crediton as promoted in policy EN4.
- use a porous surface capable of absorbing heavy rain where garden/open space is proposed for car parking, and a design that is compatible with the existing street scene. The design of any Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) should comply with the relevant Devon County Council guidance.

2 Community and facilities

Key objective : to encourage our strong community spirit by enabling an active community life with town events for all

Context

Crediton has a huge number of community groups covering all aspects of social life. Many of these groups regularly work together to produce town-wide events which are appreciated by residents and are core to town life. Current performance and presentation spaces in the town are inadequate for the aspirations of these groups. In order to develop facilities for the coming decades, the Town Team has identified the need for a multi-use space.

2.1 Community Hub (Heart Project)

The issues

The Town Team's Hub Study was the result of a long period of research and consultation with all the producing arts groups and other organisations on their requirements. The study identified the hub as a long-term project requiring substantial funding. A large number of groups are in support of pursuing this.

The Town Team has now set up 'The Heart Project' and recruited Trustees with a variety of skills to help progress it. The 2019 Feasibility Study and Business Plan considers options on new build, re-use of existing buildings and potential sites. It looks at possible facilities and potential users, based on surveys and consultations with stakeholders.

The Town Council is strongly in support of the project. However, no site or building has yet been firmly identified. This plan therefore supports in principle the use of a suitable site or building within the Neighbourhood Plan area for The Heart Project. To progress this issue, we have the following objective:

Objective 2.1 to support the Community Hub project in order to maintain and improve the range of social, community and leisure facilities for all ages and to support proposals that enable and develop the town's strong community spirit. This accords with NPPF Ch 8, para 91, para 92 a), b) Objective 2.1 will be achieved through policy CF1.

Policy CF1 Community Hub

Development of a Community Hub facility will be supported either where it involves the re-use of an existing suitable building or the development of a new building, or both, subject to:

- protecting the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers
- the provision of adequate car parking
- the design of any new building and landscaping being in conformity with policy D5 of this plan.

2.2 Young people's facilities

The issues

Since the termination of Youth Services in 2014 and the handing back of the Haywards Youth Centre to the County Council, young people in the town have had no dedicated youth activity space in the town centre. For the last few years, the Congregational and Methodist churches have been making space available for youth activities during the week. However, these do not replicate the independent youth provision that previously existed. When work on this Neighbourhood Plan started, a representative group of young people from the closing youth centre made a plea to the Steering Group to consider the needs of their age group, feeling that resources were being removed from them and not replaced, and that there was no location for youth in the High Street. These needs were confirmed by the Household and Schools surveys, and youth worker's reports. The town council has now appointed a full-time youth worker who has confirmed the same needs and issues. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore needs to address the lack of facilities for young people, both indoor and outdoor, that have been identified.

To progress the issue, we have the following objective:

Objective 2.2 to support the provision of a suitable meeting space for young people in the town centre, and proposals that will increase and/or improve open space facilities for teenagers. This objective is in accordance with Local Plan 2013-2033 Policy DM23; MDDC Open Space report identifies lack of outdoor amenities for youth; NPPF Ch 8 para 91 a) 92 a) b) Objective 2.2 will be achieved through policy CF2:

Policy CF2 Young people's facilities

The provision of young people's amenity space and the development of a young people's activity space, whether it re-uses an existing building, or re-develops a site with a new building, will be supported subject to protecting the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.

2.3 Queen Elizabeth Academy School

The issues

For decades, Queen Elizabeth's and the education authorities have discussed the difficulties presented by the split site with years 7-8 at the Barnfield campus and years 9-13 at Western Road. Up to now it has not been possible to develop a single site for the school. However, circumstances could change to make that achievable. Alternatively, the two sites might continue to operate as they do presently but with further development to accommodate changing needs.

Should further development happen on either site, meaning a sharing of facilities between them, and increased travel between them, for air quality improvements we aim to ensure that the two sites are adequately linked to reduce coach trips through the town centre and to increase safe pedestrian/cycle connectivity between Barnfield and Western Road for all users of the school facilities and for other users of the footpath itself. Should a single site school become achievable, we would again aim to improve access for cyclists and pedestrians along Tin Pot Lane and other footpaths leading to the site.

To help address this issue we have the following objective:

Objective 2.3 to support redevelopment of Queen Elizabeth Academy School at Barnfield/Western Road split sites or one of those sites, provided that Tin Pot Lane is upgraded and cycle routes are considered. This objective conforms with NPPF 102 c) LP S1 e) Objective 2.3 will be achieved by policy CF3

Policy CF3 Queen Elizabeth Academy School

Subject to other policies in the development plan, the neighbourhood plan supports the development of a new single site for, and/or supports the redevelopment of, the Queen Elizabeth Academy School on its current sites with enhanced sports facilities at Barnfield provided that:

- the proposals include investment in the redevelopment of Tin Pot Lane to make it a safe, practical and attractive walking route linking the two sites or providing single site access
- the proposals maintain or improve cycle access.

3 The Town Centre

Key objective: to create a vibrant town where people enjoy living, working and spending their leisure time

Context The independent shops in Crediton town centre are greatly appreciated by residents of the town, the local area and visitors from further afield. They provide a neighbourhood service for people living in and around the High Street. At the same time, the town centre offers those from other parts of

the town the opportunity to choose locally sourced and locally made fresh produce. It offers varied goods and services from independent retailers able to offer a personal service. There is a well-supported cafe culture and a variety of restaurants and take-aways which bring people into the town centre. The small size of most of the retail premises makes new business start-ups more viable and the town has a lower rate of empty shops than elsewhere in the district. It would be unwise to take the town centre for granted or to be complacent about its future. The role of market towns and their High Streets has changed over the last 30 years and shoppers have a wide choice for making purchases, using other towns and other methods. Support for our town centre is widely held. This plan aims to support what we already have and to propose policies to help make it a destination of choice. Factors that contribute to managing and improving the town centre or which need to be considered are included in the High Street Vision statement.

3.1 Town Centre development

The issues

The town centre is strongly supported, as the Household Survey shows, but the level of traffic, noise and pollution is a constant complaint in the same survey and has been for decades. Crediton is more or less a one-street town, therefore the conditions on that street are very significant to businesses located there and their users. Any condition that discourages footfall is a threat to the viability of retail in particular. Therefore, every condition that affects this needs to be carefully considered.

Issues raised by residents include the loss of ground floor retail the primary shopping area to office space and charity shops. These developments are perceived as being a discouragement to shoppers as the retail offer is reduced. Shops being left empty for long periods; the impact of edge of town superstores on the High Street are also issues that are seen as a discouragement of town centre use.

Current planning policy allows for certain permitted developments within town centres, therefore there is a limit to how far this plan can address some of the issues than concern residents. In any case, a mix of uses is essential as not every visitor or local resident is looking for the same service or goods. What this plan can aim to do is to use the planning system to make the High Street a destination of choice for a wide variety of people by affecting what we can, principally, what the High Street looks like and how it works for all its users.

To resolve these issues, we have the following objective:

Objective 3.1 to promote Crediton as a centre for business and retail by improving the functionality, physical environment and appearance of the town centre to improve the shopping and leisure experience for pedestrian users .This objective is in accordance with Local Plan 2013-2033 S7 b) NPPF 85 b) Objective 3.1 will be achieved by policy TC1

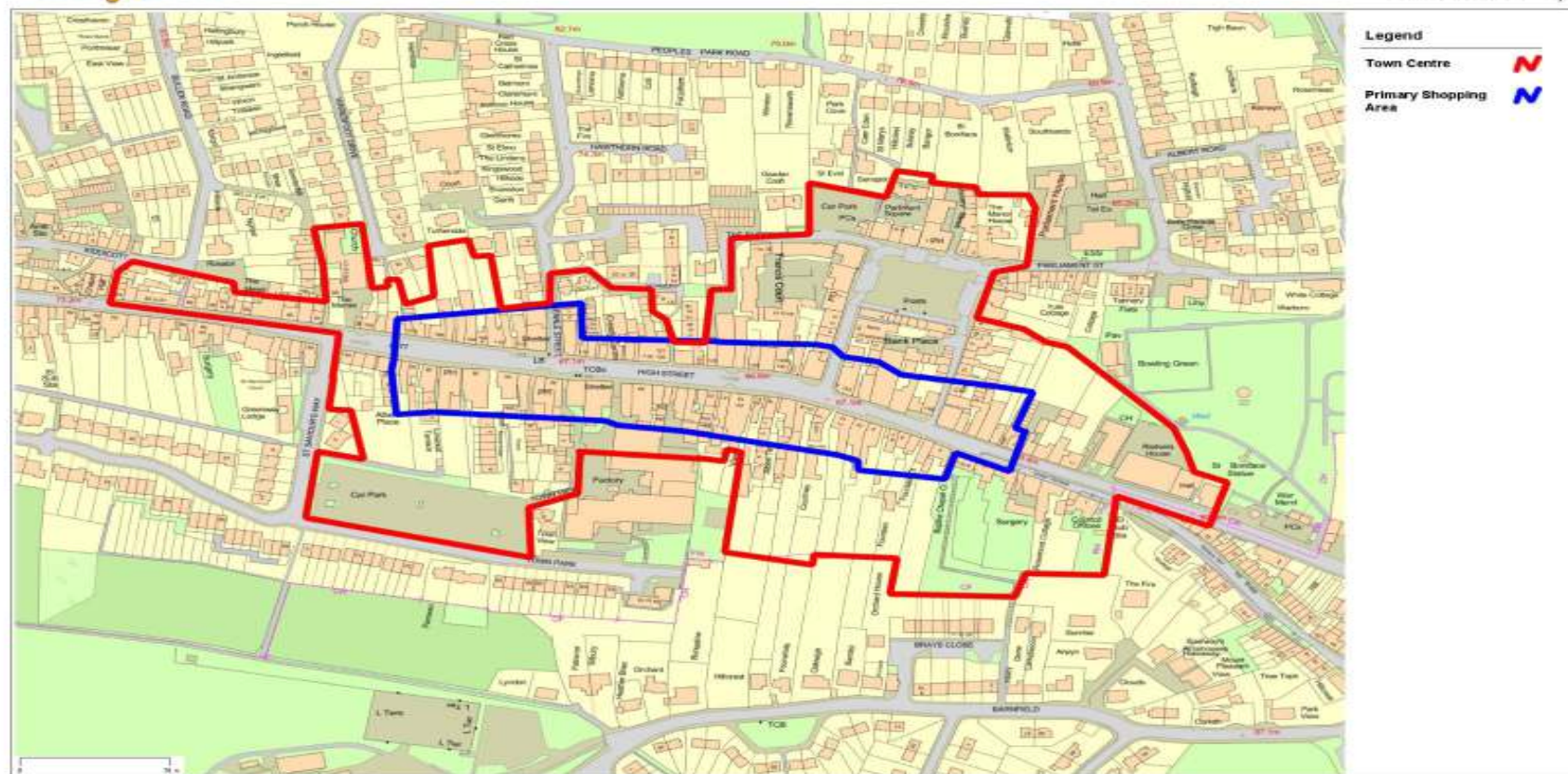
Policy TC1 Town centre development

Development proposals within the town centre boundary as defined in Figure 2 will be supported where they provide:

- a well-balanced mix of uses
- high quality design and construction which integrates well with Crediton's distinctive and historic character including existing buildings
- improvements to the functionality of the town centre that will benefit pedestrians, shoppers, cyclists and residents of the town centre.
- improvements to biodiversity and green infrastructure and the quality of the public realm where appropriate.

Fig. 2
Town Centre

Crediton CP 



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3.2 Town centre living

The issues

Crediton town centre developed as a wide main street, capable of accommodating a livestock market along its length until the mid 19th century. Behind the main street frontages, Medieval burgage plots, accessed by alleyways, contained small cottages and workshops. Many of these burgage plots remain, along with modernised living accommodation so there is already a large residential community just off the High Street as well as on it.

This community adds to the viability and vitality of Crediton town centre as well as the sustainability of the town as a whole. The larger it is the more it contributes. Empty premises of any type are detrimental to the economy of the town. They can be a discouraging eyesore as well as a waste of space and resources that could be brought into a more suitable use. While we don't want to lose shop premises in our primary retail area, we are keen to support living accommodation in the town centre.

To address this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 3.2 To encourage residential use in the town centre above ground floor level in the primary shopping area. This objective is in accordance with NPPF 85 f) Local Plan 2013-2033 DM14 b) Objective 3.2 will be achieved by policy TC2

PolicyTC2 Town Centre Living

Within the town centre boundary, development will be supported that re-uses buildings for residential use above ground floor level, including live/work accommodation and "living over the shop".

3.3 Public realm

The issues

In spite of its width, there is not a single tree at present along the length of the High Street. Over the last few decades, the town council has received approaches by different community groups and individuals asking for trees to be planted. It has so far not been possible to achieve this. Up to the present, the town council and the Chamber of Commerce have focused on summer floral decorations mainly in tubs and planters where there is space, and in hanging baskets on the frontage of buildings. These are keenly supported by the community but there is a strong desire to see some permanent planting to complement the built environment.

The roads and many pavements were constructed at a time when there was little or no consideration of equal access. Some locations where people need

to cross are not readily useable except by the young, fit and able. The less able frequently make the case that the town centre can be hazardous for them. When developments take place that affect pedestrian amenities, we are keen to see them improved as much as possible so that the town centre becomes an easy place for everyone to get around.

To help resolve this issue we have this objective:

Objective 3.3 to encourage tree planting, other permanent planting schemes and improvements to pedestrian amenities wherever development allows, to improve the accessibility and appearance of the public realm. This objective conforms with NPPF 2.8.b) Objective 3.3 will be achieved by policy TC3.

Policy TC3 Public realm

Developments affecting the public realm will be supported where they include proposals for increasing and/or improving pedestrian amenities and for making the town centre more attractive and pleasant to be in and walk around, including opportunities for planting and increasing biodiversity, where possible.

3.4 High Street to St Saviour's Way car park access route

The issues

Parking is a major irritant to Crediton residents. The household survey showed that 81% agreed that there is a car parking problem. Of these, more than half cited the High Street, our car parks and town centre parking locations as being the problem areas. This suggests that town residents perceive that the parking facilities are inadequate rather than that parking is illegally done or poorly managed throughout the town.

St Saviour's Way car park is 150 yards from the High Street and on a normal day, there are available spaces. However, it is not visible from the High Street and pedestrian access to it is via a low, dark, unattractive archway between food outlets that leads to a poorly surfaced, sloping, winding lane with a variety of cottages and on one side and residents' cars, various walls and a galvanised metal fence on the other. Vehicle access is at the other end, at the start of the main High Street retail area.

The perception of the access route is that it is steep and hard to walk up. The perception of the car park is that it is distant from the shops – 'a town edge location'. It is true that the access is not level and could be a challenge for elderly persons or anyone with mobility difficulties. However, for others, were the route more attractive, it might seem less out of the way, and the desirability of using the car park might well increase.

To resolve these issues, we have this objective:

Objective 3.4 to improve the connectivity of the High Street and St Saviour's Way car park. This objective accords with National Policy promoting town centre viability Ch 7 and Local Plan policy S1 c) Objective 3.4 will be achieved by policy TC4.

Policy TC4 High Street to St Saviour's Way car park access route

Improvements to the functionality and attractiveness of the existing access route from the High Street to St Saviour's Way car park will be supported.

Redevelopment of the factory site adjacent to the route will be supported (bearing in mind the need to retain employment land Mid Devon District Plan Review Policy DM19) subject to improvements to the boundary fence to achieve biodiversity net gain, visual attractiveness of the route and enhancement of the public area.

3.5 Shop fronts

The issues

The historic buildings along the High Street are a valued part of Crediton's heritage. Much of the pre-Georgian architecture has been destroyed by various fires. Most of what we have is 18th and 19th century, with 20th century additions. The High Street falls within the conservations area and some buildings are listed. There is a strong interest in preserving the integrity of the current High Street as much as possible. Inappropriate alterations can have an adverse effect, not just on the building itself but also its surroundings. Shop fronts run more or less uninterrupted along the length of both sides of the High Street. The appearance of the shops, and how far each one is compatible with the building that it fronts, its neighbouring buildings and shops, affects the quality of the built environment. Whilst we do not want to preserve the High Street in aspic, at the same time, we want to maintain and encourage shop fronts that are sympathetic to the town's architecture.

To address this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 3.5 in order to ensure that the design of new business and retail shop fronts, or any alterations, are compatible with the built heritage of the town centre, developers will be referred to the design statement and the shop fronts leaflet. This objective adds local detail to NPPF 185; LPR DM16. Objective 3.5 will be achieved by policy TC5.

Policy TC5 Shop fronts

Proposals for the development of new shop frontages or the refurbishment of existing shop frontages and other commercial premises in the primary shopping area will be supported where the proposed alteration or replacement is sympathetic to and respects the architectural integrity of the building and the character of the area with special regard to such matters as scale, pattern of frontages, vertical or horizontal emphasis, materials colour and detailed design. (See Appendices, Shop Fronts leaflet; Design Guide)

4 Transport

Key objective: to improve the quality and quantity of sustainable transport options, especially for walking and cycling.

Context

Crediton High Street has a history of poor air quality. It carries HGV through traffic, local commercial vehicles and school buses. It also carries significant levels of private local traffic. When the transport studies for the link road were done, number plate recognition surveys showed that a high number of vehicles passing up and down the High Street belonged to town residents doing short journeys.

Cars are convenient and it can be difficult for us to persuade ourselves out of the habit of using them, even when there are more sustainable alternatives available at less expense. However, increasing sustainable transport usage will also improve the parking situation in the town, which was a specific aspiration of respondents to the household survey. This aspiration is equally a challenge.

Advice to walk more and do more exercise like cycling is given for people of all ages. If the advice is followed, it's a win/win for fitness and reducing vehicle journeys. However, people choose not to walk or cycle through areas they feel are unpleasant or unsafe. The more vehicles that are on the roads, the more pedestrians and cyclists are discouraged. Changing the physical environment and planning policies that have for decades put vehicles ahead of pedestrians and cyclists is a further challenge.

4.1 Footpaths and cycle routes

The issues

There is very strong support for walking and cycling in Crediton. The Household Survey shows 99% in favour of better footpaths and 89% in favour of better cycle routes. As a community, we are aspirational for achieving a healthier lifestyle and getting about in a more sustainable manner. Poor connections to the bus routes and station were cited as being reasons for not using public transport more.

Although it is clear from the Household Survey that commuters do not regularly use the bus or train, it is also clear that those who are not commuting but simply moving around the town are keen to see good walking and cycling routes in all parts of the town. In the past, these routes have not been the focus of planning policy and/or the needs in some areas have changed with the result that some walking routes are disconnected, difficult or dangerous because of the way development has happened in the past. We feel that some of these needs can be addressed through new or re-developments.

To resolve this issue we have this objective:

Objective 4.1 to improve walking/cycling routes throughout the town and improve their connectivity to different forms of public transport, including from new developments. This objective is in accordance with LP S1 e) and NPPF 102 c) 104 d). MDDC Air Quality Annual Status Report for 2017 says: walking,

cycling, using public transport and buying local food reduce emissions as well as having health benefits. Objective 4.1 will be achieved by policy T1.

Policy T1 Footpaths and cycle routes

Development proposals which include improvements and extensions to existing town footpaths and the footpath/cycle path network, including crossing points, allowing greater access and connectivity between the town centre, new housing, green spaces, workplaces and open countryside will be supported subject to other policies in the development plan.

The loss of existing footpaths and walking routes will be resisted.

See Map 1 (Appendix 1, p51) for existing footpaths requiring improvement to encourage walking.

See Map 2 (p52) for missing footpaths that interrupt connecting routes or encourage pedestrians to walk in the road.

See Map 3 (p53) for points where pedestrian facilities for safely crossing the road need to be provided to maintain the integrity of the footpath network.

4.2 Crediton to Exeter cycle route

The issues

Commuting to Exeter by bicycle is feasible in terms of distance but risky in terms of safety and unpleasant at the least because of the nature of the route and the size of other vehicles using it. The narrowness of the road for almost the whole distance does not allow for a dedicated cycle lane and in many parts does not allow for safe overtaking of a cyclist.

Local cyclists, largely through the Boniface Trail cycle route group, are endeavouring to develop a route avoiding the most hazardous parts of the A377, which would be a shared use trail. Even though achieving this might take some time, we feel it is important to think ahead and consider how such a route would connect to the town.

To address this issue we have the following objective:

Objective 4.2 to improve connections to the wider cycle network, in particular to the Crediton to Exeter cycle route

This objective accords with the same sustainable transport policies as Objective 4.1; also with LP DM22, Tourism and leisure development, because the Boniface Trail will connect to the Exeter cycle network. Objective 4.2 will be achieved by policy T2.

Policy T2 Crediton to Exeter Cycle path

Where possible, all new developments at the east end of the town should have a safe and practical connection to the proposed Crediton to Exeter cycle path.

4.3 Development along principal routes

The issues

As the town has expanded, sections of principal route that used to be outside the settlement are now inside it. Retail and services have been located along routes which do not always have pedestrian connectivity, requiring pedestrians to cross and recross the road (usually where there is no crossing point) or to walk in the roadway. This is clearly inconvenient and potentially unsafe. Poor design of some developments in the past have led to this situation.

Because there is strong support for good walking routes, and we will need good connectivity as the town expands further, it is necessary to ensure that new developments contribute to making the network better, not more limited or constrained.

To address this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 4.3 to ensure that new developments along principal routes maintain existing pedestrian facilities or include proposals for creating additional pedestrian facilities on those routes. This objective is in accordance with NPPF 9.102 c) LP S1 e) Objective 4.3 will be achieved by policy T3.

Policy T3 Development on principal routes

Development of sites adjacent to the principal routes A377, A3072, Higher Road (see Fig 3, page 32) where there is no existing pavement will not be supported unless the development includes the provision of a pavement or footway, dual use where possible, along the principal route in addition to any pedestrian provision within the development site itself, and which connects the development directly into the existing footpath network.

Fig. 3
Missing Footcay Ahead Of Development



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4.4 Off street parking

The issues

81% of respondents to the Household Survey believed that there is a parking problem in Crediton. Most cited the town centre streets and car parks as being the problem areas for parking, but some residential streets were also mentioned. It is evident that the existing car parks are needed.

In addition, the proliferation of roadside parking by residents increases the pressure on finding a car parking space for visitors and service vehicles. We are therefore in support of the district's minimum standard for large developments of 1.7 spaces, rounded up to 2 spaces per dwelling for 1-2 houses.

In order to address this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 4.4 to ensure that there is adequate parking available in the town for visitors, service vehicles and workers by maintaining off street parking. This objective is in accordance with LP DM5 4.19a Objective 4.4. will be achieved by policy T4.

Policy T4 Off street parking

Development proposals that would result in the loss of off- street parking will not be supported unless it can be shown that there is no need for the car park or that equivalent space is being provided elsewhere.

5 Sustainability

Key objective: to rely on our own resources, reduce environmental degradation, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change

Context

Sustainable principles work towards reducing to a minimum the resources we use for all aspect of living: halting the consumption of finite resources and using technology to reduce our impact on the planet. In respect of climate change, this means radically reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the next 30 years, and eventually stopping emitting green-house gases altogether. We know we must achieve cleaner energy and, especially, renewable energy.

We have a strong Sustainable Crediton group. Over 500 local people and groups receive monthly updates from the SC groups working on Waste/Recycling, Housing, Transport and Food. 'Give &Take' re-use events have resulted in tons of unwanted items avoiding landfill and being reused.

In 2012, over 80 individuals and organisations met to explore moving towards a low carbon community. Many of the ideas put forward have informed this plan and the Sustainability Statement (see appendix 2, pg 60).

5.1 Renewable energy

The issues

In terms of renewable energy, the Household Survey showed support for solar energy as the preferred renewable and the DARE Renewable Energy Feasibility Study found similar support through public consultation. Unfortunately, in spite of the NPPF's environmental objective for achieving sustainable development, there are no requirements on developers to build renewable energy sources into their designs nor to consider the energy needs of their housing developments over the next 30 years or where this will come from. The low carbon functionality of the development in terms of energy use is not considered and it is left to individuals to provide renewable sources for themselves. All this plan can do is try to encourage developers to think sustainably. To address the issue, we have the following objective:

Objective 5.1 to encourage new development to provide a proportion of its energy needs from on-site renewable energy (especially the incorporation of solar panels in new house building). This objective is in accordance with NPPF 127 a) which requires that a new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area not just for the short term but for the lifetime of the development. Objective 5.1 will be achieved by policy S1.

Policy S1 Renewable energy excluding wind turbines

Proposals for energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources to serve individual properties or small groups of properties will be supported provided that:

- the energy generating infrastructure is located as close as practicable and is in proportion to the scale of the existing building the proposed development is intended to serve
- the siting, scale, design and impact on landscape, views and wildlife of the energy generating infrastructure is acceptable and does not compromise public safety and allows continued safe use of public rights of way
- adjoining uses are not adversely impacted in terms of noise, vibration or electromagnetic interference
- where appropriate, the energy generating infrastructure and its installation complies with the micro generation certification scheme or equivalent standard.

5.2 Energy diversification

The issues

Businesses and industrial buildings that have large roof areas are well-placed to consider roof-mounted solar panels that would contribute to meeting their energy needs. As a community we want to support sustainability, therefore we will encourage all commercial developments to consider suitable renewable energy sources that will help to reduce energy use from finite resources.

To resolve this issue we have this objective

Objective 5.2 to encourage businesses, industrial units and new commercial development to consider diversifying their energy sources by installing or designing into construction renewable sources of energy. This objective in accordance with LP DM2. Objective 5.2 will be achieved by policy S2.

Policy S2 Energy diversification

Initiatives that would enable local businesses to develop renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where:

- the primary function is to support their operations
- they are subordinate to the primary business
- the siting, scale and impact of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape.

5.3 Community scale renewable energy

The issues

The South-West is one of the best locations in the UK for solar energy. Where appropriate sites exist, communities can develop solar projects which help to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

To progress this issue we have this objective:

Objective 5.3 to encourage the development of appropriate standalone renewable energy projects, both by the town council and others. This is in accordance with LP DM2. Objective 5.3 will be achieved by policy S3.

Policy S3 Community scale renewable energy

Proposals for community scale energy from renewable sources will be supported where

- the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape;
- the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents;
- the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.

6 Employment

Key objective: to promote a wide range of business opportunities and facilities for home-working

Context

Many people have responded in surveys that they appreciate being employed locally or having the opportunity to set up a business in dedicated premises close to where they live. Crediton has limited land available for employment use so that land which has been allocated as such through the Local Plan Allocations procedure needs to be retained in order for people's aspirations to be met.

A future for Crediton as principally a dormitory town for Exeter is not an aspiration that has been expressed in consultations: quite the contrary. Aside from the need for local jobs, investment tends to follow employment; market towns like Crediton will need to work hard for their share of development of the district and regional economy: other towns and cities are better connected to the road infrastructure are easier and more attractive locations for investment.

It is perhaps a question of scale: Crediton would be unsuitable for the extensive developments proposed at Junctions 27 and 28, but new and existing businesses are looking for start-up premises or opportunities to expand. This plan aims to recognise and enable those ambitions.

6.1 Mobile phone coverage

The issues

Parts of the town have a poor mobile phone signal which limits options for home working for those without a landline. As new working methods develop, more people are able to develop a business that relies on communication methods rather than travelling to a dedicated workplace. This is a more sustainable option that we are keen to facilitate.

To resolve this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 6.1 to support provision of good communication facilities, including mobile phone signals, to enable a variety of business opportunities in suitable locations, including working from home. This objective is in conformity with LP S1 f) Objective 6.1 will be achieved by policy E1.

Policy E1 Mobile phone coverage

Facilities for achieving a good mobile phone signal throughout all areas of the town will be supported provided the facilities are appropriately located.

6.2 Change of use of allocated employment land

The issues

Many respondents to the Household Survey gave the opportunity to work in town as a reason they liked living in Crediton. Local jobs and businesses came

top of the list of benefits that people under 40 saw as a benefit that development could bring. It was second for the over 40s. Many residents supported the Exeter Road Tesco development on the basis that it would enable the provision of small business accommodation and start-up premises which are needed if new or current residents are not to add to commuter traffic on the road network. The current industrial estates are full or almost full with little capability of expanding. The new housing developments already proposed or allocated in the local plan, could provide new local businesses with a local workforce. For this reason, the loss of any of the allocated employment sites (defined in Policy DM19 in the adopted Local Plan), through a change of use will be resisted.

To address this issue, we have the following policy:

Objective 6.2 ensure that allocated employment sites are retained. This objective conforms with LP DM19 4.58

Policy E2 Change of use of allocated employment land

The change of use of allocated employment sites will not be supported except in circumstances where it is demonstrated that there is a sufficient range of suitable and available employment sites in the local area and the site has been marketed at an appropriate price for a minimum of eighteen months.

6.3 Re-development and expansion of existing town centre employment sites

The issues

There is a small number of employment sites in the town centre which have some negative impact on other town centre uses. Given the sparsity of employment sites in the town, it is likely that these sites, which offer local jobs, will continue to be needed. We therefore support their current use as long as that is the case. Were they ever to be redeveloped, their negative impacts could be reduced through better design and environmental considerations. With attention to the potential for green infrastructure, their appearance could be significantly different so that local people might feel less concerned about employment sites close to residential areas.

To help resolve these issues, we have this objective:

Objective 6.3 to take the opportunity of re-development to integrate town centre employment sites better into their surroundings by ensuring appropriate use, good design, landscaping incorporating green infrastructure, native planting and wildlife habitats. This objective is compatible with LP DM1 Objective 6,3 will be achieved through policy E3

Policy E3 Re-development and expansion of existing town centre employment sites

The re-development of existing employment sites in the town centre will be supported provided that

- the scale and nature of the new proposals would not have significant harmful impact on the amenities of existing adjoining activities
- the scale and nature of the proposals would not have unacceptable conflicts with other existing land use activities
- the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the local road network
- the redevelopment would include proposals for improvement in connectivity and pedestrian access where required and possible
- the proposal conforms to policy D5 of this plan: in particular, the proposal uses appropriate materials, colours and includes green infrastructure, landscaping and native planting to contribute to biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

6.4 Re-development of the Mill Street industrial and commercial area

The issues

The Mill Street area (fig 5, p39) has a number of industrial, retail and commercial sites. Some of these have developed in a piecemeal fashion over many years. With new residential development planned at this end of town and with larger vehicles accessing the sites, the area now has a number of issues that could be resolved if the area was redeveloped as opportunities arise according to a forward plan. Issues include:

- the lack of a pavement on the west side of Mill Street from ATS to Morrisons entrance
- the poor crossing facilities for pedestrians at the north end of Mill Street at the junction with Blagdon
- the unsuitability of HGVs accessing Crediton Dairy via Church Lane
- the potential to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity by creating a dual use route from Church Lane to Mill Street
- the disused industrial area at the entrance to the trading estate
- the poor quality of the street scene, including the entrance to Westward Business Centre on the east side and the frontages on the west side from Morrisons to the old Mole Avon site.

Fig 5 Mill Street industrial and commercial area



To address these issues, we have this objective:

Objective 6.4 to achieve improvement of the Mill Street industrial and commercial area by increasing connectivity, reducing HGV impact and enhancing the street scene. This objective is in accordance with LP S1 b) e) h) Objective 6.4 will be achieved through policy E4

Policy E4 Re-development of the Mill Street industrial and commercial area

Re-developments and expansions in the area shown in Fig 5, including mixed use purposes, will be supported subject to these criteria:

- the proposal improves connectivity where possible
- the proposal makes a positive contribution to the street scene
- the proposal includes landscaping and planting to improve the public realm and increase biodiversity.

7 Heritage

Key objective: to maintain our heritage of historic buildings and enhance their use with well-designed additions and refurbishments.

Context

Crediton has significant heritage assets, the parish church in particular – the only Grade 1 listed building in the town – and topping the list of most valued heritage assets in the Household Survey. The station also has a listed signal box, one of only three in the country, which is in daily operation. Other historic buildings may have a lesser classification or none but the town has its conservation area which aims to protect the integrity of the historic core. Buildings and open spaces adjacent to the conservation area are important in maintaining the townscape and the historic setting and changes to these fringe sites can impact on the heritage of the whole. Disastrous town fires across the centuries have left Crediton with fewer old, picturesque buildings than other market towns. It is therefore important for us to recognise what we have and to ensure that it is maintained and kept in use for the benefit of future generations. Once it's gone, it's gone and it's no good saying afterwards, 'We should have kept that'. Equally, we sometimes only get one chance in a generation or more to protect historic assets from incompatible adjacent development. Deterioration of the historic core can happen gradually over time without adequate measures to protect it, as has happened in the recent past.

7.1 Historic character

The issues

The historic character of Crediton is greatly appreciated by the vast majority of people in the town, particularly our most historic buildings and features. The household survey showed almost unanimous support for the parish church, closely followed by the war memorial. Other historic buildings and parks also received strong support. It is not always obvious what effect a development will have on a listed building or the setting of a historic asset and sometimes this is realised too late. This plan aims to include robust policies that will protect assets and aspires to investigate and document our historic heritage further so that what the community values is recognised and protected.

To address this issue we have the following objective:

Objective 7.1 to maintain the historic character of Crediton and the settings of our historic buildings, especially the parish church and the war memorial. This objective conforms with LP S1 m) NPPF 185. Objective 7.1 will be achieved through policy H1.

Policy H1 Historic character

In order to protect the historic character of Crediton, proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, including those with archaeological interest must comply fully with the requirements of National Planning Policy, the development plan and the guidance on design in the Crediton Design Guide

7.2 Historic landscape character

The issues

Crediton developed in the medieval period with burgage plots behind the High Street houses. The plots were surrounded by cob walls to the north and the south, some parts of which remain and are mentioned in the Devon Historic Market and Coastal towns survey. Retaining walls of local volcanic stone are a traditional feature of the town and some cobbled paths and cob walls are still intact. In some town edge roads and lanes, Devon banks have survived and we are keen to see these included in developments wherever possible.

To address this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 7.5 support proposals that enhance open spaces and preserve the public realm in the historic core including heritage assets such as cob walls, historic boundary walls, Devon banks and cobbled pathways. This objective accords with LP DM25 4.78, assets mentioned in the Devon County Historic Environment Record.

Policy H2 Historic landscape character

Developments that affect the significance of non-designated heritage assets, including landscape assets, as listed in the Heritage Action Plan, Asset Listing Proposals, should consider their significance to the town's built heritage and whether the public benefits of the development outweigh the loss of the significance of the asset.

7.3 Development within the Crediton Conservation area

The issues

The designation of the conservation area has helped to preserve many of the designated and non-designated buildings in the historic core. The High Street buildings are appreciated by the local community as the Household Survey shows. However, even 15 years ago, the Crediton Conservation area appraisal (2003) noted: 'Whilst the listed status of buildings within the Conservation Area has contributed to the preservation of its character and appearance, there have been alterations, particularly to unlisted buildings, which are beginning to diminish the visual quality of some parts of the Conservation Area.'

This plan aims to ensure that the Conservation area does not suffer deterioration in the future.

To address this issue, we have this objective:

Objective 7.3 to maintain and enhance the town's conservation area and the settings of listed buildings. This objective conforms with Objective 7.2 will be achieved by policy H3

Policy H3 Development within the Crediton Conservation area

Development proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation area in accordance with national policy and the development plan.

7.4 Crediton Station

The issues

Even though the household survey showed that more than half of all residents hardly ever or never take the train from Crediton, 95% of respondents agreed that Crediton's railway station is an important asset and the Neighbourhood Plan should include policies that protect it. There are regional plans for increasing the number of trains calling at Crediton and it could become the first part of Crediton seen by visitors and tourists arriving by train. It is therefore

in the interests of residents and the tourism and leisure sector to ensure that its heritage qualities are not compromised by poorly located and/or poorly designed development that would have a negative impact on the Station and associated buildings and infrastructure.

To address this issue, we have this objective

Objective 7.4 to promote Crediton station as part of the built heritage of the town and protect it from negative impacts of development. This objective conforms with LP S1 m) NPPF 185 Objective 7.4 will be achieved by policy H4.

Policy H4 Crediton Station

Crediton Station buildings and signal box form an important part of the heritage of Crediton Neighbourhood Plan area. Proposals which affect this group of buildings will only be supported where they are fully in compliance with National Policy and the Development Plan.

5 Retrofitting energy measures

The issues

Heritage assets sometimes fall into disrepair or deteriorate in value and quality because they are difficult to heat and light. We aim for the historic buildings of the town to continue to be useful and sustainable into the future.

To address this issue, we have the following objective.

Objective 7.5 promote appropriate energy efficiency improvements to historic and traditional buildings which improve comfort levels and reduce CO2 emissions whilst conserving their heritage value. This objective is in accordance with LP S7 2.50. Objective 7.5 will be achieved by policy H5.

Policy H5 Retrofitting energy measures

The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings will be encouraged, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, buildings of solid wall or traditional construction and buildings within conservation areas, subject to conformity with national policy and the development plan.

8 Environment

Key objective: to maintain the town's setting between the rivers Yeo and Creedy, and all its green infrastructure with enhanced biodiversity.

Context

One of the characteristics most appreciated about Crediton is its rural setting and easy access into the countryside. Development will inevitably impact on both but policies elsewhere in the plan aim to retain them as far as possible. The impact of development is lessened where it is well integrated into the existing landscape and where the adjacent landscape is maintained or improved in order to increase its attractiveness, its biodiversity and its usability for all residents.

This plan aims to avoid the degradation of land that is adjacent to new development that becomes vulnerable simply because of its proximity to a new built environment and/or its insignificance of size and position.

If landscape degrades, it becomes vulnerable to development. (MDDC Landscape character assessment p64)

Crediton has a surprisingly varied habitat types within the town boundary (Fig 4 on page 46) which offers a variety of activity areas as well as green infrastructure and opportunities for biodiversity. This landscape is important to the town.

8.1 Open spaces

The issues

Infilling in towns can be an easy option for achieving development but it can lead to a highly urbanised townscape. It is tempting to think that parks, amenity land and other open areas will not be developed but this is not the case. They can be vulnerable to creeping developments of varying kinds, which gradually change the character of the space itself as well as the built area around it. These kinds of changes can be very difficult to reverse.

To address this issue we have this objective:

Objective 8.1 to protect existing open spaces. This policy is in accordance with NPPF 97. Objective 8.1 will be achieved through policy En1 in accordance with NPPF 97 paragraphs a) b) c)

Policy En1 Open spaces

Map 4 (see Appendix 1, p54) identifies open spaces that make a significant contribution to public amenity by virtue of their landscape character, biodiversity, appearance and or function, including playing fields and sports and recreational buildings.

Development proposals for building within these open spaces or affecting sports and recreational buildings will not be supported unless:

- an assessment shows the affected land or facility is surplus to requirements
- the land or facility is being replaced elsewhere at equivalent or superior quality
- the development provides alternative sport or recreation on the site, delivering benefits that outweigh the loss of the existing facilities and uses.

8.2 Trees and hedgerows

The issues

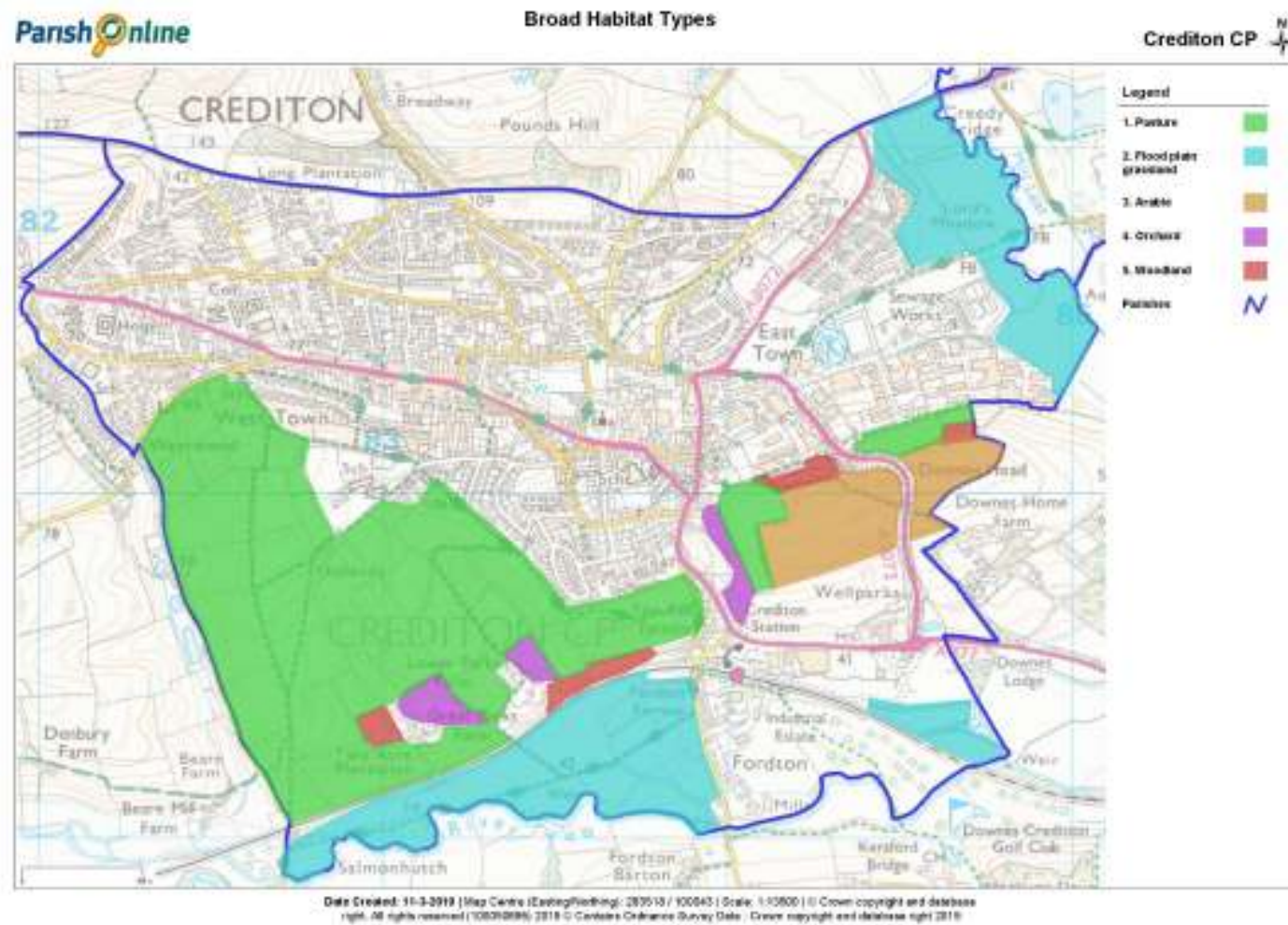
Every consultation since 2009 has supported the greening of areas in all parts of the town. Trees are constantly mentioned as missing from the townscape. The town council frequently receives requests for planting of trees in the public realm. This public support runs alongside our ambitions to mitigate the effects of climate change and to increase biodiversity. Keeping what we already have becomes a priority. There is therefore great concern when development compromises or proposes the removal of existing trees. We know from recent developments that sympathetic design can integrate mature trees into the proposals, so that new buildings and entire housing estates can fit compatibly into the landscape. Retaining trees and groups of trees helps to maintain biodiversity, green corridors, and air quality as well as improving the public realm and achieving a sense of place so there is a multiplicity of reasons for retaining existing trees as far as possible.

New development presents opportunities to enhance tree and hedgerow cover for the ecosystem services they provide. Such opportunities include: returning trees to boundaries or other areas from where they may have been removed in the past; restoring appropriate native species to the landscape; increasing tree canopy; contributing to the town's green corridors and to wider ecological networks and ecosystems. Trees also make a strong contribution to place-making, especially on smaller developments where there are open spaces but no landmark public buildings.

To resolve this issue we have this objective:

Objective 8.2 to fulfil the parish's duty under legislation to conserve biodiversity by: retaining trees of good quality, and notable, veteran and ancient trees within or affected by developments; by retaining and enhancing tree and hedgerow cover for the multiple benefits they provide; by ensuring that adequate and appropriate tree planting is included in the plans for new developments; by adopting the mitigation hierarchy – avoid losses, mitigate/enhance in association with the proposal or compensate as a last resort. This objective conforms with Town and Country Planning Act 1990 s197, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 s40, NPPF 174 a) 175 c) LPR S1 I) Objective 8.2 will be achieved by policy En2.

Fig 4 Broad habitat types within the town boundary



Policy En2 Trees

In order to improve and increase tree cover in the plan area and to retain and enhance green corridors and the street scene and to capture carbon, the following principles of retaining, avoiding harm, enhancement and compensation will apply:

1 Retain Development proposals should seek first to retain existing trees and hedgerows on the site; in particular, mature or important trees, groups of trees, orchards or woodland should be included in the layout design of the development and therefore be included in the landscape plan itself.

2 Avoid harm Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland or veteran trees) should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. The following principles should guide the design of a development where ancient woodlands or veteran trees may be affected:

- Provide unequivocal evidence of exceptional need and benefits of any proposed development, and the design of that development, that puts these individual trees, groups of trees or ancient woodlands at risk
- Establish likelihood and type of any impacts through arboricultural impact assessment
- Provide adequate buffers, including to root structures, and follow all guidance in BS 5837 during demolition/construction to demonstrate compliance with this policy expectation.

3 Enhance Proposals should include additional amenity tree and hedgerow planting wherever possible in order to: enhance the setting of the development; mitigate the impact of the development on the landscape; contribute to the street scene within the development.

Proposals that include new trees or hedges (whether replacement or additional) should include plans that fulfil the following principles:

- Contribute to increasing the tree canopy both through tree planting and natural regeneration.
- Contribute to the wider ecosystem and taking the opportunity where possible to link to or add to the identified green corridors shown on Map 5 (page 55)
- Demonstrate biodiversity net gain
- Use (or allow to naturally regenerate) a diversity of native species ecologically appropriate to the site and to climate change predictions (unless otherwise approved by a qualified ecologist)
- Source new trees grown in the UK, or from a nursery with sound biosecurity measures, to help avoid the spread of disease.

4 Compensate Where, as a last resort, felling of trees and removal of hedgerows is unavoidable, the landscape plan must include appropriate replacement trees and hedgerows in a suitable location or locations that will: increase the canopy cover compared to what was lost; demonstrate biodiversity net gain; benefit ecological networks; improve the street scene.

In circumstances where compensation cannot be delivered on site, arrangements to compensate elsewhere, through financial contributions to offsite tree planting (including management costs) should be explored.

8.3 Flood plains

The issues

Due to its setting between two river valleys, Crediton has large areas of flood plain within its boundary. These areas are vulnerable to development that could impact on the landscape. Their flood risk assessment means they are generally restricted to industrial or commercial use. Any development of this type is likely to put function and economy first and consideration of its impact second, if anywhere. Moreover, recent proposals have included changing the environment in order to achieve the development by level-raising to make use of flood plain land, reducing its extent and getting closer to the rivers. The more that engineering works are able to make flood plains useable, the more vulnerable they become.

These areas are important to the town setting, and to views into and out of the town, so development that impacts on them can be significant and create precedent for the way they are regarded in the future.

To help resolve this issue we have this objective:

Objective 8.3 to protect the town's floodplain landscape from the impact of development. This objective conforms with NPPF 170 a) and LP S1 k)
Objective 8.3 will be achieved by policy EN3.

Policy En3 Flood plains

Proposals for development must comply with national and local flood risk policy and guidance and demonstrate that they do not increase flood risk elsewhere. In addition, any proposals for development within the floodplain should, where appropriate, be supported by detailed information which demonstrates how the development will protect and mitigate damage to the floodplain landscape, including, but not exclusively, river margins, leats and floodplain grassland and should include an appropriate landscape treatment and planting scheme that will help to blend the development into the existing landscape.

8.4 Green infrastructure

The issues

National policy aims to turn around the recent trend towards loss of biodiversity. We are keen to play our part in this by having strong policies towards developing it and maintaining the opportunities we have. We have started to map our green infrastructure and corridors but there is a lot further to go in assessing its quality and effectiveness. In achieving biodiversity. As a first step we aim to ensure that no further damage or loss occurs that is avoidable.

To help resolve this issue we have this objective:

Objective 8.4 to protect and restore biodiversity and natural habitats by maintaining and extending green infrastructure

This objective conforms to 174 b) 175 d) LP DM27 b) Objective 8.4 will be achieved by policy En4

Policy EN4 Green infrastructure

Map 4 (Page 54), open spaces illustrates the green infrastructure network for the Crediton Neighbourhood Plan area. Developments that would damage or impact negatively on the green corridors shown on Map 5 (Page 55), Green Corridors will not be supported unless the corridor can be maintained by alternative planting nearby. Developments that extend or retain green corridors will be supported.

8.5 Views and vistas

The issues

The Crediton landscape is classified as lowland plains which is described thus: Lowland plains: Landscape typically has short vistas terminated by a backdrop of curving hills with occasional long views from prominent locations. (MDDC Landscape Character Assessment) Typical photographs of the town show buildings huddled into the valley with small hillside fields and woodland as the back drop. Views from highpoints around the town are of large fields looking towards the hillsides around the town and from particular points as far as Dartmoor to the South West and Exmoor to the north east. From public footpaths and roads there are views along and across the Creedy and Yeo Valleys. Development will inevitably impact on some of these but well-designed proposals that consider its site in the landscape can be integrated into a valued vista, helping to retain the town's setting and contributing to creating and maintaining a sense of place.

To help address this issue we have this objective:

Objective 8.5 to protect views from the built townscape into the town's lowland plains rural setting, especially across the Creedy Valley and the Yeo Valley, and views from the town's rural setting towards the built townscape especially across the Creedy Valley and the Yeo Valley. This objective conforms with NPPF 125, 127 b) c) d)LP S1 h)

Policy En5 Views and vistas

Developments that would damage or impact negatively on the view from Downeshead shown in Map 6 (see Appendix 1, p56) will not be supported unless the development includes landscaping and/or planting schemes that reduce the negative impact to an acceptable extent. Developments that would remove the view entirely will not be supported.

3 Appendices

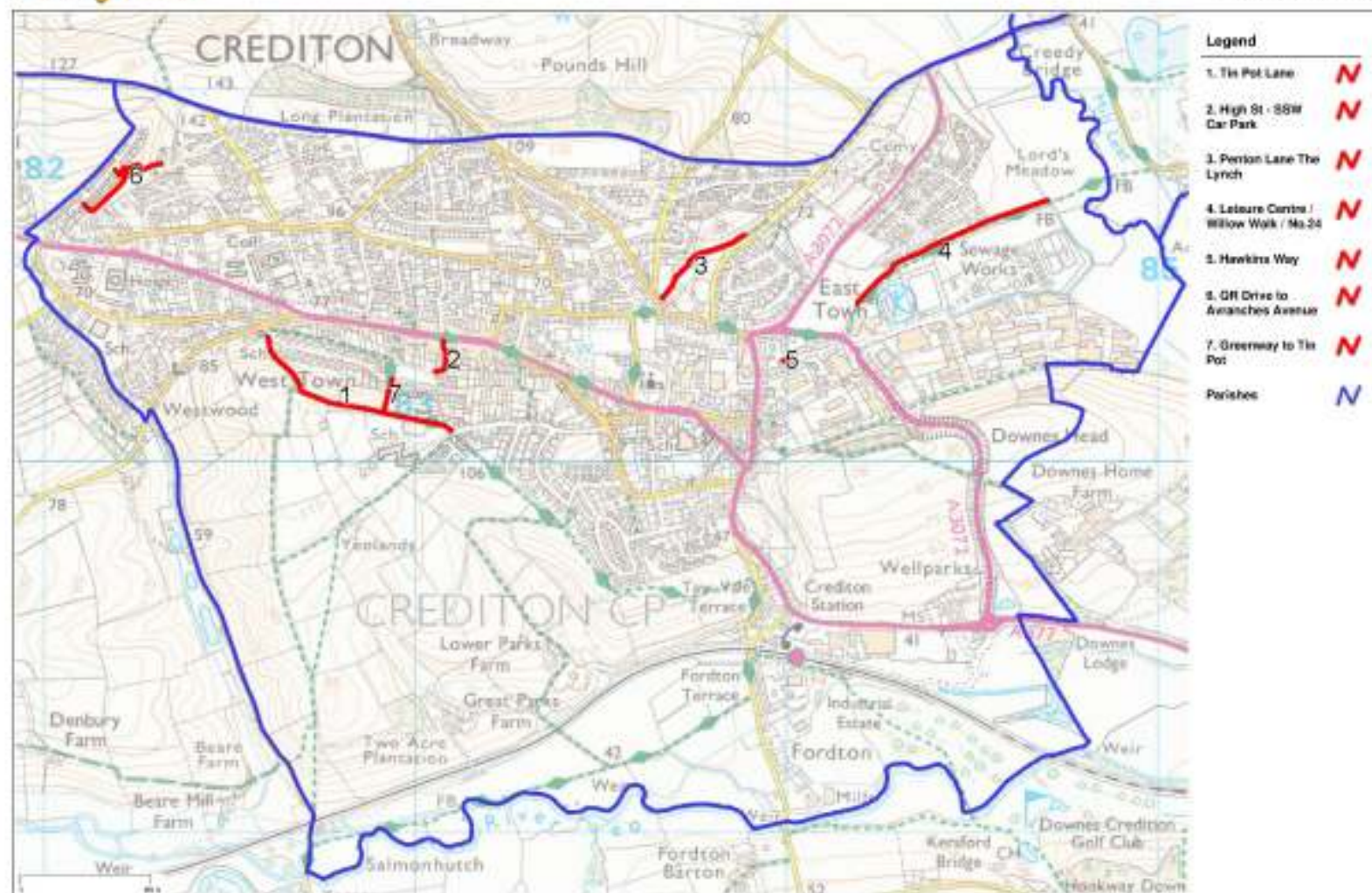
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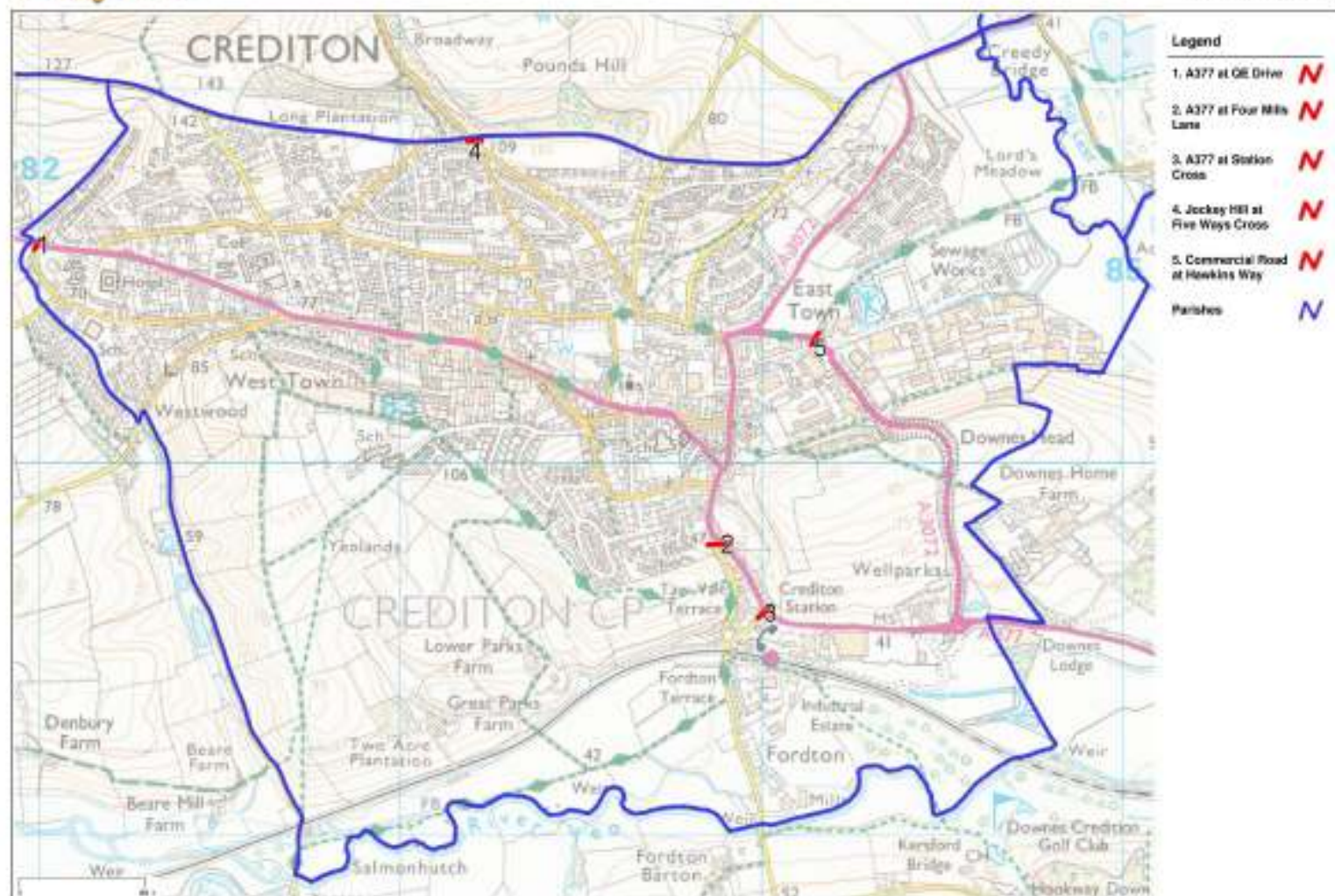
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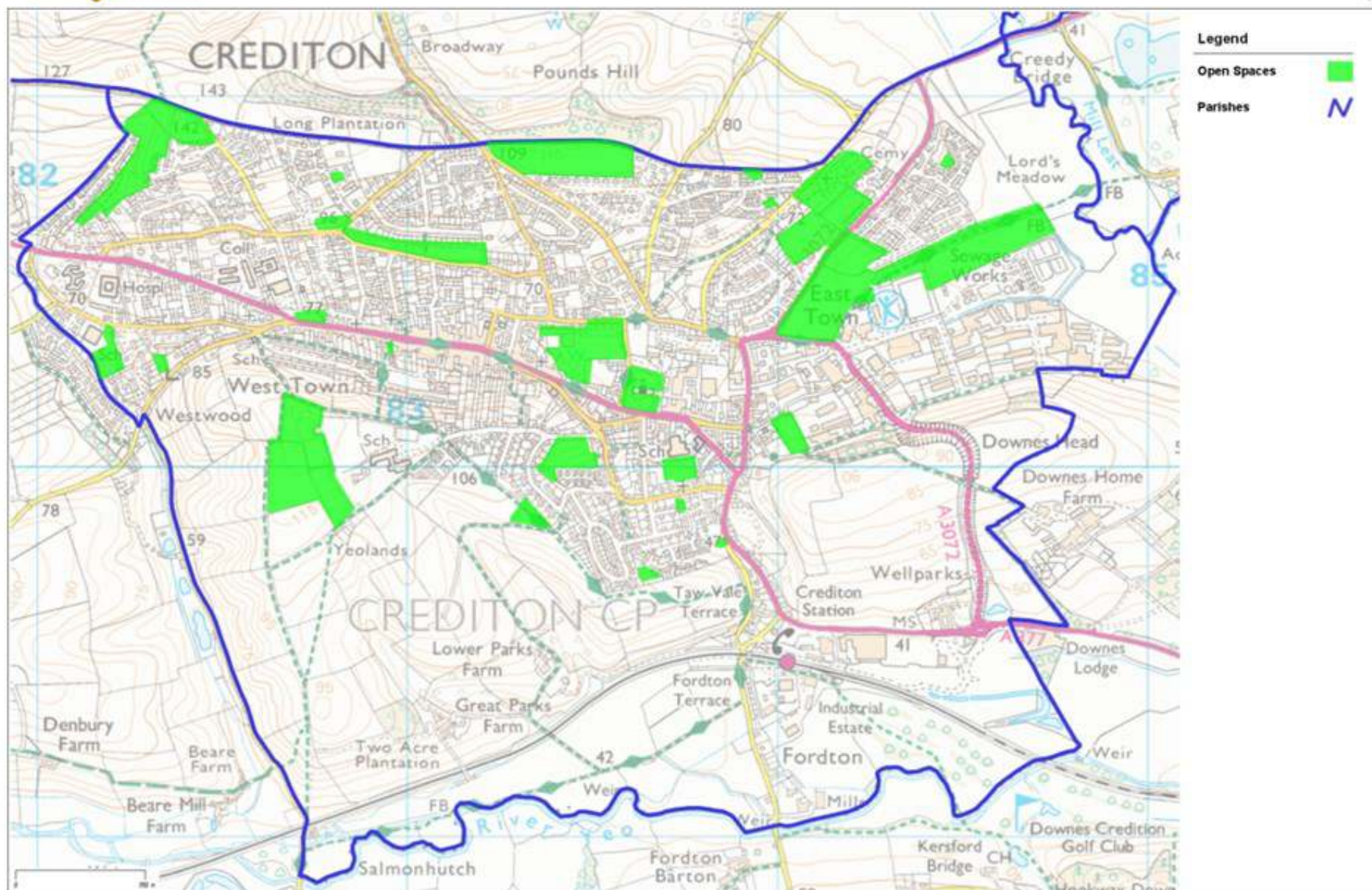


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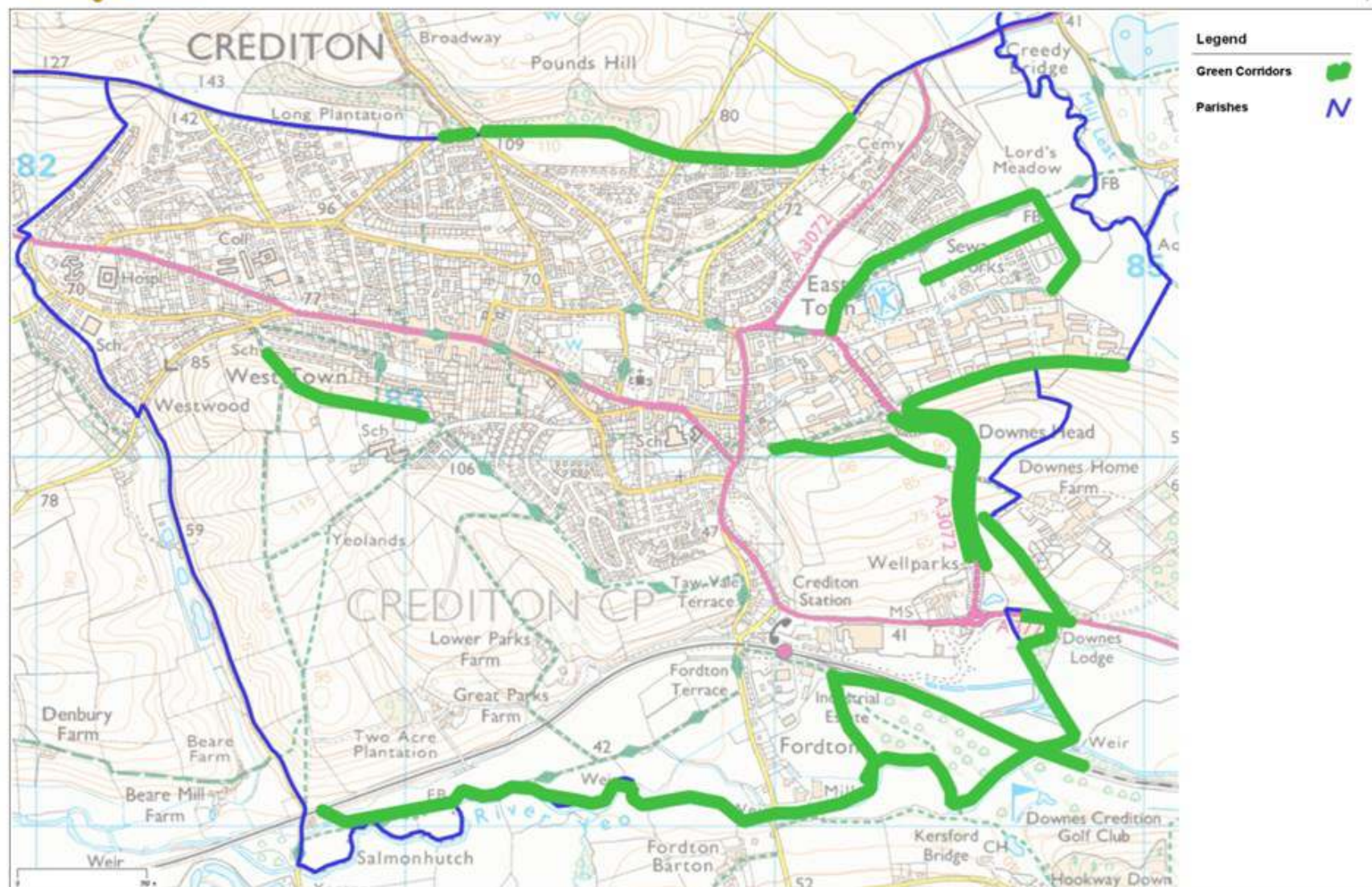


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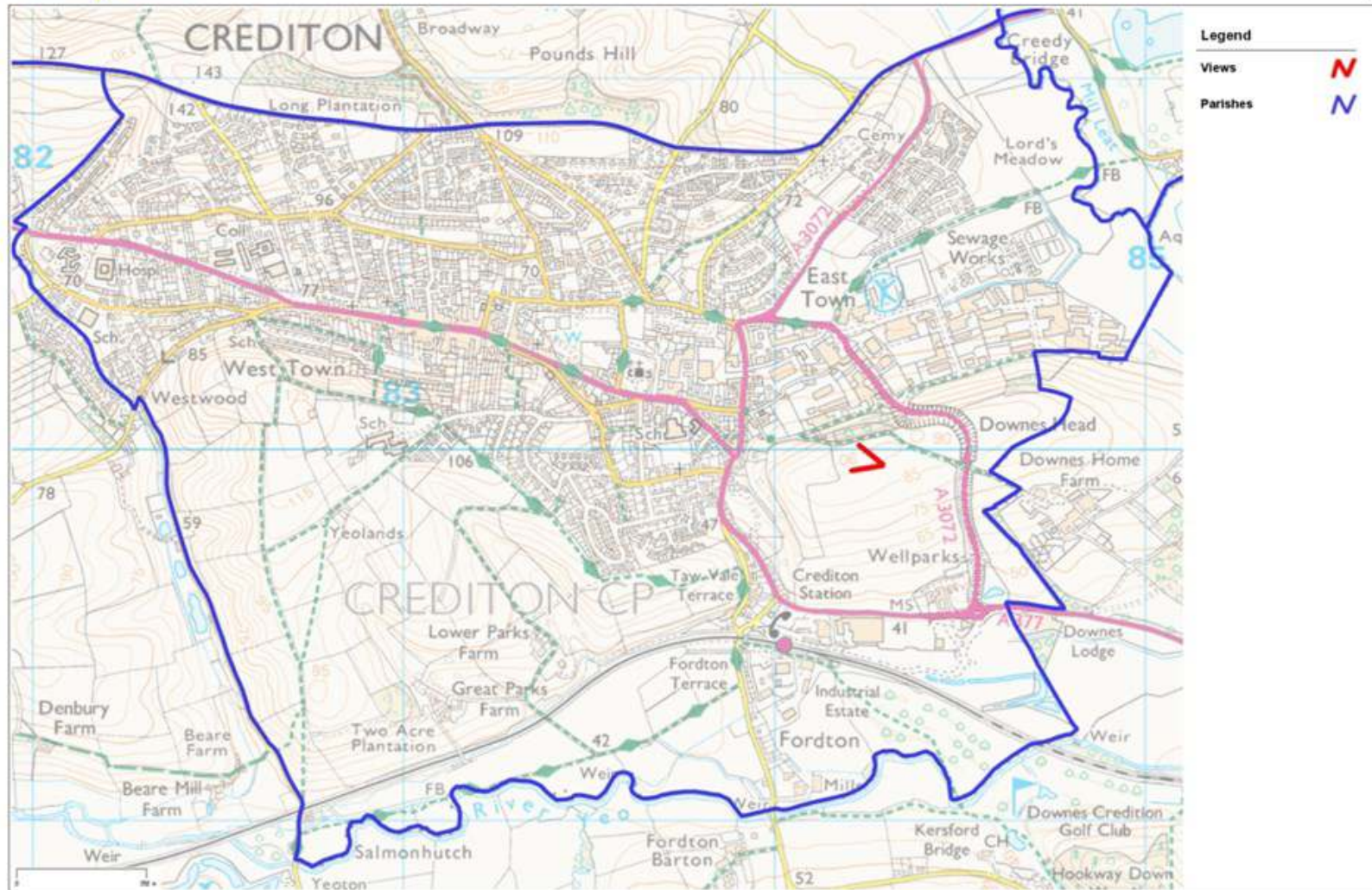
Map 4 Open Spaces

Credition CP 

Map 5. Green Corridors

Credition CP 

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Appendix 2: Plan statements

High Street Vision statement

The noise, traffic movement and pollution in the High Street were identified by residents as being major negative factors for living in Crediton.

This Plan has policies aimed at reversing these characteristics to make the High Street a positive aspect of living in the town and the town centre itself. The policies are based on the following needs which have been identified through surveys over the last 8 years:

Pedestrian first principles

The High Street is the principal road in the town where the vast majority of shops and services are located. Residents value the town centre highly and there continues to be considerable footfall. The High Street area should accommodate the needs of shoppers and visitors as well as vehicles. Presently, the focus is on vehicle movement but the vision is to achieve redevelopment on pedestrian first principles

Easy crossing

Currently, there are few dedicated or safe crossing points. Pedestrians are frequently forced to take a circuitous route to get from one side of the road to the other; to wait for traffic signals or for vehicles to give way in order to cross. Drivers are often willing to give way where there are obvious pedestrian crossing points but where the width of the road favours the driver, vehicles speed up and are not likely to accommodate pedestrian movement. Easy crossing along the length of the High Street is something we would like to achieve.

Desirable destination

While the High Street is an A class road (though not part of the strategic road network west of Crediton), it is nevertheless the heart of the town centre. As the town spreads and competing out-of-town-centre retail increases along with internet shopping, the main purpose of the High Street is changing from the main retail location to other uses. If these are to be fully realised, the High Street must be an attractive destination of a type and quality that offers something that competing locations do not have.

A multi-use area

retail – for many residents, especially those in the town centre or without their own car, the High Street continues to be the main shopping area

services – businesses and professional services continue to locate in the town centre and these still bring footfall to the High Street

centre for community celebrations, activities – the High Street offers a location for community projects like the flags, live music and Christmas lights, with the town square as a performance area close by

leisure – the town is well served with cafes and pubs, some of which have on-street facilities or pavement frontages with views onto the High Street and for these businesses, how the High Street operates has an impact on their customers

sustainable transport – buses to destinations along the A377 pass along the High Street, are well used and the needs of passengers need to be accommodated

heritage – many of the town's important buildings are on the High Street and are a key factor in the town's historic character as well as being buildings in daily use

tourism – visitors to Crediton are bound to visit the High Street for the historic buildings, the museum, parking, shops, and food outlets, so the impact of the High Street will directly affect the visitor's experience.

attractive and functional environment

It is well known that trees absorb CO2 which can help with air quality but to date it has been impossible to take advantage of the street's width to gain any permanent planting of this type. Residents have often suggested trees would improve the look of the High Street. Other types of planting may also be possible. There is a strong liking in the town for floral decoration and planting of all kinds. At the same time, the High Street must function well for people with mobility difficulties, for wheelchair and mobility scooter uses, as well as parents with prams and shoppers with trolleys.

managed traffic flow

It is understood that standing traffic, engines running, is the most polluting, therefore infrastructure that causes vehicles to halt and queue, such as lights and stationary buses are not desirable. Equally, 40 ton lorries travelling at 30 mph through the High Street may be emitting fewer polluting gases but they are creating noise and movement which make being within a few metres an unpleasant experience. This plan aims to pursue measures that would create a medium between no movement and the fastest movement.

sustainable fabric

Repairs and renewals of surfaces and infrastructure are expensive and disruptive. Any redevelopment should use materials that look suitable and which wear appropriately for the purpose.

sustainable drainage

The camber of the road is unusually severe which can make pedestrian movement difficult from north to south. It also carries the threat of flooding in sudden rain events to businesses on the north side. Changes to the road might give opportunities for sustainable water collection/drainage in the High Street with associated planting. This would be preferable to underground water drainage taking surface water away to local rivers.

Town centre and Traffic Action Plan

The Town Council will continue working with the county and district councils, traffic consultants, the Access Group and community representatives to promote and achieve the proposals in the Crediton Urban Traffic Study in order to improve air quality, driver behavior, pedestrian and cyclist facilities, and the public realm.

Sustainability statement

Crediton is committed to the principles of one planet living. We only have one planet and need to live within its capacity. At present within the UK, we are consuming resources at a rate that would require the equivalent of three planets if everyone shared our life style. And our current life style is contributing to increasing levels of global warming which are already having harmful effects in many parts of the world.

Our aim is to create a community which is less dependent on fossil fuels, more reliant on its own resources, actively working to reduce carbon emissions and finding ways to improve air quality in the town.

This has implications for all parts of the Neighbourhood Plan. The principles that flow from this and our aims are as follows:

- to make buildings more energy efficient and to deliver energy with renewable resources.
- to reduce waste, reuse and recycle.
- to encourage low carbon modes of transport and reduce the need to travel.
- to use sustainable materials, sourced locally and made from renewable or waste resources.
- to buy food that is grown locally and reduce food waste
- to use water more efficiently and tackle local flooding and water course pollution
- to protect and restore biodiversity and natural habitats, through appropriate land use.

Heritage statement

The town's historic character

Crediton has many fine 18th and 19th century buildings, many of which are Grade II listed, and most of which are found along the High Street. The architectural styles are therefore mainly Georgian and Victorian - these new developments having replaced the Tudor and Stuart buildings, many of which were lost in the Great Fire of 1743 and others subsequently.

The centuries of new building also coincided with the industrial age when the town was the centre of production from raw materials from the agricultural farms and communities around. Crediton was known for its dyed woollen cloth and tanneries. These industries produced the wealth that was needed to create a town of significant buildings reflecting the aspirations of the inhabitants.

In the 19th century the population rose to around 8,000 which is a little more than now, all living in a much smaller town than it is today.

New development

It is surprising to note how little the street pattern has changed in 200 years, in spite of the amount of new building that has gone on, especially in the last 70 years. Some of that development will be the listed buildings of the future and it is always worth keeping an eye on quality buildings of the modern era. Crediton people value the built heritage but recognise that old buildings will often need to be put to new uses.

This plan supports the protection of our heritage while seeing it as having an essential role in the daily life of the town now and in the future. Heritage buildings and street scenes may be enhanced by sensitive development. Equally, the importance and character of them must be appreciated and acknowledged if development is not to have a negative impact simply through lack of awareness or care. Hence the significance of identifying and listing assets.

Heritage listing

A list of heritage assets will include a wide range, from the most well-known impressive buildings to rows of humble cottages, and from the historic parks to ancient footpaths. The purpose of this approach is to develop a description of the town's historic character that defines its local distinctiveness.

It will also list the historic public open spaces, features of the public realm and of the natural landscape that gives the town its much-valued rural setting.

These lists will give a reference to enable any future development to be done with respect to the town's heritage and give the opportunity to not only protect but to enhance what already exists.

Heritage Action Plan

Keep an updated list of heritage assets, including landscape heritage assets

Record all currently listed buildings

Review the 2003 Conservation area appraisal

Consider buildings suggested for future listing in the 2003 Conservation area appraisal

Biodiversity Statement

Within the town boundary there are five broad habitat types (see fig 4, p46) pasture, flood plain grassland, arable, orchard, woodland. These habitats contain varying amounts of wildlife. None of the area in the town boundary is of sufficiently high value to be included in the list of County Wildlife Sites or have any statutory wildlife conservation designation. The interest and value are essentially local.

However, given that the town setting and green spaces in the town are so highly valued by residents, it is important to know what they contain and how they can best be managed to conserve and increase biodiversity.

The Neighbourhood Plan Environment Action Plan proposes an environmental audit. In the meantime, this statement identifies approaches to biodiversity of particular areas inside the town boundary, including protection, retention, maintenance, improvement, enhancement and identification of new opportunities.

Existing areas to protect and enhance

Green corridors (see map 5)

Connected areas of green space forming long corridors across an area give greater opportunities for biodiversity as species have a more extensive habitat that has greater potential to support sustainable populations.

According to Mid Devon District Council's assessment, the town is underprovided with amenity space and much of the other green infrastructure of the town is either small, disconnected or private. However, it is possible to identify two areas at the town edges where green infrastructure is more or less connected over a distance (notwithstanding administrative boundaries) forming a corridor. These generally start outside the town boundary and/or follow the boundary and link to green infrastructure that is **inside the town boundary or inside the settlement limit**. Some of these areas could be better connected and better maintained.

1 South

Hookway woods / **golf course**/ woodland next to Kersford weir/ **land south of Mole Avon** / woodland next to A377 / woodland beside footpath 6

2 North

Amenity land QE Drive/Avranches Avenue / Long Plantation / Creedy Park woods / Stonewall Lane hedges / **Pedlerspool development** / Longbarn Lane / Creedy Park woods/ **Pedlerspool Lane** / **cemetery**

Orchards

Many old orchards have been lost to development, some of them quite recently. Those remaining are valuable habitats. They include the orchard behind Fair Park and one each at Great Parks Farm and Lower Parks Farm.

New orchards that have been planted to the south of the Barnfield area should also be protected from negative impacts of development.

Biodiversity Improvement opportunities

Existing open spaces, such as parks and wide verges offer opportunities for additional planned planting and management of trees and shrubs to increase biodiversity. This could include green planting where none currently exists – especially industrial areas which can look bleak and unkempt as well as presenting a significant break in the green infrastructure of the town.

There are opportunities for improvement in the maintenance and care of wet areas such as issues, drains, leats and balancing ponds

Within the town settlement, gardens, hedges, trees and verges can be important habitats for species, including pollinators, small mammals and reptiles, a surprisingly wide variety of which is seen in all parts of the town. An increase in planting and discouragement of removal of habitats without replacement is to be encouraged.

New biodiversity opportunities

New housing developments

When new residential areas are created there is the opportunity to develop and plant out open spaces, amenity land, and Sustainable Drainage Systems to the benefit of biodiversity.

Town Centre development

High Street redevelopment may offer opportunities for tree planting that can benefit pollinators as well as greening the urban area.

Employment sites

Likewise, industrial and employment areas offer the chance to encourage planting of trees and development of green walls where there is little planting space.

Environmental Action Plan

Carry out an environmental audit of habitats, parks and open spaces.

Investigate strategy for encouragement of maintenance and management of trees and hedges

List veteran trees

Adopt a policy for pollinators

Ensure developers' requirement to improve biodiversity by having a biodiversity strategy for new developments

Investigate possibilities for improving biodiversity in public parks and open spaces

Investigate possibilities for improving and/or extending green corridors shown in Map 5

Investigate possibilities for permissive footpath connections between habitats comprising green corridors and linking existing footpaths to create a green circle around the town.

Appendix 3: Community Action Plan

Community Action Plan

Development Action Plan

Design

The Town Council will use the district council's Design Guide to help assess applications alongside the Crediton Design Statement

Housing

In order to become more familiar with housing issues and needs, and different means of delivering homes, the town council will:
consider commissioning a Crediton-specific Housing Needs Assessment
investigate Community Land Trusts

Town centre and Traffic Action Plan

The Town Council will continue working with the county and district councils, traffic consultants, the Access Group and community representatives to promote and achieve the proposals in the Crediton Urban Traffic Study in order to improve air quality, driver behaviour, and pedestrian and cyclist facilities.

Heritage Action Plan

In order to retain the town's heritage as far as possible, the town council will:
Keep a record all currently listed buildings
Keep an updated list of heritage assets, including landscape heritage assets
Review the 2003 Conservation Area Appraisal
Consider buildings suggested for future listing as mentioned in the 2003 Conservation Area Appraisal

Environment Action Plan

In order to maximise the potential of the town's environment, the town council will:
carry out an environmental audit of habitats, parks and open spaces
Investigate requirements for managing trees and hedges

List veteran trees

Adopt a policy for pollinators

Ensure developers' requirement to improve biodiversity by having a biodiversity strategy for new developments

Investigate possibilities for improving and/or extending green corridors

Investigate possibilities for improving spaces

Investigate possibilities for permissive footpath connections between habitats comprising green corridors and linking existing footpaths to create a green circle around the town

In addition to the Action Plan, the town council has the following intentions:

Community Facilities

The town council will support community-led enterprises, including proposals which develop facilities for employment, social interaction and/or well-being.

Transport

Crediton Town Council will support

proposals to further develop town plans and maps specifically designed to show connectivity between areas of the town and leisure routes around the town and its setting.

sustainable proposals to improve and extend existing commercial and community operated bus services and facilities, especially to service new development sites

the development of the Boniface Crediton/Exeter dual use trail

Sustainability

The town council will

promote recycling of waste materials and facilities for the re-use of items and materials.

encourage the purchase of locally produced goods and services

encourage energy efficiency

Heritage

The town council will support proposals that promote our St Boniface heritage.