



East Devon Planning Policy Briefing Paper East Devon Area of Special Control of Advertisements Review 2018



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Purpose of Briefing Paper

To set out the background information and action plan that will guide a review of the geographical extent of the East Devon Area of Special Control of Advertisements. Outside of Areas of Special Advertisement Control, many advertisements can be displayed without the need to make an application to the Local Planning Authority: the need to make an application depends on factors such as the type and size of advert and location in which it will be displayed. Within an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA) there are stricter controls on the type, size and height of advertisements that may be displayed without making an application and some types of advertisement may not be displayed at all. ASCA's are designated for their special scenic, historical, architectural or cultural features and should only apply to rural areas or other areas requiring special protection on the grounds of amenity. Most of East Devon has been defined as an ASCA since the 1960's and a review of the boundary is needed to reflect changes that have occurred, particularly the growth of the main towns, the development of the new town of Cranbrook and the designation of the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone. Any review needs to be based on public consultation and must follow specific legal steps, including consideration of the revised order by the Secretary of State. The review should be completed by the end of 2019, although this timetable could be affected by the need for additional consultation and/or public inquiry.

NB the plans on pages 18 to 27 need to be viewed in colour.

Key Points

(The numbers in brackets refer to the paragraph numbers in the briefing paper where there are more detail is available)

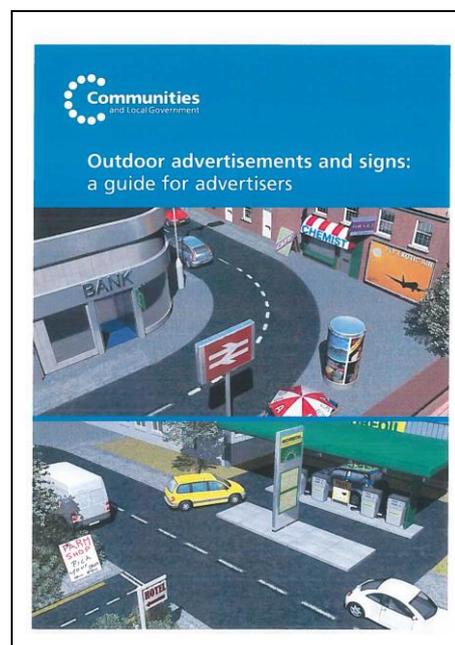
- Outside of Areas of Special Advertisement Control, many advertisements can be displayed without the need to make an application to the Local Planning Authority (para. 1.5);
- Within an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA) there are stricter controls on the type, size and height of advertisements that may be displayed without making an application and some types of advertisement may not be displayed at all (para. 1.7);
- The East Devon ASCA was designated in 1964 and became operative in 1966 (para. 3.1);
- The East Devon ASCA is very extensive and only Exmouth and small parts of other settlements are excluded from it (para 3.1);
- In 1986 additional parts of the main urban areas of Exmouth outside of the AONB were excluded from the ASCA (para. 3.1);
- In 2002 the order was modified to exclude most of Ottery St. Mary town centre from the ASCA (para. 3.1);
- Local Planning Authorities should review any ASCA every 5 years (paras 4.1 and 5.3);
- A comprehensive review is now required (para. 4.2);
- Initial work on the review will be informed by a set of guiding principles (para. 6.10)
- The proposed review process will involve public consultation before making an order and submitting to the Secretary of State (paras 5.4 and 7.2);
- Consultation on proposed amendments to the ASCA will focus on Parish Councils, amenity bodies, local trade groups and outdoor advertising interests (para 7.2);
- The proposed timetable is to produce revised plans of the ASCA for consultation in early 2019. There would be a 6 week period for consultation and any comments would be considered by the Strategic Planning Committee and Full Council prior to submitting the proposed revisions to the Secretary of State in 2019 (para 7.3);
- The proposed review will focus on whether additional areas should be excluding from the ASCA, including more of the built-up areas of the settlements already excluded, Cranbrook, Colyton and the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone (paras 6.5 and 6.8).

1. How are Advertisements Regulated?

- 1.1 What is an advertisement?** The definition of an advertisement is included in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990¹ and means ‘any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction...’. It does not include ‘anything employed wholly as a memorial or as a railway signal or a placard or other object borne by an individual or an animal’. In practice advertisements include a very wide range of devices such as: posters; boards; fascia and projecting signs; directional signs; estate agents’ boards; static balloons; flags; price displays; traffic signs and village name signs.



- 1.2 What legislation regulates the control of advertisements?** The system for controlling the display of outdoor advertisements in England is set out in ‘The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007’². A Government guide for advertisers³ provides a very useful explanation of the advertisement control system and the section relating to Areas of Special Control of Advertisements is included as Appendix 1 to this briefing paper.



- 1.3 Is advertisement control the same as planning permission?** The advertisement control system is very complex and detailed and is entirely separate from the processes that control the use and development of land through planning permissions and similar processes.

- 1.4 Who is responsible for the control of advertisements?** The day-to-day operation of the advertisement control system is the responsibility of local planning authorities, but if consent for an advertisement is refused there is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State. However, many groups of advertisement are excluded from the planning authority’s direct

¹ [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)

² [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11499/326679.pdf

control and no permissions are needed for their display. In East Devon certain parish councils determine applications for advertisement consent on behalf of the District Council.

- 1.5 What are the different types of advertisement?** There are three different groups of advertisement; those excluded from the planning authorities direct control; those granted 'deemed consent' provided the advertisement is within the rules set; and those for which the LPA's 'express approval' is always required (for which it is necessary to make a formal application to the LPA for advertisement consent). However, all planning authorities have three special powers which enable them to achieve a stricter control over advertisements: defining an Area of Special Control of Advertisements; removing a particular site from the benefit of 'deemed consent'; and requiring an advertisement to be 'discontinued'.
- 1.6 What is an Area of Special Control of Advertisements?** There are stricter controls on the size and type of advertisement that may be displayed in an ASCA than is the case outside of the ASCA. In any Area of Special Control of Advertisements only public notices, advertisements inside a building and advertisements for which there is deemed consent are permitted. In addition the LPA may give specific consent to: notices about local events or activities; advance signs or directional signs which are 'reasonably required' in order to direct people to the place identified by the sign; an advertisement required for public safety reasons; and an advertisement in any of the deemed consent classes if it is considered reasonable for the normal limits on that class to be exceeded.
- 1.7 What are the implications of being within an Area of Special Control of Advertisements?** The main consequence for the display of advertisements in an ASCA is that there are stricter limits on permitted height and size of the advertisement than elsewhere. These limits are explained in relation to each class of deemed consent, but in some cases the granting of consent for certain adverts is prohibited. This means that, even if we wished to grant consent for some classes of illuminated advertisement, we would not be able to do so in an ASCA.
- 1.8 Are there additional restrictions in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Conservation Areas?** Yes, the provisions to display adverts with 'deemed' consent do not apply in these areas for the following classes of advertisement: illuminated advertisements on business premises; flags; hoardings; balloons; and advertisements on telephone kiosks. This means that applications for 'express' consent must be made so that the impact on the special characteristics of either the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or conservation area can be taken into account.

2. What Government guidance applies to the definition of Areas of Special Control of Advertisements?

2.1 The National Planning Guidance (NPG)⁴ advises that it may be appropriate to designate an area of special control in locations where the local planning authority considers additional restrictions are necessary, such as in rural areas or other areas which appear to the Secretary of State to require special protection on the grounds of amenity.

2.2 The Governments guide for advertisers⁵ advises that “An Area of Special Control of Advertisements is an area specifically defined by the planning authority because they consider that its scenic, historical, architectural or cultural features are so significant that a stricter degree of advertisement control is justified in order to conserve visual amenity within that area”. The guide notes that in practice the extent of ASCA vary widely, with large parts of Devon being included whereas in York just the Cathedral precinct is designated as an ASCA. It also gives the example that ‘moderately sized towns’ may not be included. This suggests that it is reasonable to include smaller towns and villages in the ASCA and also urban areas that are of exceptional conservation value (such as York Cathedral precinct – shown in images below).

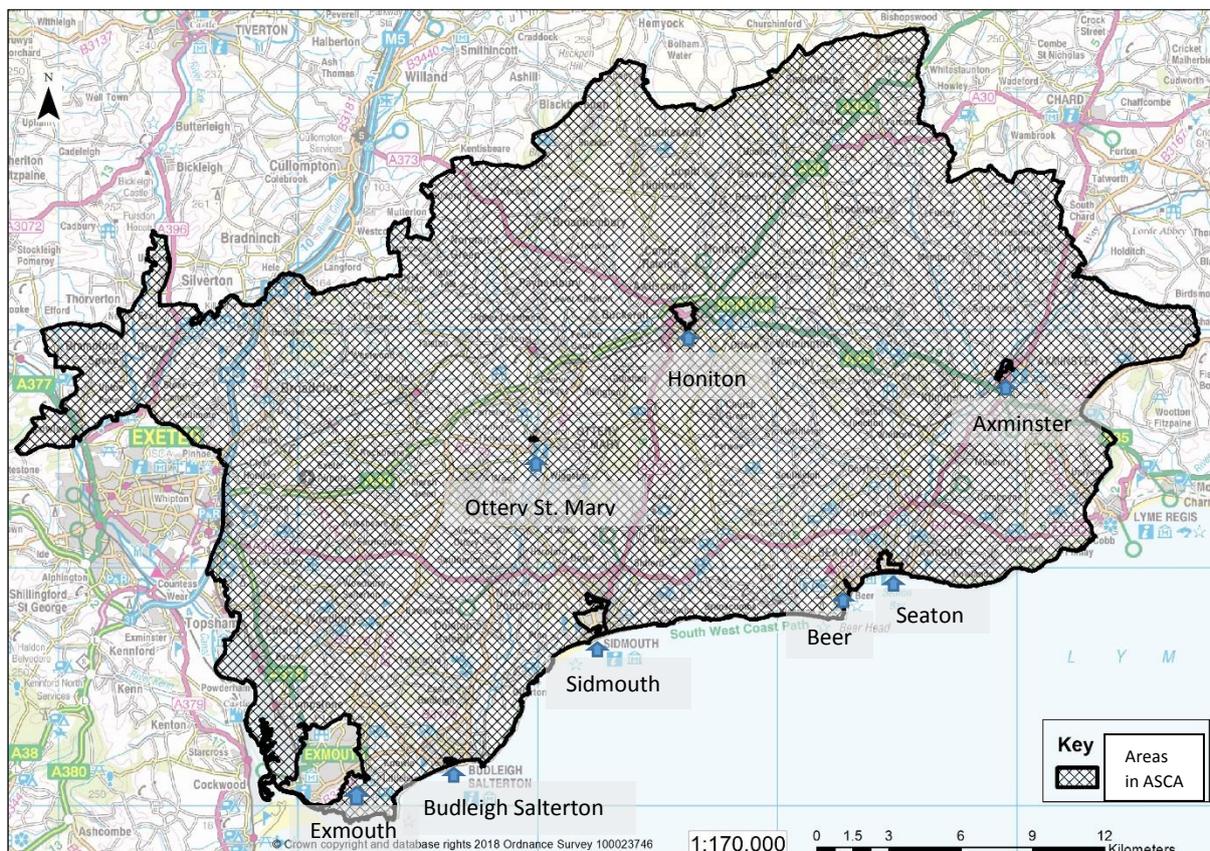


⁴ [Advertisements - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11499/326679.pdf)

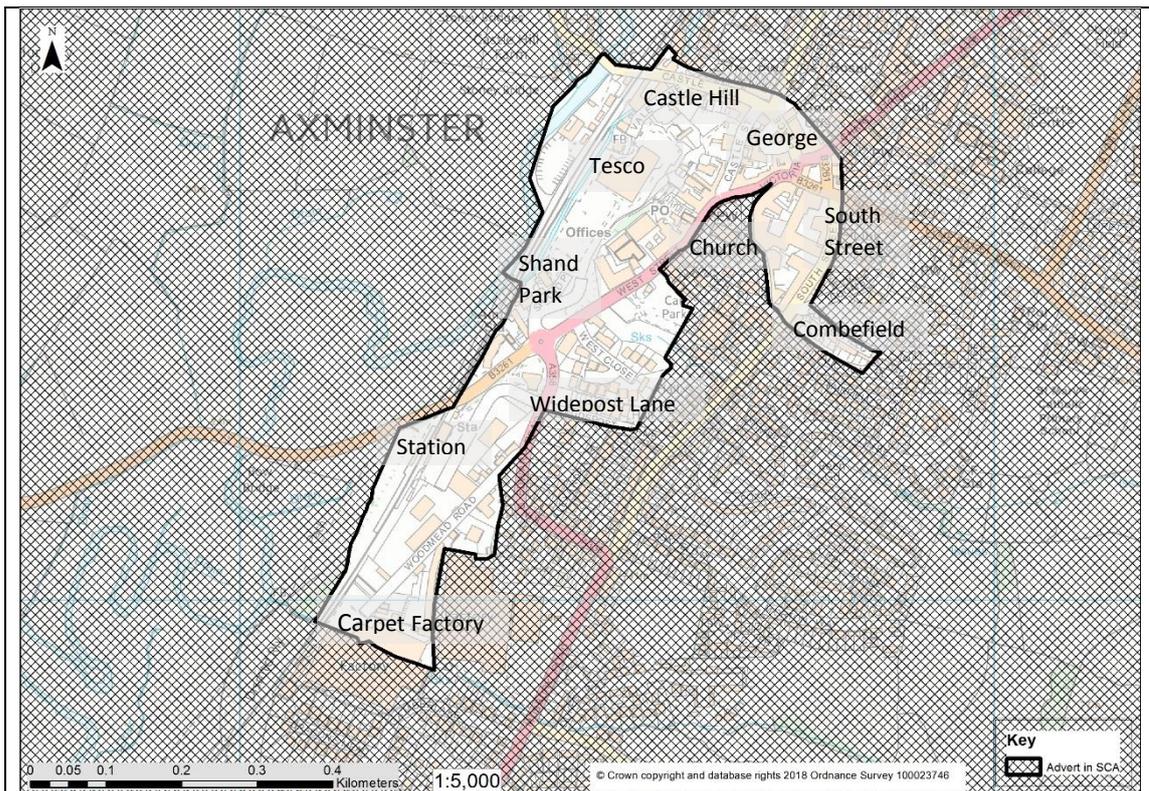
⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11499/326679.pdf

3. Which parts of East Devon are defined as Areas of Special Control of Advertisements?

3.1 Most of East Devon is covered by an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA) that was designated by Devon County Council in 1964 and came into force on 1st April 1966. The area covered by the ASCA was modified to exclude a wider area of Exmouth in 1986. A further modification, to exclude Ottery St. Mary town centre, was made in 2002. Map 1 below shows the current extent of the ASCA (all of the diamond hatched area is within the ASCA). More detailed maps of the excluded areas follow.



Map 1 – Extent of Areas of Special Control of Advertisements in East Devon



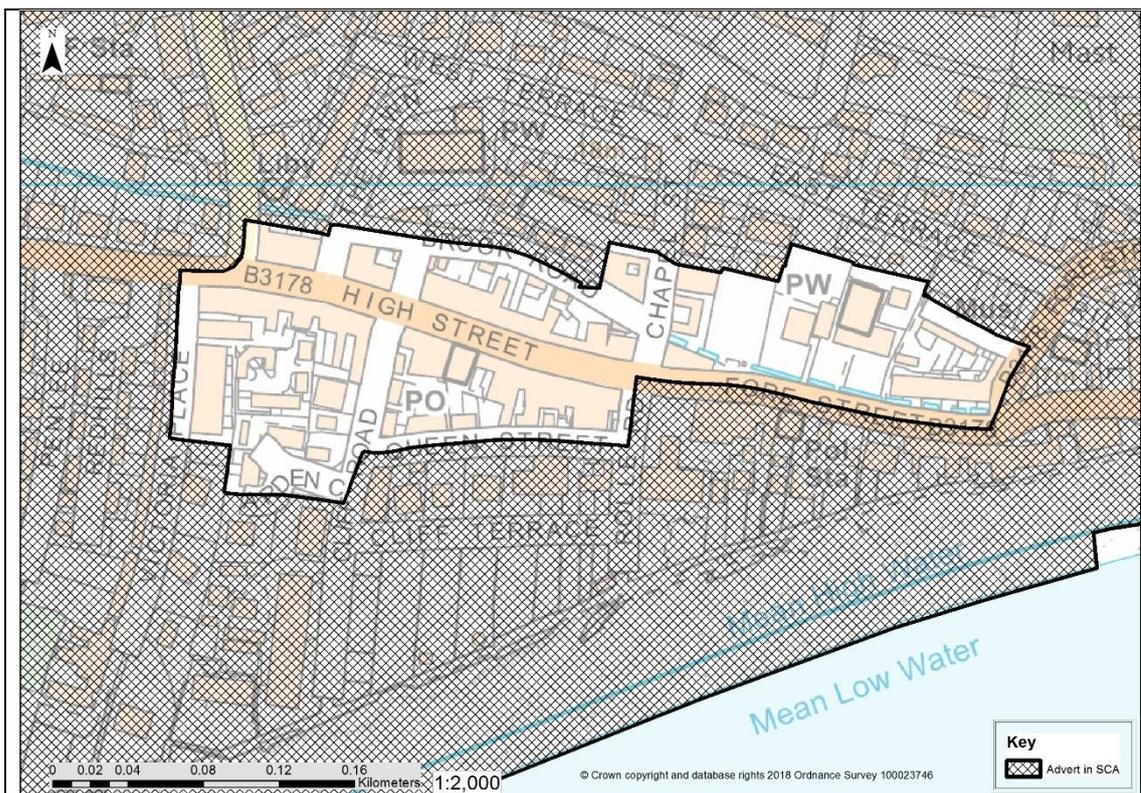
Map 2 Axminster

The majority of the town centre, including Tesco, the train station and some industrial units are excluded from the ASCA. A small part of the carpet factory and the car park for the Co-op supermarket are also excluded, but the majority of the carpet factory and the Co-op store itself are included in the ASCA.



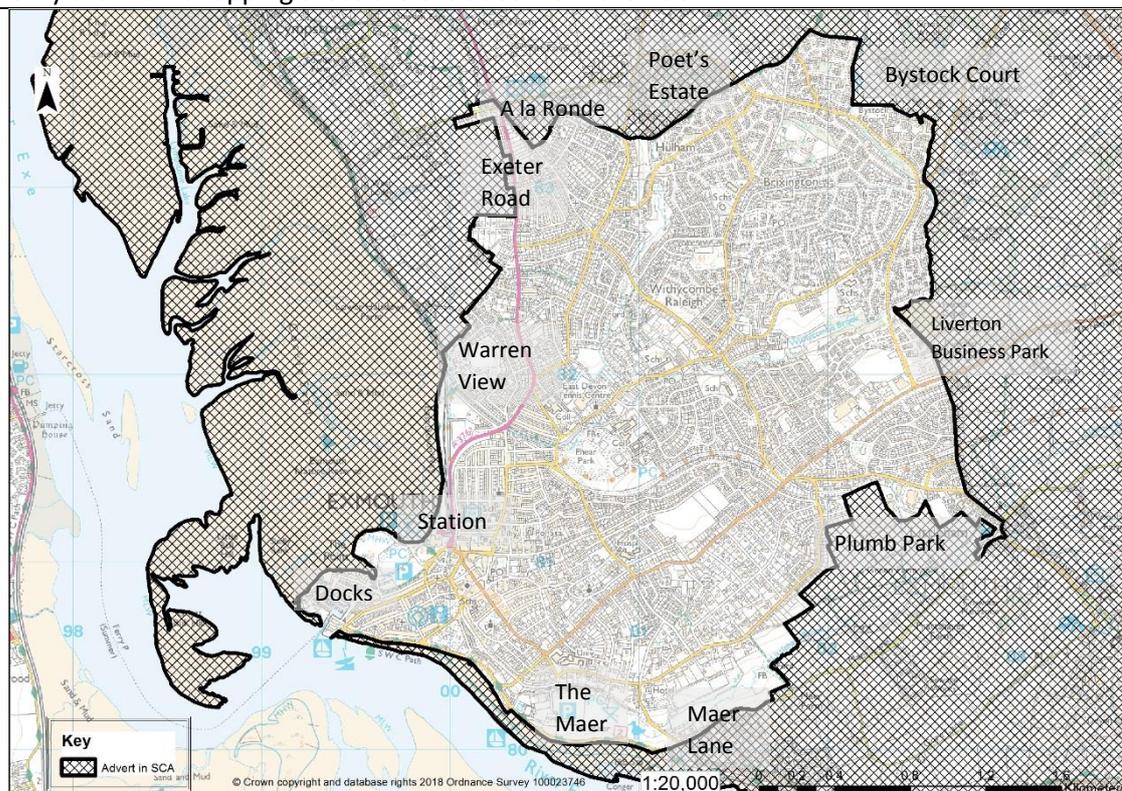
Map 3 Beer

Only the main shopping street is excluded from the ASCA.



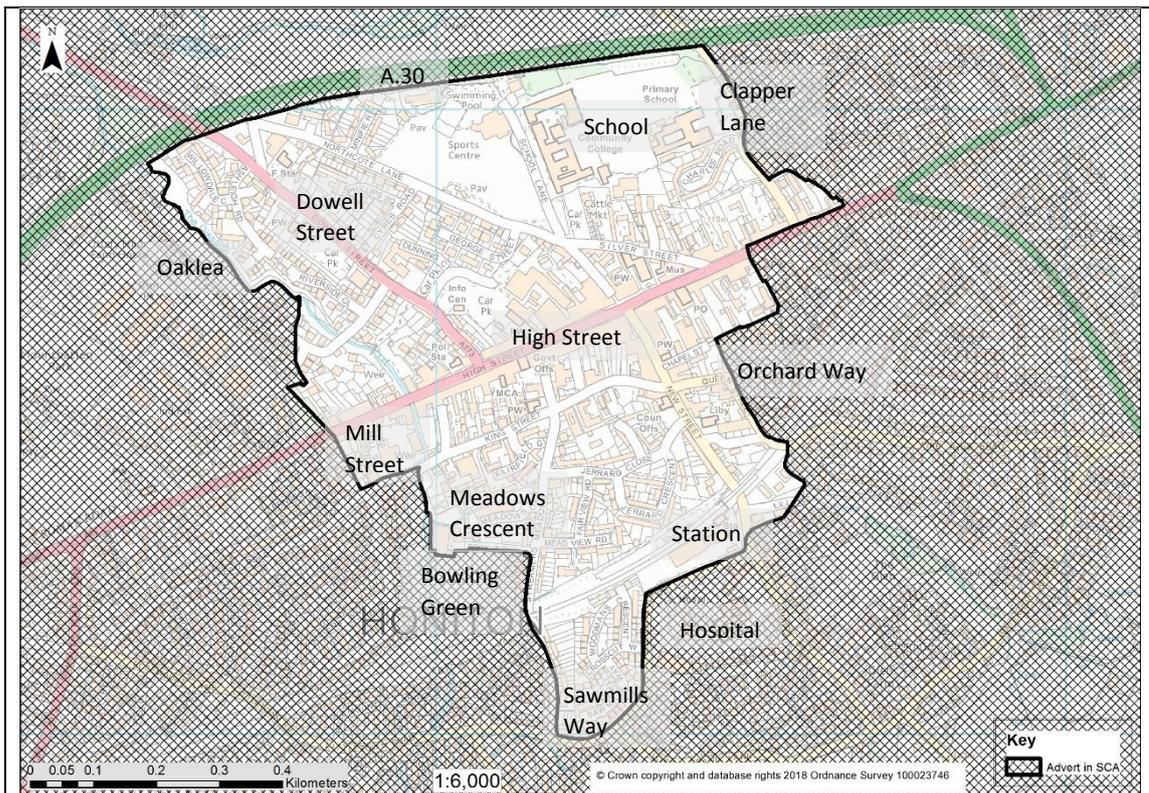
Map 4 Budleigh Salterton

Only the main shopping areas are excluded from the ASCA.



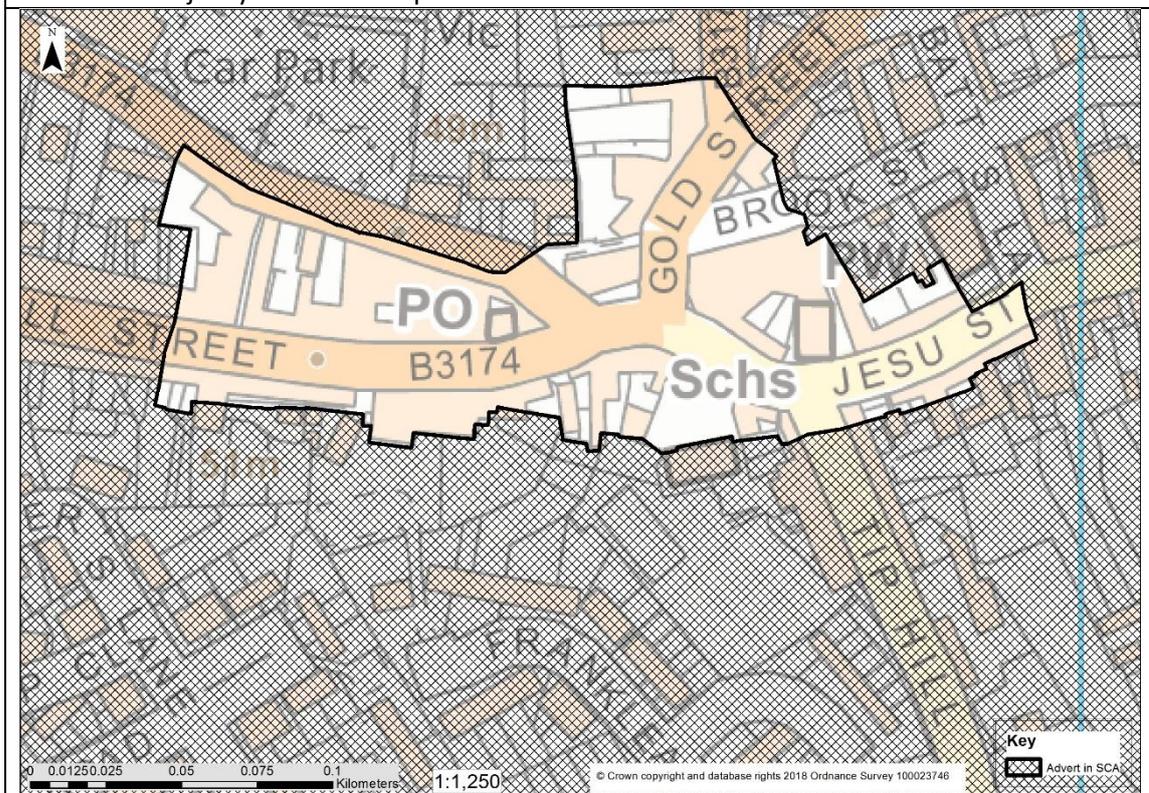
Map 5 Exmouth

The majority of the built-up area is excluded from the ASCA, but the Liverton Business Park the new development at Plumb Park and Poet's Estate are included.



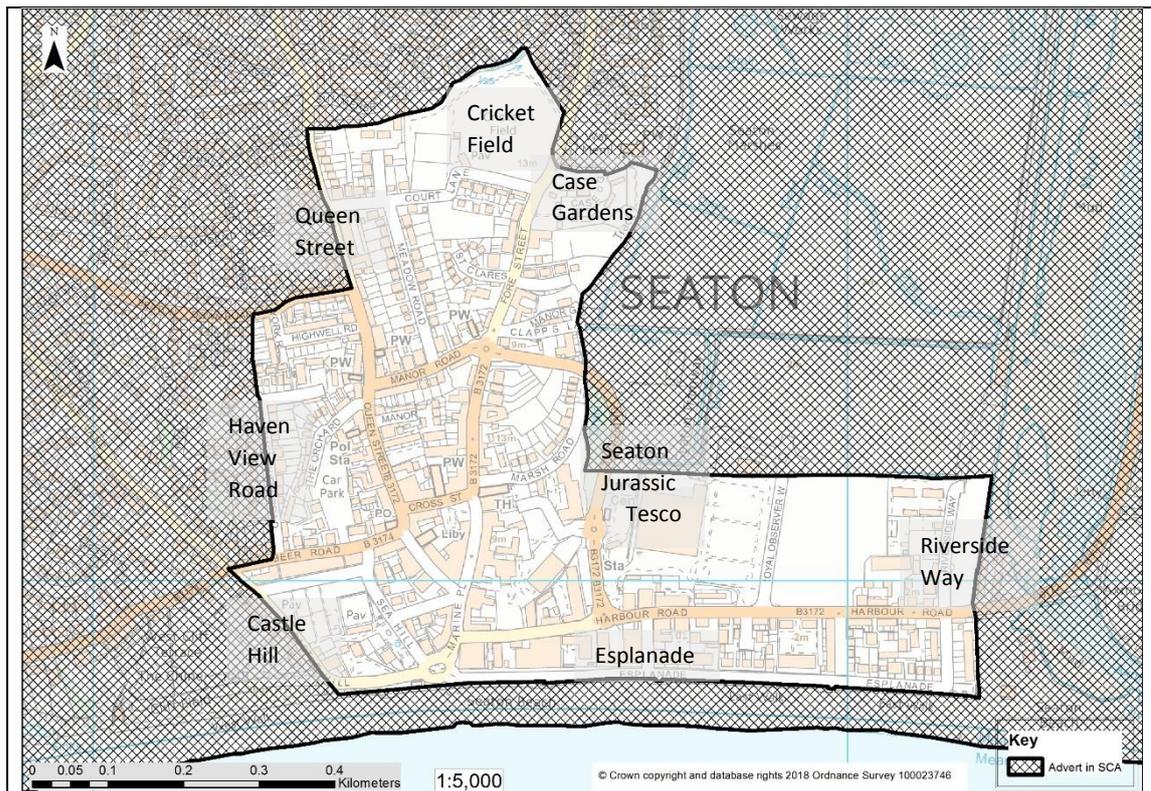
Map 6 Honiton

Excluded from the ASCA are the town centre, school and leisure centre and some housing areas. The majority of the built-up area is included in the ASCA.



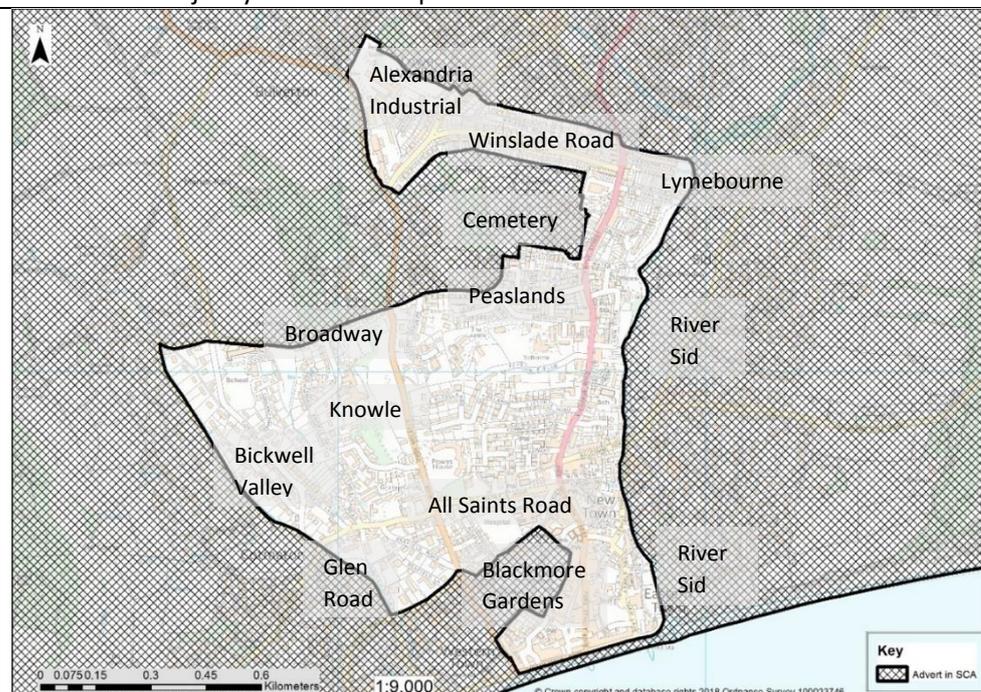
Map 7 Ottery St. Mary

Only the main town centre is excluded from the ASCA.



Map 8 Seaton

The town centre, Tesco and commercial uses near the river are excluded, together with housing along the seafront and some residential areas to the north and west of the town centre. The majority of the built-up area is included in the ASCA.



Map 9 Sidmouth

The excluded area comprises the town centre (excluding Blackmore Gardens) and areas extending along Temple Street and up Winslade Road to the Alexandria Road Industrial Estate. To the East the boundary of the excluded area runs along the River Sid. The excluded area also extends towards Bickwell Valley and south of Broadway. Much of the built-up area is included in the ASCA

4. Why do we need to review the East Devon Area of Special Control of Advertisements?

- 4.1 The National Planning Guidance (NPG)⁶** states that: “Where an area of special control order is in force, a local planning authority shall consider at least once in every 5 years whether it should be revoked or modified. It is important to ensure that the standards adopted in first making the order are consistently maintained throughout the whole area of special control whilst it remains in effect. Local planning authorities are encouraged to consider the desirability of applying to add further areas to an existing order, and of applying to remove areas in which stricter control is no longer appropriate, whenever they review an order.”
- 4.2** The last modification to the ASCA was in Ottery St. Mary in 2002. The significant changes that have occurred since, including the growth of our towns, the building of Cranbrook and the designation of an Enterprise Zone mean that a review should now be undertaken as a matter of priority.

⁶ [Advertisements - GOV.UK](#)

5. What is the process for reviewing the Area of Special Control of Advertisements?

- 5.1** The National Planning Guidance⁷ states that ‘before making an order and applying for approval from the Secretary of State, local planning authorities are expected to consult local trade and amenity organisations about the proposal’.
- 5.2** The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations⁸ set out the legal provisions relating to the review of ASCA’s.
- 5.3** Section 20 of the Regulations⁹ requires LPA’s to review an ASCA at least every five years to see if it should be revoked or modified.
- 5.4** Schedule 5 of the Regulations¹⁰ sets out the legal procedures for designating or modifying an ASCA. In summary it requires that, as soon as possible after making an ASCA, the LPA submit it to the Secretary of State with a full statement of reasons. The order must then be advertised in the London Gazette and at least one local newspaper and if objections are made, the Secretary of State may require an inquiry or hearing before an Inspector. The Secretary of State may modify an order, in which case a further round of consultation and possibly formal hearings may be undertaken before an order is approved and a final notice included in the London Gazette and a local newspaper.

⁷ [Advertisements - GOV.UK](#)

⁸ [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) (whole document)

⁹ [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) (S.20)

¹⁰ [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) (Schedule 5)

6. Which areas should be considered for removal from the ASCA?

6.1 Legislation and Government guidance.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990¹¹ (Section 221₍₃₎) sets out two criteria for the designation of an ASCA: that it is a rural area; or an area which appears to the Secretary of State to require special protection on grounds of amenity. These criteria are repeated without embellishment in Government guidance as set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of this briefing paper.

6.2 Examples of reviews in other areas

Examples of other Authorities undertaking reviews are limited: in 2011 a review of the 1963 North Kesteven ASCA was agreed that excluded the built up areas of villages from the ASCA¹²; in 2016 Dartford removed land within the remit of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (for a new settlement)¹³; and in 2017 Maldon reviewed their ASCA and concluded that the scale of development since the last review was not significant enough to warrant modification of the order¹⁴. The Maldon review placed emphasis on considering recent large industrial and commercial development only, commenting that residential development is 'not readily associated with advertisements'.

6.3 Reasons for original designation.

It is such a long time since the East Devon ASCA was originally designated that limited records exist and it is not clear what methodology was followed when the original area was designated by Devon County Council. It seems likely that, as the largest town in East Devon, the whole of the built-up area of Exmouth was excluded from the ASCA but only the more commercial areas of the other towns were excluded.

6.4 Reasons for previous amendments to the ASCA.

When the ASCA around Exmouth was reviewed in the 1980's, any developed or allocated land (as defined in the emerging local plan at the time) was excluded from the ASCA, with the exception of land within the AONB, which remained in the ASCA. In 2002 Ottery St. Mary town centre was excluded from the ASCA to remove any anomaly created as similar town centres in Devon did not have ASCA status and because the commercial heart of the town did not require protection on the grounds of amenity.

6.5 Which changes need to be reflected in the ASCA review?

The fact that the existing East Devon ASCA met the tests for designation implies that the scope of the review should be limited to reflecting significant changes in circumstance. The most obvious changes that need to be considered are the outward expansion of the main towns, the development of the new town of Cranbrook and the designation of the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone. Consideration could be given to whether wholly residential areas of the towns should be excluded from the review (as discussed in paragraph 6.2 for Maldon). This could have the benefit of retaining stricter controls outside of the commercial areas, but it would result in a more complex situation that could cause confusion and would not be compatible with the Exmouth approach. For example, if this rationale was applied to

¹¹ [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)

¹² [Area of Special Control of Advertisements Review | North Kesteven District Council](#)

¹³ [Dartford \(Control of Advertisements\) Area of Special Control](#)

¹⁴

<https://democracy.maldon.gov.uk/documents/s7922/9%20Area%20of%20Special%20Control%20for%20Advertisements.pdf>

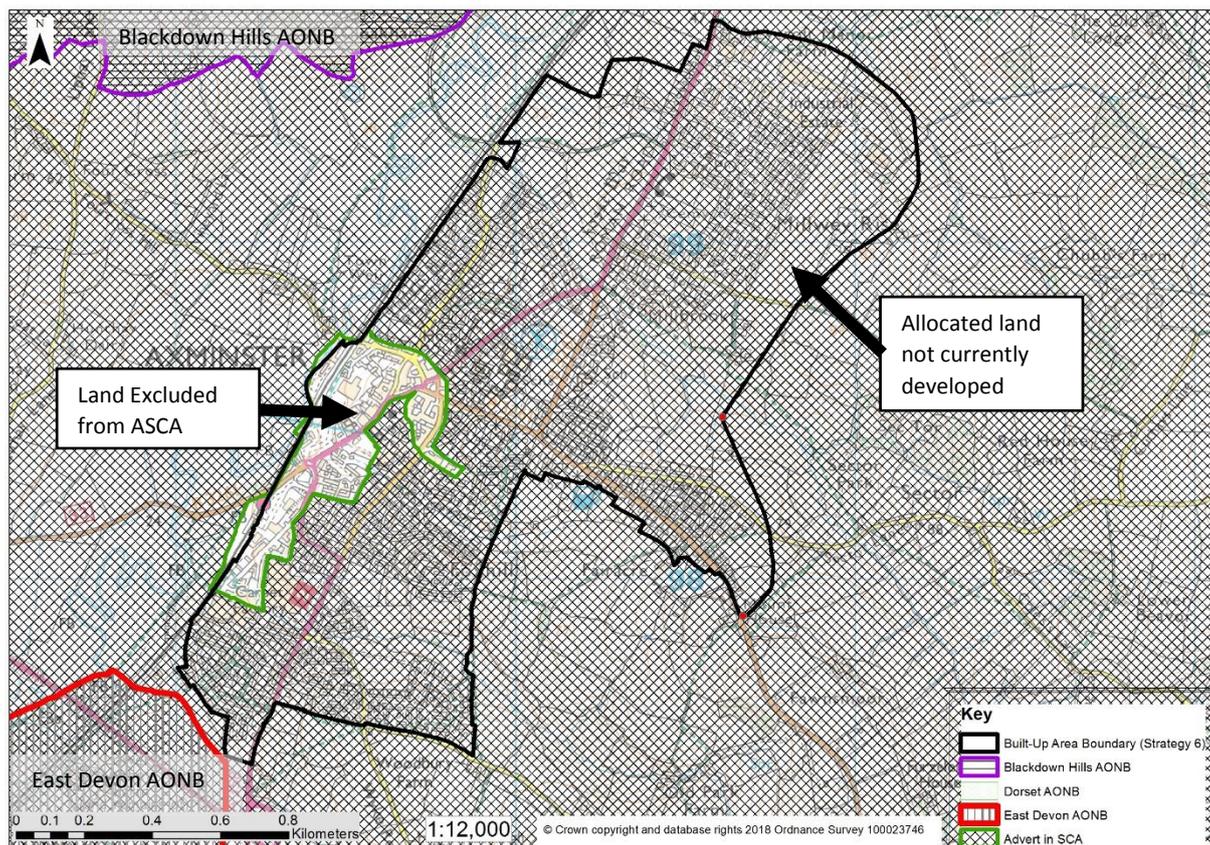
Honiton, the industrial and commercial development around Heath Park would be excluded together with Tesco and the industrial land at Ottery Moor Lane (part of which has planning permission for residential development). There are primarily residential areas (such as Oaklea) that are currently excluded from the ASCA, but would be included if the logic of this approach was applied. Rather than trying to distinguish those parts of the towns that are commercial/industrial in character from the residential areas the focus of this review should be to exclude from the ASCA the main built-up areas.

6.6 How should the ASCA boundaries be reviewed around towns already excluded?

Although they were defined for different reasons, a good starting point for the review of the ASCA is the Built-up Area Boundaries (BUAB's) defined in the East Devon Local Plan (and in the case of Beer the East Devon Villages Plan). These generally reflect the outer extent of the main built-up form of the settlements, although there are anomalies as highlighted in the maps that follow. The main potential reason for not excluding these areas from the ASCA is where parts of the East Devon or Blackdown Hills AONB's are within the BUAB's. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) are protected to conserve and enhance their natural beauty and their continued inclusion in the ASCA can be justified as they clearly require 'special protection on the grounds of amenity'. Conservation areas are designated to help protect their architectural or historic interest, but tend to focus on the commercial centres of our towns and villages, which is where most advertisements are displayed. Whilst it is possible to designate outstanding parts of conservation areas (like the Cathedral precinct in York) as an ASCA, it is not considered to be justified in an East Devon Context.

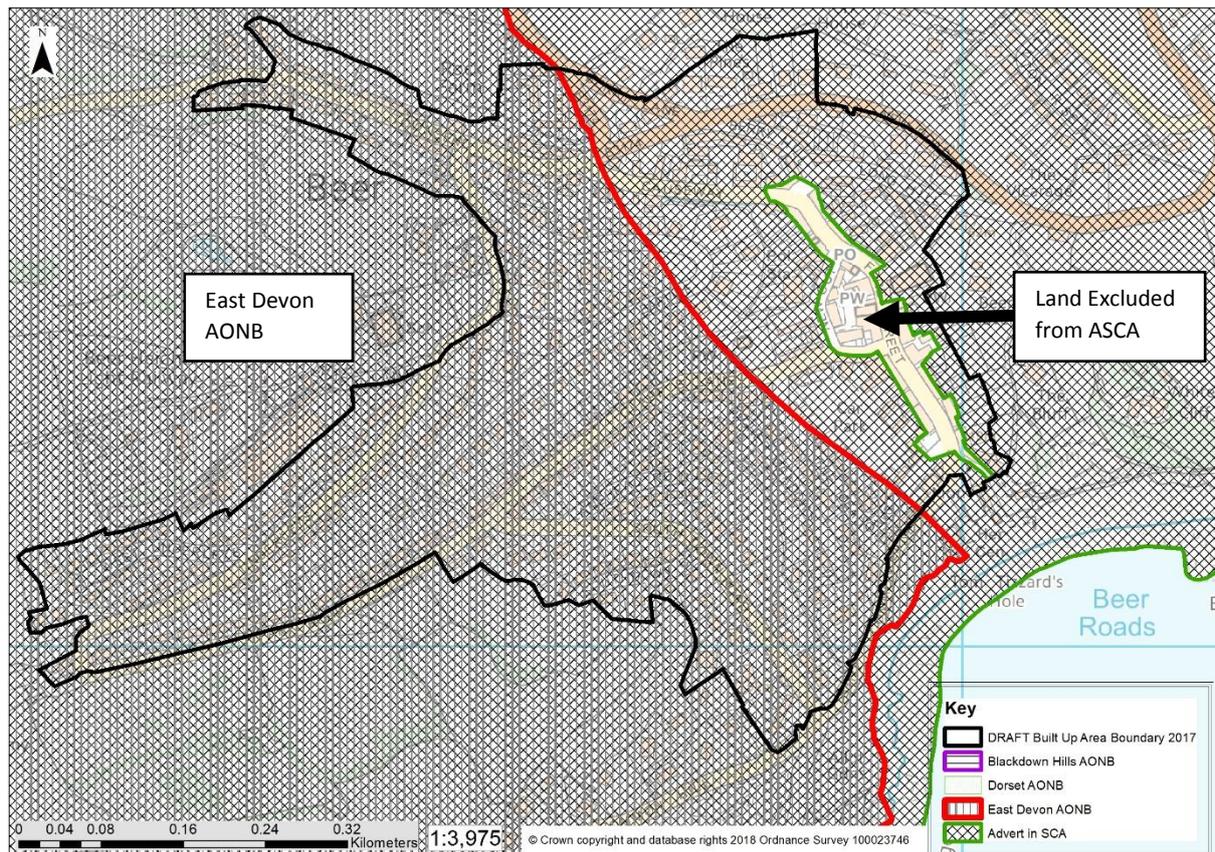
6.7 Town by town key issues

In the case of Exmouth, a review to include land within the BUAB but outside of the East Devon AONB would involve minimal alterations to the boundary of the ASCA. For Honiton, Seaton and Sidmouth this approach would consider the inclusion of a larger proportion of the built-up area for exclusion from the ASCA. The BUAB's defined in the adopted East Devon Local Plan could be used as a starting point for this review, but there are cases in Sidmouth and Honiton where the AONB is included within the BUAB. Additionally, in Honiton, the new housing being built in Gittisham parish west of Hayne Lane is excluded from the BUAB. Budleigh Salterton is wholly within the East Devon AONB and it is not therefore considered appropriate to include it in the review. The village of Beer is not a 'moderately sized town' and so it is not appropriate to consider extending the area that is excluded from the ASCA. The following maps show the Built-up Area Boundaries for these settlements and AONB boundaries and highlight issues that will need to be considered in the review.



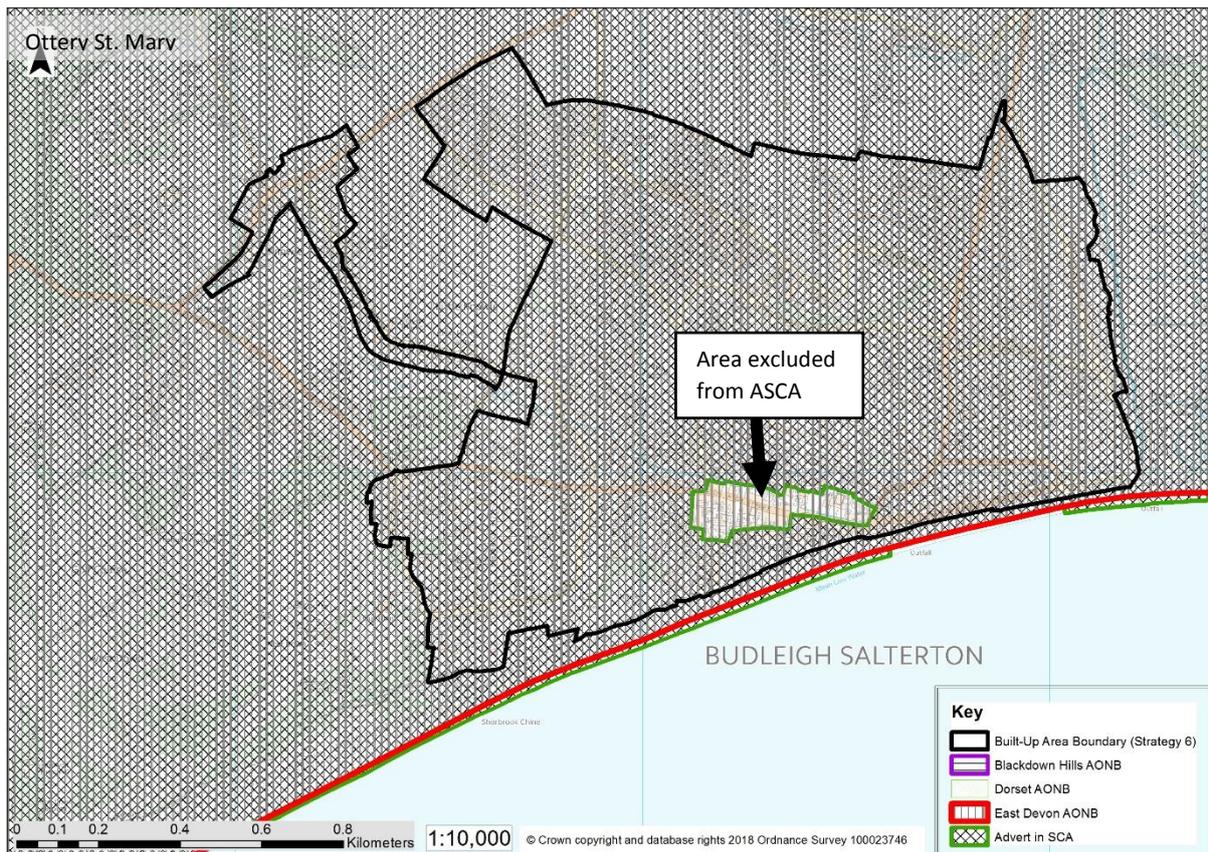
Map 10 Axminster Key Points

- None of the land included in the AONB is within the BUAB
- The land currently excluded from the ASCA comprises a small proportion of the land within the BUAB
- The BUAB includes land currently undeveloped, but allocated for mixed uses in the adopted local plan



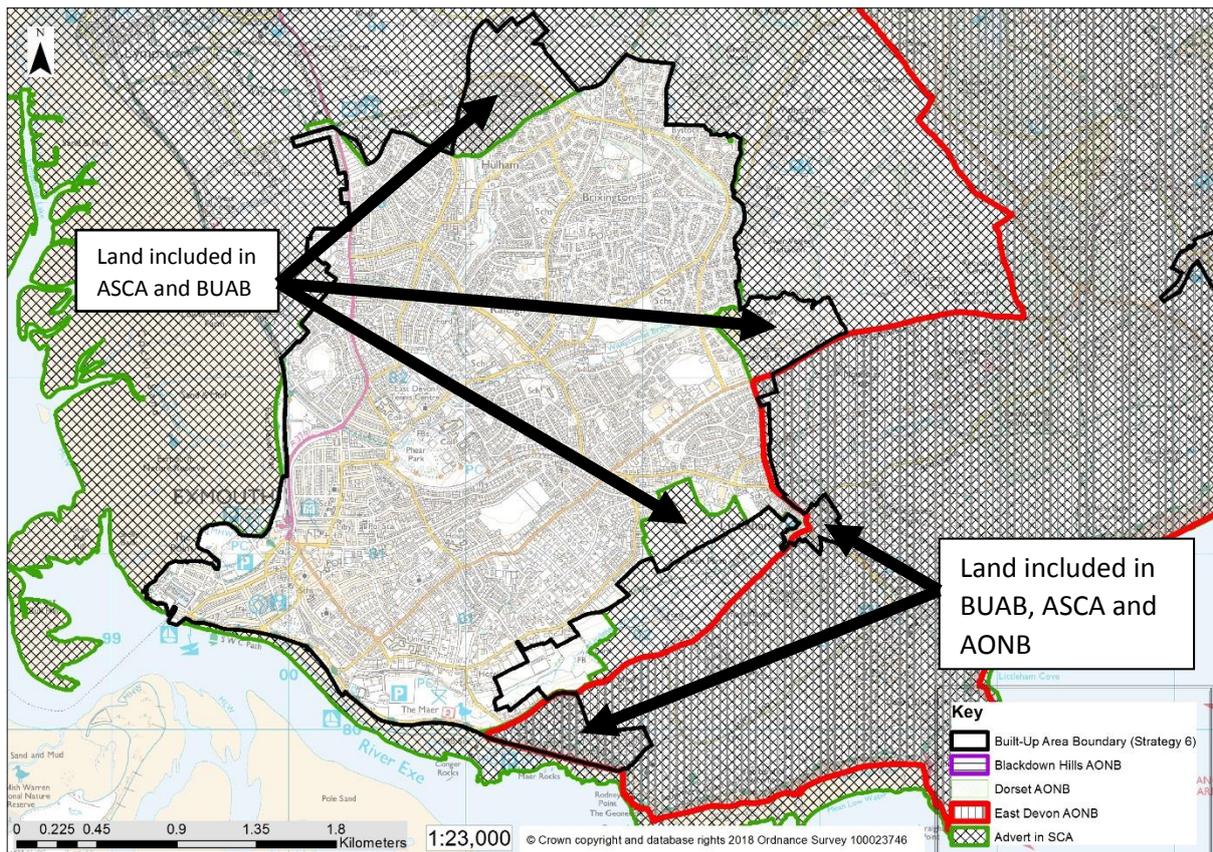
Map 11 Beer Key Points

- Beer is a village and is not one of the seven main towns identified as a focal point for development in the adopted local plan (Strategy 1 – Spatial Strategy for Development in East Devon)
- The western half of the village lies within the East Deven AONB
- The majority of the village is included in the ASCA, with only the main shopping street being excluded
- The BUAB shown is that proposed in the East Devon Villages Plan
- The Beer Neighbourhood Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation and the BUAB is proposed to be extended to include a proposed housing allocation at 'Short Furlong'.



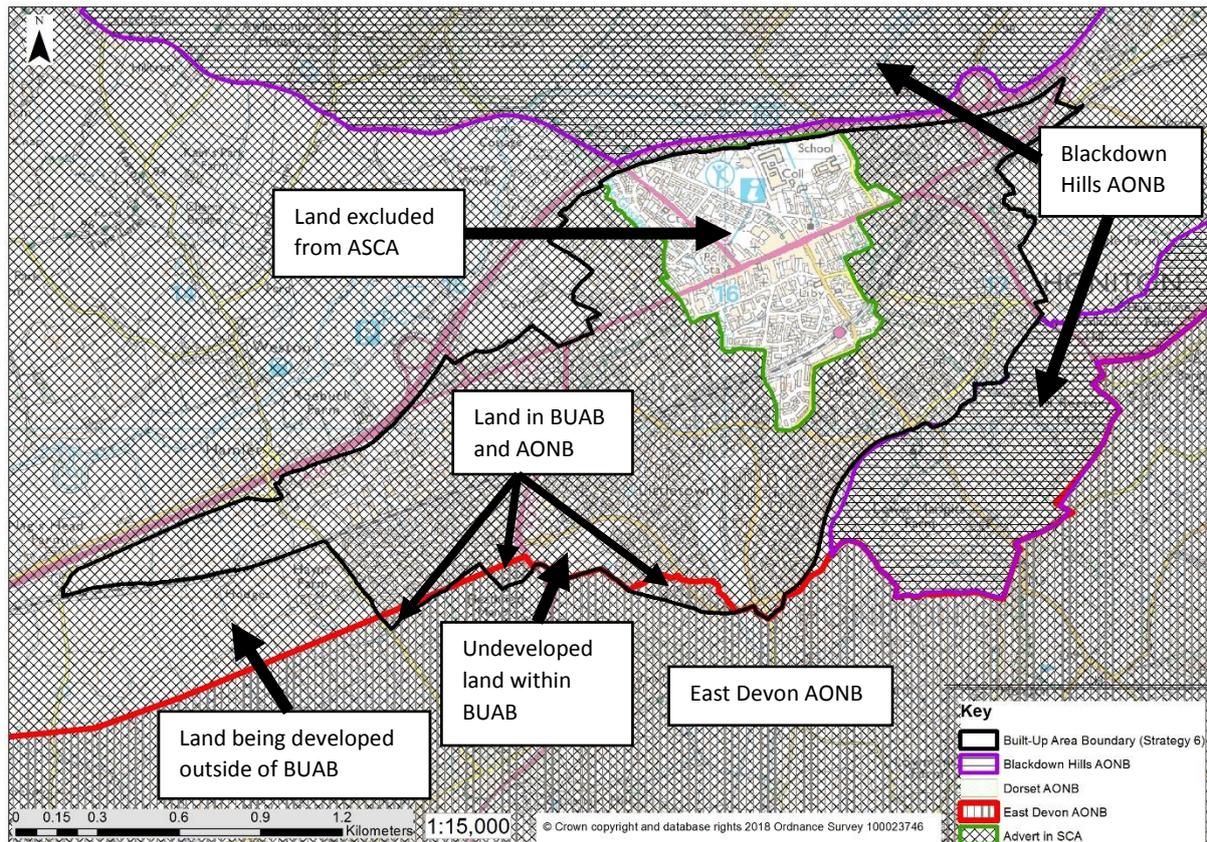
Map 12 Budleigh Salterton Key Points

- The whole of Budleigh Salterton is within the East Devon AONB
- The area of land included in the BUAB is much larger than the area excluded from the ASCA, which is focused on the main shopping street



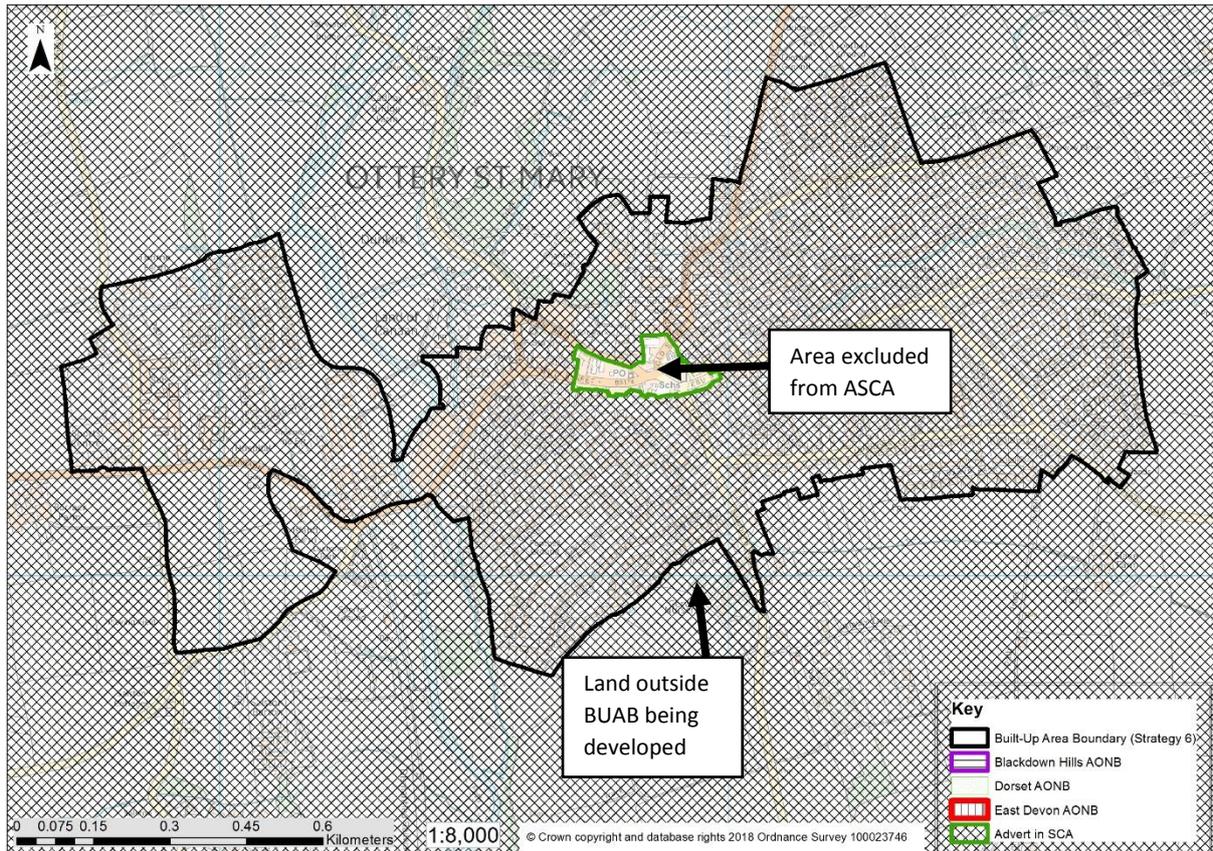
Map 13 Exmouth Key Points

- There are two small areas of land to the south and east that are within both the BUAB and the AONB
- The ASCA includes two areas of land that are included within the BUAB



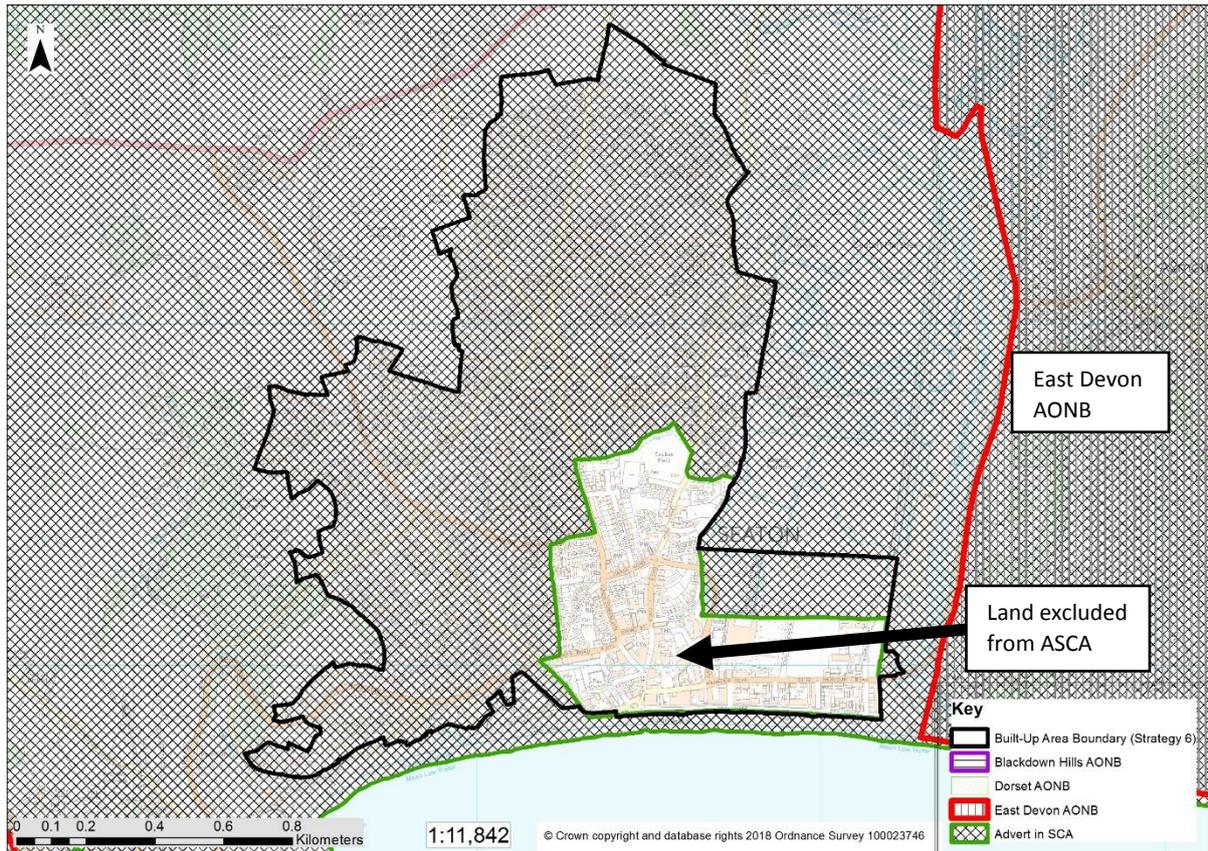
Map 14 Honiton Key Points

- Small area in the south of the BUAB are within the East Devon AONB
- There is undeveloped land to the south of Honiton within the BUAB
- There is land currently being developed to the south west of Honiton that is outside of the BUAB
- There are large areas of land within the BUAB that are excluded from the ASCA



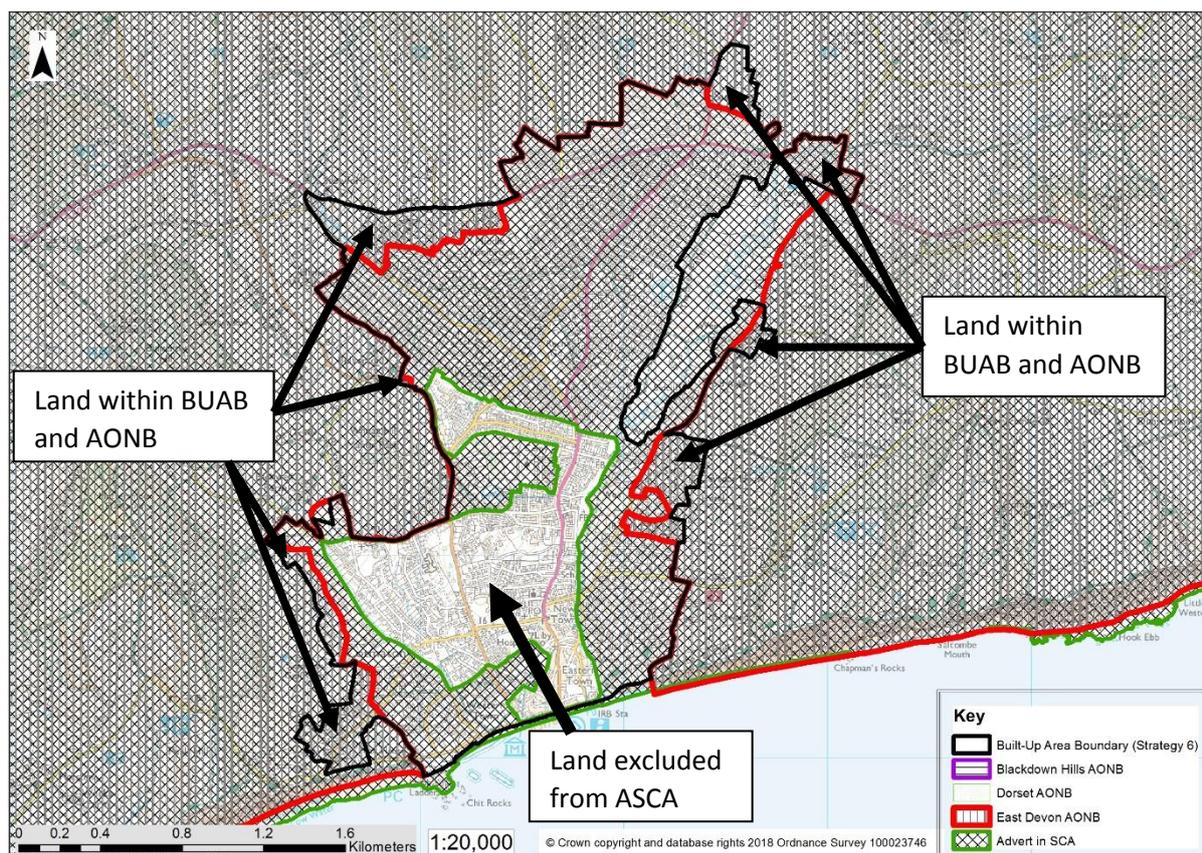
Map 15 Ottery St. Mary Key Points

- There are no AONB's close to the BUAB of Ottery St. Mary
- The area excluded from the ASCA is very small in relation to the area within the BUAB
- Land to the south of Ottery St. Mary that is outside of the BUAB is being developed



Map 16 Seaton Key Points

- None of the land within the BUAB is within the AONB
- Much of the land within the BUAB is also included in the ASCA

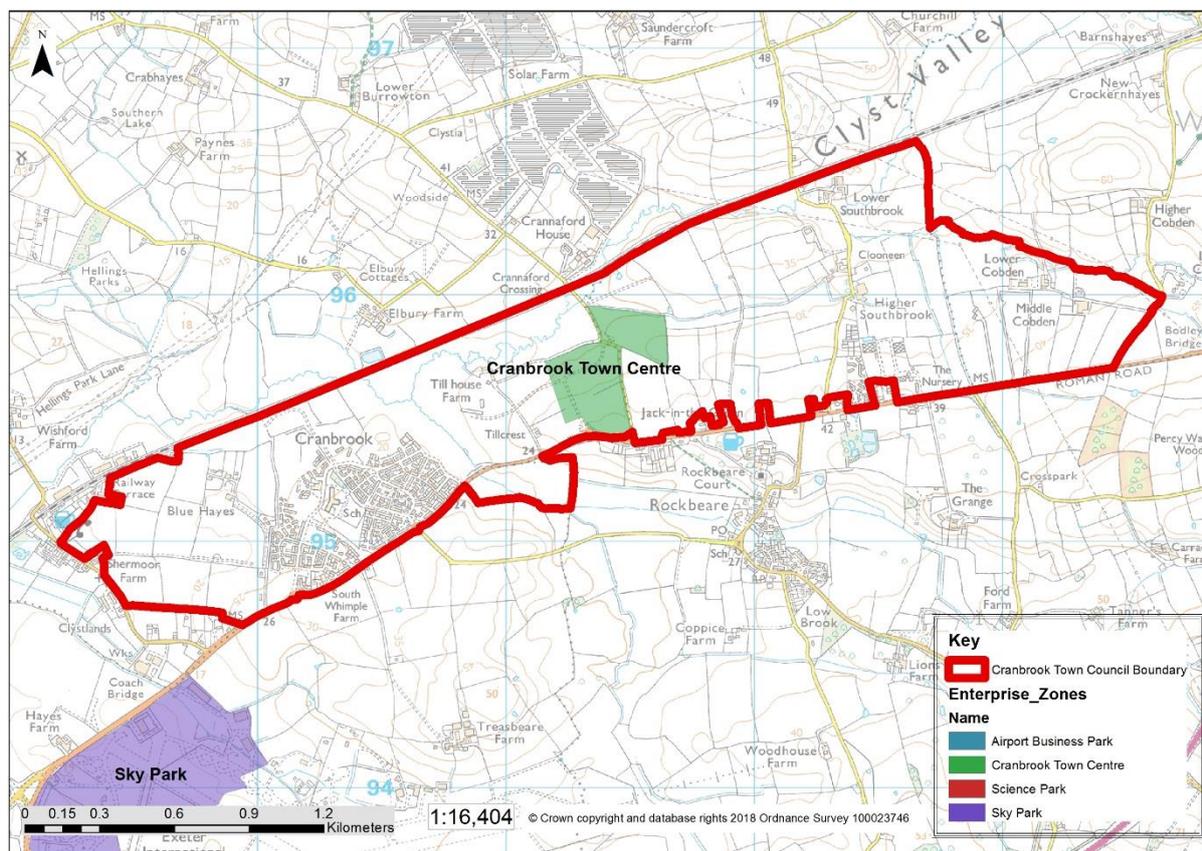


Map 17 Sidmouth Key Points

- Several areas included in the BUAB are also within the East Devon AONB
- A significant part of the land within the BUAB is excluded from the ASCA, but much of the urban area is included

6.8 Additional towns to consider for exclusion from ASCA.

In addition to the review of the boundary of the areas already excluded from the ASCA, the review will need to consider additional areas for exclusion, including the new town of Cranbrook. The town centre of Colyton, although significantly smaller than Beer, should be considered for removal from the ASCA because it has a similar planning status to Beer (they both have a town centre and shopping area defined in the Villages Plan).



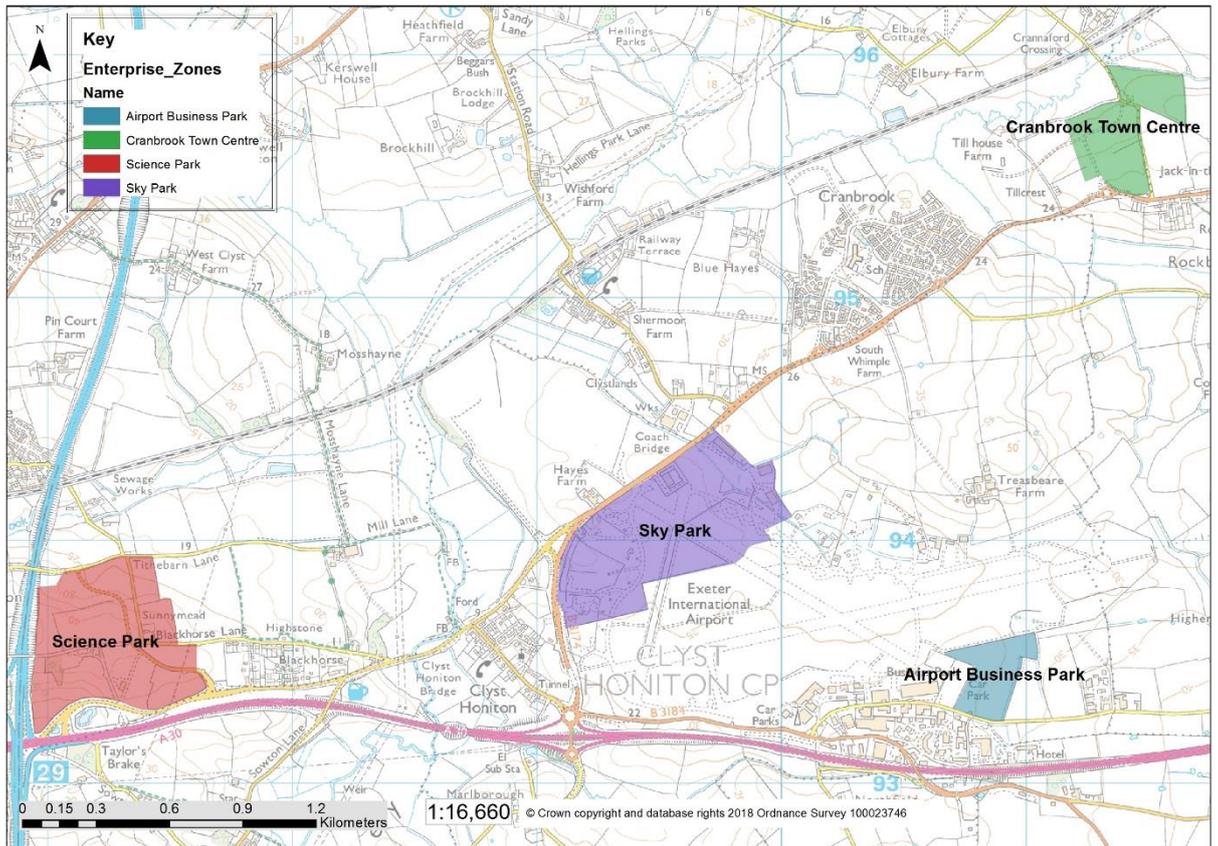
Map 18 Cranbrook Key Points

- Map 18 shows the Cranbrook Town Council boundary only – the final built form will be determined through the Cranbrook Plan, which is still being developed
- The town is unlikely to be 'built out' until after 2031 so it may be premature to remove all of the planned urban area from the ASCA

6.9 Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone

The designation of an ASCA is incompatible with the simplified planning regime of the Enterprise Zone and the review should therefore consider excluding these areas at Cranbrook Town Centre, the Airport Business Park, Skypark and Exeter Science Park.

East Devon District Council planning policy team briefing paper to inform a review of the East Devon Area of Special Control of Advertisements July 2018



Map 19 Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone Key Points

- The Enterprise Zone comprises four geographically distinct sites as indicated on the map
- All of the sites lie within the ASCA
- Inclusion in the ASCA is incompatible with the simplified planning regime of the enterprise zone

6.10 Summary of guiding principles for ASCA review

- A consistent approach will be taken to areas of the seven main towns to be removed from the ASCA that will comprise:
 - Land within the Built-up Area Boundary defined in the East Devon Local Plan will be excluded from the ASCA unless it is also within an AONB;
 - In Budleigh Salterton, which is 'washed over' by the East Devon AONB the land that is currently excluded (the town centre) will remain excluded from the ASCA; and
 - Consideration will be given to whether any large scale development on the edge of the towns that is not within the BUAB should also be excluded from the ASCA on a case by case basis.
- Consideration will be given to whether the town centre of Colyton should be removed by comparing it with the land already excluded from the ASCA in Beer.
- In Cranbrook all of the areas with planning permission for development will be excluded from the ASCA and consideration will be given to removing the expansion areas based on the expected timescales for development.
- Land within the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone will be excluded from the ASCA.

7. How will the review be organised?

7.1 How will the proposed changes be identified?

Initially the planning policy team will conduct a desk based review of the ASCA focussing on the issues identified in this briefing paper and the guiding principle set out above. Site visits will be undertaken as necessary to check the conclusions of the desk based work and a report and maps produced to identify proposed alterations to the ASCA boundary. This will then be considered by the East Devon Strategic Planning Committee and the Full Council of the District Council to agree the changes for public consultation.

7.2 Who will be consulted and how?

The National Planning Guidance recommends that local trade and amenity organisations are consulted before an ASCA is made and submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration. The Council has a 'Statement of Community Involvement'¹⁵ (SCI) to guide consultation on planning matters. This covers:

- Planning Policy documents (including the Local Plan and other Development Plan Documents (DPD's), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) and other guidance)
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Planning Applications

Whilst the review of the ASCA is not specifically included in the SCI, the principles set out for consulting on other documents will guide the review. This provides for planning documents to be made available at the Council's reception and on the web site for a minimum of six weeks. A press notice to advertise the consultation is also required together with specific notifications to Parish Councils, District Councillors, neighbouring authorities and specific groups with an interest in the document. In this case these groups would include local amenity groups (like the Sid Vale Association), the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), local chambers of commerce and the Advertising Association.

7.3 What is the timescale for the review?

Prepare draft proposals for consultation for consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 26th November 2017 and subsequent Full Council meeting. Allow six weeks for consultation in January and February 2019. Prepare amendment to the Order during Spring 2019 and submit for consideration by the Secretary of State in summer 2019. Subsequent timescales will depend on whether a public inquiry is held, but it is hoped that the revised order will be in place by the end of 2019.

¹⁵ [Work programme and consultations - Statement of community involvement - East Devon](#)

Appendix 1 Extract from Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers

Appendix: Special Controls

Power to take away the benefit of deemed consent

The rules enable the planning authority to invite the Secretary of State to order that, in any particular area, or on any particular site, an advertisement which would normally benefit from deemed consent is not to be displayed without the planning authority's specific consent. Before making any such order, the Secretary of State must ensure that the planning authority's representations to her are publicised, so that local people and interested organisations may have an opportunity to make whatever representations they wish about the merits of the proposed withdrawal of deemed consent. She must take account of any objections to the order; and, if she does decide to make it she must give her reasons in writing for doing so.

Because the withdrawal of a deemed consent may adversely affect people's livelihoods, it will be confined to those few circumstances where it is clear to the Secretary of State that one or more of the deemed consent provisions have had such adverse effects on the environment that there is no prospect of an improvement in the quality of advertising in the locality unless the planning authority are enabled to control that particular type of advertising. Once such an order has been made by the Secretary of State, the class of deemed consent to which the order relates is no longer available to advertisers after a specified date.

What is an Area of Special Control of Advertisements?

An Area of Special Control of Advertisements is an area specifically defined by the planning authority because they consider that its scenic, historical, architectural or cultural features are so significant that a stricter degree of advertisement control is justified in order to conserve visual amenity within that area. Legislation requires that Areas of Special Control are to be:

- _ rural areas; or
- _ other areas which appear to the Secretary of State to require 'special protection on grounds of amenity'.

Before any Area of Special Control defined by a local planning authority can be effective, the Secretary of State must approve it. This approval procedure ensures that nationally applicable standards are used in determining what areas are to have stricter advertisement control.

In practice, Areas of Special Control vary considerably in their extent.

For example, large areas of the Lake District and the Peak District and of the counties of North Yorkshire, Norfolk, Devon and Cornwall are Areas of Special Control, as are, at the other extreme, the cathedral precinct in York, parts of Westminster and small areas in the city of Leeds. The boundary of any Area of Special Control must always be defined precisely, by reference to an Ordnance Survey base-map, so that it is possible to ascertain whether particular premises are within special control or not.

For this reason, it may be worth checking exactly where the boundary is because there may be small enclaves (such as a moderately sized town) where the stricter provisions do not apply.

In any Area of Special Control of Advertisements three main categories of outdoor advertising are permitted. They are:

- _ public notices
- _ advertisements inside a building
- _ advertisements for which there is deemed consent.
- _ Additionally, the planning authority may give their specific consent in an Area of Special Control for:
 - _ notices about local events or activities;
 - _ advance signs or directional signs which are 'reasonably required' in order to direct people to the place identified by the sign;
 - _ an advertisement required for public safety reasons; and
 - _ an advertisement in any of the deemed consent classes if it is considered reasonable for the normal limits on that class to be exceeded.

The main consequence for advertisements which can be displayed with deemed consent in an Area of Special Control is that there are stricter limits on permitted height and size of the advertisement than elsewhere.

These limits are explained in relation to each class of deemed consent.