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Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany
Regulation 14 consultation

Project Reference: SEA for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan
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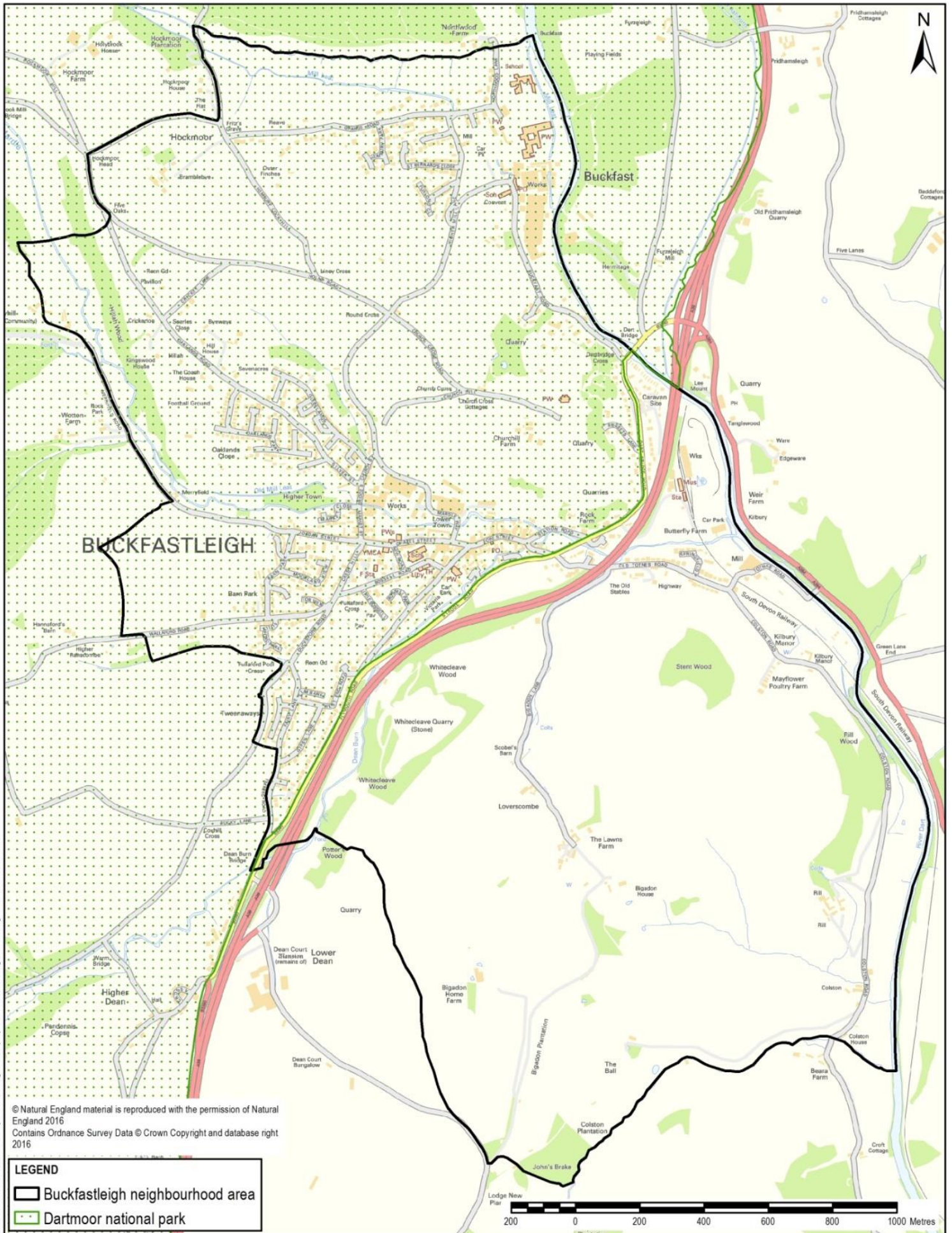
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LEGEND

- Buckfastleigh neighbourhood area
- Dartmoor national park

Project Title/Drawing Title
BUCKFASTLEIGH-A1 SEA

BUCKFASTLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

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Non-technical summary

What is sustainability appraisal?

A strategic environmental assessment has been carried out to inform the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan?

The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan (BKNP) presents a plan for the parish of Buckfastleigh in Devon for the period to 2025. Prepared to be in conformity with the Dartmoor Local Plan and the Teignbridge Local Plan, the BKNP sets out a vision and a range of policies for the parish. These relate to a range of topics, including, but not limited to, regeneration, local character, quality of life and the protection and enhancement of the environment.

The key vision for the BKNP is as follows:

"We want to see a parish that is sustainable, economically vibrant, environmentally beautiful and protected, culturally rich and a socially friendly and caring place to live, work and visit."

It is currently anticipated that the BKNP will undergo a referendum in 2017.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the current consultation on the BKNP, is the second document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (May 2016), which includes information about the Neighbourhood Plan area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the BKNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the BKNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the BKNP has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the BKNP;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the BKNP;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the BKNP; and
- The next steps for the BKNP and accompanying SEA process.

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Assessment of alternative approaches for the BKNP

At the outset of the BKNP's development process a key intention of the Neighbourhood Plan has been to shape new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area. In this context two alternative approaches options were considered by plan makers, namely whether to 1) focus development on existing previously developed 'brownfield' sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area or 2) widen the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to consider development on previously undeveloped 'greenfield' sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

To support decision making on this element of the BKNP, two options were considered as reasonable alternatives through the SEA process.

The two options were as follows:

- Option 1: Facilitate the development of greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Option 2: Focus development on previously developed sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

In light of consultation undertaken to date on the Neighbourhood Plan, and consideration of the assessment findings above, the BKNP Steering Group took the decision to focus on shaping development on brownfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area rather than allocating land for housing and employment on greenfield sites.

This was given:

- The presence of significant sites available or potentially available for regeneration and reconfiguration in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the Devonia Site and the Axminster Mill site.
- A perceived need to regenerate derelict or underutilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Significant opportunities for enhancing local distinctiveness and the setting of the historic environment in Buckfastleigh
- Significant opportunities for supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre
- The significant landscape constraints associated with the presence of the Dartmoor National Park
- The existing allocation of two greenfield sites for housing through the Dartmoor Development Management and Delivery DPD

As such a central focus of the Neighbourhood Plan has been on the rejuvenation of underutilised brownfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area, focussing on the key locations for transformation.

The appraisal findings linked to the SEA of the options outlined above are presented in **Section 4.3** of this Environmental Report.

Assessment of the current version of the BKNP

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process assessed the 21 policies put forward through the current consultation version of the BKNP. The SEA Report has presented the findings of the appraisal under the following sustainability themes:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Climate change
- Historic environment and landscape
- Land, soil and water resources
- Population and community
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport

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The appraisal has concluded that the current version of the BKNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in relation to the 'Population and Community' theme. These benefits largely relate to the carefully targeted spatial approach proposed by the plan, the focus on regenerating and rejuvenating key disused and underutilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area for community benefit, and the BKNP's impetus on protecting and enhancing open space and green infrastructure networks.

In relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' theme the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan will promote **significant positive effects** through providing a local policy context which both offers protection to the internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites present in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and offers enhancements. In this respect the current approach proposed through the BKNP will support improvements to ecological networks which will support key habitats and species of significance in the area. There is however some further potential for the BKNP to more directly recognise the Neighbourhood Plan area's rich geodiversity resource.

The scope and scale of the proposed policy approaches relating to landscape/townscape character and the historic environment will help ensure that wide ranging benefits in relation to the 'Historic Environment and Landscape' theme are secured through the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to limiting the magnitude of potential adverse effects relating to new development areas, the policies have the potential to secure significant enhancements through rejuvenating key areas of historic environment importance in Buckfastleigh and Buckfast. As such the BKNP has the potential to lead to **significant positive effects** in relation to this theme.

In relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' theme, whilst no allocations are included in the BKNP, the Neighbourhood Plan has a strong focus on rejuvenating disused and underutilised brownfield sites in Buckfast and Buckfastleigh. This will bring **significant positive effects** in relation to this theme.

The current version of the BKNP will initiate a number of beneficial approaches regarding the 'Transport', 'Climate Change' and 'Health and Wellbeing' themes. However these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process.

Recommendations at this current stage

Two recommendations have been made for improving the sustainability performance of the current version of the BKNP. These are summarised as follows:

- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich archaeological resource and potential. In this context there is further potential for the policies of the BKNP to acknowledge the archaeological resource and potential of the area. This could include through a policy which highlights that development proposals should take account of their effect on sites with the potential for archaeological interest (including their setting) and proposals with the potential to affect sites of archaeological interest being required to submit an appropriately scaled archaeological study to inform mitigation measures.
- There is further potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to more directly recognise the significance of the many geological features of interest present in the area. In this context there is scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to include a policy which sets out provisions for 1) protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Plan area's rich geodiversity resource (including the key exposures of geological interest present locally), and 2) increasing opportunities for enhancing awareness and understanding of local geodiversity.

These recommendations should be considered through the next stage of plan making for the BKNP.

Next steps

Subsequent to the current consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, the BKNP will be updated to reflect comments received. The Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.

The BKNP and updated Environmental Report will then be submitted to Dartmoor National Park Authority and Teignbridge District Council for their consideration. The National Park Authority will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the BKNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the BKNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by the National Park Authority. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to the National Park Authority with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the BKNP will become part of the Development Plan for Buckfastleigh and Buckfast.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment in support of Buckfastleigh's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan (BKNP) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2012. The BKNP, which covers Buckfastleigh Parish in Devon, is being prepared in the context of the Dartmoor Local Plan and the Teignbridge Local Plan. It is currently anticipated that the BKNP will be submitted to Dartmoor National Park Authority in early 2017.

Key information relating to the BKNP is presented in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Responsible Authority	Buckfastleigh Town Council
Title of Plan	Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood plan
Purpose	The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in conformity with the Dartmoor Local Plan and the Teignbridge Local Plan.
Timescale	To 2025
Area covered by the plan	Buckfastleigh Parish. (Figure 1.1)
Summary of content	The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the plan area. Section Error! Reference source not found. below presents the vision and aims of the Neighbourhood Plan
Plan contact point	Simon Rines, Neighbourhood Plan officer Email address: simrines@gmail.com

1.2 SEA Explained

The BKNP has been screened in as requiring an SEA.

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative environmental effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging Neighbourhood Plan's contribution to sustainable development.

The SEA has been prepared in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹.

The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

In line with the SEA Regulations this Environmental Report must essentially answer four questions:

- 1) What is the scope of the SEA?
- 2) What has Plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?

'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised for the plan.
- 3) What are the appraisal findings at this stage?

i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
- 4) What happens next?

These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present 'the information to be provided within the report'. **Table 1.2** presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SEA questions.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC

1.3 Structure of this Environmental Report

This document is the Environmental Report for the BKNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the Regulations.

Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the Environmental Report in order to meet Regulatory² Requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with regulations, the report must include... ³
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
What's the scope of the SEA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for plan making/SEA process.

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

³ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Vision and objectives for the BKNP

2.1 Local Plan context for the BKNP

The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan area is within Teignbridge District. However much of the northern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is also within the boundaries of Dartmoor National Park, including Buckfastleigh town and Buckfast. As such the northern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is administered by the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

Due to the Neighbourhood Plan area's location within the two authority boundaries, the BKNP is being prepared in the context of both the Dartmoor Local Plan and the Teignbridge District Council Local Plan 2013-2033.

The Dartmoor Local Plan comprises the Dartmoor Core Strategy and Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD). The Dartmoor Core Strategy, which was adopted in April 2008, sets out the vision, aims and strategic policies for spatial development in the Dartmoor National Park up to 2026. The Development Management and Delivery DPD was subsequently adopted by the National Park Authority in July 2013 and sets out subject related policies (e.g. housing, employment, tourism) to advise and manage development and site specific policies to set the planning framework for particular areas and land use. Together, the two documents provide a framework for how future development across the National Park will be planned and delivered.

2.1.1 Dartmoor Local Plan proposals for Buckfastleigh

The Development Management and Delivery DPD's vision for Buckfastleigh is threefold:

- Sustain and improve the range of local shops and services for the community and the tourist economy
- Provide opportunities for high quality housing development
- Conserve the town's distinctive heritage as a mill town.

Drawing on these elements it also proposes the following allocations in Buckfastleigh:

- Devonia Site: 2.55ha mixed use development which should accord with a comprehensive design brief/masterplan for the entire site prepared in association with the local community, relevant stakeholders and the National Park Authority.
- An area of land 0.8 ha in extent to the west of Barn Park: allocated for housing, not less than 50% of which should be affordable housing to meet identified local needs.
- An area of land 1.7 ha in extent adjacent to Holne Road: allocated for housing, not less than 50% of which should be affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

It also has a close focus on conserving Buckfastleigh's distinctive heritage as a mill town

2.1.2 Dartmoor Local Plan proposals for Buckfast

No specific policies for Buckfast are included in the Dartmoor Local Plan. In this context for Buckfast the Development Management and Delivery DPD instead highlights that 'The policies in the Core Strategy and the general policies of this document will be sufficient for development management purposes'.

2.1.3 Teignbridge Local Plan proposals for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan area

The Teignbridge Local Plan 2013 to 2033 was adopted by Teignbridge District Council on 6th May 2014 and provides a framework for how future development across the district will be planned and delivered. Due to the coverage of the Neighbourhood Plan area administered by Teignbridge District Council being limited to the southern parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. in the parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area away from Buckfastleigh town and Buckfast), no allocations are included for the Neighbourhood Plan area by the Teignbridge Local Plan.

2.1.4 Vision and objectives for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan

The vision and objectives for the BKNP were developed following the review of extensive consultation exercises carried out by the town council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The vision and objectives for the BKNP are presented below.



We want to see a parish that is sustainable, economically vibrant, environmentally beautiful and protected, culturally rich and a socially friendly and caring place to live, work and visit.

Vision for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan



To support the Neighbourhood Plan's vision, the BKNP sets out a number of Neighbourhood Plan policies. The latest iteration of these policies has been appraised in **Chapter 5** of this Environmental Report.

3. The Scope of the SEA

3.1 SEA Scoping Report

The SEA Regulations require that: “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England.⁴ As such, these authorities were consulted on the scope of the BKNP SEA in May 2016.

The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:

- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
- The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.

Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix B**.

Comments received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed, are presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Natural England Carol Reeder, Lead Adviser, Sustainable Development Team – Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	
Natural England welcome the preparation of the Strategic Environmental assessment (SEA) scoping report and the development of assessment criteria against which future Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals (and alternatives) will be assessed.	Comment noted.
There is no reference in the report to future monitoring. This issue should be addressed and indicators should be developed as part of the SEA process.	A proposed monitoring programme will be presented in the submission version of the Environmental Report

⁴ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme.’

Consultation response

How the response was considered and addressed

Table 3.1: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions for biodiversity

Assessment questions have been updated to reflect comments.

The first and third assessment criteria ask if proposals help to “support continued improvements to the status of the Buckfastleigh Caves Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/Hembury Woods SSSI. As noted in the baseline summary (para 3.3) Buckfastleigh Caves and Hembury Woods are also of European importance having been designated as part of the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) & South Dartmoor Woods SAC respectively. The European status of these sites should be referred to in the assessment criteria. In addition it is suggested that the words “protect and,” be added at the beginning of the first 3 criteria as it is important that sites of national & European importance are protected.

The final criterion asks if proposals ‘support access’ to biodiversity & geodiversity. Public access to some designated sites may not be desirable. It is therefore suggested that this criterion be revised as follows: “support understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity and access to and interpretation of sites where appropriate”.

Assessment question has been updated to reflect suggestion.

In addition, and for information, it is worth noting that ‘Conservation Objectives’ have been developed for the European sites. Supplementary Advice Packages are also being prepared and will be available in due course.

Comment noted.

Historic England

David Stuart, Historic Places Adviser South West

Section 5.1 (p18) identifies street clutter as a problem but it is not clear how this has been identified. Is it the only issue affecting the historic environment? (apart from heritage assets on the national Heritage At Risk Register and those which may be on a local At Risk list).

Other sustainability issues relating to the historic environment have been identified with street clutter. Street clutter is an issue which has been identified through consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan to date.

The Summary of future baseline (p23) asserts that there is “significant opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the town and better reveal assets’ cultural heritage significance”. What evidence is this assertion based on? Is it related to any of the allocation sites?

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on a number of key brownfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area with the potential to enhance the setting of the historic environment. This includes the Devonia site in the town centre.

Otherwise, we have no comments on the Scoping Report apart from to refer you to our guidance on SEAs available on our website - <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/strategic-environ-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/>

Comment noted.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Environment Agency	
Marcus Salmon, Sustainable Places Planning Specialist	
We have reviewed the scoping report and consider that in general the report acknowledges majority of the environmental issues we consider are of most importance.	Comment noted
Biodiversity: We consider that the focus of theme and headline sustainability issues identified are appropriate with regard to biodiversity matters within the Buckfastleigh neighbourhood plan area. This section recognises the numerous conservation designations, the importance of green infrastructure, that waterways are an integral feature of the area's biodiversity and the need to support the integrity of Biodiversity Action Plan (Priority) habitats. We recommend that this also includes Priority species too.	Priority species have been included in the SEA Framework for consideration through the SEA process
Biodiversity: In terms of the sustainability context the relevant conservation legislation (both United Kingdom and European Union) has been identified along with the most pertinent parts of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The baseline also appears to be sound in so far as our remit goes.	Comment noted.
Biodiversity: We support the proposed SEA objectives and assessment questions.	Comment noted.
Climate change: We consider that the focus of theme and headline sustainability issues identified are appropriate in that they recognise the effects of climate change, the need to reduce emissions and to adapt to the changes induced by climate change. The sustainability context has identified relevant EU level strategies, national legislation like the Floods and Water Management Act and the relevant guidance from the NPPF. There could also be reference to our emerging Flood Risk Management Plans and the Lead Local Flood Authority's Flood Risk Management Strategy.	Context review updated.
Climate change: The baseline has recognised the significance of fluvial flood risk and proposed works. Our upgrading of the Buckfastleigh will result in an improved standard of protection for the town. The future baseline succinctly acknowledges how a changing climate will change the baseline such as by increasing flood risk over time. We support the proposed SEA objectives and assessment questions and note that questions recognise that climate change is a cross-cutting theme with biodiversity in that habitats and species will need to be resilient to be able to adapt to changes in the climate.	Improved flood defences have been noted in the updated future baseline section for the 'Climate Change' environmental theme.
Climate change: We support the focus of theme. However, we note that the headline sustainability issues are limited to the land quality of brownfield sites and the classification of agricultural land in the area. We consider that the ecological and chemical status (Water Framework Directive objectives) of the area's watercourses should also be acknowledged. We are, nonetheless, pleased that the sustainability context includes reference to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and River Basin Management Plans.	Key issues related to theme have been updated to reflect ecological and chemical status.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>Whilst the summary of the current baseline covers the issues of most relevance to us it should also acknowledge the status of the watercourses. Of the three waterbodies within the neighbourhood plan area the River Mardle and the Dean Brook are presently at Good Ecological Status. However, the River Dart here is at Moderate Ecological Status and it is failing with regard to fish. It is the target for all these water-bodies to meet Good Ecological Status by 2027 and there should be no deterioration from the existing status.</p>	<p>Baseline data for this Land, Soil and Water Resources environmental theme has been updated.</p>
<p>In terms of the future baseline we are pleased to see that the WFD has been acknowledged. However, we would stress that continued improvements to water quality under the WFD requires local and neighbourhood plans to play their part in them. We also support the proposed SEA objectives and assessment questions.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

3.2 Key Issues and Objectives for the SEA

3.2.1 Key sustainability issues

Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SEA Scoping Report was able to identify a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SEA. These issues are as follows, presented by seven environmental themes:

3.2.2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Much of the built up area within of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Hembury Woods SSSI for larger scale residential development.
- Habitats for numerous Protected Species are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich geodiversity resource, which should be protected and enhanced.
- Areas of biodiversity value within the Neighbourhood Plan area should be protected and enhanced. Their integrity should also be supported through improved ecological connections in the area, including through the provision of green infrastructure enhancements.
- Features of biodiversity value such as trees, hedgerows, waterways and meadows should be protected from the impacts of future development and where possible enhanced.
- The integrity of the Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats present in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area should be supported through the BKNP, with due regard to the key habitats and species present at these sites.

3.2.3 Climate Change

- An increase in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions.

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- Whilst per capita greenhouse gas emissions for Teignbridge continue to be lower than for Devon, South West and England averages, these are also falling at a lower rate than at the county, regional and national level.
- There is significant opportunity for renewable energy and low carbon provision within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Fluvial flooding linked to the River Mardle is a key issue for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- The BKNP should seek increase the Neighbourhood Plan area's resilience to the effects of climate change through supporting adaptation to the risks associated with climate change in the area.

3.2.4 Historic Environment and Landscape

- The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment, with many features and areas nationally or locally designated for their cultural heritage interest.
- Most of the built up area of the parish is within the Dartmoor National Park, and a large proportion of Buckfastleigh town is within the Buckfastleigh Conservation Area.
- New development has the potential to lead to beneficial and adverse effects on the historic environment, including through affecting the setting of cultural heritage assets and landscape/townscape quality.
- New development could lead to pressures on non-designated sites and townscapes, including from the loss of key built and natural features.
- Street clutter from road signage has been deemed to be a key detriment to the setting of the historic environment.
- Noise pollution from the A38 trunk road is a key impact on the townscape and landscape character of the town and on tranquillity.

3.2.5 Land, Soil and Water Resources

- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a significant brownfield resource, including the Devonia mill site.
- It is uncertain whether agricultural land in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Plan area comprises land classified as 'the best and most versatile' agricultural land.
- Of the three waterbodies within the Neighbourhood Plan area the River Mardle and the Dean Brook are presently at Good Ecological Status. However, the River Dart here is at Moderate Ecological Status and it is failing with regard to fish. It is the target for all these water-bodies to meet Good Ecological Status by 2027 and there should be no deterioration from the existing status.

3.2.6 Population and Community

- The population of the Neighbourhood Plan area has seen recent declines.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a higher proportion of people in the under 16 age group than district and regional averages. However there is a lower proportion of residents within the 16-24 age group than district, regional, and national averages.
- There are significant pockets of deprivation in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This particularly relates to the quality of housing, income deprivation and employment opportunities.

- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a high proportion of residents privately renting or socially renting.
- In common with many other areas, the Neighbourhood Plan area has an ageing population. This will have implications for health service provision and the provision of other services, facilities and amenities.

3.2.7 Health and Wellbeing

- There is a higher prevalence of poor health in the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan area than district averages.
- Deprivation levels in parts of Buckfastleigh are significantly higher than other parts of South Devon. This is a key contributor to poor health in parts of the parish.
- The poor quality of housing stock in the Neighbourhood Plan area has a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing.
- A key influence on health and wellbeing for some residents is noise pollution from the A38. Due to the close proximity of residential areas in the town to this major route, significantly elevated levels of road traffic noise are experienced in a number of locations.
- An ageing population has the potential to increase pressures on health and care services.

3.2.8 Transportation

- Bus services, whilst relative good during the day, are poor early in the morning and from later in the evening.
- Ongoing cuts to services are threatening bus services.
- New development areas should be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by the private car.).
- Continued enhancements to public transport and walking and cycling networks should be promoted.

3.3 SEA Framework

These issues were then translated into an 'SEA Framework' of objectives and assessment questions. This SEA Framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline. The SEA framework for the BKNP is presented below.

Table 3.2: SEA Framework for the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and support continued improvements to the status of the internationally designated South Hams SAC and South Dartmoor Woods SAC? • Protect and support continued improvements to the status of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI? • Protect and support continued improvements to the status of the Potters Wood SSSI? • Protect and support continued improvements to the status of the Hembury Woods SSSI? • Support the aims associated with the two Strategic Nature Areas present in the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Protect and enhance the Neighbourhood Plan area's rich geodiversity resource? • Support understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity and access to and interpretation of sites where appropriate?
Climate Change	
Promote climate change mitigation in Buckfastleigh.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the plan area from population growth? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Reduce the need to travel? • Increase number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
Support the resilience of Buckfastleigh to the potential effects of climate change.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into the likely effects of climate change into account? • Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the plan area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the plan area to the effects of climate change?

Historic Environment and Landscape

<p>Protect, maintain and enhance Buckfastleigh's cultural heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the Buckfastleigh Conservation Area? • Preserve the historic settlement pattern of Buckfastleigh? • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest? • Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness? • Reduce street clutter from road signage? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?
<p>Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the 'Special Qualities' of the Dartmoor National Park? • Conserve and enhance landscape and townscape features? • Support the integrity of the Buckfastleigh Conservation Area?

Land, Soil and Water Resources

<p>Ensure the efficient use of land.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which in the parish comprises Grade 3a agricultural land?
<p>Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of waste produced? • Move waste up the waste hierarchy? • Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?
<p>Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvements to water quality? • Minimise water consumption?

Population and Community

<p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?
<p>Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.</p>	

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<p>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?
<h3>Health and Wellbeing</h3>	
<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of Buckfastleigh's residents.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Facilitate enhancements to the housing stock of Buckfastleigh? • Limit the effects of noise pollution from the A38? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards? • Improve access to the countryside for recreation?
<h3>Transportation</h3>	
<p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development? • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel? • Enable transport infrastructure improvements? • Facilitate working from home and remote working?

4. What has plan making / SEA involved to this point?

4.1 Introduction

In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.

The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the BKNP has been informed by an appraisal of alternative approaches to housing and employment development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

4.2 Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken since 2013

Plan-making for the BKNP has been underway since November 2013. Initial work incorporated a number of informal and formal consultation exercises carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, including on the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A range of consultation events have since been carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan. This has included a range of exhibitions, public meetings and questions and answer sessions as well as workshops.

The following sections discuss the evolution of the BKNP in association with the SEA process.

4.3 Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan

A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the BKNP.

At the outset of the BKNP's development process a key intention of the Neighbourhood Plan has been to shape new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area. In this context two potential options were considered, namely whether to 1) focus development on existing previously developed 'brownfield' sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area or 2) widen the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to consider development on previously undeveloped 'greenfield' sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

To support decision making on this element of the BKNP, two options were considered as reasonable alternatives through the SEA process in relation to the broad location of development to be supported through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The two options were as follows:

- Option 1: Facilitate the development of greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Option 2: Focus development on previously developed sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

These two options were considered through the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during scoping (see Section 3.3).

Table 4.1 presents the findings of the appraisal of Option 1 and Option 2 outlined above. To support the assessment findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant theme. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the comparative sustainability performance of the two options in relation to each theme considered.

Table 4.1: Appraisal findings: options for broad locations of development

Option 1: Facilitate the development of greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area

Option 2: Focus development on previously developed sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference	
		Opt 1	Opt 2
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Potential effects on biodiversity have the potential to take place on both previously developed and greenfield land. Whilst greenfield development has the potential to lead to the loss of key landscape features of biodiversity value and impact on ecological corridors, previously developed land can support a rich biological diversity. In this context previously developed land can provide habitat for UKBAP Priority species and contribute to wider ecological networks, as well as the provision of ecosystem services such as pollination.</p> <p>All allocations have the potential to have impacts on biodiversity assets if located inappropriately and have poor design and layout. Likewise all allocations have the potential to promote net gains in biodiversity value. In this context, for all sites, potential effects on biodiversity depend on elements such as the provision of green infrastructure to accompany new development areas and the retention and incorporation of biodiversity features.</p>	2	2
Climate change	<p>In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, road transport is the significant contributor to emissions in the area. The extent to which the two options have the potential to support climate change mitigation through facilitating a reduced level of car dependency is therefore a key element. In this context, Option 2, through promoting the development of previously developed land has increased potential to promote development in town centre locations which are more integrated with the existing built up area of the Neighbourhood Area. This has the potential to allow at some locations easier access to services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.</p> <p>In terms of climate change adaptation, the redevelopment of previously developed land provides opportunities for enhancing the resilience of the brownfield sites and surrounding area to the effects of climate change. This includes through green infrastructure enhancements and design and layout which helps regulate the effects of extreme weather events in the town, including through regulating surface water run-off. In this context, whilst the direct provision of green infrastructure improvements to accompany new development areas should be achievable through both options, including through mechanisms such as the community infrastructure levy, the redevelopment of brownfield land increases scope for direct improvements to climate change resilience.</p>	2	1

Option 1: Facilitate the development of greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area

Option 2: Focus development on previously developed sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference	
		Opt 1	Opt 2
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Option 1, through facilitating greenfield development in the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan area, increases the scope for impacts on landscape character, including from visual impact and impacts on noise quality. The potential significance of such effects is increased due to the location of the Neighbourhood Plan area within the Dartmoor National Park. As such greenfield development has increased potential to have impacts on the Special Qualities of the National Park.</p> <p>Whilst Option 2 has the potential to have direct impacts on historic environment assets located on brownfield sites, high quality development sensitive to the historic environment resource has the potential to support enhancements to townscape character and the rejuvenation of disused or underutilised historic environment assets. Given the significant opportunities for supporting the reuse and rejuvenation of existing heritage assets in Buckfastleigh, this will support the town's historic environment resource, if high quality design and layout is incorporated within new provision. Similarly Option 2 provides opportunities for enhancing local character and distinctiveness if high quality design is incorporated within new provision. Option 2 therefore increases opportunities to rejuvenate existing underutilised heritage assets whilst protecting landscape character, and offering opportunities to enhance visual amenity and the setting of the historic environment.</p>	2	1
Land, soil and water resources	<p>Option 1 will lead to the loss of greenfield land in the Neighbourhood Area. The option also has increased potential to lead to the loss of areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land (including, potentially, Grade 3a land). However this is uncertain as recent agricultural land classification has not been undertaken in the area.</p> <p>Option 2 has increased potential to support the efficient use of land through the reuse of existing structures and rejuvenating previously developed land.</p> <p>In terms of water quality, it is difficult to come to a conclusion regarding the potential for development at any given location to result in negative effects without an understanding of the design measures that will be put in place. For example sustainable drainage systems – SuDS – are an effective means of minimising surface water runoff and hence pollution. However, given the potential for development on previously developed land to reduce land contamination- including associated with traditional industries in Buckfastleigh- Option 2 has the potential to lead to medium and long term improvements to water quality.</p>	2	1

Option 1: Facilitate the development of greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area

Option 2: Focus development on previously developed sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference	
		Opt 1	Opt 2
Population and community	<p>In terms of affordable housing, such provision may be easier to deliver through the larger allocations which potentially there may be more scope to be delivered through Option 1. Whilst all new developments involving one or more dwellings are liable for the community infrastructure levy, concentrating the delivery of housing at larger sites may help enable the securing of additional contributions to site specific mitigation through Section 106 planning agreements (it should be noted however that such contributions are typically required to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable). Recent legislation has introduced a 10 unit threshold for affordable housing contributions. As such Option 1 may have increased opportunity for delivering affordable housing in the parish.</p> <p>In terms of the provision of services and facilities, the delivery of CIL monies and similar mechanisms are likely to be more achievable through the allocations facilitated through Option 1.</p>	1	2
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The delivery of housing provision through larger scale allocations potentially enabled by Option 1 has the potential to concentrate effects on road safety and noise quality from increased traffic flows at certain locations. This may have effects on the health and wellbeing of residents. Effects however depend on the location of new development areas and the integration of elements such as sustainable transport linkages and green infrastructure provision.</p> <p>Option 2 has the potential for supporting health and wellbeing through improvements to the quality of the built environment in parts of Buckfastleigh and Buckfast. This includes through enhancing the quality of the public realm and improving the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhoods as a place to live. It also increases opportunities for delivering development in town centre locations easily accessible to services, facilities and amenities.</p>	2	1
Transport	<p>Option 2, through promoting development on previously developed land, has increased potential to facilitate the development of new housing at locations which are more integrated with Buckfastleigh town. This has the potential to allow at some locations easier access to town centre services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.</p> <p>However, the provision of new and improved sustainable transport infrastructure to accompany new housing development, including pedestrian/cycle and public transport links may be more feasible with the larger scale of development enabled by Option 1.</p>	2	1

4.4 Current approach in the Neighbourhood Plan

In light of consultation undertaken to date on the Neighbourhood Plan, and consideration of the assessment findings above, the BKNP Steering Group took the decision to focus on shaping development on brownfield sites in the town rather than allocating land for housing and employment on greenfield sites.

This was given:

- The presence of significant sites available or potentially available for regeneration and reconfiguration in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the Devonia Site and the Axminster Mill site.
- A perceived need to regenerate derelict or underutilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Significant opportunities for enhancing local distinctiveness and the setting of the historic environment in Buckfastleigh
- Significant opportunities for supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre
- The significant landscape constraints associated with the presence of the Dartmoor National Park
- The allocation of two greenfield sites for housing through the Dartmoor Development Management and Delivery DPD (**Section 2.1.1**).

As such a central focus of the BKNP has been on the rejuvenation of underutilised brownfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area, focussing on the key locations for transformation.

4.5 Development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

To support the implementation of the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in **Section 2.1.4**, the current version of the BKNP puts forward 21 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are grouped under five themes.

The policies, and themes under which they are grouped, are as follows.

Business, tourism and enterprise development policies

- BTE1: Employment and enterprise:
- BTE2: Devonia Mill site
- BTE3: Axminster Site
- BTE4: Salmon's Leap Business Park
- BTE5: Retention of existing shops

Transport policies

- T1: Sustainable transport
- T2: Improved accessibility
- T3: Highway Network

Housing policies

- H1: Barn Park
- H2: Holne Road
- H3: Devonia Mill
- H4: Infill / Windfall Sites

Environment and green spaces policies

- ENV 1: Church Hill
- ENV2: Whitecleaves Quarry
- ENV3: Devonia Mill
- ENV4: Biodiversity
- ENV5: Trees
- ENV6: Adapting to climate change

Heritage and design policies

- HD1: Good quality design
- HD2: Retail and Commercial Frontages
- HD3: Heritage

5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current Regulation 14 version of the BKNP. This chapter is structured as follows:

Sections 5.3 to Error! Reference source not found. present an appraisal of the current version of the BKNP under the seven sustainability theme headings; and

Section 5.10 subsequently discusses overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

5.2 Approach to the appraisal

The appraisal is structured under the seven sustainability themes.

For each theme 'significant effects' of the draft plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations.⁵ So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan may combine with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the BKNP). These effect 'characteristics' are described within the appraisal as appropriate.

5.3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The current version of the BKNP sets out a range of provisions which will 1) help limit potential effects from new development on features and areas of biodiversity interest in the Neighbourhood Plan area and 2) support enhancements.

Key sites of biodiversity importance in the Neighbourhood Plan area include the internationally designated South Hams Special Area of Conservation and the nationally designated Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI and Potters Wood SSSI.

In relation to the Potters Wood SSSI, Policy ENV2 (Whitecleaves Quarry) recognises the national biodiversity significance of the quarry through seeking to ensure that the nature conservation value of the immediate area is enhanced incorporating 'wildlife habitats, corridors and any other features of ecological interest including those related to protected species'. It also supports the existing Review of Minerals Permissions condition, which states that the site to be returned to nature/amenity use following the cessation of quarrying. This will support the integrity of the SSSI designation, and help facilitate enhancements to the biodiversity offer of the area.

⁵ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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In relation to the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI/South Hams SAC, parts of these designations are covered by the area known as Church Hill. In this context the policy for Church Hill (ENV1) recognises the importance of the area to biodiversity through precluding development in this area and supporting proposals that would enhance the understanding of the biodiversity and geodiversity resource of the area. It also seeks to conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of the area, and seeks to ensure that improvements to recreational offer do not have adverse effects key assets of importance for ecological networks. The South Hams SAC is also offered protection by the policies for the Devon Mill site (BTE2) and the Axminster site (BTE3), which seek to ensure that no effects on the integrity of the SAC arise as a result of development proposals at these locations.

More broadly in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity, the current version of the BKNP presents a number of policies which will support ecological networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Policy ENV4 (Biodiversity) sets out that proposals which result in a loss of biodiversity would not normally be permitted, and appropriate mitigation and/or compensation is provided which, where possible, achieves a net enhancement to biodiversity in the parish. This is supported by Policy ENV5 (Trees) which seeks to ensure that new development does not lead to the loss of older trees or trees of 'good arboricultural and amenity value'. In relation to geodiversity, Policy HD1 (Good quality design) seeks to promote the use of local building materials in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

5.3.1 Recommendation

Whilst the current version of the BKNP will indirectly promote understanding of the Neighbourhood Plan area's biodiversity and geodiversity resource, and supports the use of local building materials, there is further potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to more directly recognise the significance of the many geological features of interest present in the area. In this context there is scope for the BKNP to include a policy which sets out provisions for 1) protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Plan area's rich geodiversity resource (including the key exposures of geological interest present locally), and 2) increasing opportunities for enhancing awareness and understanding of local geodiversity.

5.4 Climate change

In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

In this context Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport) seeks to ensure that new development proposals maximise the potential for pedestrian and cycle linkages and usage, and Policy T2 (Improved accessibility) seeks to enhance pedestrian and cycle networks, and preclude permission for development which affects the functioning of existing routes. These policies will therefore support walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car, promoting climate change mitigation.

The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan on rejuvenating disused or underutilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area will support an intensification of uses in the town centre, with its range of services, facilities, amenities and public transport links. This will support climate change mitigation through limiting the need for residents to travel, including by the private car.

Further supporting climate change mitigation in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the current version of the BKNP promotes energy efficiency and the provision of renewable energy. In this respect Policy ENV5 (Adapting to climate change) sets out a number of provisions for adopting and enabling the flexible development of low and zero carbon energy through a range of technologies and facilitating the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in new and existing developments. This is supported by Policy H4: Infill / Windfall Sites, which promotes high standards of sustainable and low carbon design within these types of development.

Enhancements to green infrastructure networks promote climate change mitigation through supporting carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable modes of transport, and climate change adaptation through helping to limit the effects of extreme weather events and regulating surface water run-off. In this context the BKNP's focus on the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure

provision in the Neighbourhood Plan area will support these elements. The policies supporting biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Plan area (**Section 5.3**) will further help increase the resilience of ecological networks to the effects of climate change through making provision for improvements to habitats and enhancing such networks.

In relation to flood risk in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the addressing of issues linked to fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding are likely to be supported by the provisions of the NPPF. Likewise, the flood risk, SuDS and surface water flooding policies proposed by the Dartmoor Local Plan and the Teignbridge Local Plan would further help limit adverse effects in this regard. However Policy ENV5 (Adapting to climate change) promotes the use of 'best practice' in the provision of SuDS and ENV3 (Devonia Mill) supports the provision of a 'landscaped town centre public park within the flood plain part of the Devonia site'. This will complement existing flood risk work being undertaken within the town and upstream by the Environment Agency.

5.5 Historic environment and landscape

The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment and distinctive character. A central focus of the policies proposed for the BKNP is on protecting and enhancing the quality of the public realm, supporting local distinctiveness, protecting landscape character, and supporting the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In this context the current version of the BKNP provides a robust basis for the conservation and enhancement of landscape character and townscape character in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Landscape and townscape quality and the integrity of the historic environment will be supported by the policies which promote high quality design, layout and the provision of features and areas which promote the quality of the public realm.

The rich historic interest of the Devonia site is recognised through Policy BTE2, which seeks to conserve and enhance the mill's heritage and support the integrity of the Buckfastleigh Conservation Area. The setting of the historic environment and local distinctiveness at this location will also be supported by Policy ENV3, which promotes a new landscaped town centre public park within the Devonia site. With regard to the Axminster site, Policy BTE3 seeks to ensure that the heritage significance of the site is fully identified, and the historic environment associated with the site is conserved and enhanced, and the historic setting of Buckfast Abbey supported. The policy for Church Hill will also help conserve and enhance the wider landscape and townscape setting of the town by precluding development at this location and supporting uses which would be complementary to the location's contribution to local distinctiveness. BTE1 (Employment and Enterprise) seeks to ensure that proposals that support the development of small scale social enterprises and other businesses that meet the needs of the community are sensitive to local character.

These elements of the BKNP will be further supported by the Heritage and Design policies. In this context HD1 (Good quality design) sets out a range of provisions for protecting and enhancing local distinctiveness. This includes through promoting high quality design, respecting existing street scenes, and using high quality materials which fits within the existing context of Buckfastleigh and Buckfast. This will be supported by Policy HD2 (Retail and Commercial Frontages) which sets out that shopfronts should complement the existing heritage and setting of the streetscene. The historic environment and local distinctiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan area will also be supported by Policy HD3 (Heritage) which sets out that 'development affecting heritage assets within Buckfastleigh and Buckfast Parish must pay special regard to the need to conserve and enhance their settings and any special architectural or historic features of significance' and policies promoting biodiversity (**Section 5.3**), which will promote the creation and enhancements of habitats (such as trees and hedgerows) which support local distinctiveness.

The policies promoting sustainable transport use and a limiting of traffic and congestion will also bring benefits for the historic environment and local distinctiveness. In this context Policy T1 (Sustainable transport) Policy T2 (Improved accessibility) will help limit impacts from transport on key features and areas of historic environment interest and their settings, townscape quality and local distinctiveness.

5.5.1 Recommendation

The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich archaeological resource and potential. The range of archaeological records reflects the town's evolution from the founding of Buckfast Abbey in 1018, its evolution as a mill town and market town in the medieval period, the development of cottage industries to the 16th - 18th Centuries, the expansion of industrial activities and the coming of the railway in the 19th Century, and the 20th Century expansion of the town's residential areas to the west. In this context there is further potential for the policies of the BKNP to acknowledge the archaeological resource and potential of the area. This could include through a policy which highlights that development proposals should take account of their effect on sites with the potential for archaeological interest (including their setting) and proposals with the potential to affect sites of archaeological interest being required to submit an appropriately scaled archaeological study to inform mitigation measures.

5.6 Land, soil and water resources

A key element of the BKNP is to support the rejuvenation of disused and underutilised previously developed sites, including notably the Devonia site and the Axminster site. In this respect the policies for these locations will support land and soil resources by promoting the reuse and intensification of brownfield sites in preference to previously undeveloped greenfield sites. This will support the efficient use of land. This will be further supported by the policy for windfall/infill sites, which facilitates the use of previously developed land for these types of development.

The BKNP's focus on sustainable design and technologies will also help reduce resource use. In this respect Policy ENV5 (Adapting to climate change) sets out a number of provisions for adopting and facilitating the development of low and zero carbon energy through a range of technologies in new and existing developments. This is supported by Policy H4: Infill / Windfall Sites, which promotes high standards of sustainable design.

The reuse of previously developed land at the Devonia and Axminster sites will support soil and water quality at these locations. This includes through facilitating the remediation of potential areas of contaminated land present at these locations linked to the sites' previous uses. The policies supporting biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements in the Neighbourhood Plan area will also enhance the quality of land and water resources through promoting the ability of natural processes to support soil and water quality.

5.7 Population and community

Whilst no allocations for housing are included in the BKNP, the Neighbourhood Plan sets out provisions for housing at the Barn Park and Holne Road developments (which have been allocated in the Local Plan). In this context the BKNP seeks to promote at least 50% affordable housing at the two sites, and at the Barn Park, promotes self-build. The BKNP also supports the provision of housing at the Devonia site and at infill/windfall development, with a preference for affordable housing at these locations.

In terms of accessibility to services and facilities, the Devonia site, where mixed use development is supported, is located in the centre of Buckfastleigh with its amenities and public transport links. This will be supported by the policies that will promote and promote the use of sustainable modes of transport. In this context Policy T1 (Sustainable transport) seeks to encourage walking cycling and public transport use, and Policy T2 (Improved Accessibility) seeks to promote new pedestrian and cycle linkages in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Policy BTE 5 (Retention of existing shops) also seeks to preclude the loss of local shops and services of community value through change of use. This will help maintain accessibility to local services, facilities and amenities.

The quality of life of residents will also be promoted the Devonia site policies, which support the provision of new public open space at the site and the policy for Church Hill, which recognises the location's key role for recreational activities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. It will also be promoted by

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Policies ENV4 (Biodiversity), Env5 (Trees) and HD1 (Good quality design). In this context the current version of the BKNP's impetus on the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks will support the health and wellbeing of residents by facilitating improvements in levels of physical activity, enhancing social interaction between residents and promoting psychological well-being. This will be supported by the BKNP's strong focus on local distinctiveness, enhancements to the public realm and on the protection and enhancement of townscape and landscape quality (**Section 5.5**). This will contribute to the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhood as a place to live and promote the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

In relation to the economic vitality and viability of Buckfastleigh and Buckfast, Policy BTE1 (Employment and enterprise) promotes proposals that support the development of small-scale social enterprises and other businesses that meet the needs of the community, and the policies for the Devonian site (Policy BTE2) and the Axminster site (Policy BTE3) support mixed use development facilitating a range of commercial uses, as well as leisure uses. Policy BTE4, supports the development of new commercial uses at Salmon's Leap Business Park, primarily comprising B1 class use. In this context these policies will support the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area through promoting new employment opportunities, economic sectors and uses in the area.

5.8 Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of residents will be supported the Devonian site policies, which support the provision of new public open space at the site and the policy for Church Hill, which recognises the location's key role for recreational activities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. It will also be promoted by Policies ENV4 (Biodiversity), Env5 (Trees) and HD1 (Good quality design). In this context the current version of the BKNP's impetus on the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks will support the health and wellbeing of residents by facilitating improvements in levels of physical activity, enhancing social interaction between residents and promoting psychological well-being. This will be supported by the BKNP's strong focus on local distinctiveness, enhancements to the public realm and on the protection and enhancement of townscape and landscape quality (**Section 5.5**). This will contribute to the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhood as a place to live and promote perceptions of security and.

Health and wellbeing will be supported by the policies which directly and indirectly promote healthier modes of travel, including walking and cycling. In this context Policy T1 (Sustainable transport) seeks to encourage walking cycling and public transport use, and Policy T2 (Improved accessibility) seeks to promote new pedestrian and cycle linkages in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Policy BTE (Retention of existing shops) also seeks to preclude the loss of local shops and services of community value through changes of use, and the policies for the Devonian site promote mixed use development at this town centre location. This will help support access to local services, facilities and amenities by walking and cycling.

Road safety will be supported by BTE1, which seeks to ensure that new employment development does not impact on road safety, the sustainable transport policies (Policies T1 and T2) and the policies which enhance local distinctiveness and enhancements to the public realm.

The current version of the BKNP promotes energy efficiency and the provision of renewable energy. In this respect Policy ENV5 (Adapting to climate change) sets out a number of provisions for adopting and facilitating the flexible development of low and zero carbon energy and facilitating the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure new and existing developments. This is supported by Policy H4: Infill / Windfall Sites, which promotes high standards of sustainable and low carbon design within these types of development. This will help enhance the efficiency of housing and help reduce fuel poverty. This is an important element for the Neighbourhood Plan area; in Buckfastleigh the quality of the housing stock is currently a key detriment to health and wellbeing.

5.9 Transport

Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport) seeks to ensure that new development proposals maximise the potential for pedestrian and cycle linkages and usage, and Policy T2 (Improved accessibility) seeks to enhance pedestrian and cycle networks, and preclude permission for development which affects the functioning of existing routes. These policies will therefore support walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car, promoting the use of sustainable modes of transport in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The focus of the BKNP on rejuvenating disused and underutilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area will support an intensification of uses in the town centre, with its range of services, facilities, amenities and public transport links. This will limit the need for residents to travel by private car.

5.10 Conclusions at this current stage

5.10.1 Potential significant effects

The appraisal has concluded that the current version of the BKNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in relation to the 'Population and Community' theme. These benefits largely relate to the carefully targeted spatial approach proposed by the plan, the focus on regenerating and rejuvenating key disused and underutilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area for community benefit, and the BKNP's impetus on protecting and enhancing open space and green infrastructure networks.

In relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' theme the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan will promote **significant positive effects** through providing a local policy context which both offers protection to the internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites present in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and offers enhancements. In this respect the current approach proposed through the BKNP will support improvements to ecological networks which will support key habitats and species of significance in the area. There is however some further potential for the BKNP to more directly recognise the Neighbourhood Plan area's rich geodiversity resource.

The scope and scale of the proposed policy approaches relating to landscape/townscape character and the historic environment will help ensure that wide ranging benefits in relation to the 'Historic Environment and Landscape' theme are secured through the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to limiting the magnitude of potential adverse effects relating to new development areas, the policies have the potential to secure significant enhancements through rejuvenating key areas of historic environment importance in Buckfastleigh and Buckfast. As such the BKNP has the potential to lead to **significant positive effects** in relation to this theme.

In relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' theme, whilst no allocations are included in the BKNP, the Neighbourhood Plan has a strong focus on rejuvenating disused and underutilised brownfield sites in Buckfast and Buckfastleigh. This will bring **significant positive effects** in relation to this theme.

The current version of the BKNP will initiate a number of beneficial approaches regarding the 'Transport', 'Climate Change' and 'Health and Wellbeing' themes. However these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process.

5.11 Recommendations at this current stage

Two recommendations have been made in this chapter for improving the sustainability performance of the current version of the BKNP. These are summarised as follows:

- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich archaeological resource and potential. In this context there is further potential for the policies of the BKNP to acknowledge the archaeological resource and potential of the area. This could include through a policy which highlights that development proposals should take account of their effect on sites with the potential for

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archaeological interest (including their setting) and proposals with the potential to affect sites of archaeological interest being required to submit an appropriately scaled archaeological study to inform mitigation measures.

- There is further potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to more directly recognise the significance of the many geological features of interest present in the area. In this context there is scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to include a policy which sets out provisions for 1) protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Plan area's rich geodiversity resource (including the key exposures of geological interest present locally), and 2) increasing opportunities for enhancing awareness and understanding of local geodiversity.

These recommendations should be considered through the next iteration of plan making for the BKNP.

6. What are the next steps?

Subsequent to the current consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the BKNP, the draft plan will be updated to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.

The BKNP will then be submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authorities, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Teignbridge District Council, for their consideration with the updated Environmental Report. The National Park Authority will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the BKNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.

Subject to the National Park Authority's agreement, the BKNP will then be subject to independent examination. The Examiner will consider whether the plan is appropriate having regard to national policy and whether it is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

The Examiner will be able to recommend that the BKNP is put forward for a referendum, or that it should be modified or that the proposal should be refused. The National Park Authority will then decide what should be done in light of the Examiner's report. Where the report recommends modifications to the plan, the National Park Authority will invite the BKNP Steering Group to make modifications to the plan, which will be reflected in an updated Environmental Report. Where the Examiner's Report recommends that the proposal is to be refused, the National Park Authority will do so.

Where the examination is favourable, the BKNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by the National Park Authority. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to the National Park Authority with a request it is 'made'. Once 'made', the BKNP will become part of the Development Plan for the area.

Appendix A Context review and baseline

A.1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Context review

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy⁶ was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively planning for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'.
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)⁷ sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

⁶ European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf

⁷ Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

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At the local level the Devon Local Nature Partnership, Natural Devon, was set up in late 2012. Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people who aim to help bring about improvements in their local natural environment.

Natural Devon's 'Priority Themes' for 2014-2019 are as follows:

- naturally healthy;
- green connections;
- outdoor learning;
- farming with nature;
- wood for good;
- resilient wetlands; and
- sustainable seas⁸.

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan, The Nature of Devon: a Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan (revised 2009) reviewed the status of wildlife and geodiversity in Devon and sets out a framework for action. It includes 20 individual Species Action Plans and 17 Habitat Action Plans for priority habitats and species and topics that have a considerable influence on the conservation of biodiversity. The Species Action Plans each concentrate on one particular species, while the Habitat Action Plans aim to conserve whole habitats with all their wildlife. These are currently being updated.

Baseline summary

Current baseline

Buckfastleigh Caves

The Buckfastleigh Caves have been internationally designated as part of the South Hams Special Area of Conservation and nationally designated as the Buckfastleigh Caves Site of Special Scientific Interest. They are located to the north east of Buckfastleigh town and comprise one of three networks of cave passages in limestone outcrops around Buckfastleigh.

Buckfastleigh Caves are an excellent example of cave formation during the Pleistocene period, and are one of Britain's outstanding locations for Pleistocene mammals. The cave waters are important for an aquatic crustacean, and the site supports both winter and breeding roosts of a rare species of bat. The caves also contain important and mineral deposits. The wide range of important features found within the caves makes this a valuable site for the study of late Pleistocene cave formation.⁹

According to a site condition assessment of the SSSI undertaken by Natural England in March 2014, the condition of the Bakers Pit part of the site is 'unfavourable recovering' due to its former use as a rubbish tip. The Bullycleaves Quarry, Rock House Quarry / Cave, Higher Kiln Quarry sections of the site were deemed to be in 'favourable' condition during the same site condition assessment¹⁰.

Potters Wood

Potters Wood, which is located south of Buckfastleigh on the opposite side of the A38 from the town, was designated as an SSSI in 1986. The site is one of three networks of cave passages in separate limestone outcrops around Buckfastleigh. Accumulations of debris washed into the caves during their formation contain important fossil remains which give an indication of the age of the caves. The caves

⁸ Natural Devon (2014) Prospectus for Natural Devon 2014-19 and Natural Devon (2015) Action Plan 2015/16

⁹ SSSI citation: http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1002275.pdf

¹⁰ SSSI condition summary <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1002275>

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also contain important mineral deposits. The wide range of important features found within these caves makes this a valuable site for the study of late Pleistocene cave formation.¹¹

The site is an important location for the Greater Horseshoe and other species of bats, which roost in the caves. Trees around the entrance of the site provide shelter and are used as staging posts by bats entering and leaving the caves.

According to the site condition assessment of the SSSI undertaken by Natural England in March 2014, the condition of site is 'favourable'.¹²

Hembury Woods

The Hembury Woods SSSI is located 50m north of the Neighbourhood Area's boundary. Also internationally designated as part of the South Dartmoor Woods SAC, the site includes good examples of semi-natural oak woodland and is representative of oak-woods developed on soils derived from the rocks of western and northern Britain. Also included are examples of valley alderwood and unimproved heathy grassland. The variety of habitats supports a rich invertebrate fauna and the site is an important entomological locality. Of additional interest are two mining adits adjacent to the River Dart which are used as winter roosts by small numbers of greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats.¹³

According to the site condition assessment of the SSSI undertaken by Natural England in September and December 2010, the condition of the units making up the site are 'favourable'.¹⁴

SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.

Both Buckfast and Buckfastleigh are within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Hembury Woods SSSI, for 'residential development of 100 units or more'. As such similar development taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan may have potential effects on this SSSI. The built up areas of Buckfast and Buckfastleigh are not in the Impact Risk Zones for the other two SSSIs highlighted above for the types of development that have the potential to be taken forward through the BKNP.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies a number of 'priority habitats' that are characteristic of Devon and for which Devon makes a significant contribution to the UK aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Key areas of BAP Priority Habitat in the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Area include:

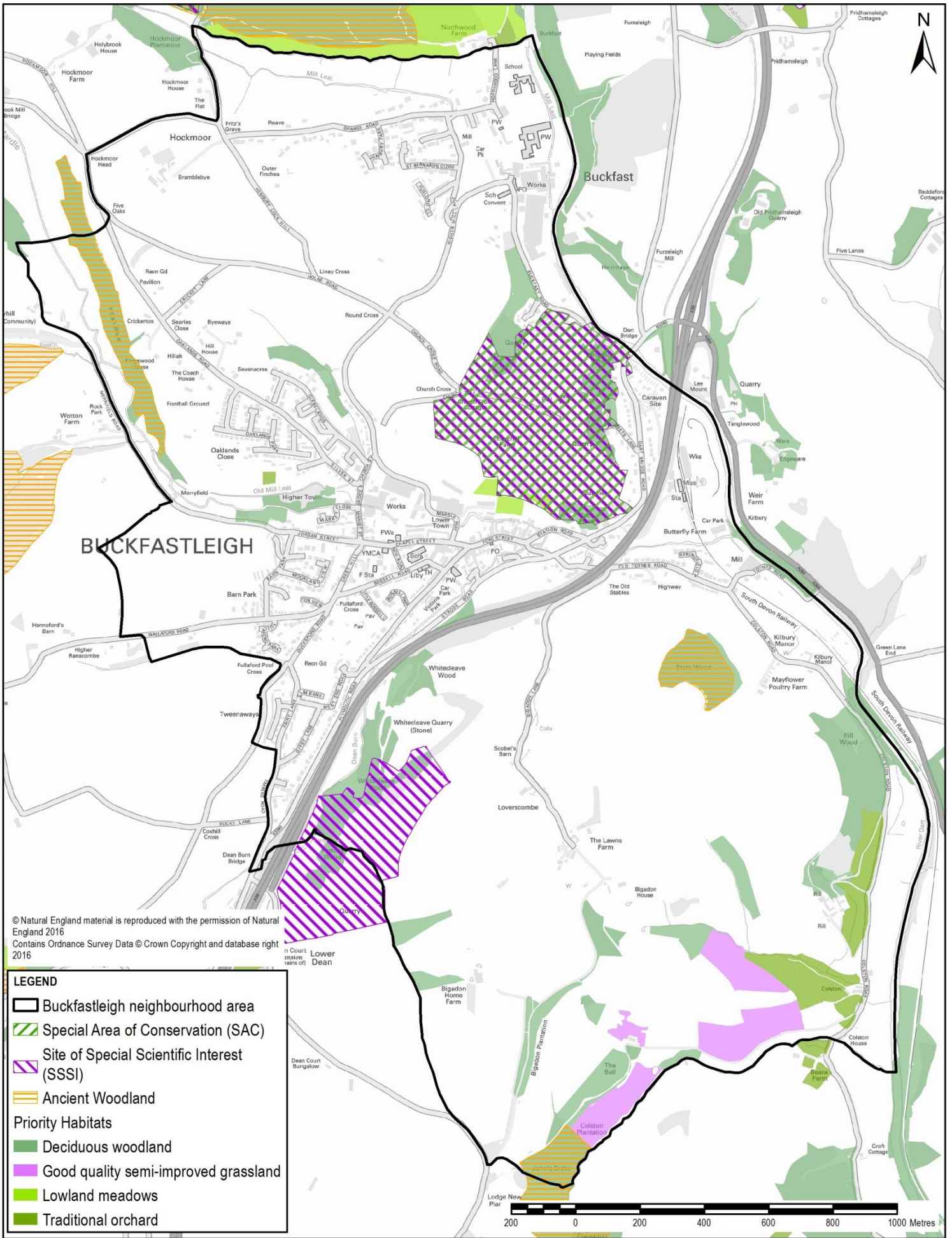
- Numerous areas of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat located across the Neighbourhood Area;
- Areas of Lowland Meadow BAP Priority Habitat located north of the River Mardle south of Churchill Farm;
- Traditional Orchard BAP Priority Habitat located in the south eastern corner of the Neighbourhood Area, west of the River Dart; and
- Areas of Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland located between Church Hill and Church Cross Road and on the southern edge of the Neighbourhood Area.

¹¹ SSSI citation: http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1002341.pdf

¹² SSSI condition summary <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1002341>

¹³ SSSI citation: http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1000695.pdf

¹⁴ SSSI condition summary <http://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1000695>



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LEGEND	
	Buckfastleigh neighbourhood area
	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
	Ancient Woodland
Priority Habitats	
	Deciduous woodland
	Good quality semi-improved grassland
	Lowland meadows
	Traditional orchard

Project Title/Drawing Title
BUCKFASTLEIGH-A1 SEA
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS
IN BUCKFASTLEIGH

Client BUCKFASTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL		
Drawn SJ	Checked BB	Approved GM
Date 09/02/2016	Scale @ A4 1:15,000	Purpose of Issue DRAFT
Drawing Number FIGURE 3.1		Rev

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Strategic Nature Areas

Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs) are landscape-scale areas of land that have been selected by Biodiversity South West as being important areas for the conservation and expansion of particular habitat types in Devon. Two SNAs cover part of the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Area. The Dart Valley Woodlands SNA extends through the Neighbourhood Area along the River Dart between Buckfastleigh and Buckfast and SNA number 373 (which is currently unnamed) extends into the southern part of the Neighbourhood Area.

Protected Species

Numerous protected species are present in the Neighbourhood Area, including those that have European protection, species on the NERC Act (2006) Section 41, and those on the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

These include numerous species of bats, butterflies, moths, amphibians and birds, including prominent species such as the Otter, Common Dormouse, Greater Horseshoe Bat, Pipistrelle and Peregrine.

There are numerous habitats for protected species in the Neighbourhood Area. For example Greater Horseshoe bat hibernation and maternity roost sites are located in the floodplain of the River Mardle.

Summary of future baseline

Habitats and species have the potential to come under increasing pressures from housing and employment land provision in the Neighbourhood Area, including at designated sites. This includes through a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks. This may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.

Benefits for biodiversity have the potential to arise from the increasing integration of biodiversity considerations within forward planning in the area associated with the two Strategic Nature Areas present in the Neighbourhood Area and efforts to improve green infrastructure networks locally and sub-regionally.

A.2 Climate change

Context review

In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2° Celsius.¹⁵ In relation to energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gases (GHG), including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 200¹⁶. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
 - planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
 - actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
 - setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;

¹⁵ Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to two degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁶ The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

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- positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
- encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
- Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

The Flood and Water Management Act¹⁷ highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings)
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)¹⁸

Further guidance is provided in the document Planning for SuDs.¹⁹ This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

Baseline summary

Current baseline

The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team²⁰. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South West by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario are likely to be as follows:

- Under medium emissions, the central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.1°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.7°C; and
- Under medium emissions, the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 17% and summer mean precipitation is -20%.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Buckfastleigh area. These include:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;

¹⁷ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

¹⁸ N.B. The provisions of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force in October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

¹⁹ CIRIA (2010) Planning for SuDs – making it happen [online] available at: <http://www.ciria.org/service/knowledgebase/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=knowledgebase&NoTemplate=1&ContentID=18465>

²⁰ The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

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- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- Changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- Changes to global supply chain;
- Increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;
- An increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

Flood risk

In terms of flood risk, fluvial flooding is a key issue for Buckfastleigh, which is closely linked to the presence of the River Mardle and the Dean Burn, as well as the River Dart.

The steep hills and confined river valleys in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area, combined with steep channel gradients (approximately 1 in 50) result in river catchments that respond rapidly to rainfall with relatively high velocity flows. There are also a number of minor watercourses either within or in close proximity to the town. These unmapped watercourses generally drain relatively small catchments and flow into the River Mardle or the Dean Burn. A mill leat, raised above the floodplain of the River Mardle, is located within the Higher Town area of Buckfastleigh.

The flood defence scheme on the River Mardle consists of a raised masonry wall upstream of Church Bridge. The weir below the A38 road bridge has also been removed to increase the channel capacity during high flows. Flooding generally occurs along the River Mardle when bridges with limited capacity

restrict flows, causing flood waters to over top the right bank in the vicinity of Fore Street and Station Road.

Development within the River Mardle and the Dean Burn floodplain has led to a significant number of properties being at risk from flooding within the town. The South Devon Catchment Flood Management Plan indicates that 95 properties are at risk of flooding during a 1 in 100 year flood event with 230 properties are at risk of flooding during the 1 in 1,000 year event.²¹

Greenhouse gas emissions

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that Teignbridge district has had consistently lower per capita emissions than for Devon, the South West and England since 2005. The district has however seen a significantly smaller reduction in emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012 (11%) compared to Devon (16.5%), the South West (18.3%) and England (a 17.7% reduction).

In relation to CO₂ emissions by end user, between 2005 and 2012 the proportion of emissions originating from domestic sources, industrial and commercial sources and transport-related sources remained broadly the same.

Future baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (including fluvial flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation. Upstream flood attenuation schemes currently proposed for the River Mardle however have the potential to reduce flood risk in the town and the Environment Agency is currently upgrading flood defences for the town.

In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita emissions are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. However increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Area may lead to increases in overall emissions.

A.3 Historic environment and landscape

Context review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Develop 'robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics'.

²¹ Environment Agency (2012) South Devon Catchment Flood Management Plan
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-devon-catchment-flood-management-plan>

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The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England²² sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2014 – 2019 sets out a wide ranging vision for the Dartmoor National Park, based on the National Park's Purposes and Duty. The Management Plan is underpinned by a series of 'Special Qualities', which are intended to identify what is distinctive about Dartmoor, and help to identify what is most important to be conserved, enhanced and enjoyed.

Baseline summary

Current baseline

Landscape

Dartmoor was designated as a National Park in 1951 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. The northern part of the Neighbourhood Area is within the National Park, with the boundary corresponding broadly with part of the River Dart, Dart Bridge Road, Strode Road and Plymouth Road. The identified 'Special Qualities' of the National Park are as follows²³:

- open, windswept upland moors with wide views and a sense of remoteness and wildness, distinctive granite tors surrounded by loose rock or 'clitter', and large expanses of grass and heather moorland blanket bogs, and valley mires providing habitats for distinctive wildlife such as skylark and cuckoo, and rarities including Vigur's eyebright and southern damselfly;
- sheltered valleys with upland oak woodland, rhôs pasture and fast-flowing boulder-strewn rivers, home to characteristic wildlife including the pied flycatcher and salmon, and rare species such as the marsh fritillary butterfly
- enclosed farmland with small irregular pasture fields, bounded by dry stone walls and hedgebanks, providing a mosaic of different wildlife habitats, including hay meadows and species rich dry grasslands with wildlife such as the beautiful greater butterfly orchid;
- a varied geology, including the granite bedrock, providing the dominant building material throughout history, and a wide range of valued minerals including tin, copper, lead, silver and arsenic;
- timelessness - a place spared many of the intrusions of modern life, with dark night-time skies;
- tranquillity, where it is possible to find absolute peace, offering spiritual refreshment and opportunities for quiet reflection, escape and creativity;
- unrivalled opportunities to roam at will over the extensive open moorland, and an exceptional rights of way network for walking, riding and cycling;
- traditional farming practices, using the moorland commons for extensive grazing of hardy cattle, sheep and ponies including locally distinctive breeds;
- clean water - the catchment area for most of the rivers of Devon - historic leats still supply water to settlements. The peatlands and open water of the reservoirs provide an important water store helping to regulate the flow of water off the moor;
- one of the most important archaeological landscapes in western Europe revealing a chronology of human activity stretching back over 8,000 years, from ancient field systems to the legacy of tin mining;

²² HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx

²³ Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2014-2019 <http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/lookingafter/management-plan-review>

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- a wealth of historic buildings, structures and townscapes, including a strong medieval settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets, villages and towns, set within enclosed farmland surrounding the open moor and linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes;
- resourceful rural communities with distinctive culture and traditions, characteristic ways of life, local crafts, fairs, food and drink;
- an inspirational landscape of legends and myths that has inspired art and literature through the centuries and continues to inspire; and
- opportunities for discovery, challenge and adventure for all.

Historic Environment

The Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Area has a rich historic environment. Numerous features and areas of historic environment interest in the plan area are recognised through historic environment designations. These include statutory listed buildings and scheduled monuments, which are nationally designated, and conservation areas, which are designated at the local level (Figure 5.1). Natural England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

There is one conservation area located within the plan area: the Buckfastleigh Conservation Area, which was designated in February 1976 and extended in August 1990 and again in August 1993. The conservation area covers all of the eastern part of the town, and incorporates: Jordan Street; part of Silver Street; Market Street/Church Hill; the eastern ends of Duckspend Road/Wallaforde Road and Tor View, the town centre north of Bossell Road and all parts of the town north of Strode Road. It also incorporates part of the south western area of the Devonian site.

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal was undertaken by Dartmoor National Park in 2012, which provides detailed information on the key features and areas of interest within the conservation area²⁴.

The Neighbourhood Area contains 110 listed buildings. This includes six Grade II* listed buildings (Church Ruins to the east of Church of Holy Trinity, Church of St Mary (Buckfast Abbey), Parish Church of Holy Trinity, Cabell chest tomb and structure over tombs to south of Church of Holy Trinity, Buckfast Abbey Main Block and 26-29 Chapel Street) and 104 Grade II listed structures. There are no Grade I listed buildings in the Neighbourhood Area²⁵.

Scheduled monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England²⁶, there are two scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Area, comprising the Chapel East of the Parish Church and the North Gate and part of the precinct area of Buckfast Abbey. There are no registered parks and gardens or historic battlefields in the parish.

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, and scheduled monuments, conservation areas, wreck sites and registered parks and gardens in England deemed to be 'at risk'. The 2015 Heritage at Risk Register²⁷ highlights that the Parish Church of Holy Trinity on Church Hill is at risk due to earlier fire damage and the need for repair of stonework. It is understood that a survey of Grade II listed buildings has not yet been carried out in the Neighbourhood Area.

It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment resource is subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. For example, although not listed, many buildings

²⁴ Dartmoor NPA (2012) Buckfastleigh Conservation Area Character Appraisal
http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/299424/1Buckfastleigh-web-quality.pdf

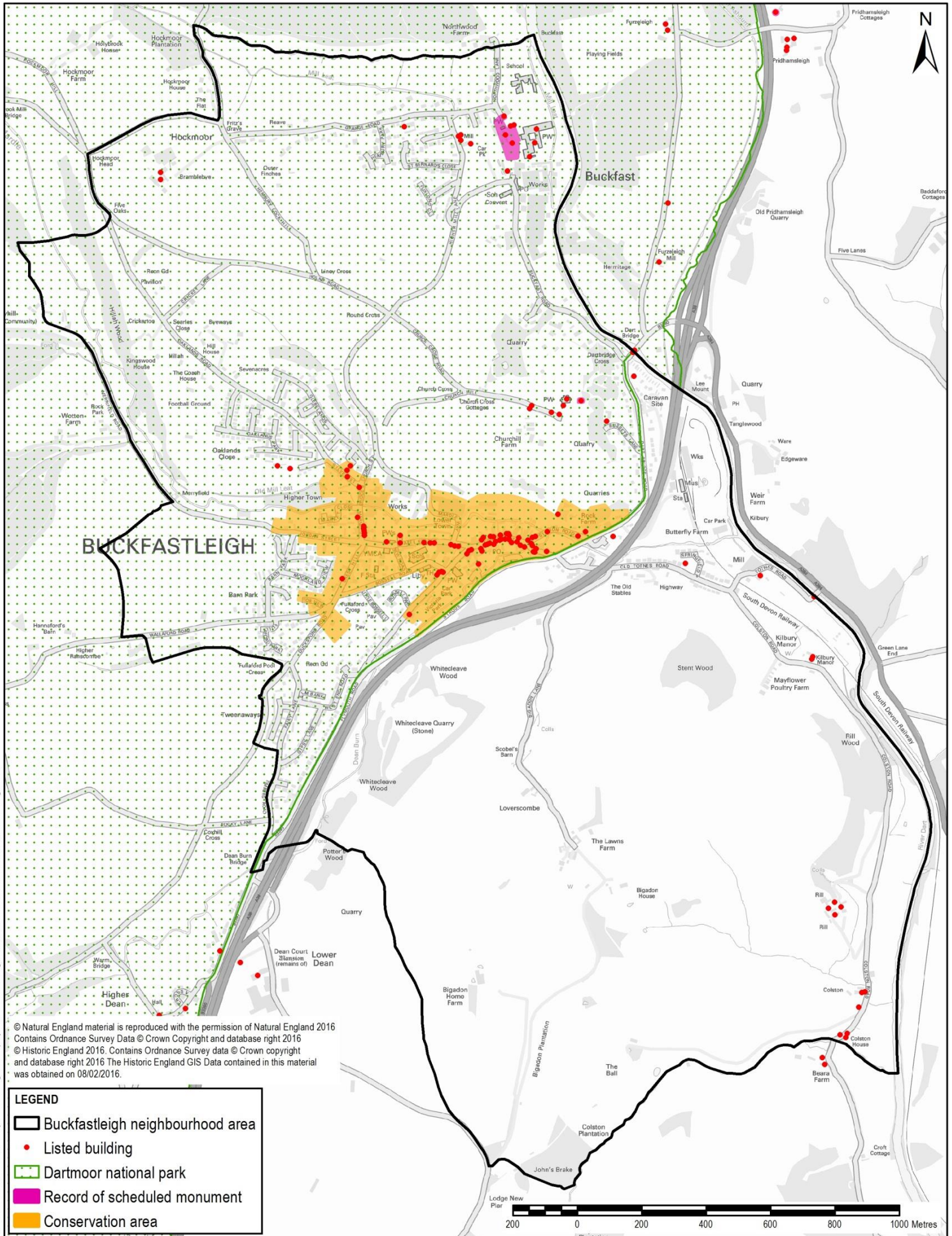
²⁵ National heritage List for England <http://list.historicengland.org.uk> [accessed 06/02/16]

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Heritage at Risk Register (2015), <http://risk.historicengland.org.uk/register.aspx> [accessed 18/03/16]

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and areas are of historic interest, and which are seen as important by local communities. Examples of these in the plan area are likely to include parks and the wider historic landscape.



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LEGEND

- Buckfastleigh neighbourhood area
- Listed building
- Dartmoor national park
- Record of scheduled monument
- Conservation area

Project Title/Drawing Title
BUCKFASTLEIGH-A1 SEA
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS IN BUCKFASTLEIGH

Client BUCKFASTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL		
Drawn SJ	Checked BB	Approved GM
Date 09/02/2016	Scale @ A4 1:15,000	Purpose of Issue DRAFT
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Undesignated actual or potential archaeological finds in the area are also of significance. In this context Buckfastleigh has a rich archaeological resource and potential.

The Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER) includes records of archaeological sites, historic buildings, historic landscapes and related information. 249 records for Buckfastleigh Parish are listed on the HER record, ranging from tree rings and orchards, structures related to mill-related activities, ecclesiastical structures, quarries and caves, medieval tenements and numerous others. This range of records reflects the town's evolution from the founding of Buckfast Abbey in 1018, its evolution as a mill town and market town in the medieval period, the development of cottage industries to the 16th - 18th Centuries, the expansion of industrial activities and the coming of the railway in the 19th Century, and the 20th Century expansion of the town's residential areas to the west.

Summary of future baseline

New development areas in the Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets. This includes through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations and Local Plan policies will offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings. Also new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the Buckfastleigh context there is significant opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the town and better reveal assets' cultural heritage significance.

New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and visual impact. There is also the potential for effects on landscape/townscape character and quality in the vicinity of the road network due to an incremental growth in traffic flows.

There are likely to be small scale and incremental changes in tranquillity in and around the plan area, affected by changes in the levels of light and noise pollution.

A.4 Land, soil and water resources

Context review

The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy²⁸ presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

The Water Framework Directive drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is currently seeking to establish 'Significant Water Management Issues' within catchments with a view to presenting second River Basin Management Plans to ministers in 2015. The plans will seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.

²⁸ European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm

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- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Encourage the effective use of land through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply

With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.

Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England²⁹, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper³⁰, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England³¹ recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

Baseline summary

Current baseline

The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, detailed classification has not been carried out in the Neighbourhood Area. However land classified as Grade 3 agricultural land covers most parts of the parish, with smaller areas of Grade 4 land. It is uncertain whether the Grade 3 agricultural land present in the parish comprises land classified as the the best and most versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3a land).

There is no Household Waste and Recycling Centre in the plan area. The nearest is located in Newton Abbot. There is also a recycling bank at Victoria Woodholme car park in Buckfastleigh.

The main watercourses in the parish are the River Mardle and the River Dart.

The River Mardle rises on Holne Moor, approximately 10km north west of Buckfastleigh, before descending from Dartmoor through Brook Manor, entering the town south of Higher Town. It then passes under Market Street and through the Devonia site before flowing eastwards north of the town centre under Mardle Way, Station Road, Dart Bridge Road and the A38. It then joins the River Dart close to the Butterfly Farm and Otter Sanctuary. The River Dart forms the eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area before flowing south east towards Totnes and the Dart Estuary.

In terms of water quality, of the three waterbodies within the neighbourhood plan area the River Mardle and the Dean Brook are presently at Good Ecological Status. However, the River Dart here is at Moderate Ecological Status and it is failing with regard to fish. It is the target for all these water-bodies to meet Good Ecological Status by 2027 and there should be no deterioration from the existing status.

Water supply and waste water provision in the area is provided by South West Water. The South Devon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy highlights that 'Water is Available for Licensing' in the

²⁹ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf>

³⁰ Defra (2011) Water for life [online] available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

³¹ Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>

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area. This indicates that there is more water than required to meet the needs of the environment and new licences can be considered depending on local and downstream impacts.

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. No SPZs are present in the Neighbourhood Area.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwaters have nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwaters are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) within which, Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. No part of the Neighbourhood Area are underlain by a groundwater or surface water NVZs.

Summary of future baseline

In the absence of the plan, a higher proportion of development has the potential to take place on greenfield land.

Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates.

In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. Water quality is also likely to continue to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies.

Water availability in the wider area may be affected by regional increases in population and an increased occurrence of drought exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

A.5 Population and community

Context review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.

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- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

Baseline summary

Current baseline

According to the most recent census data available, in 2011 the total population of Buckfastleigh Parish was 3,631. This was a decrease of 0.82% from the previous census in 2001. In comparison, the district of Teignbridge has shown a population growth of 2.70% in the same time period; however this is still considerably lower than the South West average of 7.31%, which in turn is lower than the national population growth of 7.88%.

Buckfastleigh has a very similar proportion of residents within the 0-15 age group (19%) when compared to the national average of 18.9%. In contrast, at district and regional levels, there are proportionally fewer numbers of residents within this age category. In contrast there is a lower proportion of residents within the 16-24 age group than district, regional, and national averages.

The proportion of residents between the ages of 25 and 44 in Buckfastleigh is slightly higher (23.1%) than the Teignbridge average of 21.2%; these values are both lower than the South West average (24.6%) and significantly lower than the regional average of 27.5%. The percentage of population that falls within the 45-59 age bracket is comparable between Buckfastleigh and Teignbridge (both 21.7%) which is marginally higher than the averages for the South West and England.

The proportion of residents within Buckfastleigh aged 60 and over (28.1%) is slightly lower than the Teignbridge average of 31.4%. These numbers are higher than the South West average of 26.4%, and significantly higher than the national average of 22.3%.

Deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation³² including: any member of a household not a full-time student is either unemployed or long-term sick; education (no person in the household has at least level 2 education, and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student); health and disability (any person in the household has general health 'bad or 'very bad' or has a long term health problem); and housing (household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating).

Broadly speaking, based on these dimensions, Buckfastleigh has higher overall deprivation levels than district, regional, and national averages. As shown in Table 7.3 there are fewer households classified as 'not deprived' in Buckfastleigh (41.7%), than Teignbridge (44.2%), and the South West (44.8%).

Whilst there are broadly similar levels of households deprived in 1 dimension, there is a higher proportion of households in Buckfastleigh which are deprived in 2 dimensions (20.1%) when compared

³² ONS (2011) Census 2011, Households by Deprivation Dimensions, 2011 (QS119EW)

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to district (18.1%), and regional (17.6%) averages. There are also a higher number of households in Buckfastleigh deprived in 3 dimensions (4.6%) compared to district (3.7%) and regional (4.0%) averages. There are fewer households within Buckfastleigh which are deprived in 4 dimensions than all other comparators.

The overall deprivation figures however mask significant pockets of deprivation within some areas of the parish. The more recent Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible. The population of LSOAs are approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 LSOAs in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

There are three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are either fully or partially in Buckfastleigh. Two (E01020198 and E01020199) are completely within the parish boundary with another (E01020197) covering Buckfast, but also parts of Ashburton and Buckland in the Moor.

IMD ranks for the two LSOAs wholly within the parish for the 'Living Environment' domain are particularly poor, with ranks for the 'Indoors' Living Environment sub-domain within the bottom 4% of LSOAs in England and Wales. This reflects a significant issue in Buckfastleigh regarding the quality of housing, including relating to poorly insulated and energy inefficient properties, which frequently lack central heating and double glazing.

Further categories in which the two LSOAs perform particularly poorly relate to the Income and Employment domains. This is linked to the lack of employment opportunities in the Neighbourhood Area and the low paid and/or seasonal nature of such work. These ranks are also reflected by those of the sub-domain relating to the proportion of children living in low income households and older people who experience income deprivation.

Whilst in most respects IMD rankings are poor in Buckfastleigh, particularly when compared with other locations in South Devon, the LSOAs in the parish perform particularly well in regards to the 'Outdoors' sub-domain. This reflects good access to open space, including on Dartmoor, and low road casualty rates.

The proportion of people owning a home outright or with a mortgage in Buckfastleigh (59.7%) is significantly lower than the averages for Teignbridge (73.5%) and the South West (67.4%) and also lower than the national average of (63.3%).

The proportion of socially rented houses in Buckfastleigh (17.0%) is much higher than the Teignbridge average of 8.9% and the South West average of 13.3% but broadly comparable to the national average of 17.7%. The proportion of privately rented households in Buckfastleigh (20.4%) is higher than all other comparators. As already highlighted above, the quality of housing in many parts of Buckfastleigh is a significant issue.

Whilst the parish has lower levels of people with no qualifications as Teignbridge and South West averages, and also a lower percentage of people with Level 4 qualifications or above than Teignbridge averages.

Overall the occupation profile shows that Buckfastleigh has a significantly higher proportion of residents working in elementary occupations (such as machine operatives, in caring, leisure and other services) as well as skilled trade occupations when compared to district, regional, and national averages.

In contrast, there are fewer people working as: managers, directors and senior officials; professional occupations; associate professional and technical occupations; or administrative and secretarial roles.

Future baseline

The population of the parish fell between 2001 and 2011. This has the potential to continue if the vitality of the town and employment opportunities are not supported. In line with other areas population trends have the potential to result in a further increase in the proportion of older people within the parish.

Given existing deprivation levels it is important to create and maintain future employment and training opportunities in the local area to ensure the age structure of the population remains balanced.

The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. However, without interventions, the suitability and quality of housing in the parish may continue to decline. Unplanned development may also have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure or the natural environment.

A.6 Health and Wellbeing

Context review

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’.
- A core planning principle is to ‘take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all’.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities’
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives³³ (‘The Marmot Review’) investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

³³ The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf>

Baseline summary

Current baseline

Deprivation is a significant contribution to poor health and an adverse effect on wellbeing, and elements related to the poor quality of housing and income deprivation are a key influence.

General health in Buckfastleigh is unfavourable when compared with district, regional and national averages. In this context at the time of the 2011 census 43.5% of the population considered themselves in 'very good' health, which is lower than the proportion in Teignbridge (46.9%), the South West (46.9%), and England (47.2%). The proportion of residents in 'good' health is broadly comparable across all areas; while Buckfastleigh shows a higher proportion of residents reporting that they are in 'fair health' (15.5%) than district (14.7%), regional (13.4%) and national (13.1%) averages.

A higher proportion of residents in Buckfastleigh consider themselves in bad health (5%) than district (4.2%), regional (4.0%) and national (4.2%) averages. The same pattern also emerges with those in very bad health. 1.5% of Buckfastleigh residents reported that they were in very bad health, compared with 1.3% in Teignbridge as a whole, 1.1% in the South West, and 1.2% in England.

Whilst reported health was unfavourable in Buckfastleigh at the time of the census, in terms of reported disabilities, the proportion of residents in Buckfastleigh reporting that their day-to-day activities are not limited by disability is slightly higher than for Teignbridge as a whole. The proportion of residents in Buckfastleigh who feel that their day to day activities are limited 'a lot' by disability (9.3%) is slightly lower than that of Teignbridge (10.4%).

The proportion of residents who feel that their day-to-day activities are limited 'a little' by disability in Buckfastleigh is comparable to Teignbridge averages (11.3%).

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Buckfastleigh and Ashburton identifies current, and future, health and wellbeing needs to inform future service planning and delivery.³⁴ In this context, the JSNA identifies a range of socio-demographic and health related data which is of relevance to the Plan. However, it should be noted this data is not specific to Buckfastleigh, and the area considered also incorporates Ashburton, Buckland on the Moor, Holne and Widecombe in the Moor.

The average life expectancy at birth for the population of the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh profile area is 82 years compared to 82.1 years for Devon overall. This figure is not significantly different to the Devon rate, which is higher than the national average of 80.2 years³⁵. An ageing population can however have significant consequences for the provision of health care services.

The Dartmoor National Park Open Space Sport and Recreation Study³⁶ sets out requirements for the provisions of outdoor sport and play space. At the time of writing in 2011, the report noted that although Buckfastleigh met the required area standard for outdoor sport space it fell 300 square meters short of a target of 3,000 square metres for children's play space.

A key influence on health and wellbeing in the Neighbourhood Area is noise pollution from the A38. Due to the proximity of many residential areas in the town to this major route, significantly elevated levels of road traffic noise are experienced in a number of locations. This includes on Dart Bridge Road, Plymouth Road and Old Totnes Road.

³⁴ Devon County Council (2013) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Buckfastleigh / Ashburton [online] available at: http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/JSNA-2013-14-Town-Health-Profile-Ashburton-Buckfastleigh.pdf?bcsi_scan_e956bcbe8adbc89f=0&bcsi_scan_filename=JSNA-2013-14-Town-Health-Profile-Ashburton-Buckfastleigh.pdf

³⁵ Ibid 13

³⁶ Dartmoor National Park Authority (2011) Dartmoor National Park Open Space Sport and Recreation Study [online] available at: http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/114135/2011-06-28_DJ_DNPA_Open_Space_Report-without-App3.pdf

Summary of future baseline

Broadly speaking, the health of the population in Buckfastleigh is unfavourable when compared with district, regional, and national averages. Deprivation levels are higher than the Devon average and there is a higher prevalence of 'bad' and 'very bad' health.

Ongoing cuts to community services have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing over the longer term.

Obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

Noise pollution from the A38 has the potential to be an increasing issue as traffic flows increase on this major route.

An ageing population has the potential increase pressures on healthcare services.³⁷

A.7 Transport

Context review

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth. The Devon Local Transport Plan 2011-31 presents a long term strategy for the area and an implementation plan for the county.

Current baseline

Rail network

No mainline or branch railway stations are present in the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest railway stations are at Totnes (10km from Buckfastleigh) Ivybridge (15km) and Newton Abbot (18km). They are served by Great Western Railway and CrossCountry train services with trains from Totnes to Plymouth taking approximately 25 minutes, and Exeter St Davids 35 minutes. Totnes and Newton Abbot are well connected by rail services, and there are direct services to stations in Cornwall, Taunton, Reading, London, Bristol, Birmingham, the north of England and Scotland.

Buckfastleigh Railway Station is situated on the South Devon Railway, which is a heritage railway, linking Buckfastleigh with Staverton and Totnes. Trains operate daily from late March to the end of October and select weekends in the winter. On most days a single train set operates, providing four journeys a day in each direction. On busy days two train sets may operate, providing more journeys³⁸.

Bus network

The Neighbourhood Area is served by the X38 bus service which runs to Exeter and Plymouth. There are 14 services Monday to Saturday and 4 services on a Sunday.

The number 88 bus service also services the parish and runs to Ashburton, Newton Abbot and Totnes. Monday to Friday, there are two services between 7.00am to 7.50am, with services once an hour until approximately 6:30pm. On Saturday services are hourly and start at 7.30am, finishing at approximately 6:30pm, and on Sundays there are four services running from 10.30am to 5.30pm.

³⁷ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) Ready for Ageing? [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

³⁸ South Devon Railway Trust Timetables [online] available at: <http://www.southdevonrailway.co.uk/timetable>

Road network and congestion

The parish is well connected by road and is served by the A38, which is also known as the Devon Expressway and is a major trunk road. The A38 bypasses Buckfastleigh town, and can be accessed at Dart Bridge Road and near Dean Forge. The A38 links the Neighbourhood Area with Exeter and the M5/A30, and Plymouth and Cornwall.

Road traffic from the A38 is thought to contribute significantly to noise and air pollution in and around the Neighbourhood Area, however further research needs to be undertaken to ascertain values for these pollutant levels. There is no evidence of significant congestion issues within the Neighbourhood Area.

Availability of cars and vans

The proportion of households with no access to a car/van is comparable to district and regional levels and significantly lower than national average. The proportion of households with one car is lower than district numbers but broadly comparable to regional and national averages, however the proportion of households with two or more cars/vans is higher.

The proportion of households with three or more vehicles is also higher than all comparators, while those with four or more are broadly comparable across all areas. The low proportion households which do not own a car in the Neighbourhood Area reflects the good road connections present locally and limitations related to public transport.

Method of travel to work

The proportion of people who travel to work driving a car or van is slightly higher than district and regional values and significantly higher than the national average. The number of people travelling to work on foot in Buckfastleigh is comparable to national averages but lower than that of regional and district comparators. A lower proportion of people travel to work by bicycle than the district average and a lower proportion of Buckfastleigh residents work from home when compared to district, regional and national averages.

Future baseline

Public transport usage will remain relatively low due to infrastructure constraints, although there is potential to increase public transport use and active travel such as cycling. There is potential for the number of people working from home in Buckfastleigh to significantly increase due to modern working patterns and through the provision of high-speed broadband.

Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by measures outlined in the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3³⁹, there will be a continuing need for development is situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car.

³⁹ Devon County Council (2011) Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2026 [online] available at: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/ltp3>

