

Chapter 7

The Natural Environment

Objective

To protect enhance and maintain Budleigh Salterton's outstanding natural environment within the various important designated protection areas: East Devon AONB, SSSI, World Heritage Site and its setting, Coastal Preservation Zone, Devon County Wildlife Site and proximity within 10km to Pebblebed Heaths / SAC / SPA.

INTRODUCTION

7.1 Budleigh Salterton's Natural Environment is a cornerstone of its economic and commercial future and is the town's greatest asset. In the town's Neighbourhood Plan Survey the strongest message was the location, seafront and the beauty and character of the surrounding countryside was rated as one of the three best things about Budleigh Salterton. In the Youth Survey, 84% rated "looking after the environment" as most important for the town. The many green spaces, trees, hedgerows and walls contribute to the beauty of the town which attracts so many visitors.

The community play a vital role in assisting in the protection and preservation of our Natural Environment. Our responsibility and accountability to future generations cannot be understated.

Aims– To ensure the following:

- **Conservation of the outstanding natural environment.**
- **Protection and enhancement of existing habitats, landscape and semi-rural character in order to protect the character of the EDAONB. Retain and conserve the bio-diversity of the area.**
- **Protection and enhancement of green open spaces.**
- **Maintenance of wooded areas**
- **Maintenance of Coastal Preservation Area**

- **Encouragement of the designation of a green network along the amenity railway line and creation of a green corridor.**
- **Retention of the Green Wedge, maintaining landscape and wildlife interest**
- **Continuation of the protection and preservation of allotments.**

POLICY NE1: Conservation of the Natural Environment

Conservation of the outstanding natural environment will be a primary planning consideration. This includes the protection and enhancement of the EDAONB, the geodiversity, existing habitats, the landscape and the semi-rural character of the town. The green infrastructure of the town integrates and blends the built environment into the high quality EDAONB landscape and new development must take into account EDDC's and DCC's landscape character assessments management guidelines.

Development proposals will ensure that the development enhances or maintains the biodiversity of the site.

See map of Ecological Areas and East Devon Local Plan pages 73

Policy Justification:

The whole parish lies within the East Devon AONB.

Town Consultation:

- 7.2 The Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire identified the natural environment of the town and surrounding coastal and river areas to be extremely important. Any approval for development should only be given where this is taken into account as a first priority.

Budleigh Salterton Design Statement:

- 7.3 4.3.2 Strands of countryside penetrate and weave their way into the town, providing wildlife corridors and patches of woodland only minutes from the town centre.

NPPF Policies:

- 7.4 115 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas and should be given weight.

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31:

- 7.5 Strategy 46 Landscape conservation and AONBs
- 7.6 Strategy 21.5 Environment - conserve the outstanding natural environment. Ensure semi-rural character of those areas on the edge of Built-up Area, particularly to the west of the town are maintained in order to protect the character of the EDAONB. Strategy 46 Landscape conservation and AONBs.

POLICY NE2: Protection of Local Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces allocated in this document should be protected. Proposals for development will be resisted unless they are ancillary to the use of the land as a Local Green Space. The Local Green Spaces allocated in this document are: Jubilee Fields, The Green (Station Rd), Cliff Terrace Gardens, Blueberry Downs, Little Common (Exmouth Road), East & West Terrace Gardens, Hospital Garden, Budleigh Salterton Community Gardens, Greenway Gardens, Frewins Gardens The Spinney, Barn Lane Playing Field, Norman Crescent Playing Area, Railway Line, Croquet and Bowls Club, Football Ground.

See also Policy CLW1 'Protection of Recreational Facilities' Page 52 See map on page 72

Map reference Green Open Spaces on page 36

7.7 The open spaces and green land make an impact and contribution to the health and well-being and the social life of the town. They are widely used by all the community including the young and old. Their contribution to the environment is invaluable and they are an integral part of the character of the settlement.

7.8 With the exception of Little Common (6) they are all within the BUAB and in close proximity to the community they serve, all within walking distance of the town, and they are all within the AONB. Many have historic significance and are part of the longstanding landscape character of the town.

7.9 Between them they demonstrate examples of beauty, tranquillity, richness of wildlife and recreational facilities.

7.10 The public consultation overwhelmingly wanted the overall character of the town to remain.

Selection Criteria

7.11 We identified recognised green areas as potential local green spaces and assessed their suitability against the criteria in paras. 76 – 78 of the NPPF.

7.12 Despite some community desirability to include the fields to the north of the town, these were rejected as they did not meet the criteria. The community were then consulted on the proposed designations and were supportive.

7.13 Some proposed green spaces are in the conservation area but are included to give them added protection.

7.14 The community allotment gardens and the railway line make an unique and important contribution to the town's landscape and well-being to justify their inclusion as green spaces.

Future management

7.15 These green spaces have a mixture of public, private and charitable ownership and historically have all been well managed and there is no reason to see why this will change.

1-Jubilee Fields. Justification- historic significance, given by Lord Rolle to the town on a long lease to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 and since then has provided recreational value. In the late Victorian era the path by the sea was known as the Quarter Deck. The site now abuts this part of the SW Coastal Path. [OS Ref SY 059817](#)

2-The Green (Station Rd). Justification- community and recreational significance since the early 1950s. The site is used extensively by the whole community for fêtes, music, literary and food festivals. The land has received public money to develop cycle tracks and exercise areas for the community [OS Ref SY 060823](#)

3-Cliff Terrace gardens & carriage turning bays. Justification – of unique historic significance, original Georgian garden & road layout. [OS Ref SY 063818](#)

4-East & West Terrace gardens & carriage turning bays Justification -historic significance, original and early Georgian garden & road layout associated with first Georgian Terraces in Salterton. [OS Ref SY 063820-065819](#)

5-Blueberry Downs seaside garden. Justification –landscape significance contributing to the iconic view of the Otter mouth and overlooks the SSSI of the Otter Estuary; the garden has a well preserved WW2 Pillbox, a historic local asset. [OS Ref SY 072820](#)

6-Little Common (Exmouth Rd). Justification-historical common, marked as such on the 1842 Tithe map, remained green space ever since and continuously well used by the community. The trees contribute to the characteristic and attractive entrance to the town and the space provides a habitat for wild life. It was in the BUAB but the recent built up area boundary changes have put this just outside. [OS Ref SY 054821](#)

7-Hospital Garden. Justification- historical, recreational and community significance, special to the local community as it became a garden at the same time as the Hospital in 1887, the time of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee, remained one ever since and over the years has been used as a memorial garden. The mature trees contribute to the setting of East Budleigh Road. The public have stressed that the garden should remain because of its historic and memorial nature. The Health & Well Being Hub on the hospital site has now been confirmed and users have already expressed their desire to use the garden for community health and well being recreational activities, in particular for Age Concern and users of the dementia memory cafe. It will be an essential part of the recreational value to the community health hub. [OS Ref SY 067822](#)

8-Budleigh Salterton Community Gardens. Justification- These recently re-sited gardens are a dearly loved and a community asset located within the built up area of the town. The opposition to the relocation of the previous community gardens was demonstrated vociferously by the town’s population a few years ago. [OS Ref SY 063827](#)

9-Greenway Gardens. Justification- These are longstanding allotments for the Greenway Lane community. [OS Ref SY 060827](#)

10-Frewins Gardens. Justification- recreational value and historic significance as endowed by Lady Mathieson in conjunction with Frewins estate in 1912. [OS Ref SY 056828](#)

11-The Spinney. Justification- historic and landscape significance; associated with the listed Umbrella Cottage since 1700; trees contribute to the key view

from the coastal path. The garden is a spectacular wild life haven. OS Ref SY 066820

12-Barn Lane Playing Field. Justification- Playing fields for the large local family community providing opportunities for recreation. OS Ref SY 059828

13-Norman Crescent Playing Area. Justification- Newly created open space offering recreational facilities for the recent housing development. OS Ref SY 060827

14-Railway Line. Justification- tranquillity; richness of wild life and enhancement of biodiversity; recreational value. OS Ref SY 064824-067826

15-Croquet and Bowls Club. Justification- Previously known as the BS Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, originating in approx 1870. Had a history of archery, croquet, bowls and tennis and at its peak had 10 tennis courts and 4 croquet lawns. In 1920s held national tournaments attended by top players. It still has a local important recreational value. OS Ref SY 064822-066822

16-Football Ground. Justification- recreational value, well used by young and old. OS Ref SY 060827

Policy Justification:

Budleigh Salterton Design Statement:

7.16 4.51 The green spaces dotted throughout the town add to its character and individual identity

7.17 4.52 Encroachment into the Green Wedge, Public Open Spaces or land recognised as Land of Public Amenity Value should not be supported. None of this land is “surplus to requirements”.

NPPF Policies:

7.18 Paras. 76, 77, & 78) identify that land should be protected from future development by way of Local Green Space designation according to intent and criteria. The criteria for designation are set out in para. 77 “The designation should only be used where green space is reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; where the green area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance,

recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of wildlife; and where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 - 31:

7.19 Para 4.24 says “Such land is of intrinsically high environmental quality because of its form, tree and shrub cover or features such as stream or pond. In other instances, it is important because of the view it gives of the surrounding countryside or a significant building or landmark”.

Planning Practice Guidance 2014 provides further guidance and states “Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis”. PPG 17 notes that planning for open space, sport and recreational facilities that are of high quality, or of particular value to the community, should be recognised and given protection by the Local Authority

POLICY NE3: Conservation of Biodiversity

Development should conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of the town, surrounding countryside and coastal area, including maintenance and enhancement of habitat connectivity on a landscape scale’.

Policy Justification

NPPF Policies:

7.20 Para 7 The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- 1) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils, 2) recognising the wider benefits of ecosystems services, 3) minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31

- 7.21 Strategy 3a – Sustainable Development: Conserving and Enhancing the Environment – which includes ensuring development is undertaken in a way that minimises harm and enhances biodiversity and the quality and character of the landscape. This includes reducing the risk of flooding by incorporating measures such as sustainable drainage systems. Developers should maximise the proportion of their developments that take place on previously developed land.

POLICY NE4: Maintain trees and hedgerows

To maintain wooded areas: existing trees and hedgerows are important in the setting of the town and provide habitat for wildlife and should be retained wherever possible and replaced if lost. Where there are woodland boundaries to the town these should not be lost.

Policy Justification:

Budleigh Salterton Design Statement:

- 7.22 4.41 The Exmouth Road is lined with mature oaks, beech, Holm oak, Monterey cypress, Scots pine and a variety of other evergreens, forming a wonderful canopy all the way into the town.

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31

- 7.23 21.6 The District Council recognises that trees, both individually and collectively, make an important contribution to the amenity, character and environmental value of the area. Accordingly, retention of woodlands, groups and individual trees will be encouraged and particular value is given to ancient and veteran trees.
- 7.24 21.9 Where it is in the interests of amenity for trees and woodland to be preserved, the District Council has powers to make Tree Preservation Orders. Under such Orders, permission is required for lopping, topping and felling work to the tree. The Council also has to be notified of proposals to carry out work on trees in Conservation Areas.

COMMUNITY ACTION NE1

The Town Council will produce a strategy for the planting and regeneration of trees.

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Responsibility: BSTC

POLICY NE5: Development within the Coastal Preservation Area

Development will not normally be permitted within the Coastal Preservation Area which acts as buffer for the Jurassic WHS to the west of the town, unless it can be demonstrated that no harm to the character and purpose of this area will occur. Encroachment by private gardens onto the coastal path environs should not be supported.

See map of Ecological Areas on page 74

Policy Justification:

7.25 To the west of the town the land rises to 129 m. at West Down Beacon. The Golf Course merges with the remnant heath, scrub and block of conifers, rising from the infertile SAC/SPA Pebble Beds and forming the southernmost extension of the East Devon Commons. It is bounded to the south by the Jurassic Coast Heritage Site. The western view was amongst one of many reasons for the town to be included within the EDAONB.

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31

7.26 Strategy 44 – Undeveloped Coast and Coastal Preservation Area: Land around the coast and estuaries of East Devon, as identified on the Proposals Map, is designated as a Coastal Preservation Area. Development or any change of use will not be allowed if it would damage the undeveloped / open status of the designated area or where visually connected to any adjoining areas. The Coastal Preservation Area is defined on the basis of visual openness and views to and from the sea.

POLICY NE6: Protection of railway amenity wildlife corridor

This green corridor offers the opportunity to enhance and increase biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Further encroachment by private gardens onto this space should not be supported. OS Ref SY 064824-067826

Policy Justification:

7.27 The railway amenity line forms a wildlife corridor and provides recreational access from the town centre to the countryside and River Otter. It is widely used by residents and tourists.

NPPF Policies

7.28 Para.75 Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31

7.29 Para 9.2.i. Investigate proposals for the amenity former railway link from Upper Stoneborough to East Budleigh Road to be designated as a green network and corridor.

COMMUNITY ACTION NE2:

7.30 Designate a green network along the railway amenity line, with the creation of a green corridor. OS Ref SY 064824-067826

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serves and historic sites) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and flood plains, wildlife corridors and greenways). These contribute to people's well-being and together comprise a coherent managed resource responsive to evolving conditions.

R

COMMUNITY ACTION NE3:

Manage this corridor to enhance the wildlife.

Responsibility: BSTC to lobby EDDC

POLICY NE7: Protection of Green Wedge

The green wedge and the three Devon County Wildlife Sites separating Exmouth Road from Knowle Road should be protected to maintain landscape and wildlife interest and prevent coalescence of the two settlements. OS Ref SY 053823

The Green Wedge Policy Justification:

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31

7.31 Strategy 8: Development within Green Wedges will not be permitted if it would add to existing sporadic or isolated development or damage the individual identity of a settlement or could lead to or encourage settlement coalescence.

POLICY NE8: Protection of Allotments/Community Gardens

Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of existing allotment spaces will not be supported unless alternative allotment, area space and replacement numbers are equivalent or greater than the existing is provided.

7.32 The recently re-sited Budleigh Salterton Community Gardens and the Frewins and Greenway Gardens are a dearly loved and valuable community asset located within the built up area of the town. The opposition to the relocation of the previous community gardens was demonstrated vociferously by the town's population a few years ago.

Policy Justification:

NPPF Policies

Para 70 & 73

East Devon Local Plan Policies 2013 – 31

7.33 Strategy 3 - Sustainable Development

c) Promoting social wellbeing - which includes providing facilities to meet people's needs such as health care, affordable housing, recreation space and village halls.

25.4 Allotments are a valuable asset in promoting greater sustainability within local communities and are recognised as being of particular importance in urban areas, especially where individual gardens may be small in size.

Town Consultation

7.34 The comments on the Open Day reinforced the town's commitment to having allotments and was succinctly summed up by one resident. *"Please do NOT get rid of or move the allotments. Soil takes time, passion and a community."*

Community Action NE4:

The value of the allotments to sections of the community are such for BS Town Council to seek a nomination for inclusion on EDDC's Assets of Community Value, subject to criteria being met.

Responsibility: BSTC