

Stockland Neighbourhood Plan

2014-2031

Final Version



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Stockland Parish Council

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Acknowledgements

The Parish Council would like to thank the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as well as residents, local groups and organisations for their hard work and input during the development of this Plan. We also thank T Phillips and C Gardner for use of the photographs in the Plan.

Introduction

The Community's Plan

This Neighbourhood Plan is *the community's Plan*. It represents the community's Vision and priorities for how they would like to see the local area change in the coming years and in doing so it sets out our local planning policies which will be taken into account as and when any proposals for development come forward in the parish.

The Plan cannot deal with every issue identified as being important to the community: it has a focus on responding to proposals for development and the appropriate use of land. It puts us, as a community, in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where it requires planning permission. The Plan and its policies reflect our parish's own characteristics while recognising that it has a lot in common with other rural parishes in East Devon which share the landscape of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Plan covers the period between 2014 and 2031.

The Plan Area

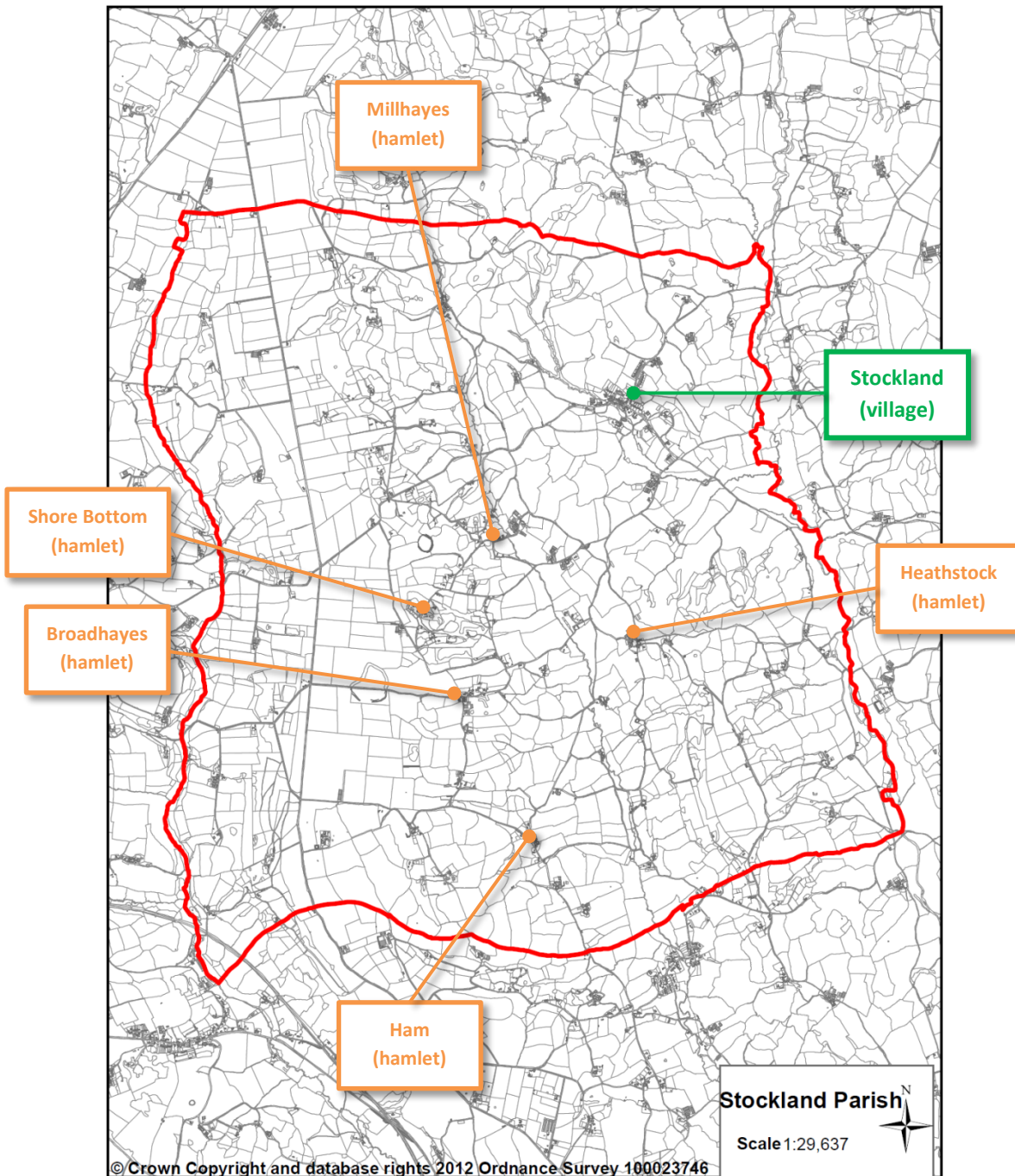
Stockland is a traditional rural Devon parish at the heart of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within the parish lies Stockland village, our main (yet small) settlement surrounded by 9 square miles of rural countryside and the hamlets of Ham, Heathstock, Millhayes, Broadhayes and Shore Bottom. In 2011, the census recorded that the parish had a population of 661 residents in 311 households. The parish is bounded by the River Yarty to the east and the Umborne Brook to the west. The A30 / A303 and A35 sweep past some two or three miles from the village but you wouldn't know they were there. Roughly equidistant from Honiton, Chard and Axminster, Stockland parish has little through traffic and its historic village and hamlets are tranquil places to live. Expect to



hear the birds singing, the distant sound of a tractor and an occasional light aeroplane. Centred on the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, with its impressive square tower, Stockland village lies in a broad and pretty bowl of land with an open sunny aspect. The rolling hills and long upland ridges hide many beautiful walks and changing views. Our parish is also characterised by ancient Devon hedgerow banks and the turbaries, land being managed to improve biodiversity. The village has a thriving primary academy and a busy village hall with cricket pitch, tennis court, playground and a monthly market.

The Neighbourhood Plan area (the whole parish) was approved by East Devon District Council on 16th August 2013, following consultation. Figure 1 shows the extent of the area.

Figure 1 – The Neighbourhood Plan Area, which follows the parish boundary, and our main settlements



Source: East Devon District Council (settlement labels added by Stockland Parish Council)

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How have we got here?

The development of the Plan has been driven by a steering group, comprised of residents and a Parish Councillor. It was recognised at an early stage that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the parish and to be *the community's Plan*, we would need to conduct thorough engagement with those who live and work in the parish. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit.

The process and types of consultation and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in our Consultation Statement which accompanies this Plan. However, the key methods we have used included:

- Public exhibitions, meetings and events;
- A community questionnaire sent to all households;
- Updates on a dedicated 'Our Plan' page of the village website;
- Contact with local businesses and groups;
- Directly contacting wider-than-local organisations and agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in planning issues in the parish; and,
- Consultation 'windows' during which comments have been invited on draft documents.

Our development of the Plan was based on a desire to be open and encouraging comments and contributions from all quarters with the aim being to achieve consensus, but also to have debates about issues where the community was divided in its views.

Plan Development Process

- Produce a draft of the plan
- Receive feedback from the community and other stakeholders
- Document the feedback
- Update the plan

There may be several iterations of the above process. When the plan is considered to be ready for submission:

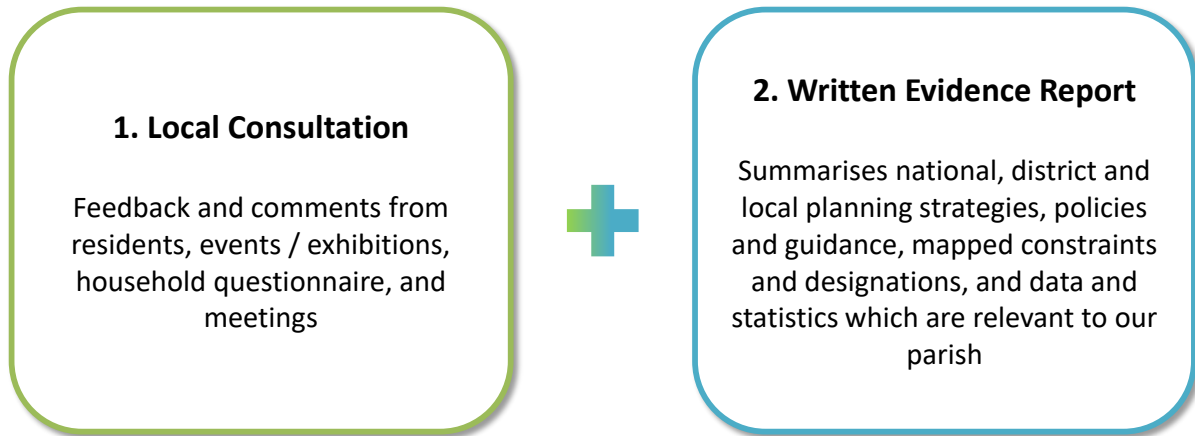
- Submit the plan and associated documents to EDDC
- EDDC will appoint an independent examiner to assess it
- Plan is amended with feedback from the examiner (if necessary)
- Plan is subject to a local referendum organised by EDDC

Our Evidence Base

To inform the content of the Plan, we have developed our evidence base so that our policies are underpinned by clear reasoning and justification. We have done this in two ways. Firstly, we have undertaken local consultation (documented fully in our Consultation and Engagement Plan and the Consultation Statement which will be submitted alongside this Plan for Examination) and secondly by gathering together our understanding of the written evidence that already exists into a summary report.

We have used these two approaches to help identify our Plan’s Aims, Objectives, Vision and its policies. Figure 2 illustrates these methods.

Figure 2 – Composition of Our Evidence Base



Sustainability Appraisal

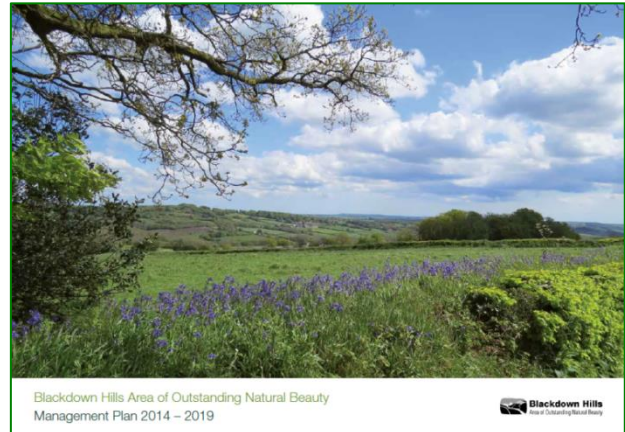
The Plan is subject to testing as it is developed to help determine the Plan’s positive or negative impact on the social, environmental and economic character of the parish. This is being done through a sustainability appraisal (SA), with a report of the SA accompanying this version of the Plan. The aim of the SA is to identify impacts and then propose possible amendments to policies to lessen any potential negative impacts which could arise as a result of the Plan’s policies and / or proposals.

The Plan’s Status

This Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will be part of the statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant weight (importance) when it comes to being used by the local authority to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy in our parish. It sits with the district-wide Local Plan, produced by East Devon District Council (also part of the statutory development plan) and underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), as the main planning policy documents relevant to our area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level. However, this Neighbourhood Plan should not be treated as a blueprint and the Plan’s policies cannot guarantee that a proposal will be refused nor permitted.

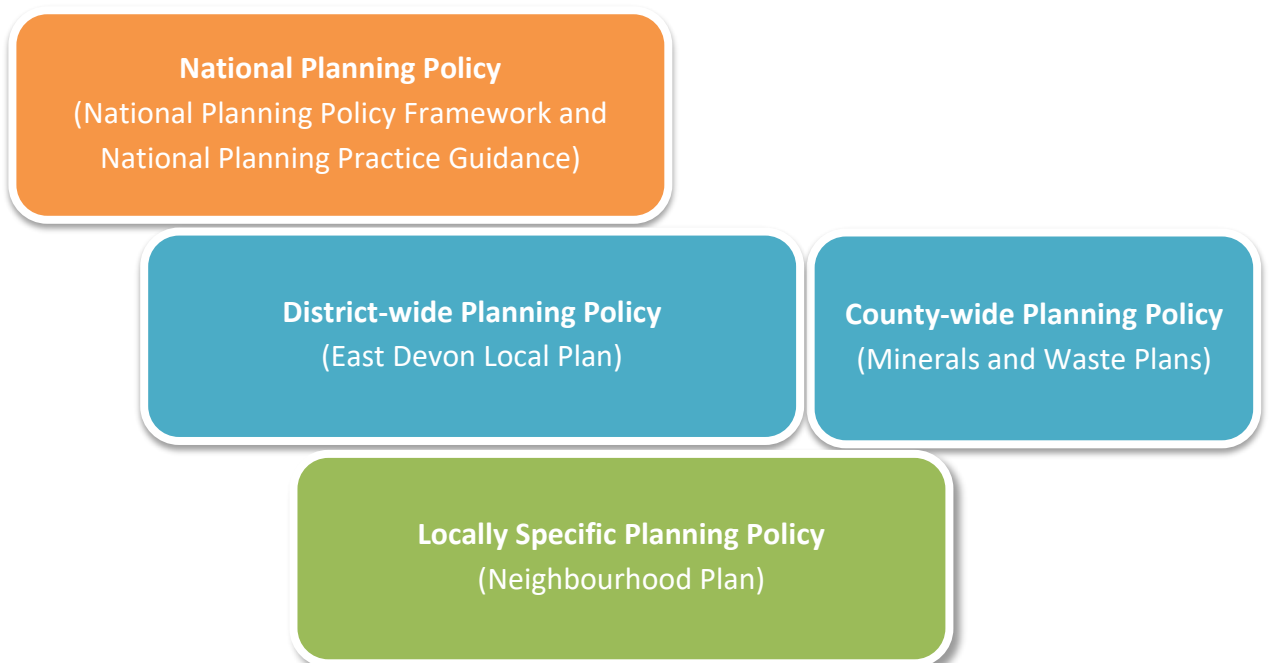
Throughout this document the term ‘Local Plan’ refers to the East Devon Local Plan, 2013 to 2031 adopted on 28th January 2016 and the policies contained therein.

The policies set out by the Blackdown Hills AONB in its Management Plan and other guidance documents (which are advisory rather than carrying statutory weight in the planning system) add a further layer of policies which are particularly important in Stockland.



The relationship between our Neighbourhood Plan and other planning policy documents which carry statutory weight in the planning system is shown below.

Figure 3 – Planning Documents with Statutory Weight



It is important to remember that our policies do not seek simply to repeat planning policy and guidance at the national or district-wide levels, nor the policies of the Blackdown Hills AONB. In some cases our policies may appear to be seeking similar or the same outcomes as other policies at these levels, but importantly, where this is the case our Neighbourhood Plan policies provide our community the opportunity to add a local dimension or detail to those more strategic policies and to reinforce them on the basis that it is these matters which are of most importance to us in Stockland.

Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) set out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". It is important to understand what that means for our Plan as it sets the parameters within which we can make proposals and set policies.

When taking decisions on proposals for development this means that proposals should be approved where they accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. Translating this to what it means for our Neighbourhood Plan, it states that neighbourhood plans should "...support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development..." and "...plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan". The NPPF goes on to say that "*The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.*" We are also advised that neighbourhood plans should reflect these Local Plan policies and plan positively to support them, while not promoting less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermining its strategic policies. Outside of strategic policies, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Neighbourhood Plan. Our Basic Conditions Statement and Sustainability Appraisal (to be submitted for Examination alongside our Plan) will demonstrate how our Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and how it meets sustainability tests.

The Structure of Our Plan

Our Plan sets out the Vision, Aims and Objectives for our area, which have been developed based on our extensive dialogue with the community and shaped by existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies.

Having explained our rationale for these, the Plan sets out our local planning policies on a topic by topic basis. Our topics have been derived by pulling together common Aims and common key issues arising from consultation.

Within each topic we set out which Aims and Objectives the topic's policies are seeking to respond to and a summary of the characteristics of that topic and the key issues which have arisen. Then, for each policy we set out:

- our justification for why we need the policy;
- the policy.

It is important to note that, while we have packaged policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole Plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered: policies in one topic may apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.

Our Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Plan

Delivering Our Aims, Objectives and Policies

The Aims and Objectives of this Plan will be delivered in two main ways: through its policies and through its identified actions (some of which are related to actions which cannot be implemented by this Plan itself as a document relating only to land-use).

The Plan's policies are designed to provide a framework which will be used by local authority development management officers and Councillors (elected Members) when considering planning applications for development. The policies provide a set of parameters which will be applied to proposals for development and are therefore largely used in response to such proposals.

Our Plan also sets out a range of community actions in each section, which have been identified through local consultation and the development of the Plan's Aims and Objectives, which are projects or programmes that will need to be implemented outside of the development of this Plan. These may fall to the Parish Council to lead or the community or partners such as local authorities or statutory agencies. They also provide an indication, in some cases, of what local infrastructure in Stockland we see as a priority (and therefore how any proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts received as a result of new development could be beneficially used).

In addition to the scope and remit of the Plan in terms of actions and delivery, National Planning Practice Guidance reminds us that public bodies need to have regard to the purposes of the designation of the parish as part of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

"Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that 'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes. A list of the public bodies and persons covered under "relevant authorities" is found in Defra guidance on the 'have regard' duty. Natural England has published good practice guidance on the 'have regard' duty.

*This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas. The duty applies to all local planning authorities, not just national park authorities. The duty is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, the statutory purposes of these protected areas."*¹

The duty applies to all decisions and activities that may affect land within an AONB and not just to those that relate to planning, countryside and related environmental issues. Natural England's good practice

¹ Paragraph 003 (Landscape), National Planning Practice Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government

guidance considers that in the application of the duty, it is good practice that a public body *“considers the duty of regard at several points in any decision-making process or activities, including during initial thinking, at more detailed planning stages, and at implementation; and provides written evidence that they have had regard and considered whether it is or is not relevant.”*²

In practice, the “having regard to” duty means that *“Decisions and actions taken by relevant authorities will invariably require a wide range of factors and issues to be taken into account. The duty requires that this process should include consideration of potential impacts on AONB/National Park purposes – with the expectation that adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated where possible. Provided this is done, the duty has been met, irrespective of whether or not the decision ultimately taken conflicts with AONB/National Park purposes.”*³

Our Plan therefore also helps to inform the local planning authority’s duty to “have regard to” the purposes of the AONB.

Sitting alongside this Plan and the East Devon Local Plan, is the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan, a statutory plan required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, but which has no statutory status in the planning system. The Management Plan has been an important reference point and part of our evidence informing the development of the Plan and its policies. National Planning Practice Guidance affirms the importance of using the Management Plan in this way and also its role in delivery and considering future development.

“Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area. As part of this, local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning bodies should have regard to management plans for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as these documents underpin partnership working and delivery of designation objectives. The management plans highlight the value and special qualities of these designations to society and show communities and partners how their activity contributes to protected landscape purposes.

... Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plans do not form part of the statutory development plan, but may contribute to setting the strategic context for development by providing evidence and principles, which should be taken into account in the local planning authorities’ Local Plans and any neighbourhood plans in these areas.

*... Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plans may also be material considerations in making decisions on individual planning applications, where they raise relevant issues.”*⁴

² p.6, England’s Statutory Landscape Designations: a practical guide to your duty of regard, Natural England

³ p.6, England’s Statutory Landscape Designations: a practical guide to your duty of regard, Natural England

⁴ Paragraph 004 (Landscape), National Planning Practice Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government

Vision, Aims and Objectives

Our Vision for the parish represents our view of what we would like the parish to be like in the future by the time that the Plan reaches its end date. The Vision is a representation of the Aims of our Plan, the things we would like to achieve, which have been derived from local community consultation and other evidence.

Stockland Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

Nestled in the rolling Blackdown Hills AONB, Stockland parish is a special place to live and visit because of its distinctive landscape, tranquil natural environment and built heritage. This we shall maintain through a combination of careful preservation, thoughtful development and enhancement by all concerned, working together with an active and friendly community.

Our Aims

The Aims of our Plan have been set following extensive community consultation and discussion. They are set out under a set of topic areas. These topics are:

- Natural Environment;
- Built and Historic Environment;
- Housing and Population;
- Community Facilities and Services;
- Transport and Access;
- Economy and Employment; and,
- Energy and Low Carbon.

Our Objectives (how we are going to achieve the Aims) are set out in each topic section in the Plan and it is from these Objectives that our policies and community actions have been developed.

Natural Environment

- Aim 1 Protect and enhance the natural environment, including the distinctive landscape and ecology.
- Aim 2 Protect the tranquillity of the environment and maintain the dark skies.

Aims 1 and 2, relating to the Natural Environment and the Objectives that ensue from them have primacy in the Neighbourhood Plan and must be considered first and foremost in any neighbourhood planning matter.

Built and Historic Environment

- Aim 3 Ensure that all new development is sympathetic to the traditional character of the area.
- Aim 4 Protect the area's heritage (sites and locations).

Housing and Population

- Aim 5 Support new small-scale housing development in the village where local needs are demonstrated.

Community Facilities and Services

- Aim 6 Encourage small scale retail and/or hospitality development that meets local needs.
- Aim 7 Resist the loss of local facilities and amenities (including church, village hall, sports facilities, pub, school and preschool) and protect Assets of Community Value (ACVs).

Transport and Access

- Aim 8 Seek ways to minimise parking problems in the village when development is proposed.
- Aim 9 Maintain and enhance a network of footpaths and bridleways.

Economy and Employment

- Aim 10 Help support and sustain local businesses.

Energy and Low Carbon

- Aim 11 Support small scale, unobtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes providing they are sensitively sited and screened (appropriately landscaped).

Natural Environment

Aims	Objectives
<p>1. Protect and enhance the natural environment, including the distinctive landscape and ecology.</p>	<p>1a) Retain and enhance the existing beauty of the parish by encouraging the planting of native trees and hedges along with the preservation of the existing Devon banks.</p>
	<p>1b) Support and protect the biodiversity of turbary land through appropriate stewardship and management.</p>
	<p>1c) Maintain public access to turbary land.</p>
<p>2. Protect the tranquillity of the environment and maintain the dark skies.</p>	<p>2a) Resist any development or road scheme likely to have an adverse effect on tranquillity or dark skies and seek ways to reduce any existing impact.</p>

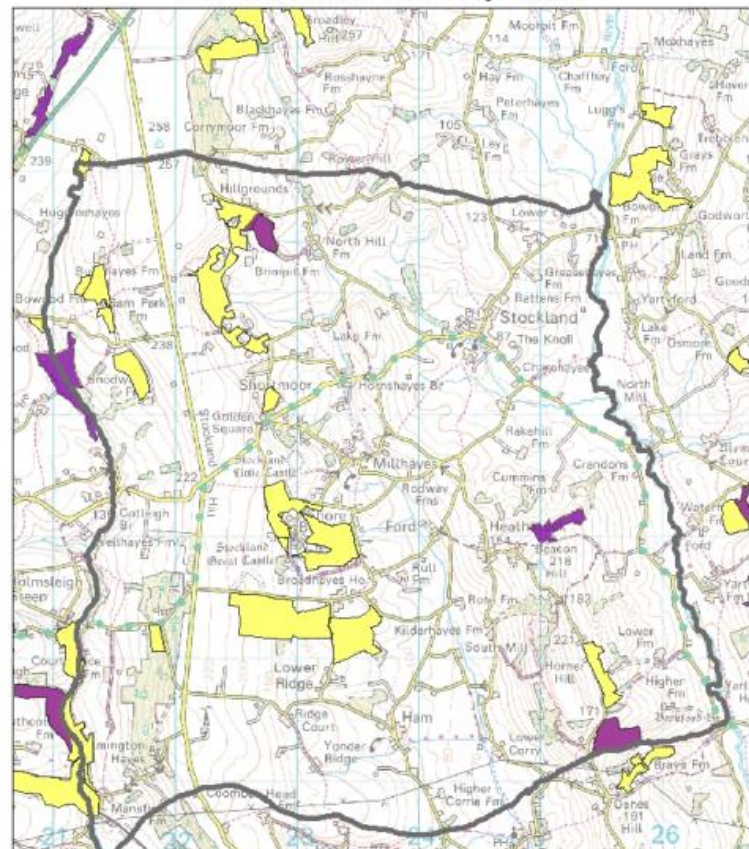
Introduction

Stockland is a rural parish nestled in the heart of the protected landscape of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is bounded by the river Yarty to the east and the Umborne Brook to the west. The A30 / A303 sweep past to the north west of the parish and the A35 some miles to the south, but the parish itself has little through traffic. It is an example of a tranquil, beautiful and special rural Devon landscape rich with wildlife.

The parish straddles the defined Axe Valley and East Devon Central Ridge Landscape Character Areas and is comprised of a combination of predominantly undulating and rolling farmland and woodland and steep wooded slopes. As well as the intrinsic beauty of the landscape and AONB designation, our parish also has many designated County Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodland Sites.

This distinctive quality of the parish is a characteristic highly valued by the people who live here and is one of the reasons that we choose to live here. This applies both to those of us who have moved into the parish and those who have grown up here and stayed (or moved away for a time and then returned). The well documented characteristics and the value of our natural environment as an asset to people, wildlife and biodiversity has been supported by the responses to our Neighbourhood Plan local consultation and community questionnaire.

Stockland biodiversity sites



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Legend

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- County Geological Sites (by region)
- Ancient Woodland Inventory Sites (AWI)
- County Wildlife Sites (CWS, Devon)
- blackdown_aonb

Retaining and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of our Parish

Justification for our policy

We have already identified the importance of the high quality of the landscape, and of the biodiversity in the parish as part of that landscape, to both the people who live in Stockland and the wildlife which inhabits the natural environment. It is critical, therefore, that our natural environment is retained, conserved and enhanced where necessary now and in the future.

While there are other policies at national and district levels which afford some protection of our natural environment (see the related policies box below), there are a number of locally specific issues which we deem of sufficient importance to the community to require additional policy protection and guidance. We are also conscious that while the approved AONB Management Plan provides principles which should be applied to the natural environment in Stockland, they do not have statutory



Courtesy of Cathy Gardner

weight in the decision making process even though they should be considered as a “material consideration” when planning proposals are considered by the local planning authority. We feel a strong sense of need for our Plan to adequately reinforce some of the overarching principles of protection for the environment to give us both the certainty that such policy coverage will remain and also to ensure that our Plan represents fully the weight of the issues raised by our community. In doing so, it can fulfil its Aims and Objectives without relying solely on other policy set out elsewhere. Our Aims and Objectives, identified as important by the community, also show synergy with many of the agreed AONB Management Plan principles and policies.

We are clear that it is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to prevent development from taking place. However, we are equally clear that any development which is proposed within the parish, as part of the AONB, requires special consideration to ensure that its impact does not have adverse or negative impacts on our valued natural environment. We therefore require development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have any adverse impact on the existing state of the natural environment.

Our concern about potential adverse impact (and therefore our policy) extends to two specific issues, raised as particularly important by the community during consultation and supported by other evidence: a desire to see any new development landscaped using species of plants native to our area; and, the need to protect our traditional and ancient hedge banks.

Our preference is for appropriate development to fit within the landscape without having adverse impacts on its surrounding landscape and the natural and built character of the area within which the proposal is located. However, in some cases, it may be acceptable for appropriate landscaping to play a role as part of the solution to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the setting of the proposal. Where the use of planting is considered to be an appropriate part of that solution, native local species of plants should be used, such as hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, oak or beech.

Devon hedges (commonly also referred to as “Devon banks”) are a common feature of the landscape in Stockland. They are usually formed of an earth bank which is faced with either stone or turf and is often topped with bushes or shrubs. They are often very old, biodiverse and very attractive. They play an important role as stock-proof barriers and shelter for livestock and crops. Banked hedges and associated ditches are important to mitigate against flooding. Our farming community and other local landowners have a key role in maintaining the integrity of these important features. The successful conservation of these hedges is critical to maintaining the special character of Stockland’s natural, farmed and historic landscape.



Policy NE1 - Retaining and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of our Parish

- i) Development proposals that demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts on the natural environment (landscape and biodiversity) (or satisfactorily mitigate these impacts), and enhance the natural environment where there is the opportunity to do so, will be supported.**
- ii) Where mitigating measures are unavoidably required for development to be acceptable within its landscape setting, appropriate landscaping should be employed to mitigate the impact of the development, and such measures should include the use of native species of trees and hedges where planting is required.**
- iii) Where change to existing traditional Devon banks is unavoidable, proposals for development which affect traditional Devon hedges will only be supported where they have demonstrated that options have been assessed and, as a result, have proposed the least damaging option (to the hedgerow / bank, setting in the landscape, biodiversity and habitats).**

Community Actions and Projects

CA1 - The Parish Council will work with partners such as the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB and EDDC to encourage the planting of native species of hedge and trees.

CA2 - The Parish Council will work with partners such as the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB, Devon County Council and EDDC to encourage the positive management and preservation of our Devon banks.

CA3 - The Parish Council will work with the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB, EDDC and DCC to identify particular hedgerows and Devon banks at risk in the parish.

Supporting and Protecting our Turbaries

Justification for our policy

The turbaries are owned by the Parish Council and are recognised as being of particular value to the landscape, wildlife and to the local community. Their location is identified on Map 1 below. The history of the turbaries is summarised in “Stockland Turbaries – Historical Context”⁵. The turbaries are actively managed through agreements between the Parish Council and Natural England (although existing agreements will expire during the lifetime of this Plan). They have a high wildlife value and support many species of flora and fauna within their wet heath, bog and woodland. The wet boggy communities are very significant in conservation terms, as these types of landscapes are restricted both locally and indeed across Europe.

Information about the turbaries is provided on the website⁶, including “Turbary Management and Losses and Gains in Wildlife”⁷, which sets out some of the changes seen in the turbaries in the presence of species. This, and other locally collected evidence and information about the turbaries, demonstrates their importance to the natural environment and also in terms of their contribution to local heritage and access to the countryside.

Local consultation has endorsed their importance and our policy reflects this need to protect and maintain our turbaries. All of Stockland’s turbaries are County Wildlife Sites but none are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest despite the richness and quality of some areas.

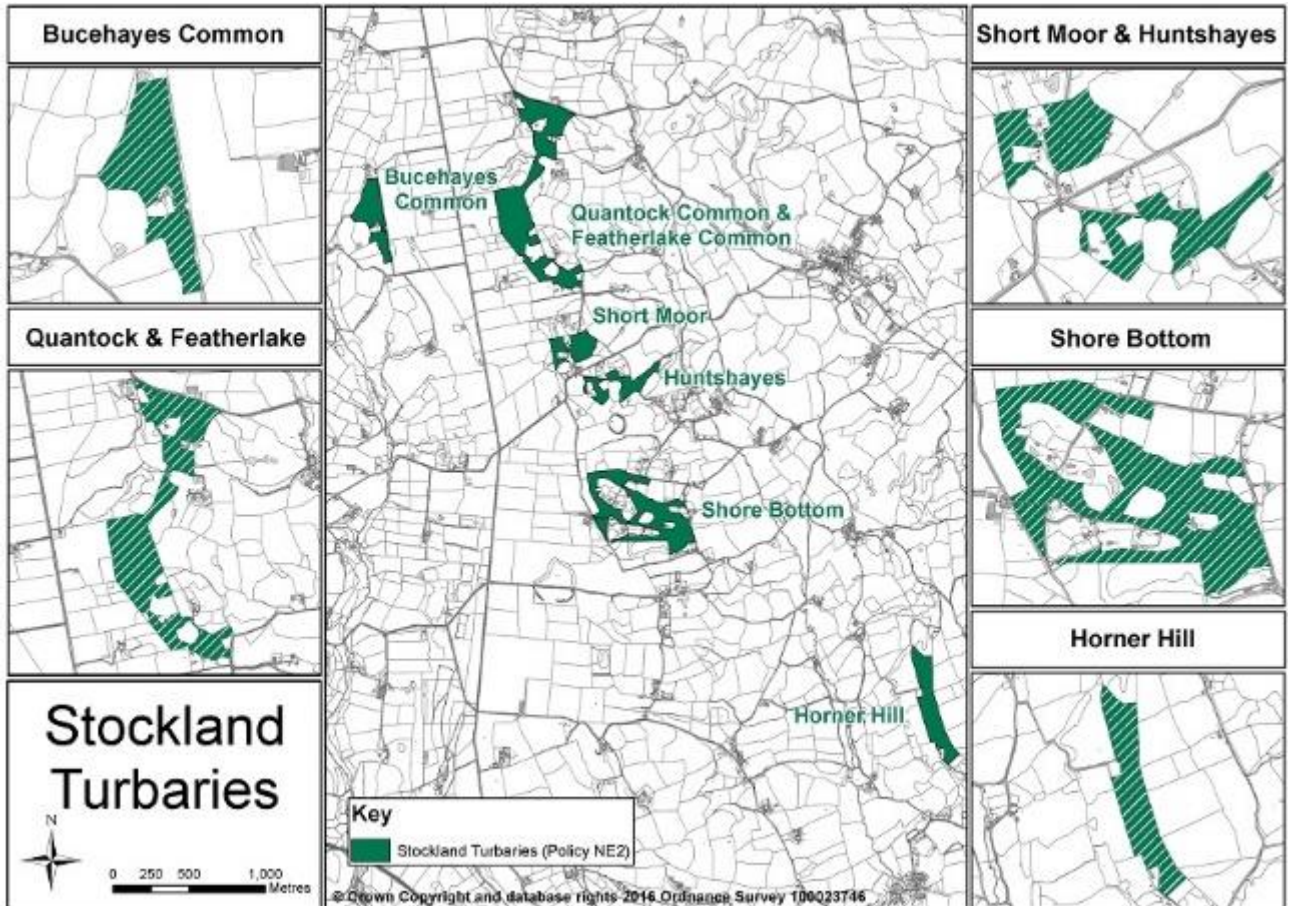
⁵ See <http://www.stockland.org.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Stockland%20Turbaries%20-%20Historical%20Context.pdf>

⁶ See <http://www.stockland.org.uk/turbaries>

⁷ See

<http://www.stockland.org.uk/sites/default/files/TURBARY%20MANAGEMENT%20and%20LOSSES%20and%20GAINS%20in%20WILDLIFE.pdf>

Inset Map 1



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Policy NE2 - Supporting and Protecting our Turbaries

The Stockland turbaries are defined on Inset Map 1. To support, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the turbaries and maintain public access, development proposals will only be supported where they have no negative impact on the biodiversity of, quality of and public access to turbarry land or it can be demonstrated that any such impacts will be satisfactorily mitigated.

Community Actions and Projects

CA4 - The Parish Council will support and protect the biodiversity of turbarry land through appropriate stewardship and management in partnership with, for example, landowners, the Blackdown Hills AONB, Natural England, the Devon Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

CA5 - The Parish Council will work with landowners and partners such as the Blackdown Hills AONB, EDDC and Devon County Council to maintain access to turbarry land.

Preserving Tranquillity and Our Dark Skies

Justification for our policy

We have already identified the importance of the tranquillity of our parish in relation to the characteristics of the natural environment and landscape. Much of the coverage in policy terms which relates to preserving the tranquillity of our environment is contained within AONB guidance (which is advisory and not statutory). The Local Plan does not have policies specifically referencing or considering the implications of potential change to the tranquillity of our parish. National planning policy allows for planning policies and decisions to aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity which *“have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason”*.⁸ It is a locally specific issue to our parish and therefore, given its importance to the community, merits some reinforcement through policy in our Plan.

There is a significant body of evidence which demonstrates the presence of dark skies above the parish and their value. Protecting them as an asset through the control of light pollution is important locally. Even small changes to lighting can have an impact when added together cumulatively. National planning policy states that *“By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”*⁹ The Local Plan has criteria which identifies a requirement to minimise light intrusion, where light overspill from street lights or floodlights on to areas not intended to be lit, particularly in areas of open countryside and areas of nature conservation value. The focus of this policy is on local amenity and surroundings rather than on the impact on dark skies per se. However, the AONB Management Plan sets out an objective which relates, very clearly to the tranquillity and value of the dark skies stating that *“The tranquillity of the Blackdown Hills AONB is conserved and enhanced by restricting or reducing noise and light pollution and major developments within or affecting the AONB.”*

¹⁰

Given this context, the importance to the community, and its identification in the AONB Management Plan objectives and policies as an important issue, we have introduced a policy which specifically refers

⁸ Paragraph 123, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government.

⁹ Paragraph 125, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government.

¹⁰ p.56, Objective PD5, Blackdown Hills Management Plan, Blackdown Hills AONB, 2013

to maintaining tranquillity and maintaining our dark skies through the control of light pollution. We have also introduced a community action to encourage the use of the AONB guidance to householders and organisations given that changing small scale lighting and adding household lighting fixtures is not normally subject to requirements for planning permission.

Policy NE3 – Preserving Tranquillity and Our Dark Skies

Development should maintain the tranquillity and dark skies of the parish.

Community Actions and Projects

CA6 - The Parish Council will encourage the use of guidance produced by the Blackdown Hills AONB for householders and organisations on limiting light pollution from new and replacement lighting.

Built and Historic Environment

Aims	Objectives
<p>3. Ensure that all new development is sympathetic to the traditional character of the area.</p>	<p>3a) Work with East Devon District Council and applicants to ensure that any new development, alteration or extension is done according to the Blackdown Hills AONB design guide for houses.</p>
	<p>3b) Ensure that the size, scale, location and materials used for any development minimises its visual impact on the essential character of the AONB and neighbouring properties: i) Limit the use of bunds (built-up landfill) and support terracing to lower the roof line of new farm barns.</p>
<p>4. Protect the area's heritage (sites and locations).</p>	<p>4a) Encourage the protection of Stockland Little and Great Castle and any other archaeological sites.</p>
	<p>4b) Explore the creation of a Conservation Area around the hamlet of Broadhayes.</p>
	<p>4c) Seek ways to repair or demolish derelict buildings and protect and repair those at risk.</p>
	<p>4d) Ensure the Conservation Area in Stockland is given sufficient weight when planning decisions are made.</p>
	<p>4e) Encourage the sympathetic management of home and retail premises to enhance the visual quality of conservation area(s).</p>
	<p>4f) Keep the hamlets individual and retain evidence of their original purpose. e.g. Mill buildings and leets.</p>
	<p>4g) Retain and maintain traditional finger post signs.</p>

Introduction

The built character and form of Stockland village and of our hamlets of Heathstock, Millhayes, Broadhayes, Ham and Shore Bottom contribute significantly to the sense of place and the parish's identity. The village and hamlets have a history to them which has shaped the look and feel of where we live today. Evidence from local consultation and our records of designated and important sites and buildings demonstrates that there are significant historic and heritage assets¹¹ with national designations and highly valued structures and buildings of local importance. The landscape setting of our village and hamlets is as important as the built form as it is the special landscape of the AONB which frames our settlements. These factors all come together to make up the character of our village and hamlets.

National and district policies and designations afford significant degrees of protection to existing built heritage and historic assets such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments. The AONB



Management Plan, although advisory in nature, also sets out objectives and policies relating to the importance of ensuring that any new development is of high quality design and conserves the historic character of the AONB, stating that, *“All development in the AONB is of the highest quality, is in keeping with the landscape and conserves its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities.”*¹²

Within this context, our local evidence suggests a need to introduce more local, specific policies, to reflect local distinctiveness and ensure that any development proposals respect the importance of our local historic and heritage assets and the traditional built form of our settlements. Importantly, our policies are intended to help guide development proposals on how best to integrate new development into our existing built and natural environments, steering away from blandness in design and towards innovation and respect.

¹¹ The National Planning Policy Framework defines a “heritage asset” as “A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” (Annex 2, p.52)

¹² p.56, Objective PD1, Blackdown Hills Management Plan, Blackdown Hills AONB, 2013

Protecting Our Valued Archaeological and Heritage Assets in Stockland Parish

Justification for our policy

Stockland village has been described as a typical rural village in a valley setting in the heart of the AONB¹³. There are a number of features of special importance including structures and buildings being built from local chert stone, the Parish Church and its tower forming an important landscape in the village, the significant landscape setting south of the stream and also including the churchyard and grounds of the Old Vicarage and a strong sense of enclosure derived from converging lanes with many dwellings fronting the carriageway. The village has a number of designated heritage assets such as listed buildings and buildings referenced on the local list of important historic buildings. It also retains its Conservation Area status, which we continue to support.



Courtesy of Cathy Gardner

The maps relating to Stockland village's significant heritage assets and features are reproduced in Appendix 1 from the Interim Conservation Area Appraisal (2010).

Across the rest of the parish there are numerous significant heritage and historic assets including listed buildings and scheduled monuments. The hillforts of Stockland Little Castle and Stockland Great Castle are worth particular mention and have been identified as assets worthy of particular attention and preservation. Stockland Great Castle is on the Heritage at Risk Register maintained by English Heritage which states that the Scheduled Monument has extensive significant problems in terms of its overall condition and is vulnerable from arable ploughing. With this position in mind, we have identified a community action relating to future work to protect and enhance such assets.

A further issue of importance which emerged through local consultation was the desire to see traditional finger posts used on the highway in Stockland parish retained and maintained. We have identified a community action which seeks to take action relating to this ambition.

¹³ Conservation Area Appraisal, East Devon District Council, 2010

Policy BHE1 – Protecting Our Valued Archaeological and Heritage Assets in Stockland Parish

Where relevant, proposals affecting heritage assets and/or their settings should take into account Conservation Area Appraisal(s) and are encouraged to have regard to additional local evidence documenting local historic and heritage assets.

Community Actions and Projects

CA7 - The Parish Council will work with partners to encourage the protection of Stockland Little Castle and Stockland Great Castle and protect and enhance any other important heritage and historic buildings and archaeological sites.

CA8 - The Parish Council will work in partnership with Devon County Council as Highways Authority and other partners as necessary to encourage the retention and maintenance of the parish's traditional finger post signs.

CA9 – Within the context of the policies in this Plan, the Parish Council will seek ways to repair and bring back into use or demolish derelict buildings as appropriate to their surroundings, historic significance and whilst considering any potential impact on wildlife

CA10 - The Parish Council will encourage the sympathetic management of home and retail premises to enhance the visual quality of the Stockland Conservation Area.

Protecting Our Hamlets' Historic Identity

Justification for our policy

The small hamlets of Ham, Heathstock, Millhayes, Broadhayes and Shore Bottom, each have historical character and the community has identified the importance of local built structures and buildings which tell the story of the hamlets' development and features which are important to retain. The traditional or distinctive features such as hedge banks, stone walls, traditional finger posts and the use of Chert stone are also important determinants of character.

These are not all features which are designated as important nationally and we have identified a policy to seek their retention as a result of any development together with a community action which will seek to identify local heritage assets in the hamlets.

We have also identified a community action, arising from consultation, which highlights the need to explore the creation of a Conservation Area around the hamlet of Broadhayes.

Policy BHE2 – Protecting Our Hamlets’ Historic Identity

In the parish’s hamlets of Ham, Heathstock, Millhayes, Broadhayes and Shore Bottom development proposals affecting heritage assets, will only be supported where they retain and enhance the built character and heritage value of the asset and its setting, and acknowledge the role the asset once played in the history of the hamlet.

Community Actions and Projects

CA11 - The Parish Council will work with the community to identify locally valued heritage and historic assets in the hamlets. This list of assets will be held by the Council and regularly reviewed.

CA12 - The Parish Council will explore the creation of a Conservation Area around the hamlet of Broadhayes.

Maintaining the Built Character of Our Parish through High Quality Design

Justification for our policy

Given the history of our village and hamlets and their setting in the AONB landscape, we consider it important to protect and conserve the character of our existing built environment, while recognising that where change does take place, it does so in a way sympathetic and sensitive to our village and hamlets and their setting within the AONB landscape. Therefore the design and materials of any new development should take this into account.

The Blackdown Hills AONB has developed design guidance for housing and we endorse its content and advice through this Plan. The Design Guide for Houses is reproduced in full as an appendix to this Plan and the Parish Council is keen for it to be taken into account as part of future development proposals in Stockland.

The guidance sets out a number of general design principles¹⁴ which are:



Courtesy of T Phillips

¹⁴ Page 12, Blackdown Hills AONB Design Guide for Houses, 2012

- Whether new build or alterations, good detailing, appropriate materials and sensitive treatment of the spaces around buildings are essential elements in achieving a successful and sympathetic scheme.
- Locations for new buildings and development should follow the traditional settlement pattern and respect the integrity of historical settlement forms.
- Layouts for new development sites should reflect the road patterns and plot forms of the surrounding traditional settlement. It is important to create the same sense of enclosure, traditional proportions and massing of buildings, for example continuing a distinct building line along a street.
- Building forms and materials should reflect the local traditions.
- New extensions and additions to traditional buildings should respect the character and setting of the original building. Where new buildings are adjacent to traditional ones, consider the group as a whole, using scale, form, colour and materials to link new and old.
- Sensitive design of the spaces around buildings is essential to preserve local character. The most harmoniously designed building can look 'out of place' if it is not properly integrated into its setting.
- Contemporary design should draw on the qualities of landscape, historic features and buildings to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Policy BHE3 – Maintaining the Built Character of Our Parish through High Quality Design

To ensure that new development is of high quality design and is sympathetic to the traditional built character of the parish, proposals for development will be supported where they take into account the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design Guide for Houses and:

- i) ensure that the size, scale and location of the development is appropriate to the form, scale and setting of the surrounding built environment; and,**
- ii) ensure that materials and design of the development are in-keeping with the character of the surrounding built environment; and,**
- iii) ensure that it is designed in such a way as to minimise its impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape, on views of the proposed development and on the natural environment; and,**
- iv) include the use of appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and other measures to reduce surface water run-off.**

The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design Guide for Houses is set out in Appendix 2 of this Plan.

Community Actions and Projects

CA13 - The Parish Council will encourage use of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design Guide for Houses for residential development which does not require planning permission or fall under Permitted Development Rights.

Housing and Population

Aim	Objectives
5. Support new small-scale housing development in the village where local needs are demonstrated.	a) Resist housing development outside the confines of the village.
	b) Ensure that any new housing development meets proven needs and, if required, supports the aging population as well as young families.

Introduction

National planning policy advises that it is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability and vitality of villages and smaller settlements. It suggests that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship, and that rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities. It also states that assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plan process.



The Local Plan requires special care to be taken when development takes place within the AONB, as do AONB policies, with development proposals being required to conserve or enhance the character of the landscape and protect the traditional local built form.

Stockland village is the main settlement in the parish with the hamlets of Ham, Heathstock, Millhayes, Broadhayes and Shore Bottom and dispersed rural dwellings and farmsteads making up the remainder. The parish comprises 231 detached houses, 54 semi-detached houses, 17 terraced houses and 6 flats. Of these, 247 are owner-occupied with 19 of the remainder private rented and 22 either social rented or other rented accommodation. In the last 15 years, records suggest that 7 dwellings have been built in the parish. The affordability ratio (i.e. the ratio between earnings and house price) is 18.1 (with the England average being 15.4).¹⁵ The majority of households in the parish are formed by single person

¹⁵ Data taken from the Stockland Rural Place Profile, ACRE / OSCI, 2013 (original data sourced from ONS 2011 census and Department). The Profile states that “The housing affordability ratio is based on comparing house prices to earnings. Rather than compare average house prices and incomes, we have compared the “lowest quartile” (the lowest 25%) of prices to the lowest quartile of household incomes – which is more representative of groups trying to get onto the housing ladder. An affordability index of 10 would mean that lowest quartile house prices are 10 times as high as lowest quartile incomes. This data is only available for the local authority, not the local area.”

households (73 in number or 25.3%) and married couples with no dependent children (133 in number or 46.2%).¹⁶ 15% of the parish population of 661 people is aged 17 or under with 37.1% of the population in the 30 – 59 age group and 29.1% over 64.¹⁷ Our evidence has highlighted that there is an affordable housing need for 2 dwellings in the parish, one of which is required for a household in 2015 and one required in the next 5 year period to 2020¹⁸.

According to the 2011 census, our parish as a whole had a population of 661 residents in 311 households. Recent estimates suggest that Stockland village has around 60 houses accommodating 140 residents. As we have set out in the Built and Historic Environment section, Stockland village is characterised by a historic core, most of which is within a Conservation Area, with many listed and mediaeval buildings. Roads to the village are narrow, often single width country lanes, many of which are flanked by traditional Devon banks or hedges. There is no public transport available and anyone without a car is reliant on lifts from others and / or community transport to get to services and facilities not available in the village. The village benefits from a village hall, primary school, children’s play area, church, tennis court and recreation ground. The village pub is the subject of continuing efforts to retain it as a community asset and there is no shop in the village. There is limited employment in the village and much of the local employment in the parish is naturally based on farming activity. It is important to understand the characteristics of the village as they inform the suitability or not of locating new development there, to what scale and of what type.

The Local Plan no longer considers Stockland as suitable to sustain further development under Strategy 27 due to its limited range of services and facilities

¹⁶ 2011 census data, Neighbourhood Statistics website, ONS, www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/

¹⁷ 2011 census data, Neighbourhood Statistics website, ONS, www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/

¹⁸ Draft Housing Needs Survey, Community Council of Devon, November 2014

Meeting Demonstrable Local Needs on Local Exceptions Sites

Justification for our policy

Local Plan policies have established a strategy for the District which focuses most development in the more sustainable locations in East Devon (Strategy 27). We have established that Stockland is a rural parish with few facilities and is set in a sensitive environment and landscape which needs to be protected for its beauty and biodiversity and its status within the AONB reflects this. We have also already set out our policies which govern how any new development should look with regard to respecting its rural and built surroundings.

National planning policy guidance¹⁹ allows opportunities for sustainable rural housing that meets local needs to come forward, as does district policy through its policy on “Exception Sites”. Exception sites are *“Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.”*²⁰ We support the provision of housing through the demonstration of small scale local needs on exception sites in Stockland village. However, acceptable exception sites should also take other factors into account including the distance from the site to existing community facilities and the village centre (as well as safe access, a particular concern in a rural village such as Stockland), and research and guidance elsewhere²¹ has identified that a distance of around 400 – 600 metres (or a 5 minute walk) on reasonably flat terrain is a “reasonable walking distance”. This distance has been used as a basic standard of “reasonable walking distance” by East Devon District Council in the consideration of accessibility and sustainability matters²².

Responses to our local consultation during the development of our Neighbourhood Plan identified support for housing development at a rate equal to that of the last fifteen years. There was also a desire for a mix of types of development including both privately owned and community led housing.

Whilst there is local support for further housing development within the parish, as Stockland is not a Strategy 27 settlement, further development is limited under Strategy 35 of the Local Plan to Exception Sites only, as described in the above text.

The Housing Needs Survey, undertaken in autumn 2014, summarises that there is an affordable housing need for 2 dwellings in the parish, one of which is required for a household in 2015 and one required in the next 5 year period to 2020²³.

¹⁹ Paragraphs 54 and 55, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government

²⁰ p.55, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government

²¹ See, for example, Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2, Homes and Communities Agency, http://udc.homesandcommunities.co.uk/urban-design-compendium?page_id=5542&page=203

²² See Small Towns and Villages Sustainability Assessment 2013, East Devon District Council, 2013, <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/ptc020b-smalltownsandvillagesustainabilityassessment2013part1.pdf>

²³ Draft Housing Needs Survey, Community Council of Devon, November 2014

Policy HP1 – Meeting Demonstrable Local Needs on Local Exceptions Sites

Where suitable sites cannot be found within Stockland village, proposals for new additional housing development will be supported:

- i) on “Local Exceptions Sites” in locations within a reasonable and safe walking distance of existing community facilities within Stockland village; and,**
- ii) where they meet demonstrable local housing needs*, that is, of appropriate type, tenure and scale.**

***In Stockland, in 2014, this amounts to 2 affordable housing dwellings in the period to 2020.**

Community Facilities and Services

Aims	Objectives
6. Encourage small scale retail and/or hospitality development that meets local needs.	6a) Support applications for new small scale retail or hospitality businesses that are in keeping with the character of the area, meet local needs and do not have an adverse effect on existing businesses.
7. Resist the loss of local facilities and amenities (including church, village hall, sports facilities, pub, school and preschool) and protect Assets of Community Value (ACVs).	7a) Support the sensitive and necessary maintenance and improvement of local facilities and amenities.
	7b) Support Stockland Community Pub Ltd in its efforts to reopen the King's Arms Inn for the benefit of the wider community and for the long term.
	7c) Ensure decisions on applications affecting any Asset of Community Value give due weight to the wishes of the community.
	7d) Support the school to help ensure its continued viability.

Introduction

Stockland regards itself as a thriving community. There are several community organisations and a range of regular community activities that take place. Missing from the heart of the community however is the shop (closed since 1982) and the pub (The King's Arms Inn, closed since 2013). The importance to the community of the latter was recognised in its listing as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) in 2013²⁴. Community action is being taken to try to 'rescue' the pub and give it a new role in community life, possibly including a shop, library and / or cafe.

It has been made clear in the consultations carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan that the pub is missed by many and more local retail outlets, which met local demands, would be most welcomed. The Neighbourhood Plan's Objectives reflect a desire to support this initiative and to encourage other forms of local retail development to enhance access to top-up shopping needs and to help sustain our local rural economy.



²⁴ Further details of the listing can be viewed on the East Devon District Council website <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/communityassets> . The moratorium on the sale of the pub ended in February 2014.

New Retail and Commercial Development

Justification for our policy

Paragraph 28 of the NPPF recognises that the development of local services serves to strengthen the local economy. Within that policy context, we would welcome a shop and / or cafe at the heart of our parish within or adjacent to the village of Stockland. New retail businesses that are easily accessible and serve the local community will help make us more sustainable as a community. They would reduce the need to travel and our dependency on the motor vehicle for every-day activities and supplies. They would help strengthen the sense of community and neighbourliness we have in Stockland. Two thirds of respondents to the 2014 Community Survey would welcome small retail units e.g. village or community shop as a potential means of increasing local employment opportunities as well as providing an outlet for local produce and crafts.

Any new retail or commercial development should be of an appropriate scale and not adversely affect the character and visual appearance of the neighbourhood. Development proposals should also conform to the Neighbourhood Plan policies for the natural and built environment. We are also conscious that new additional retail and commercial premises (and the businesses that they accommodate) should improve the local economy and services we have in our community and not threaten any existing businesses. Therefore, whilst healthy free-market competition cannot be influenced by our planning policies, we would not wish to see new businesses be established to the overall detriment of our local economy.

For these reasons we have included a policy that permits new facilities and services that are clearly aimed at serving a local demand and developed in keeping with the area.

Policy CFS1 – New Retail and Commercial Development in Stockland Village

Proposals for new retail and commercial facilities, extensions and/or alterations to existing facilities to serve the local community will be supported on sites within or adjoining the confines of the village provided they meet the following criteria in full:

- i) Can be provided preferably through the conversion or extension of an existing building, or if that is not viable, the development of a new building, without having an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments; and:
- ii) the proposal will be well related to the built form of the settlement and close to existing development; and,
- iii) the site is accessible by a variety of types of transport, including walking and cycling and the amount of traffic generated by the proposal could be accommodated on the local highway network without harming road safety; and,
- iv) the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents by reason of undue noise or traffic; and,
- v) The proposal meets a proven local need or demand; and,
- vi) The proposal does not have a negative impact on (i.e. significantly reduce the viability of) existing businesses or community services.

Improvements to Existing Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets

Justification for our policy

To ensure that we remain a proper community, we feel strongly that we should protect the existing local facilities, which contribute to our way of life and its quality. Consultation events have demonstrated a desire amongst the local community to ensure that there is no loss of community facilities and what we have remains fit for purpose. We acknowledge that changes may have to be made to help our community facilities, amenities and assets to remain relevant, viable and able to meet future needs and demands in an appropriate way. Changes or improvements that require modification, alteration or extension of existing land or buildings however should not be detrimental to the character of the area or our natural assets.

Paragraph 28 of the NPPF recognises their value and states that neighbourhood plans should “*promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship*”.

This is echoed in Policy CC4/A of the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan, 2014-19 which advocates “*support the retention or enhancement of community facilities, services and amenities where compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB.*”

Policy CFS2 – Improvements to Existing Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets

Proposals which seek to enhance or improve Stockland’s existing local community facilities, amenities and assets will be supported where:

- i) there is a demonstrable need for them; and,**
- ii) they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area’s natural and built environments.**

Loss of Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Locally Valued Assets through Redevelopment

Justification for our policy

Our aim is to maintain and increase, not decrease, the range of facilities that serve the local community. We will oppose any proposal that results in a loss of such facilities through the conversion, demolition or redevelopment of any site or building in the Parish. We will work with organisations and businesses that wish to ensure that Stockland has the facilities and amenities it requires.

Paragraph 70 of the NPPF states that planning policies should: guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs.

One such local community facility that is very much at risk (in 2016) is the King’s Arm Inn, Stockland, which comprises a group of buildings that have played their part at the centre of community life for a very long-time; but are presently closed. The King’s Arms Inn was placed on East Devon District Council’s list of Assets of Community Value after being nominated by the Parish Council in 2013. It remains on the list until 8th August 2018. For it to be listed as a community asset, it was necessary to demonstrate that *“its main use is to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could realistically; do so in the future, or has been so used in the recent past and could realistically be brought into such use”*²⁵. The King’s Arms Inn is also a grade II listed building within the Stockland Conservation Area. The community has come together in an effort to bring the building back into use as a public house, with other community functions and purposes. To maximise the chance that it will remain at the heart of the community, we will support any sound proposal that ensures that the King’s Arms Inn can once again serve as a community hub²⁶, as long as other relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are adhered to.

²⁵ Community Right to Bid Nomination form, East Devon District Council

²⁶ A Community Hub is generally recognised as a building that is accessible to all groups in the neighbourhood or area it serves, where local people can gather and meet and where community activities can take place.

Policy CFS3 - Loss of Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Locally Valued Assets through Redevelopment

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of locally valued community assets (including the church, village hall, sports facilities, pub, school and preschool) and registered Assets of Community Value will only be supported where:

- i) there is no reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility which will benefit the local community and they demonstrate a need for their proposed change; and,
- ii) they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments.

In all circumstances involving the change of use or possible loss of community facilities, prospective developers are encouraged to engage with the local community at the earliest opportunity.

Policy CFS4 – The King's Arms Inn

The development of the King's Arm Inn as a community hub will be supported.

Community Actions and Projects

CA14 - Support Stockland Community Pub Ltd in its efforts to reopen the King's Arms Inn for the benefit of the wider community and for the long term.

CA15 - Ensure decisions on applications affecting any Asset of Community Value give due weight to the wishes of the community.

Stockland Church of England Primary Academy

Justification for our policy

The Parish's Primary School is an important local facility, which contributes much to our sense of community. The school may need to improve or extend its accommodation and facilities to meet future educational needs of the parish and the wider catchment area. We shall work with the school's governors to ensure that the school is able to continue to offer a first class, modern, education. We will

also support proposals that enable the school's facilities to be more accessible to the community at large. We have identified community actions to take this forward.

Policy CFS5 – Stockland Church of England Primary Academy

The provision of new additional or improvement of existing facilities at Stockland Church of England Primary Academy, which serve an educational and / or community purpose, will be supported where a need for the facility has been proven and they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments.

Community Actions and Projects

CA16 - We shall work with the School's governors to ensure that the school is able to continue to offer a first class, modern, education to all of the local children of the parish and wider area.

CA17 – Explore further use of school facilities by the community.

Transport and Access

Aims	Objectives
8. Seek ways to minimise parking problems in the village when development is proposed.	8a) Support proposals to increase off-road parking for existing properties where these do not adversely affect local character and the built environment.
	8b) Ensure that new developments have satisfactory access and egress and off-road parking.
9. Maintain and enhance a network of footpaths and bridleways.	9a) Support schemes that extend the footpath network where needed.
	9b) Support small-scale improvement projects for footpaths and bridleways.
	9c) Introduce measures to establish pedestrian only or shared pedestrian/bridleway routes in preference to routes open to motorised vehicles.

Introduction

Stockland parish is served by a network of narrow lanes typical of rural East Devon and the Blackdown Hills. The main access road into and out of the Parish is Stockland Hill, which runs north-south connecting the A30, which passes just to the north, with the A35 to the south. Stockland Hill by-passes the main village, ensuring that traffic in the centre of Stockland is relatively light and mostly local. As a community we are very car-dependent. The last weekly bus service to the village was ended on 19th September 2015. Car ownership is high – only 5% of households do not have regular access to a motor vehicle. Fortunately the parish is also served by the Fare Car



Courtesy of T Phillips

(community transport) service. Recent consultation shows that travel and traffic issues are few and most people accept and enjoy their relative seclusion. It is pleasing to record that many local people enjoy walking. Our intent is to further reduce the impact of the motor car and make walking, riding and cycling safer and more appealing.

Some concerns have been raised in the village about the speed of traffic through the village. Stockland Parish Council are having ongoing discussions with the Highways Agency over this issue.

Off-road Car Parking

Justification for our policy

The lack of off-road parking spaces combined with the growing number of households with more than one car, is very apparent in the number of cars that daily line our narrow roads and lanes. In the interests of the safety of pedestrians and improving the visual appearance of the village and hamlets, we would welcome initiatives that lead to a reduction the number of cars that have to park on the carriageways. This includes an acceptance, in principle, for proposals which add parking space in off-road locations which do not have an adverse impact on the value or characteristics of our natural and built environment.

Policy TRA1 – Off-road Car Parking

Proposals to provide additional off-road parking spaces will be supported where they do not have an adverse impact on:

- i) the character of our local built environment; and,**
- ii) the quality of the surrounding natural environment; and,**
- iii) the visual amenity of the area; and,**
- iv) flood risk (including local surface water flooding).**

Vehicular Access and Egress Arrangements

Justification for our policy

Meeting the standard requirements of the Highways Authority for visibility splays can cause substantial damage to the character of our historic settlements and to our special local environment. Rigidly conforming to the standard requirements can also give the motor vehicle predominance, which is contrary to our Aims and Objectives. Furthermore, in some cases, strict adherence to the requirements may prevent an otherwise acceptable development from taking place.

We welcome the 2011 “Highway Management in Devon’s Protected Landscapes: Protocol” which has been adopted by Devon County Council and endorsed by Devon’s protected landscape management bodies including the Blackdown Hills AONB which, along with its companion document “Highway Management in Devon’s Protected Landscapes: Guidance”, provides some flexibility in highway design in order to protect the local setting and distinctiveness of the rural environment particularly in the AONBs.

In response to concerns that were expressed clearly in our community survey, we are prepared to consider the suitability of the vehicular access and egress proposals for any new development or the improvement of existing vehicular access and/or egress on a case by case basis, so as to minimise the potential loss of precious historic banks and hedgerows, in accordance with Policy NE1 of this Neighbourhood Plan. However, safety will remain an over-riding concern.

Policy TRA2 - Vehicular Access and Egress Arrangements

The development of new or improved vehicular access and egress will be supported where:

- i) it takes the safety of pedestrians and other road users fully into account; and,**
- ii) the proposal demonstrates that all options have been considered to avoid adverse impact on the landscape and setting of the proposed access.**

Rights of Way (Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Unclassified Roads and Other Trails)

Justification for our policy

As a community we enjoy walking and wish to enjoy the natural environment in our parish in a way that is safe, beneficial for health and not detrimental to the countryside or those that inhabit or work within it. We shall continue to support the Highway Authority to maintain and improve the existing network of rights of way and encourage sustainable access within our parish. We would like to see an increase in the number of footpaths and bridleways, particularly those that link us to the wider network of routes and with other settlements and communities. Should the community achieve agreement from landowners to create new access then funding shall be sought to deliver those improvements. Any new paths shall be created in line with statutory planning and access legislation.

Where future housing development is permitted we shall seek to negotiate safe, off-road public access leading to and from the village for all users. We welcome proposals that helps make our off-road routes more appealing and accessible for all users whilst protecting the essential character of the route and our sensitive natural environment.

In the interests of safety and keeping route-ways fit for purpose, we wish to create a clear separation between those that can be used by motor vehicles and those that cannot. We will liaise with the appropriate authorities about introducing restrictions and physical measures that prevent unauthorised motor vehicles from taking advantage of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes.

The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan has a number of policies under the heading of 'Access and Enjoyment' that seek to:

- *Achieve an accessible, connected and above-minimum-standard network of Public Rights of Way across boundaries throughout the AONB, whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB (Policy AE 1/A)*
- *Seek an appropriate balance between providing and promoting access and the conservation of the landscape and tranquillity of the AONB (Policy AE 1/B)*
- *Ensure a wide range of sensitive and sustainable access opportunities for users of all abilities to enjoy the special qualities of the AONB (Policy AE 1/C)*

Our Neighbourhood Plan policy is aimed at realising the above policies so as to increase and improve public access to the countryside in the interests of peaceful and healthy enjoyment of the natural environment in safety and free from interference or disturbance.

Policy TRA3 – Rights of Way (Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways, Unclassified Roads and Other Trails)

The improvement and enhancement of public rights of way will be supported.

Economy and Employment

Aims	Objectives
10. Help support and sustain local businesses.	10a) Support the provision of high-speed broadband to every property in the parish.
	10b) Support the diversification of farm businesses and the conversion of agricultural buildings where it is shown to be necessary to help ensure the continued viability of the farm.
	10c) Support measures to promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Introduction

Stockland is a rural community with a rural economy based on agriculture. Many of those of working-age that do not work within the local economy commute out of the parish. The Community Survey 2014 shows that the number of additional people wanting to work regularly from home is significant. We envisage the character of the economy and employment patterns remaining largely as they are, so as to help protect the overall character of the Parish. Our objectives reflect a desire to see improved connectivity (particularly in terms of broadband access) and thereby put in place the infrastructure necessary for modern businesses including home based business, farm diversification (for example, farm shops) and other land-based rural businesses. Our objectives elsewhere in the Plan support these and other facets of our rural economy such as tourism.

Super-fast Connectivity

Justification for our policy

We recognise that regular use of the internet and social media is important if we are to maintain our quality of life. Fast and reliable connection will be essential in future for running successful businesses, accessing services and assistance, furthering education and creating a breadth of opportunities for personal growth and development. We are intent on establishing and maintaining the necessary level of connectivity. While the main driver for our policy is to help sustain and improve the local economy, the need for improved provision extends beyond the traditional business premises and office as many people are now working from home or running a business from home which could require high speed broadband connectivity. There are naturally positive spin-offs in ensuring improved connectivity speeds to households on this basis as the use of the internet for social interaction, education and access to essential services increases with time.

However, this cannot be done at all costs and so recognising the special quality of our natural and built environment, to minimise the visual impact of new connectivity infrastructure such as cabling or telecoms boxes or hubs for super-fast fibre broadband, such infrastructure should be appropriately

sited, sympathetically designed and camouflaged so that it is in-keeping with its setting and surroundings.

Policy EE1 – Super-fast Connectivity

- i) **The development of a super-fast broadband infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sensitively sited and sympathetically designed.**

Community Actions and Projects

CA18 - Work with providers to accelerate the introduction of super-fast broadband and more reliable connectivity across the whole parish.

Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

Justification for our policy

Farming is a vital component of our parish and its economy. We will help ensure that farming businesses can remain viable by permitting the conversion or redevelopment of existing farm buildings where it can be shown that it will make a difference to the business but have little or no impact on the character of its surroundings.

The NPPF (paragraph 28) calls for policies that support a prosperous rural economy. It states that planning policies should

- *“support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings”*
- *“promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses”*

In the spirit of this national policy we will not oppose the careful and sensitive conversion and alteration of existing agricultural buildings for business-related purposes. Any development however must conform to other policies in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan that are aimed at protecting the character, tranquillity and visual appearance of the area.

The AONB Management Plan recognises the need to:

- *Support rural diversification which contributes to business viability, develops local markets and adds value to local products without compromising the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB (Policy RET 1/A)*
- *Encourage the development of sustainable employment opportunities that are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB, and encourage people to continue to live and work within their communities (Policy RET 1/B)*
- *Support the development of sustainable tourism activities that are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB, and encourage people to continue to live and work within their communities (Policy RET 1/C)*

Our policy is intended to facilitate the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings in the interests of increasing the viability of the farm business whilst ensuring the conversion and reuse is compatible with its setting and the special character of the AONB.

Policy EE2 – Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

To support farm diversification, the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business or business-related purposes will be supported where:

- i) the proposal would be compatible with its landscape setting, and;**
- ii) the local road network could safely accommodate the increase in vehicles resulting from the proposal; and,**
- iii) the proposal complements, or is otherwise compatible with the agricultural or other land-based activities present in the area; and,**
- iv) the proposal would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents and/or other uses; and,**
- v) the buildings concerned would not require substantial rebuilding or disproportionate extension.**

Farming and other rural businesses

Justification for our policy

The NPPF (para. 109) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity,*

including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures

- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”*

Farming has defined the character of the natural and local environment of our parish for centuries. Changes in farming methods should not put this special and unique character at risk.

The community has made it clear at recent consultation events that the physical landscape and environment of the parish are of primary importance and should be protected and preserved. Therefore where the proposed change is not enabled by the General Permitted Development Order, we will resist developments and changes on farmland that are likely to have an adverse effect on the established rural landscape of the parish.

Policy EE3 – Farming and other rural businesses

- i) **In all cases, new development proposals on farmland requiring planning permission will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal protects and promotes the natural beauty and special character of the AONB landscape.**

Energy and Low Carbon

Aim	Objectives
11. Support small scale, unobtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes providing they are sensitively sited and screened (appropriately landscaped).	11a) Ensure that any renewable or low carbon energy schemes are sensitively sited and screened (appropriately landscaped) to protect the essential qualities of the AONB.
	11b) Resist large-scale and obtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes that are likely to have a negative impact on enjoyment of the natural and built environment and are contrary to our Vision.

Introduction

We recognise the importance and value that renewable and low carbon energy schemes (and improvements to energy efficiency of buildings where done sensitively) can have to help provide alternatives to fossil based fuels and therefore help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, improve the security of energy supply, reduce households bills for energy, generate an income for community organisations and businesses and reduce the cost of supply of energy.

However, in practical terms, different types of renewable and low carbon energy installations will be suitable in different built and natural landscapes. We have already set out how we value our natural landscape and tranquillity in Stockland within the context of the AONB and the policies we have developed on energy proposals reflect this position.

On 18th June 2015, the Government introduced a requirement for local planning authorities to only grant planning permission for wind energy development if: the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing. Notwithstanding this policy position, our policies on energy still cover proposals for wind turbines and provide additional and locally specific tests to ensure that, should any such proposals come forward during the Neighbourhood Plan plan period, and national policy or Local Plan policies change, there are criteria in place against which applications can be appropriately tested²⁷.

²⁷ HCWS42 (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-06-18/HCWS42/>),

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

Justification for our policy

Evidence we have gathered²⁸, together with the views of our local community have identified support for smaller scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes which respect the qualities of the landscape and natural environment as a whole and do not have an adverse impact on the beauty of and biodiversity within our parish.

This includes the findings of the “Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills” report which assessed the suitability, in broad terms, in the AONB of different types and scales of renewable and low carbon energy solutions. Table 1 below, reproduced from the “Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills” report²⁹, sets out this position and also helpfully confirms what we mean in our policies by “small scale” and “large scale” renewable energy installations.

Table 1

TYPE	TECHNOLOGY	SUITABILITY
Biomass	Large-scale 10-40MW electricity generation plant	Red
	Small Combined Heat and Power plant	Green
	Business / domestic biomass boilers	Green
	Business / domestic biomass stoves	Green
Anaerobic digestion	Centralised anaerobic digestion (AD) plant	Red
	AD serving a group of farms	Yellow
	AD serving a single farm	Green
Waste to energy scheme		Red
Micro-hydro	Micro-hydro	Green
	Restoration of traditional mill sites	Green
Photovoltaics	Building associated PV systems	Green
	Solar PV farms	v. limited
Solar hot water		Green
Ground, air and water source heat pumps		Green
Community heating	Small-scale or micro community heating	Green
Wind	Large-scale turbines (90m – 135m)	Red
	Medium-scale turbines (25m – 90m)	v. limited
	Small-scale turbines (12m – 25m height)	Yellow
	Micro turbines (<11m)	Green

Source: p.9, Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report, Land Use Consultants in association with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2010

²⁸ Such as the Blackdown Hills Management Plan, 2014; the Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report, 2010; and, the Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in the Devon Landscape: Advice Note, 2013.

²⁹ p.9, Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report, Land Use Consultants in association with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2010

Policy ELC1 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

- i) Proposals for renewable or low carbon energy schemes will be supported where they are small scale, sensitively sited and where necessary, appropriately landscaped, in order to protect the quality of Stockland's and the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity and wildlife habitats.**

Proposals for renewable or low carbon energy schemes are encouraged to take into account the advice given in the "Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report (2010)".

Monitoring and Review

While there is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored, the Parish Council will periodically monitor the impact of policies on change in the parish by considering the policies' effectiveness in the planning application decision making process. The Parish Council will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications. The Clerk will keep a record of the application, any applicable policies, the comment from the Parish Council and the eventual outcome of the application. The delivery of community actions that have been identified will also be periodically monitored.

A full or partial review of this Plan is unlikely to be considered necessary during its lifetime unless triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or District-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and / or existing neighbourhood plan policies.






Appendix 1

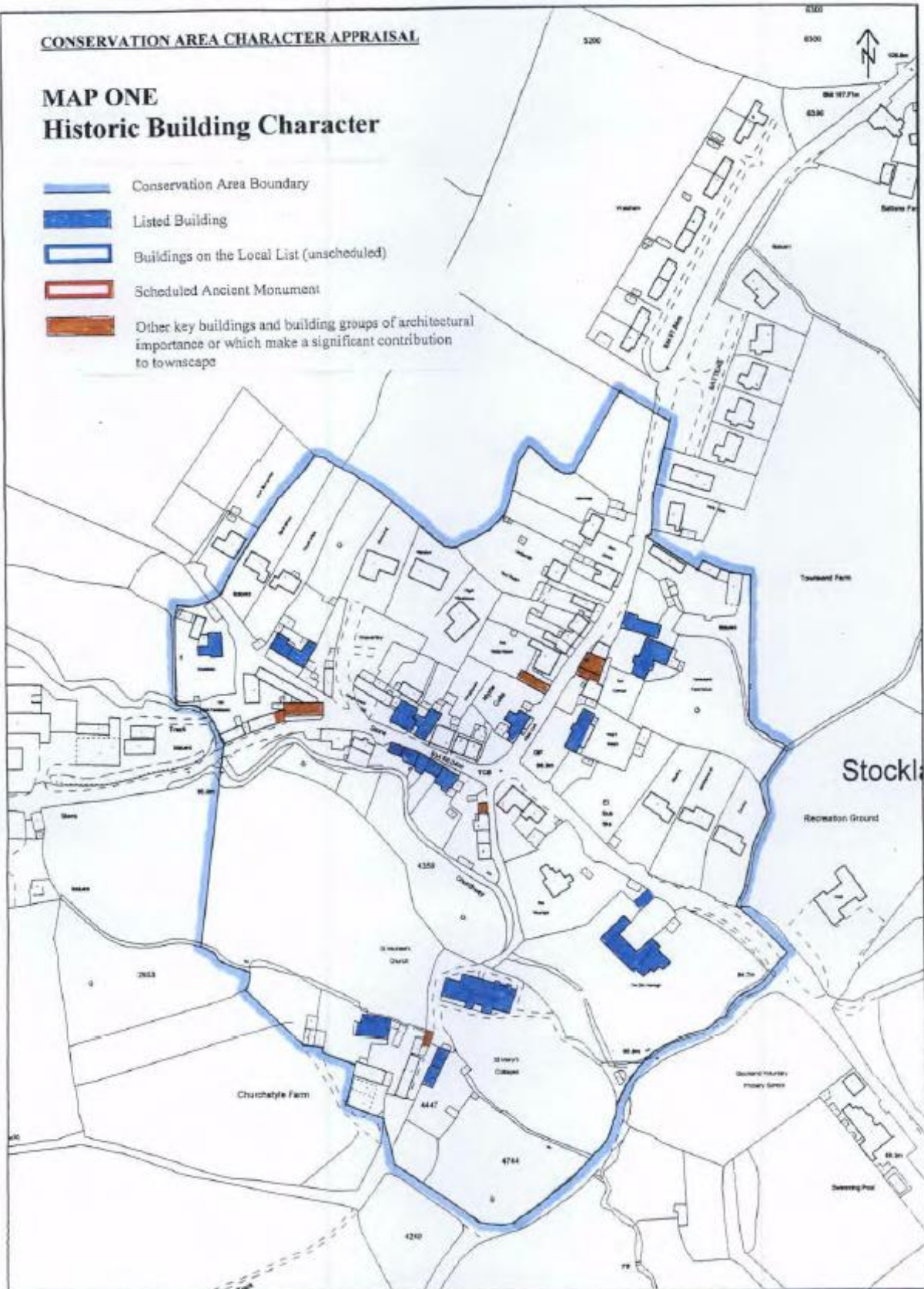
Maps relating to the Historic Character of Stockland Village

(reproduced from Conservation Area Appraisal)

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

**MAP ONE
Historic Building Character**

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Buildings on the Local List (unscheduled)
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Other key buildings and building groups of architectural importance or which make a significant contribution to townscape








Stockland Conservation Area
East Devon District Council

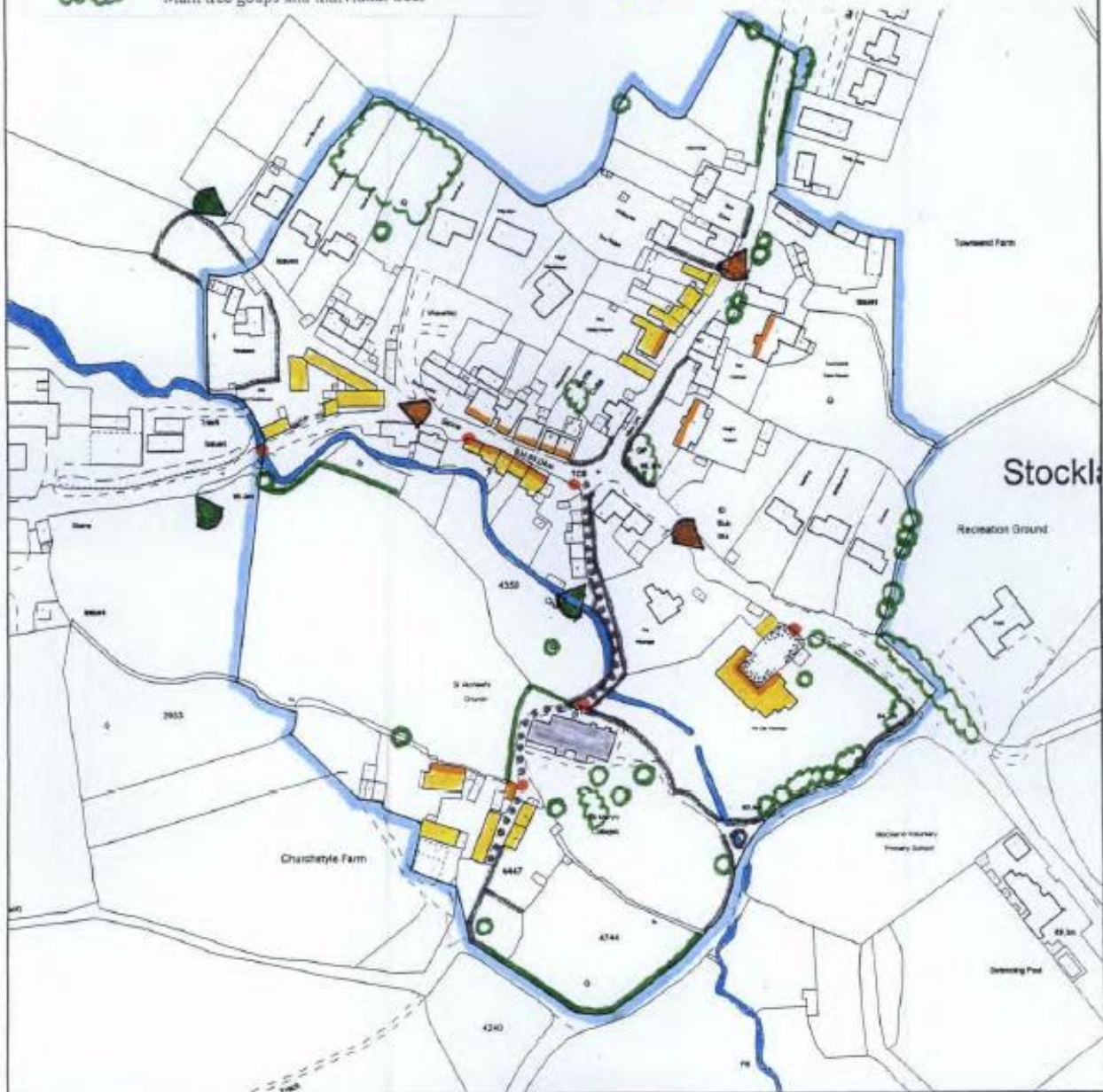
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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

**MAP TWO
Important Features**

-  Significant Landmark
-  Feature of Special Interest
-  Largely unspoilt frontages retaining significant period detail (including original shopfronts)
-  Important building groups, normally of similar date, character or frontage detail
-  Main tree groups and individual trees

-  Open space with unrestricted public access
-  Open space with limited or restricted public access
-  Useful pedestrian links
-  Prominent walls
-  Main hedgerows
-  Surfaces in traditional/natural materials
-  Viewpoints - open / long distance
-  Viewpoints - enclosed or partially enclosed
-  Water features



Stockland Conservation Area

East Devon District Council

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Appendix 2

AONB Design Guide for Houses

Please see separate electronic file to access the Design Guide (for e-versions of this Plan).