



ASHBURTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN | 2018-2036

Working Draft | 31st December 2024

Ashburton Town Council

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Dates of versions

1st draft (community consultation)

Pre-submission version

Submission version

Approved version (made)

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This plan has been made possible by the high level of interaction and support from many of the community of Ashburton Parish.

1. Quick Link To Policies

The list of policies which follows enables the reader to simply click the policy title to be taken automatically to that policy.

Policy list and internal links to be added prior to consultation...

Strategic Policies of the Adopted Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 -2036 that are referred to in the text.

Strategic Policy 3.3 Housing in Local Centres

1 | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act in 2011. The objective underpinning the idea of Localism, is that decision-making be passed to a more local level, from national or local government to local communities. Town Councils can produce Neighbourhood Plans for their own local area, putting in place a strategy and policies for the future development of the area.

This presents real opportunities and gives the community more control over local planning policy that is of specific relevance to Ashburton.

The Neighbourhood Plan, however, must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of adopted Local Plans. In relation to Ashburton, this means the adopted Dartmoor National Park Local Plan 2018-2036 and DNP Housing Supplementary Planning Document, December 2023; and the adopted Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-33.²

The Neighbourhood Plan must be acceptable to local people, reflecting their needs and priorities and be supported by a local referendum.

When the plan is “made” (adopted) it will become part of the “development plan” alongside the Dartmoor and Teignbridge Local Plans. Development proposals will then be determined in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan as well as those Local Plans.

The Ashburton Neighbourhood Plan guides what development can and cannot happen in Ashburton.

How have we got here?

At a meeting in early 2014 the Town Council passed a resolution to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Ashburton. The Designated Area is illustrated on Map 1 and follows the line of the Parish Boundary.

The National Park Authority and Teignbridge District Council both approved the Town Councils proposal to designate a Neighbourhood Plan in February 2014.

The Designation of the Plan Area

Formal designation of the Plan area has therefore taken place. Figure 1 shows the Plan area boundary and therefore the area to which policies in this Plan apply.

The plan has been prepared by a Steering Group comprising of residents and Town Councillors. The Steering Group identified the need that in order to achieve a truly representative picture of the planning issues of relevance in the town and to be “community plan”, they would need to undertake thorough engagement with those who live and work in the town.

They also recognised that a plan could not be produced without the input of the many organisations and agencies with a region, district or county remit.

The process and types of consultation and discussion that the Steering Group have held with various parties is documented in detail in the Appendix of the Consultative Analysis Report which accompanies this Plan at Submission stage.

Characteristics of the Plan Area

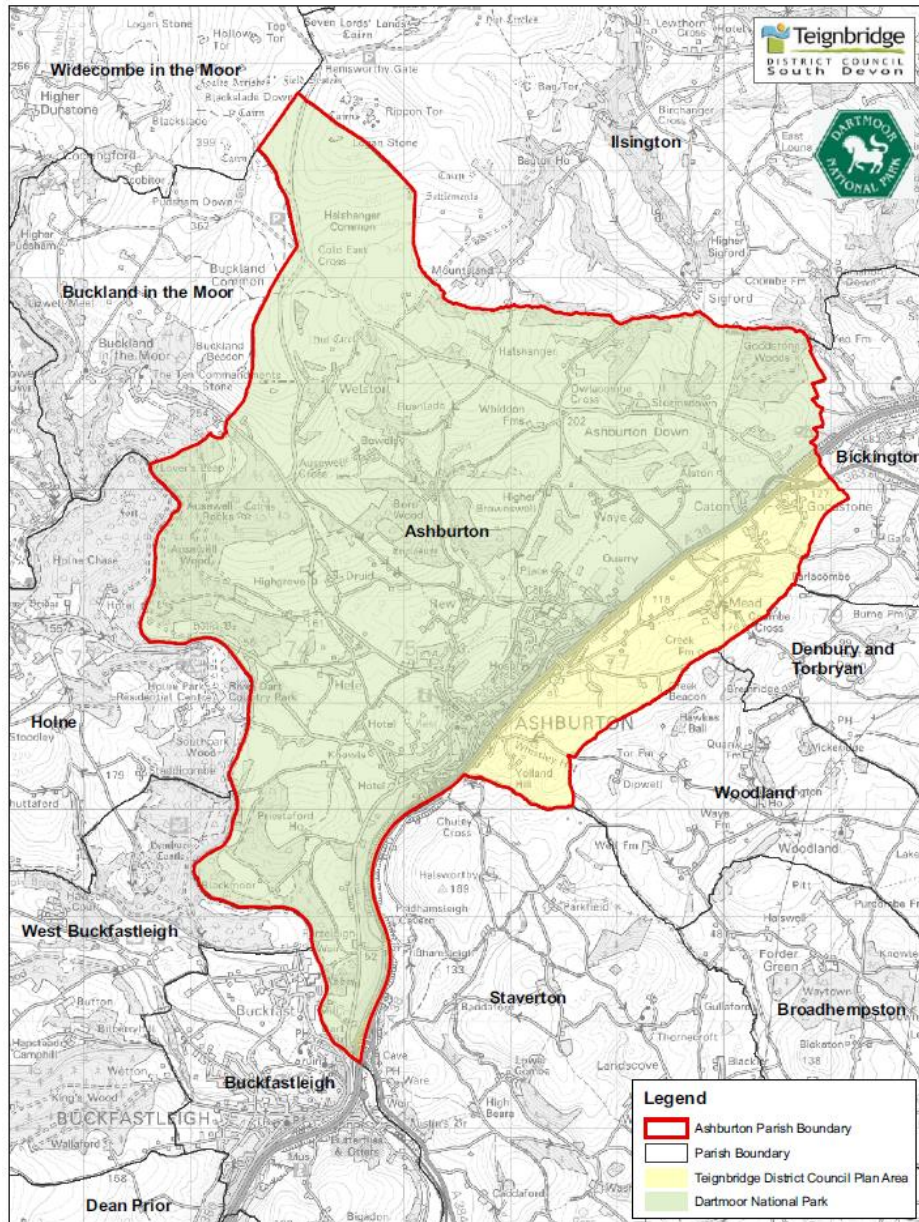
It is located on the eastern side of Dartmoor National Park and adjacent to the A38 trunk road, enjoying a dramatic landscape of the Dartmoor National Park. Also, on the eastern side of the on the A38, part of the plan is located in Teignbridge District Council area. Ashburton is approximately 20 miles northwest of Plymouth and 17 miles southwest of Exeter.

This location results that the plan is subject to Strategic Planning Policies within two Local Planning Authorities.

¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

² See <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/planning/> and <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/living-and-working/business/planning-policy/local-plan>

Map 1: Ashburton Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary



Ashburton Parish Boundary

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Previously important as a Stannary town (a centre for the administration of tin mining), it remains the largest town within the National Park, with a population of around 3346 (Census 2011). The town's name derives from the Old English Aesc-burnaton – meaning a farm settlement with a stream frequented by ash trees.

As recorded in the Domesday Book (1086), during the Civil War, Ashburton was a temporary refuge for the Royalist troops fleeing after their defeat by General Fairfax at nearby Bovey Tracy. The town is one of a few to still annually appointing a Portreeve or “Port Warden”, i.e., Keeper of the Gate.

Ashburton's History

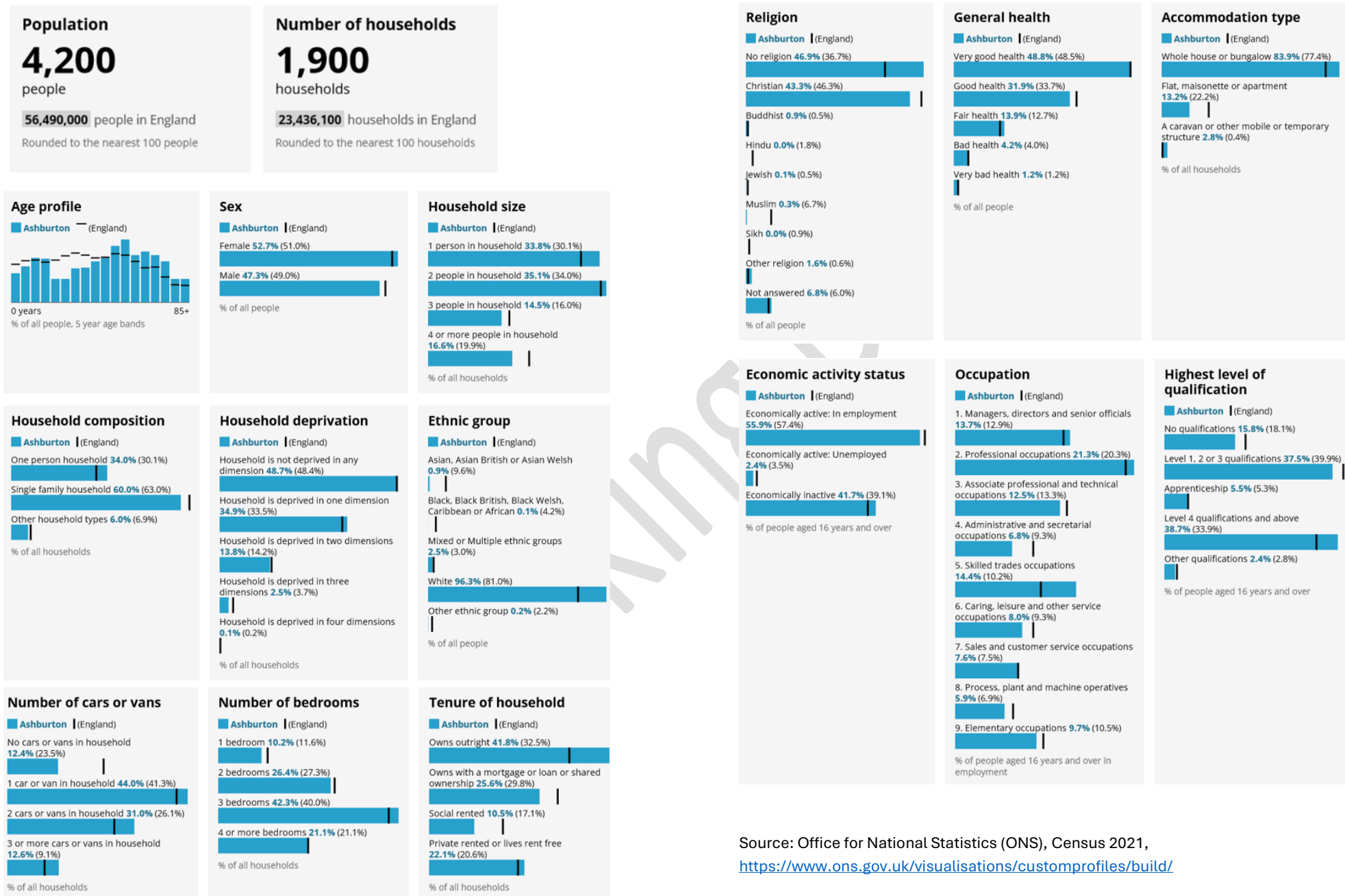
Ashburton is a town of great charm, situated in a steep sided green valley with the moor and the extensive woods of Holme Chase close at hand. There are few buildings of individual importance, but many modest circa 18-19 century houses to delight the eye-built gables, slate hanging, and early Victorian fronts, and quoins picked out in another colour. There is surprisingly little earlier building in the main streets (apart from a few circa 16 and 17 century structures buried behind later fronts). Despite the fact that the town, lying on the old Exeter-Plymouth Road, was a borough from 1238, deriving its prosperity from tin and cloth. In the late Middle Ages, it was the most important of the four Devon Stannary towns. Much rebuilding of the circa 18-19 centuries was encouraged by the coaching trade (the town is halfway between Exeter and Plymouth). The town centre has survived remarkably unspoilt by the circa 20 (apart from some clearance for road widening in North Street, which destroyed some of the medieval houses), and mediocre rebuilding of the 1970s at the North end. It is helped by the bypass which takes the through traffic, and, more recently, benefits from the careful planning control operating within the Dartmoor National Park³

Demographics

Census data from 2021 provides a reasonably up-to-date position on the demographic characteristics of the Plan area.

³The Buildings of England, Cherry and Pevsner, 1989

Figure 2: 2021 Census Profile



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021,
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>

2 | VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES



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Vision statement

The Vision provides a statement of intent which the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan and other interest groups should strive to achieve.

“Ashburton will remain as a vibrant, active community with a bustling town centre, and accessible parking, which is attractive to locals, visitors, tourists and the local business community. It draws on its medieval history and stunning national park location whilst providing a choice of homes for local people with access to a range of recreational and leisure opportunities.”

Aims and Objectives.

Our aims set out, by theme, what we want to achieve through this plan. They are summarised by topic below. In turn, our objectives set out how we are going to achieve those aims. The objectives are set out in each topic section. Both the aims and objectives are reflective of what can be achieved through this plan as a land-use planning document and within the planning system. Non-land-use **planning matters which have been identified or which have been identified as** important by the community during the plan – making process are summarised as community actions, priorities and projects throughout the plan.

AIMS

The Historic and Built Environment.

Aim 1. The historic environment should be recognised and appropriately protected and enhanced.

Aim 2. New development should have a beneficial impact on the character and sustainability of the area and respond positively to the challenge of climate change.

Aim 3. Improve and maintain the public realm.

Aim 4. Provide more green spaces, play areas, trees and community horticulture opportunities in residential areas for reasons of health, amenity, quality of public realm, and a response to climate change.

Aim 5. New development proposals should prove their sustainability credentials

Housing

Aim 6. The rate of housing growth should be moderate and must not put a strain on local infrastructure.

Aim 7. New housing provision should address Ashburton’s needs.

Aim 8. The impact of new housing development on its location should be physically, aesthetically and socially beneficial and respond positively to the challenges of climate change.

Community Facilities and Recreation.

Aim 9. Local community facilities should be sufficient in quantity and quality to continue to meet community needs.

Aim 10. Opportunities for young people should be adequately addressed.

Aim 11. Ensure the local provision of quality education opportunities for all.

Aim 12. Local green spaces that contribute to the amenity of their local areas should be protected.

Aim 13. Sports, leisure and recreation facilities should be sufficient in quantity and quality to meet evidenced community needs. Encourage recreational activity appropriate to the outstanding geographical location

Town Centre and Retail.

Aim 14. The town centre must remain the commercial and social heart of the area.

Aim 15. Continue to improve the appearance and amenity of the town centre.

Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Aim 16. Arts and cultural projects should be welcomed and promoted.

Aim 17. Appropriate improvements and enhancements to tourism facilities should be welcomed and encouraged.

Aim 18. Sustainable tourism development should be encouraged and actively pursued.

Transport, Accessibility and Parking.

Aim 19. Sustainable transport modes should be encouraged and better facilitated.

Aim 20. The traffic & parking implications of new development should be fully recognised and addressed.

Aim 21. More parking should be provided.

Aim 22. Measures to address traffic problems and their implications should be introduced.

Natural Environment.

Aim 23. The countryside should be safeguarded from the impact of development or over use.

Aim 26. Public access to the countryside should be accommodated where it does not cause harm.

Economy, Employment and Business.

Aim 27. Business development that is in keeping with and enhances the towns distinctiveness should be accommodated.

Aim 28. Encourage development that offers good quality employment opportunities.

3 | CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY



The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)⁴ set out the Government’s planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. It is important to understand what that means for our Plan as it sets the parameters within which we can make proposals and set policies.

When taking decisions on proposals for development this means that proposals should be approved where they accord with the development plan without delay; and where a plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

Translating this to what it means for our Neighbourhood Plan, it states that “Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies”⁵. The NPPF goes on to say that “Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies”⁶. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood

⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

⁵ See paragraph 13, National Planning Policy Framework, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁶ Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.

area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.”⁷

Following this consultation, we will approach both Dartmoor National Park Authority and Teignbridge District Council, as the LPAs within which our Plan area sits, to request their formal view (or screening opinion) as to whether the Plan will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). This is a requirement of the process set by the Government. In the meantime, we have been mindful of a need to consider the Plan’s policies against the ability to deliver sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

The planning system has a key role to play in sustainability, as we have set out above, and within that context has a significant part to play in reducing our impact on climate change, helping us mitigate impact and adapting to the changes which are already occurring. Nationally, a target has been set for the country to be “net zero” in relation to carbon emissions by 2050, with the Devon Carbon Plan⁸ also reflecting this target, to be reached by 2050 at the latest. Associated with the climate emergency declaration, an ecological emergency has also been declared.

There are several initiatives, plans and strategies which already set the context for Ashburton and present both opportunities for local action in the parish and a wider response to the changing climate:

- Ashburton Climate Emergency⁹;
- Dartmoor National Park Climate Action Plan¹⁰;
- Teignbridge Carbon Action Plan¹¹;
- Devon Carbon Plan¹²;

⁷ See paragraphs 29 and 30, National Planning Policy Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁸ See <https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/>

⁹ <https://www.ashburtonclimateemergency.com/overview>

¹⁰ <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/climate-change>

¹¹ <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/environmental-health-and-wellbeing/climate-change/climate-change-emergency/>

¹² <https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-carbon-plan/>

- Devon Climate Change Declaration¹³;
- Devon Climate Change Strategy¹⁴;
- Projects and initiatives which are seeking to reduce emissions managed by Devon County Council¹⁵; and,
- Projects and initiatives which are seeking to support habitats and species supported by the Devon Nature Partnership¹⁶.

These will all contribute at a strategic and more local level, with projects which are designed to have a positive impact or response. While a wide range of measures (both “carrots” and “sticks”) will need to be introduced across society and sectors, the planning system can play an important part in responding to the climate and ecological emergencies.

This Plan can play its part in helping to reach targets set nationally to reduce carbon emissions and also at the county and district levels through its role as the planning strategy for the town. This means both encouraging the reduction of emissions but also looking to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate, for example, in terms of a response to flood risk or “greening” of the environment and increasing biodiversity, encouraging local initiatives and enabling change for example in local food production, or helping to ensure that development does not exacerbate problems linked to climate change.

One of the key challenges facing the parish will be to have a positive impact on our changing climate at the local level through mitigation and ensuring that development and our environment evolves to minimise impact, while enhancing and not compromising the natural environment, quality of, and accessibility to, the built environment and the local economy (both in terms of diversifying sectors but also the benefit from the tourism and visitor economy).

Rather than try to design a single planning policy about climate change and how mitigation and adaptation measures can be supported (which would

need to cover a long and varied set of issues and criteria), we have sought to “climate change proof” policies (and community actions and projects) which we have developed within each topic. This means that the response to the changing climate, through the planning system and this Plan, is a “golden thread” running through policies. As climate change is a “cross-cutting” issue which affects and can be affected by so many topics, policies have been designed to apply criteria, where relevant, to help mitigate impact or adapt to our changing climate.

At the local level, the work of Ashburton Climate Emergency is central to achieving change and contributing to prevention and reduction of climate changing practices, and to adaptation and mitigation measures in response to the changes that we are and will continue to see. Importantly, where we can and where relevant, we have made links between the work of Ashburton Climate Emergency and policies and community actions set out in this Plan.

¹³<https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-climate-declaration/>

¹⁴<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/strategy/climate-change-strategy>

¹⁵<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/strategy/climate-change-strategy/reducing-emissions>

¹⁶<https://www.naturaldevon.org.uk/>

4 | THE HISTORIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



Introduction 1 | As of 21st Dec 2024

The purpose of this chapter is to describe how “Ashburton has an opportunity through neighbourhood planning to create a vision for the future of their area, by agreeing what is special and how its character can be preserved or enhanced and by enabling appropriate and sustainable new development. HERITAGE- both built and natural-defines the character of the places where people live and underpins the quality of life and work.



St Andrew's from church path

The National Trust believes that an effective planning system guides well-designed, necessary development in the right places, making an important contribution to prosperity and growth. At the same times, it can prevent development that is poorly designed or in the wrong place. Good planning delivers the new homes, shops, employment and services that communities want, where they want them, and it protects the places that matter to us all, forever, for everyone”¹⁷.

The Steering Group believes that our Heritage, considered by many as the inheritance of present-day society, can be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan. It includes guidance on evidence, stakeholder engagement, statutory process and planning, as stated above that can be achieved in Ashburton. The plan shadows and endorses their advice and vision.

Heritage can help to achieve a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals. It can help to deliver sustainable growth. And at the

¹⁷Karin Taylor, Head of Planning, National Trust

same time, planning for growth can support an area's heritage and help to make it more viable.

The role of heritage in delivering economic development is often overlooked and its importance to both the tourism and visitor economy should not be underestimated.



West Street

Planning Context

National Policy for Heritage

The National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 includes specific policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It highlights the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage

assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats (20).

Our understanding of the key issues derived from evidence base and community consultation frame our aims and objectives for this topic and the policies which flow from them.

Objective 1

- i) Identify local heritage assets
- ii) Ensure new development does not cause unnecessary harm to heritage assets.

Objective 2.

- i) Guidance which sets out what we consider to be “high quality” design.
- ii) Encourage sustainable construction methods and the layout of all new development to introduce measures to reduce CO2 emissions through low carbon energy generation and energy efficiency.
- iii) Encourage the use of previously developed (brownfield) land sites for development where feasible as a preference over greenfield sites.
- iv) Ensure that proposals for new development do not cause additional or exacerbate existing flood risk through increased surface run-off, protect the floodplain from inappropriate development and have no adverse impact on water quality.

Objective 3.

- i) Identify public spaces that need improvements or enhancement.
- ii) Establish standards for public realm improvements

Objective 4.

- i) Encourage provision of useful green space in residential areas.
- ii) Promote environmental enhancements in association with new development.

Objective 5.

Promote energy efficiency, charging points for electric vehicles and appropriate micro-generation in new and existing developments.

Heritage Designations

Ashburton is fortunate to have a rich historic environment and boasts many heritage assets. Of particular note are the Conservation Area, listed buildings and scheduled monuments. These areas and designated assets already benefit from national policy and legal protection and the Neighbourhood Plan does not need to focus on these in its policies. Details of these assets and designations are set out in both the Glossary to this Plan and Appendix 1 – Ashburton’s Built Character, Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment.



Ashburton Conservation Area

Values of Heritage

An essential part of the heritage evidence base is in the understanding of how historic buildings and areas are used by the public, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders and how they can support the local economy and community.



31 East Street

Heritage has a range of social, economic, environmental and cultural values. Most historic buildings in Ashburton are in residential accommodation. St. Andrews Church, Grade I listing is in community religious use. St Lawrence Chapel, formally in religious use and a grammar school, is now used for a variety of community purposes. The former Methodist Church is a thriving Arts Centre. Commercial office use is mainly located around the area of the former railway station and ancillary buildings.



St Lawrence Chapel

Town Centre

The high-quality historic environment of the town centre and its immediate approach roads helps to attract shoppers and visitors to Ashburton, creating a competitive advantage for the town. The Old Coaching Inns, particularly The Exeter Inn, one of the oldest inns in the country which together with its antique shops adds a sense of panache – “a town of all seasons”. Together with numerous tea shops and cafes, Ashburton provides an excellent destination to visit.

Tourism

The concentration of listed buildings together with the various specialist shops provides the town with a distinctive character, resulting in it being a popular tourist attraction.

It is of critical importance that the Neighbourhood Plan recognises the “Value of Ashburton’s Heritage” for the future of the town and protects and enhances it by the provision of appropriate policies. It is for this reason that its Vernacular Character is outlined in para 4.8 and protected by Policy.... This policy endeavours to ensure that future development complies and achieves this aim.



West Street, looking east

The Historic and Built Environment Policies

The Vernacular Architecture, Heritage, Townscape and Civic Spaces of Ashburton

Policy Justification

The domestic vernacular architecture of Ashburton comprises buildings designed for living such as that of eating, sitting, sleeping and storage etc. It also includes ancillary buildings, which at certain times, have been quite extensive, i.e., brew houses, bake houses, kitchens, wash houses etc. In the town centre, it includes public houses and shops, where the domestic dwellings predominate. Painted render is the dominant finish for walls, with principal streets being of smooth finish and inscribed with ashlar lining; Lanes are roughcast finish or painted stone rubble stonework; Around 60 dwellings are half slate hung and the other half stone, some of the slate having been painted. “The House of Cards” –the best-known slated front, and 31 East Street is exceptional, having fish scale slates.



The Bullring

Buildings with stone elevations are few and brickwork restricted to buildings alongside Prigg Meadow.

“Townscape is the art which can transform a group of three or four buildings from meaningless muddle into a meaningful composition, or a complete town from a workable diagram on paper into a three-dimensional living environment for human beings, satisfying to those who live in it, work in it, or simply look at it”¹⁸.

This chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to lead us to a fuller and more exciting awareness of the character of Ashburton. To understand this unique character and get an emotional reaction, we need to look at three ways in which this happens- Vision, Place and Street Furniture.



St Andrew's Churchyard

Open spaces within the tight knit pattern of the town's buildings are not part of the town's character, its main streets being lined mostly with terraces without gardens, together with passages, alleyways and lanes which penetrate through and between them.

¹⁸Gordon Cullen, 1961



Tucker's Meadow



War Memorial, East Street

However, The Neighbourhood Plan however identifies four important spaces within the Conservation Area which contribute towards the town's historic and visual qualities (see Appendix 1 and photos).

- a) The church yard of St. Andrews church, both on its West Street side and its south where it combines with the Recreation Ground.
- b) The "Bull Ring" section of West Street together with the broad section of North Street at its southern end, where the former Market House stood, and the cattle market was held.
- c) The wide junction of at the east end of East Street that comprises the setting of the war memorial including the private front garden areas of the Coach House and the Wilderness beside it.
- d) The broad section of North Street at its northern end where it turns beside the terraced group that includes the Victoria Inn, including the paved area adjacent to the Bay Horse Inn where the Bovey Memorial is set.

Views

The town's enclosed streets and courtyards create many pleasant views and glimpses that are typical of its tight-knit urban character.

The view along East and west Streets towards the Bull Ring, of which are closed by buildings on the Bull Ring or North Street.

Characterising Ashburton's confining landscape setting are the views south along Woodland Road and in the west from Stapledon Lane, each closed by a hillside backdrop.

Illustrating Ashburton's relationship with the River Ashburn are the glimpses from the King's Bridge and the bridge at the north end of North Street which show the closeness of buildings alongside it (including the weavers' house with loft over).

Modern Development

The steep hillsides around Ashburton historic core have continued to act as natural barriers to development, but there are exceptions. The recent being the ribbon of housing built along the west bank of the River Ashburn opposite and beyond the long open space on North Street that was created when the continuous row of historic buildings there were demolished. Since the houses do not reflect the character and traditions of buildings in the town their exposure to the Conservation Area tends to compound the detrimental impact which the demolitions on North Street had upon its former tight-knit urban character (the demolitions in Kingsbridge Lane to make way for a car park had a similar effect).

Two other significant developments are at Ashburn Gardens off Roborough Lane, and St Andrews Close off West Street. The former, of village like character is attractive and the latter having an urban town appearance takes advantage of the sites existing assets, including the Town Mills building. This having the advantage of being part of the small square in front and the view of nearby St. Andrews Church, which is captured as a visual focus along Mill Path.



Longstone Cross (Lewes Mead)



Golden Lion Court



Tuckers Meadow



Badger's Barn



Grey Matter

Policy HBE1: Protecting Vernacular Architecture, Heritage Assets, Townscape and Civic Spaces

- 1. Development proposals will be supported where they demonstrate, through a Planning Statement, Heritage Assessment and / or Design and Access Statement, how they have responded positively to and fully taken into account the following (where relevant):**
 - i. Dartmoor National Park Design Guide;**
 - ii. Teignbridge Design Guide; and,**
 - iii. Ashburton Conservation Area Character Appraisal.**
- 2. Proposals at, on and affecting national heritage assets and Local Heritage Assets defined in Policy HBE3 should demonstrate that they cause no significant harm to the asset(s) including their setting, character and local distinctiveness and how they have taken into account the Historic Environment Records, where relevant.**

Solar Panels on Heritage Assets

Policy Justification

The solar panel revolution has resulted in an adverse impact on the architectural character of many of our Devon towns and villages including Ashburton.

The advent of the designation of the panels as Permitted Development has created a considerable impact on the appearance of many of Ashburton's streets.

Rapid developments in the innovation of products such as integrated metal roof panels and solar paving panels, now enables the task of conservation of our townscape to become a more practical possibility.

Therefore, on Grade I and Grade II* Listed buildings, and buildings which are designated as Local Heritage Assets, the installation of solar panels will be resisted.

Policy HBE2: Installation of Solar Panels on Heritage Assets

Where planning permission is required, the installation of solar panels on the roofs of Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings, and on Local Heritage Assets defined in Policy HBE3, will only be supported where they demonstrate that they cause no significant harm to heritage assets including their setting, character and local distinctiveness.

Protecting Local Heritage Assets

Policy Justification

The NPPF defines a heritage asset as a building, monument, site, place or landscape identified as having a significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.

Sustaining and enhancing these assets which are an “irreplaceable resource” is an important strategy of the neighbourhood plan.

The Town Council will work with the Dartmoor National Park to secure these locally recognised heritage assets’ designed on the Planning Authority’s “local list.”

Policy HBE3: Protecting Local Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment

1. Ashburton’s Local Heritage Assets are defined as:

- i. St. Andrews Chuchyard decorative floral railings and gated entrance;**
- ii. High stone walled paths and boundary walling;**
- iii. Former Ashburton Station and associated surrounding buildings (refer to Appendices for detailed report);**
- iv. Stapledon Lane Street - Worn granite gutters from cartwheels;**
- v. East Street – Numbers 23,25,27,29;**
- vi. St. Lawance Lane -Granite and marble kerbstones;**
- vii. West Street - Leade shop name in pavement; and,**
- viii. East Street - Granite Slab pavements adjacent to the Town Hall.**

2. Where relevant, proposals on, at or affecting these heritage assets must meet the requirements of Policies HBE1 and HBE2.

To be amended to accord with para 209 of NPPF

Safeguarding of Former Transport Routes and Their Green Re-use

Policy Justification

Disused railway lines offer potential for re-use as future walking, cycling or public transport routes. As such their continuity should be protected from development which may impact on the future provision of such a route. Even a small development on the route can interrupt continuity and so undermine

the potential of the whole route.

The former Railway Station, ancillary buildings and disused railway line offer potential as transport or recreational routes.)

Policy HBE4: Safeguarding the Disused Railway Line

- 1. The Disused Railway Line (identified in Map 2) will be safeguarded for use as a footpath and cycle route. Development proposals which deliver or enable delivery of this improvement will be supported where they demonstrate viability of delivery through a costed programme of work and maintenance.**
- 2. Development proposals which affect or prejudice the ability to deliver improvements to the disused railway line as an enhanced walking and cycling route will only be supported where they deliver an alternative route to satisfactorily mitigate loss.**

Traffic

Public realm

Infrastructure

Reuse and regeneration of historic assets including public transport links, good pedestrian links, community infrastructure, medical facilities and community centres Will be encouraged.

Infrastructure deficiencies should be identified, especially where they are an impediment to reusing historic buildings.

Designing Environments which Support People with Dementia

Policy Justification

There are over 900,000 people living with dementia in the UK. This figure is projected to increase to 1.6 million by 2040. People living with dementia may experience the built environment differently to other people. Evidence has shown that good quality housing and well-planned, enabling local environments can have a substantial impact on the quality of life for someone living with dementia.

Helping them to live well in their community for longer.

Planners, architects and developers should make every effort at the outset to provide more flexible, adaptable “fit for purpose” housing.

It is this challenge that the Neighbourhood Plan endeavours to address by illustrating examples of more flexible plans (see Appendix Part II).

The Neighbourhood Plan attempts to reflect on the challenges they face, along with how the built environment can be adapted to improve their safety and support them to live independently in the future.

Dementia Friendly Communities

There are many Dementias friendly communities in England and Wales. To engage in this process communities, commit to delivering change that enables recognition of their work towards becoming dementia friendly.

It is the ambition of the Steering Group of the Neighbourhood Plan that Ashburton becomes a “Dementia Friendly Town”. Addressing health topics that promotes mental wellbeing, resilience and improved quality of life through improving the range of and access to mental health and early intervention, integrating physical and mental health care.

HBE5: Designing Environments which Support People with Dementia

Development proposals for major development, environmental enhancements and regeneration schemes within and on the edge of the Ashburton Settlement Boundary should respond positively to the need to plan for people with dementia taking fully into account:

- i. RTPI Practice Advice: Dementia and Town Planning;
- ii. Design for Dementia (Bill Halsall);
- iii. LGA and Innovation in Dementia (LGA); and,
- iv. any other up-to-date design and guidance documents relating to supporting environments for people with dementia.

Healthy, Active Places

Policy HBE6: Healthy, Active Places

Major development proposals for housing and employment uses should be designed to enable people of all ages and abilities to use and enjoy their neighbourhood environment in a way that has a positive impact on their physical and mental wellbeing. Proposals should incorporate the following where relevant:

- i. distinguishable, well defined and designed public spaces that are attractive, accessible and stimulating;
- ii. permeable and easy to navigate corridors that incorporate

elements of natural infrastructure; with good lighting, smooth plain surfaces, frequent seating that prioritise walking, cycling, wheelchairs, prams, mobility vehicles and routes to public transport,

- iii. a clear hierarchy of streets that are easy to navigate with distinctive features at junctions. These should be defined by varied urban form features (e.g. public art, trees and street furniture) and architecture that reflects local character and contribute to navigation and wayfinding;
- iv. inclusive layouts promoting health, well-being, community cohesion and public safety;
- v. designs, features and spaces usable by all age groups and abilities;
- vi. public seating, toilets in public buildings and bus shelters that are suitable for older people and people with disabilities;
- vii. frequent pedestrian crossings with audible and visual cues suitable for older people;
- viii. links to strengthened, improved and extended public transport, cycling and walking networks and natural infrastructure networks,
- ix. have regard to the “Police Secured by Design” principles to reduce opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour., and
- x. the installation of a defibrillator in a prominent external location.

Community Actions and Projects

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 (Appendix 2) of this Plan.

For this topic, the community actions and projects are:

- Protect Heritage Assets;

5 | HOUSING



As of 24th December 2024

Introduction

The introductory pages of the Plan highlight what the Plan can and cannot do with regard to planning issues already dealt with at the strategic level by the two Local Planning Authorities which cover the Plan area, i.e. Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) and Teignbridge District Council (TDC). For example, there are strategic policies relating to planning for housing which the Plan should not repeat or contradict. It is also important that the Plan is cognisant of housing needs derived from both our own evidence-based studies and that available from TDC as the Housing Authority for the whole Plan area.

However, at its heart, this Plan must have regard to the expectations of the local community of Ashburton and incorporate their expectations of housing that is “fit for purpose”.

In the future, housing which comes forward in the town should not follow mundane examples of some large housing developments which have little or no regard to the local vernacular of Ashburton. Housing in the town should also consider the specific needs of those residents with dementia, accessibility needs and special needs.

The key issues derived from evidence base and community consultations frame our Aims and Objectives for this and other topics (and the policies which flow from them) are as follows:

Aim 6. The rate of housing growth should be moderate and must not put a strain on local infrastructure.

Objective 6

- i) Establish an appropriate growth and development rate for Ashburton, within strategic context of the Local Plan.
- ii) Ensure infrastructure capacity and needs are understood and appropriately addressed in good time to match the needs arising from development.

Aim 7. New housing provision should address Ashburton’s needs.

Objective 7

- i) Ensure new housing development addresses identified local needs from within the town and local affordability issues.

Aim 8. The impact of new housing development on its location should be physically, aesthetically and socially beneficial and respond positively to the challenges of climate change.

Objective 8

- i) Ensure Areas of Search for new housing development are those least harmful to the special environment and landscape of the National Park.
- ii) Promote housing design and layout that reflects the Vernacular Character and distinctiveness, in a sustainable manner, through design guidance.
- iii) New housing should contribute to creating diverse neighbourhoods enabling people with Dementia, Accessibility and Additional Needs to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible by the provision of suitable “fit for purpose” housing.

Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024), states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area’s identified need as possible, including an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

The plan is also guided by Housing Objectives 6, 7 & 8 which are as stated above. They stress the need to produce house designs that are “fit for

purpose”. Floor plans which have the ability to be adapted to meet changing circumstances as we grow older without the necessity of moving to specialist housing. Thus, recognising the challenge that illness’s such as Dementia or Parkinsons’ can have on the community.

A design philosophy of” long life, loose fit” should be aspired to, with adaptable dwellings that can be lived in through life by anyone. (Design for Dementia by Bill Halsall & Michael Riley).

The strategy of the Adopted Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036 is to focus housing on Local Centres such as Ashburton.

The Adopted Teignbridge Local Plan 2013 – 2033, although providing for the construction of over 4000 houses during the period of the plan, does not identify any sites within the parish of Ashburton, i.e., within the area of this emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The Local plan is in the process of being replaced by the Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040, having been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Public Examination. Therefore, the 2020-2040 Local Plan should be considered as this Neighbourhood Plan is produced.

The Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040 contains sufficient sites to meet the housing needs of the district up to 2040. The housing needs of the district (including those areas of the district that lie within Dartmoor National Park have been calculated, using the Governments Standard Method.). They have been calculated across the district and not on a parish-by-parish basis. The Local Housing Needs Report can be found within the homes evidence section of the Local Plan Examination webpage. Therefore, there is no reliance on the Neighbourhood Plans to deliver the government’s required 5-year housing land supply.

Consequently, this Plan (Emerging Ashburton NP) does not identify or allocate any additional housing sites within the section of the Designated Plan Area that lies east of the A38 within the Teignbridge District Council.

Housing Context in Ashburton

Settlement Profile

The Settlement Profile of Ashburton published in September 2019 by the Dartmoor National Park Authority gives an interesting insight into Demographics, Housing and Local Issues.

It highlights Infrastructure delivery which is needed and has a reasonable prospect of being funded in the next 20 years.

They include the need for additional car parking, an extension the Primary School, the opportunity to link Bullivers Way to the recreation ground, a proposed cycle lane between South Dartmoor Academy and Buckfastleigh, and a need for allotments and additional burial space.

An important issue is to ensure that when new housing is provided, a proportion of the properties enjoy good wheelchair access.

Vernacular Architecture

Housing development proposals in this plan must have regard for the Local Vernacular (use of local materials and architectural character of the area) and endeavour to deliver affordable and local need housing, well designed efficient and “fit for purpose”.

Housing development should be a mix of house types and size which enables and encourages younger families to live and work within the Ashburton community, as well as providing opportunities for older local people to stay. Housing should be accessible and adaptable and achieve high levels of sustainability. With regard to Open Market and Affordable housing, land will be referred to as “Areas of Search to meet local needs and respond to appropriate development opportunities.

To help ensure a property is within the financial means of the local population. Affordable and Open Market housing should be of moderate size in accord with the objectives of Strategic Policy 3.2 “Size and accessibility of new housing”, of the Adopted Dartmoor Local Plan.

This is equivalent to a 3-bedroom 5-person house in national space standards. For the successful delivery of affordable housing, it is crucial that land value also reflects its use for affordable housing. (Adopted Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036).

Local Housing

In response to the adopted Dartmoor Local Plan, the Ashburton Neighbourhood Plan proposes that the provision of Open Market and Affordable Housing within the Plan area should endeavour to deliver housing that is in accordance with DNPA Definition of Local Persons, (Page 62, Local Plan), and Policy H9, page 88 Local Connection Test and Cascade, of the Teignbridge Local Plan Review).

Housing Need

National and local authority policies require that development in the Dartmoor National Park is focused upon protecting the “Special Qualities” and meeting the needs of local communities. This Neighbourhood Plan supports this policy (detailed in the Dartmoor National Park Management plan 2021-2026). These Special Qualities include “its landscape character, geology, biodiversity, archaeology, history, and the rural communities who live and work within Dartmoor now and the history of those who have lived here in the past.”

The Neighbourhood Plan will also support delivering local affordable housing and Special Needs demand that are identified by the evidence in the recently completed Housing Needs Report (May 2024) (HNR).

Housing Needs Report

A Housing Needs Report (HNR) has been produced in May 2024 by Devon Communities Together on behalf of Teignbridge District Council (the Housing Authority).

The report provides an indication of how many affordable homes and what types of tenure within the affordable housing definition are needed by the community.

Its principal conclusion was that “The report identified a need for 56 households with a current connection to Dartmoor National Park or who will establish a connection within 12 months.

Housing sites will be referred to as “Areas of Search” west of the A38 Express Way, i.e. within the DNPA, in order to meet housing needs highlighted in the HNR and also to meet Sustainability criteria, (Strategic Policy 1.2 Sustainable Development in the Dartmoor National Park.

The Steering Group, as already stated above, is very aware of the dangerous situation that will arise if the Age Profile projected in the Dartmoor Local Plan for 2035, is not addressed. “In particular, projections show a severe ageing population and a reduction in the proportion of working age people” resulting in shortage of skills and labour.

The Settlement Profile for Ashburton¹⁹, dated September 2019, which was prepared by the DNPA, also indicated an ageing population but with a slightly better availability of skills and labour.

Definition of a Local Person.

The Definition of a Local Person is set out below. The criteria are based upon the Ashburton Community’s desire to support local people who wish to stay in their communities, to enable those who have been unable to stay to come back, and to encourage those already working in the town and parish to live locally.

Definition of a Local Person.

Ashburton's local needs and local affordable homes are restricted to occupancy by a local person. "Local" is defined as a household containing at least one permanent resident who:

- A) Currently lives in Ashburton Parish and having done so for at least 5 years; OR
- B) Has lived in Ashburton for at least 5 years, but moved away within the last 5 years; OR
- C) Is currently employed within Ashburton Parish, working for not less than 16 hours per week, and having done so for at least 26 weeks out of the preceding year; OR
- D) Has a strong connection to Ashburton Parish by virtue of, for example: upbringing, employment, or having a requirement to provide substantial care for a close relative who currently lives in Ashburton Parish and has done so for at least 5 years.
- E) A person with a family member (for example a parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, stepson, step-daughter, child of partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece) who is living in the parish and has done so for a continuous period of at least 5 years, and
- F) Reside in adjoining Rural Parishes which are located just outside the park but functionally look to Ashburton for services.

These criteria are not in priority order. A level of priority will be applied in a Section 106 legal agreement to the geographical area of housing need used to justify the development, in accordance with the Strategic Policy 3.1. of the Adopted DNP Local Plan.

Definition of Affordable Housing

The definition of Affordable Housing is as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, Annex 2; Glossary, in conjunction with Affordable Homes Updated Ministerial Statement 24 May 2021.

However, the fact that a widening gap between incomes and house prices means Open Market housing in some areas, including Dartmoor and Ashburton, may be beyond the reach of those with an average household income.

Therefore, it is of critical importance that the type of housing delivered responds to needs identified in the HNR. Developers should therefore work with communities to tailor schemes to meet the most appropriate mix of affordable housing in line with the findings of the Housing Needs Report. (HNR).

The HNR, (May 2024) section 7.5 Table(a), suggests that the most appropriate mix of affordable housing on new developments for the next 5 years should be:

- 1 bedroom 32 homes,
- 2 bedroom 17 homes
- 3 bedroom 7 homes

However, in Para 7.5 Housing Mix, page 17, the report says that: -

"Consideration should be given to the fact that a number of households have expressed a desire to under-occupy by one bedroom, and it may be prudent for both the development of a balanced community and to allow households the opportunity to expand in the future to reduce the number of one beds slightly and increase the number of three beds by the same number".

After consultation with the DNPA the plan refers to sites as Areas of Search for the next 5 years. After this period a further HNR could be prepared if it is considered necessary.

Private Open Market Housing

Private Open Market housing should be carefully designed to help to ensure that a property is within the financial means of local residents.

The Dartmoor Local Plan suggests that property should be restricted to 93sqm in size (gross internal floor) to support its affordability.

This is equivalent to a 3-bedroom 5-person house in National Space Standards (MHCLG 2015).

For the successful delivery of affordable housing, it is critical that the land value also reflects its use for affordable housing. This will include ensuring the size of the plot and the building 's design support its affordability.:

The property should have a rear garden of modest size. Large gardens or associated land and buildings will not be acceptable.

Housing Policies

Mix of houses in New Residential Development

Policy Justification

The Neighbourhood Plan Policy seeks not only to provide new homes but aims to provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the type and location of housing than is currently available. Accordingly, it is appropriate for developers to provide a range and mix of housing type, size and affordability within new residential developments and conversions. Due to size constraint limitations, it is not considered that all sites will be suitable for the application of this policy, therefore a threshold has been incorporated into the policy, above which developers will be expected to take into account this policy in proposed schemes. The policy includes encouragement of the provision of plot for small builders/individuals or groups to custom build their own homes, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Housing Aspirations of Older People Living in Rural Devon

The above report was produced by the Community Council of Devon on behalf of the Devon Rural Housing Partnership in January 2011. Although a relatively small survey it did cover 25 communities and resulted in some Key Findings of which some are very germane to the issue of Accessibility and Additional Needs.

Firstly, it found that most older people want to stay within their existing community as they age; and to achieve this objective, there are also issues about physical changes needed to properties to allow this to happen.

Secondly, the Localism Agenda provides an opportunity for communities to create bottom-up solutions for how to support older residents to stay in their community, i.e., the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The highest scoring area was “a home which is easy to maintain, access to public transport, shops and leisure facilities were also seen as important”.

The Steering Group has given strong support for this evidence of need in the town and Policy HOU1 includes the need to refer to the Housing Needs Report which evidences the need.

Policy HOU1: Range and Mix of New Housing Development

- 1. Housing developments should provide a range of housing sizes, types and tenures within the site with a focus on delivery of one-, two- and three-bedroom houses suitable for young people, young families and older people, including a proportion of single storey properties.**
 - i. The mix and appropriate tenure of affordable dwellings should reflect the findings of the most up-to-date Ashburton Housing Report.**

Locations suggested as “Areas of Search” for Future Housing

Policy Justification

Ashburton is a designated Local Centre in the Adopted Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036.

To meet local housing need, and enable development opportunities, sites are identified in the Adopted Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 -2036, together with Housing Supplementary Planning Document, December 2023.

The Sites considered appropriate in the Local Plan are:-

PROPOSAL 7.3 Land at Longstone Cross, Ashburton (DNP Adopted Local Plan).

This site has been completed to provide 39 affordable homes, but a further Area for Search may be possible on land located to the west of this site.

PROPOSAL 7.4 Land at Chuley Road, Ashburton (DNP Adopted Local Plan).

An area of land at Chuley Road is identified for redevelopment for mixed use. Within this area, development will be approved where it is informed by and responds to various criteria which includes “the local need for affordable housing”.

The Steering Committee agrees with this proposal and considers that this site should provide specific provision for Elderly Persons Units owing to its location in the immediate town centre with its shopping and community facilities.

Applications should be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which includes consideration of climate change and demonstrates that any development will be safe, not increase flood risk elsewhere, and where possible reduces floor risk overall, and

Evidence to inform an appropriate assessment (Habitats Regulations) in order to establish that development of this site would have no adverse impact on the South Hams Special Area of Conservation.

PROPOSAL

Planning Permission has been granted for 29 houses on the site of the former Outdoor Experience, Churley Road.

PROPOSAL - Land at Kenwyn, Western Road.

This site (the former Care Home off Western Road), is identified as a possible “windfall site” in the Adopted Dartmoor National Park Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan, taking into account of the likely costs in order to achieve a viable redevelopment. No specific proposals are included in the Neighbourhood Plan for any community development.

However, the development “must comprise not less than 45% affordable housing” (strategic Policy 3.3, Adopted DNP local Plan); OR

If a proposed developer considers that this would be unviable, they may offer a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision.

However, off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution must be robustly justified and any approach agreed contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.



Kenwyn House

Policy HOU2: Re-development of Kenwyn

The redevelopment of the Kenwyn (former care home) site off Western Road will be supported for residential use. Subject to viability and feasibility assessments, the preferred development of the site should maximise provision of affordable housing on-site and demonstrate how the proposal:

meets the requirements of Policy HBE1 and other policies in the development plan; and,

has no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties (such as through overlooking, noise, light pollution and odour).

Second Homes

Anecdotally, second home ownership and holiday lets in the town present both an opportunity (from a business perspective), and constraint (with regard to reducing the supply of housing to others to access, some of whom at least will be local people wishing to stay or move back to the town). However, there are limitations to how planning policy could or could not have an impact on this position, and it is not 100% clear, in all areas where a second homes policy has been introduced, that it necessarily has the desired effect, with increasing supply of the number of houses delivered being a common counter argument to helping improve the position locally.

The Government has proposed (in 2023/24) a “use class” requiring a permission to change the “use class” of a residential property to a holiday let where it is used as such for a certain amount of time over a year. With the change of Government in 2024, it is not yet clear whether this proposal will be introduced or not at the time of writing this Plan.

With regard to second homes policies in neighbourhood plans, often introduced in coastal areas of Devon and Cornwall, the evidence of demand for second homes required to make them pass scrutiny by Plan Examiners is unlikely to exist at the high levels necessary in the town. These types of policies are also fairly limited in scope as they can only apply to new residential development proposals and cannot apply retrospectively, with the planning system not being able to control the property market.

This Plan therefore acknowledges that it may have both a positive and negative impact locally, but that there is likely to be insufficient evidence to introduce a second homes policy in the town.

Community Land Trust (CLT).

The Community Land Trust is a democratic, non-profit organisation that own and develop land for the benefit of the community.

They can typically provide affordable homes, community gardens, civic buildings, pubs, shops shared workspace, energy schemes and conservation landscapes.

Community Actions and Projects.

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 of this Plan.

6 | COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RECREATION



As of 21st December 2024

Introduction

Community is a word often casually used, but it is the essence, in its meaning of togetherness, as to what Ashburton is about. There is a centrality in the town, not because its residents think or act alike but because there are few who cannot find a group of like-minded people with whom to identify. What unites these disparate bodies is the strength of character and foresight that their town displays and their desire to preserve, protect and promote it.

While Ashburton is fortunate to benefit from a fairly good level of Sports, Leisure and Recreation facilities, there are areas as stated in Chapter 2 of the Consultation Analysis 2019 that require future attention.

The Neighbourhood Plan endeavours to address as many of these issues as possible in either the Statutory Part 1 of the plan which deals mainly with land use issues, or in Part 2 which deals with possible projects and opportunities for implementation.

Current Facilities

During the Covid crisis the community set up a complex organisation, encompassing a wide spectrum of local people, to enable food deliveries to reach the vulnerable. In addition, a chat line helped those feeling lonely to talk to someone who cared about their mental and physical frailty. It is not, however, only in a crisis, that Ashburton caters for so many interests. Whether in religion, sport, education, gardening, drama, music, painting, history, literature or debate, there will be an organisation to welcome you.

The buildings for worship are well used and well preserved. Churches Together involves Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists and Quakers in various charitable projects. There are good primary and secondary schools within the town itself. Cricket and football teams flourish and swimming lessons are offered in the pool. Not only does the Garden Society enjoy an enthusiastic membership but a team of volunteers attacked the overgrown churchyard and won the prize for the best kept churchyard in Devon.

A group gathers to paint and draw, and the Dartmoor Artists' Exhibition was a feature of summer for many years. There is a play-reading group and several choirs, whilst historians and heritage enthusiasts meet for guided walks through the town. or listen to lectures. The Arts Centre offers an all-encompassing menu of jazz, folk and classical music, film, debate and more. The University of the Third Age has several interest groups and open lectures. The Town Hall is a venue for language learning or yoga and various other events. There are many more such gatherings--few small towns can offer so much.



Antique shop on corner of East Street

The Court Leet and Baron Jury presided over by a resident bearing the ancient title of Portreeve, has preserved our medieval heritage for over a thousand years.

In terms of commerce, we are fortunate in having a variety of small individual shops. There is a butcher's, an artisan bakery, a delicatessen, along with a specialised fish retailer, as well as a greengrocer, two small supermarkets, dress shops, jewellers and several antique outlets as well as others of interest. The loss felt at the closure of our banks has, to some extent at least, been offset by the willingness of the Post Office to adapt to providing many of their facilities.

Plans, recently completed, have provided financial banking and a library, in a calm sheltered atmosphere. The Post Office takes its services, by a mobile unit, to outlying towns on Dartmoor as a community service.



Antique shops on North Street

How fortunate we are to live in such a town is well understood, but to do so becomes harder and harder. As prices and mortgages become more expensive it is difficult for younger people and indeed for all ages to set up home here. There is a great need for more housing, particularly affordable

units of various kinds, to allow people to stay, raise families, and provide workers for the number of small businesses which operate here. At present many local employees are priced out of the market, have to live elsewhere, and must commute.

Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Dec. 2024, page 28), Promoting healthy and safe communities, states that -

Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which

- a) promote social interaction,
- b) are safe and accessible, and
- c) enable and support healthy lives.

The local planning authorities (DNP and Teignbridge DC) should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets in certain locations.

Provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, and local shops.

Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities services.

Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and are retained for the benefit of the community, and

Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

Ensure faster delivery of other public services infrastructure and work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted. (The Steering Group strongly supports this positive aim of the NPPF, and the Neighbourhood Plan supports and

encourages this in many topic and issues discussed in the plan).

Our understanding of the key issues derived from evidence base and community consultation frame our aims and objectives for this topic and the policies which flow from them which are as follows-

Objective 9.

- i) Enable community facilities to be multi-purpose, flexible and responsive to changing needs and demands, new facilities provided in locations which seek to minimise travel by motor vehicle.
- ii) Support the provision of new and improved health facilities which are response to the needs of the population.

Objective 10.

Establish needs and preferences in dialogue with young people.

Objective 11.

- i) Facilitate needs
- ii) Support forward planning of education providers.

Objective 12.

Identify sites suitable to be designated and protected as “local green space”

Objective 13.

- i) Sports, leisure and recreation opportunities should remain responsive to the changing needs and demands of a varied demographic.
- ii) Protect the use of existing sports, leisure and recreation facilities.
- iii) Support and promote the provision and use of new accessible and affordable facilities, in locations which seek to minimise travel by motor car vehicle.
- iv) Promote development that encourages healthy lifestyles.



7 | TOWN CENTRE AND RETAIL

Introduction As of 22nd Dec 2024

Ashburton town centre has a variety of almost exclusively independent local businesses. Apart from the local Co-op and Spar small supermarkets, we are lucky enough to have a butchery, bakers, greengrocers, delicatessen, fish delicatessen and wine shop, amongst others in the food sector.

As well as serving the local community, these shops attract visitors to the town, many of whom are envious of the selection we have, such a selection often no longer being available in their own towns or villages.

As well as the food outlets, Ashburton is known as a "destination" town for antique shops, jewellers and galleries and whilst this fact can divide the local community, some of whom feel that there are too many of them, they also undoubtedly draw in visitors, many of them regular, to the town.

These visitors will in many cases patronise other local business, particularly the numerous cafés and other establishments in the hospitality sector.

Appendix 6 to the Ashburton Settlement Profile (2019) confirms that the town is the largest within the Dartmoor National Park and has about 6,700 sq.m. of retail and commercial space within the town centre. The vacancy rate at that time measured using both units and floor area was around half of the UK average.

Concerns have been expressed that on some days (particularly Mondays) not enough shops are open, but it must be taken into account that many businesses are run by sole traders, and they cannot be expected to work 7 days a week! It must also be remembered that to stock an antiques shop takes a lot of work behind the scenes, whether it is sourcing stock or arranging collections and deliveries etc. This takes up a lot of time.

External factors such as the rise of internet shopping exacerbated by the Covid 19 epidemic and the drastic rise in household bills and inflation affecting traders and customers alike have affected the amount of money people have to spend.

Town centres are and always have been a dynamic place. Ashburton is no different - how different it was 30, 20, 10 or even 5 years ago. It is therefore only to be expected that in 5 or 10-years' time, it will have changed again.

During the current year What is a cause for concern is the potential for town centre retail premises to be turned into residential properties.

A particular worry is that of the five existing pubs in the town centre, during the current year, only two has been open for business.

The public consultation

Many of the comments on improving the Town Centre received during the public consultation related to vehicles and their use/ misuse. Topics mentioned included the need for a 20mph limit in Town Centre, EV charging points, one way traffic systems, pavement bollards to prevent indiscriminate parking, general parking limitations, out of town delivery hub, better use of Cleder Place and the need for increased provision of dog refuse bins.



Church Street Pavement Parking

Primary Shopping Area

The shops and Post Office provide for the essential day today convenience needs of the local community. They also offer important retail facilities, in particular for the elderly and less mobile.

Public Houses often provide for community life and reduce the need to travel. It is a concern that of the existing 5 pubs in the town only three are currently trading. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan will seek to resist the loss of local shops and services where this would result in the loss of these facilities to the community. Map...indicates the primary shopping area.

Map 6: Primary Shopping Area

Map to follow

It is extremely difficult to reinstate shops or other premises, when they have changed to other uses. However, it is not always possible or practical to prevent their closure when it is uneconomical for their use to continue. Therefore, proposals involving the loss of local shops or services will only be permitted where the Town Council is satisfied that the existing use is no longer viable and there is no market for the business as a going economic concern. To prove by evidence of this factor, the Council will seek information regarding the marketing of the business and its accounts. The Council will seek also seek to retain the shop front in circumstances where permission is granted to enable the premises to be reinstated as a shop should the opportunity arise.

The Council will continue to encourage the provision of new shops within the town centre.

Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework, Dec 2024 states that:-

Support development in the interests of a diverse and flourishing Town Centre.

Encourage good design for shop fronts and encourage and safeguard the retail function of the Town Centre.

Support measures to further enhance the public realm within the Town Centre and including but not limited to trees and other planting where appropriate and feasible.

Where an application fails to satisfy the objectives listed above or is likely to have an adverse impact on one or more of the above considerations, the council will recommend that that application is refused.

Our understanding of the key issues derived from evidence base and community consultation frame our aims and objective for this topic and which policies flow from them and which are as follows:

Objective 14.

- i) Support development in the interests of a diverse and flourishing town centre.
- ii) Encourage and safeguard the retail function of the town centre.
- iii) Encourage the positive and acceptable use of the upper floors of shops and commercial premises.

Objective 15.

- i) Encourage and support good design principles, and to ensure that new design is sympathetic with the character of existing traditional shop fronts .
- ii) Support measures to further enhance, including but not limited to trees and other planting, where appropriate and feasible.

Town Centre and Retail Policy

Change of Use of Shops or Services

Policy Justification

Existing retail and service provision within the town centre should be maintained and potential providers of future retail development within the Town Centre will be encouraged to make provision on a scale and nature, appropriate to local needs and to accord with local Vernacular Architecture (i.e., use of local materials);

Policy TCR 1: Change of Use of Shops and Services

1. **The Ashburton Primary Shopping Area is defined in Map**
2. **Within the Primary Shopping Area, proposals which support the retention of the existing retail, business and service offer will be supported.**
3. **Proposals for change of use of existing retail and business premises within the Primary Shopping Area will be supported where:**
 - i. **the existing use is no longer viable, where evidenced demonstrating that the site has been actively marketed for at least 6 months at a realistic price for the type of commercial uses that the type of use can command;**
 - ii. **the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses is not**

compromised (through noise, light pollution and odour); and,

- iii. **the change of use of a retail premises retains the shop front.**

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 of this Plan.

For this topic, the community actions and projects are:

- **Encourage the re-introduction of a market.**

The NPPF Dec. 2024 page 26, para 90c, states that Town Centres should “retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones”.

8 | TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE



Introduction

As of 22nd December 2024

Whilst Ashburton is an historic medieval town, set amid beautiful pastoral scenery, it is not, however, merely quaint, but a vibrant working community with much to offer the visitor. Positioned on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, it is exceptionally well placed for access, being only a few minutes from the A38 Devon Expressway, just halfway between Exeter and Plymouth and less than 10 miles from the major railway hub of Newton Abbot.

It offers a wide range of attractions, to historians of architecture and railways. In addition, it appeals to some who would enjoy shopping in a town centre composed of individual family run retail outlets, including intriguing antique stores which have been featured on television. Yet others will be drawn to the ambitious Arts Centre and St. Lawrence Chapel concert programmes, where films, music, drama and discussions take place far more frequently than many other larger towns can offer.

Planning Context

Whilst the NPPF December 2024 does not specifically address Tourism, it strongly emphasises the need to create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport infrastructure considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to its significance.

All the above aims will contribute to the creation of a Tourist Destination town.

There are a number of places to eat and drink, including The Old Exeter Inn, established in the twelfth century, the Silent Whistle Inn and the Victoria Inn.

There are many interesting cafes tailored to suit all, including vegan, diners.

CASSIE – interiors of Tailors and Rafkiki please.

The “Gateway to the Moor” as it is called, is the perfect starting point for those who wish to explore our splendid National Park by coach, car, bicycle or on foot, with gentle green spaces within the town to linger before or after.

accommodation, together with bed and breakfast facilities.

Ashburton benefits from examples that illustrate how existing historic Listed buildings can benefit from a change in use and enjoy a new lease of life, thus providing a sustainable community use for the town.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Objectives.

Objective 16.

i) Ensure developments are accessible and have a positive impact on community life and are in locations which seek to minimise travel by the provision of adequate parking.

Objective 17.

The Town Centre and its main approach roads (East and West Streets), are key assets that should be regularly refreshed and well maintained.

Objective 18.

Support appropriate sustainable tourism related developments, such as the unique character shops, cafes and accommodation..

Protection of Tourist Facilities

Policy Justification

Key evidence to follow.

Policy TAC1: Protection of Tourist Facilities

Proposals which would result in a significant loss of tourist facilities (defined as those facilities reliant on income from tourists and visitors to function) to other uses will be supported where:

- i. the facility or premises has been effectively marketed for the same or a similar use for a period of 6 months,**
- ii. it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the tourist facility is on longer viable; or**
- iii. the proposed alternative use would provide equal or greater benefits for the local economy and community than the current use, for example, through full time-time equivalent jobs created or sustained.**

Local Tourism Opportunities

Policy Justification

In the introduction to this chapter Ashburton is described as “The Jewel in the Crown” of the National Park. There are many reasons why this is so and why they merit it becoming one of Devon’s Tourist Destination Towns. Both for its own attractions and for being particularly well placed as “The Gateway to the Moor”, an alternative title. Dartmoor National Park is celebrated throughout Britain for its distinctive wild landscapes rising from gentle pasture land, for the biodiversity of its flora and fauna and, to quote the DNP Local Plan, for its quality of tranquillity, where it is possible to find absolute peace, offering spiritual refreshment and opportunities for quiet reflection, escape and creativity”.

From Ashburton one can walk, cycle or drive straight into the park. Whilst the town provides a pleasant starting or finishing point it offers the tourist far more. There is an interesting mix of individual family run shops with an excellent range of produce, including first class meat, fish, cheeses, vegetables, bread and wine, along with two small supermarkets for practical food buying.

Others will please those who love antiques, jewellery and assorted gifts. Their usefulness, however, is coupled with great charm, for the shops in the town centre operate in buildings of historic interest.

The Exeter Inn is one of the oldest in the country whereas The Silent Whistle pub bears testimony to our past as a railway terminus, where several of the original station buildings remain.

Tea rooms and cafes offer diverse menus for all appetites, and it is also possible to picnic on the grass of Cleder Place in the centre of the town or on one of the benches in our peaceful churchyard. An additional attraction is to explore the many quaint passages and alleyways of the town.

St. Lawrence Chapel and St. Andrew’s Church are listed buildings well worth a visit, though in fact the whole town is full of such architectural treasures.

Additionally, Buckfast Abbey is just a couple of miles away along a good road. Since the A38 gives immediate access to Ashburton it is a very well-placed location indeed to become a tourist’s delightful destination. Explore the more rural sectors of the parish, call in for coffee or a meal at various hostelrys such as The Dartford Lodge Hotel and Furzeleigh Mill Hotel.

The Neighbourhood Plan will support Ashburton in its desire to become a Destination Centre where visitors will seek overnight accommodation and stay awhile, rather than a quick visit and a cup of coffee. The towns historical significance and natural setting in the Dartmoor National Park, making it a major place of interest and attraction that aids the towns’ tourism economy.

Policy TAC2: Local Tourism Opportunities

- 1. Development proposals for extensions to existing and new tourism related facilities (such as attractions or amenities which broaden and extend the visitor and tourism experience) will be supported, where:**
 - i. there are no adverse impacts on the following (or such impacts can be mitigated satisfactorily):**
 - a. the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses (from noise, light pollution or odour);**
 - b. trees, hedgerows, biodiversity and habitats;**
 - c. the character of the landscape and natural environment; and,**
 - ii. cause no significant harm to heritage assets and Local Heritage Assets defined in Policy HBE3 or their setting.**
- 2. Proposals should demonstrate long term financial viability through a business plan and how they support local employment opportunities.**

Tourist Accommodation

Policy Justification

Serviced and non-serviced tourist accommodation businesses make a positive contribution to the tourism economy on Dartmoor and Ashburton. This policy sets out where tourist accommodation will be acceptable in principle.

Strategic Policy 5.2 of the Dartmoor Local Plan sets out the principle that hotels and guesthouse uses are best located within town centres or on the

edge of the town centre. New-build holiday homes and other permanent holiday accommodation amounts to new housing and will therefore be expected to comply with the Local and Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies.

However, the Steering Group is aware that there are excellent existing tourist accommodation facilities available which should be supported.

Policy TAC3: Tourist Accommodation

- 1. Development proposals for new and extended hotels, Bed and Breakfast and guest houses will be supported where they:**
 - i. are within or on the edge of the Settlement Boundary;**
 - ii. make use of redundant buildings or previously developed land;**
 - iii. provide electric car charging points;**
 - iv. where relevant, provide improved safe walking and cycling opportunities from the site into the town;**
 - v. there are no adverse impacts on the following (or such impacts can be mitigated satisfactorily):**
 - a. the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses (from noise, light pollution or odour);**
 - b. trees, hedgerows, biodiversity and habitats;**
 - c. the character of the landscape and natural environment; and,**
 - iii. cause no significant harm to heritage assets and Local Heritage Assets defined in Policy HBE3 or their setting.**

Additional Parking and Park and Ride

Policy Justification

That there are too few parking spaces both for residents and visitors is inevitable in a town of medieval heritage. It will be necessary to balance accessibility with the practical problem of excessive traffic in narrow streets. There are opportunities for the development of parking in the Dolbeare Meadow area and The Dartmoor Lodge hotel is amenable to providing some coach spaces at the opposite end of town. A suitable small electric shuttle service would alleviate much of the problem or it might be profitable to incorporate the existing Town Bus route by extending its range to additional pick up stops at tourist accommodation facilities.

Policy TAC4: Additional Car Parking and Park and Ride

Proposals for a park and ride facility (including a seasonal facility) will be supported where the location and design will:

- i. reduce the environmental impact of the private car on the local community;**
- ii. provide electric car charging points;**
- iii. where relevant, provide improved safe walking and cycling opportunities from the site into the town;**
- iv. are sympathetic to, and unobtrusive in, its landscape and / or townscape setting.**

Given that one of Ashburton's most attractive features is the variety of small local outlets in its centre, this, in turn, provides inherent problems. Any family business needs time off to replenish stock, or simply to relax. There are then

financial constraints in employing staff to keep the premises open for customers who may or may not arrive. Conversely, it is vital that visitors and indeed residents, find a lively trading atmosphere if they are to enjoy, and bring prosperity to the town.

Promotion of Arts and Culture

Policy Justification

As already stated in Chapter 4 on Heritage and the Historic Environment, four buildings are illustrated of Listed Buildings being used to support different social/economic modern-day activities and functions.

Among the examples are the former Methodist Church, now operating a wealth of activities as Ashburton Arts Centre; No 1 West Street as the Town Museum; and St. Lawrence Chapel which hosts concerts and accommodates a music examination centre. Additional is the Old Coffee House B&B, and on Ashburton Road is Gages Mill B&B and Furzeleigh Mill Hotel which also has a small art and craft gallery (Furzeleigh Living).

Policy TAC5: Promotion of Arts and Culture

Development proposals for facilities which support the arts and culture will be supported, where they:

- i. there are no adverse impacts on the following (or such impacts can be mitigated satisfactorily):**
 - a. the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses (from noise, light pollution or odour);**
 - b. trees, hedgerows, biodiversity and habitats;**
 - c. the character of the landscape and natural**

environment; and,

- ii. **cause no significant harm to heritage assets and Local Heritage Assets defined in Policy HBE3 or their setting.**

Community Actions and Projects

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 of this Plan.

For this topic, the community actions and projects are:

- Invest, by advertising more widely, the town's Medieval Events. Ashburton's Medieval origins are valued and celebrated. The town is still led by a Portreeve, or Warden, leader of the ancient Courts Leet and Baron. The post has been held in unbroken succession for over twelve hundred years. Lively events, including the traditional Ale Tasting and Bread Weighing, are held in the streets with the Court members in

medieval costume. Such events provide a unique point of interest to the visitor and should be more widely advertised in local newspapers, radio and television.

- The Town Council will encourage and promote events:
 - that celebrate festivities to mark the town's medieval history;
 - actively advertise nationwide to promote the town's historical attractions;
 - produce information literature for distribution to the tourist industry to accord with the policy of promoting the town as a Destination Centre.
- An information leaflet incorporating the above and drawing attention to the many other attractions, with clear directions for finding us, would greatly enhance the scope of their appeal and would need to be funded. Once the availability of coach parking is established and greater provision for cars, the town can become a popular destination point, bring potential customers to shops and hospitality outlets. There is a need for information as to the opening hours of such establishments. There should be no days when finding an open café or restaurant is difficult.



The Old Coffee House
Established 1650
B & B
17 people 01253 511111

9 | TRANSPORT, ACCESSIBILITY AND PARKING

As of 22nd December 2024

Introduction

Ashburton grew up around a ford (later a bridge and now culverted under West Street) on the River Ashburn. Later it was on the stagecoach route from London to Plymouth, and the passengers were served by several coaching inns such as The Golden Lion (now a private house, but resplendent with its newly restored lion on the portico), The London Inn, (now a restaurant and private flats) and The Exeter Inn.

The railway did not arrive until 1872 and was the terminus of a branch line from Totnes via Staverton and Buckfastleigh; the main London to Penzance route having been routed through Newton Abbot and Totnes in 1847, thus bypassing the town.

Various local omnibus services operated in the town from the 1920s.

Due to the pressures of increased traffic, Ashburton bypass was opened in 1933.

The railway was closed in 1963 and after a brief stint in preservation between 1969 and 1971, the section between Buckfastleigh and Ashburton was closed to enable the widening and dualling of the A38 Devon Expressway.

Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, states that opportunities for proposed transport infrastructure, changing transport technology, are incorporated into emerging plans—for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development.

Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are identified and pursued.

Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to their schemes and contribute to making up of high-quality design.

Transport, Accessibility and Parking Objectives.

Objective 19.

- i) Support enhancements to the public transport network.
- ii) Improve accessibility to public and community transport services.
- iii) Support infrastructure which enables an increased use of electric and plug in hybrid vehicles.
- iv) Improve and extend safe routes for pedestrians, those with impaired mobility, the disabled and cyclists.

Objective 20.

- i) Prioritise pedestrians, those with impaired mobility and the disabled and promote safety for all road users in new developments.
- ii) Seek to ensure that sufficient off-street parking is provided in new development.

Objective 21.

- i) Ensure adequate parking provision within development and in the Town Centre.
- ii) Establish the most appropriate locations for additional visitor parking.

Objective 22.

- i) Review the junction between *(to follow)* with a view to providing safe passage for pedestrians, those with impaired mobility and the disabled.
- ii) Resolution of congestion in the Bull Ring area in the Town Centre as a priority.

Local Concerns

There are several local concerns relating to traffic in Ashburton. However, not all can be addressed in whole or in part through the planning system or this Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, the following sections provide context for several issues which can only effectively be pursued through community actions and projects, as set out at the end of this chapter.

Roads and Access

Devon County Council has designated a significant area of the town to become a 20mph zone under Tranche 1. The order came into effect on 23rd November 2023. There seems to be much public support for the scheme, although there were questions about how it would be enforced. On the question of traffic calming, slightly more respondents were in favour than against.

There were several requests for the existing Recommended Crossing Points (RCPs) in the town centre to be upgraded to zebra crossings. Unfortunately, these do not fall within the Highways criteria for this type of pedestrian crossing.

Various suggestions have been made to put one-way systems in place or to pedestrianise part of North Street. Due to the mediaeval street layout and very narrow alternative routes, these would seem to be impractical at this stage.

Suggestions have been made that a park and ride coach drop off point in the town centre, with suitable parking to be made available on the outskirts would increase visitor footfall to the town. (Policy TAP *(to be confirmed)* seeks to address this topic).

The urgent installation of Speed Retarding Strips on the town approach roads was requested. Cyclists having little regard for the safety of pedestrians crossing the road. Policy TAP6 seeks to address this issue.

Pavement Parking

There are many examples of indiscriminate pavement parking occurring in the town centre, creating a safety hazard because pedestrians including those pushing prams and wheelchair users, who are forced to move into the road.

Locations frequently affected include Ashburn Close and Church Road.



Blocked pavements outside St Andrew's Church

Public and Community Transport

Ashburton is currently served by the Stagecoach 38 service between Ivybridge and Exeter, and the 88 Country Bus service between Newton Abbot and Totnes. The town itself is served by the 898 Country Bus service which connects the eastern end of the town and Westabrook estates with the town centre. There is also a weekly service to Buckland in the Moor (Country Bus 672).

The nearest railway stations are at Totnes and Newton Abbot, both on the London – Penzance mainline.

There is a desire to continue to retain and improve the frequency of bus services to other destinations from Ashburton.

Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity Policies

Improving Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity



Public transport on West Street

Policy Justification

The planning system can only influence some of aspects of transportation.

Map 7: Ashburton Transport and Accessibility Plan (to follow)

Policy TAP 1: Improving Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity

1. The Ashburton Transport and Accessibility Plan is set out on Map7, and identifies the key transport and accessibility constraints, opportunities and the network's features that contribute to Ashburton's historic character.
2. Where relevant, development proposals will be supported where they:
 - i. deliver identified opportunities and/or resolve identified constraints; and/or,
 - ii. do not erode key features which contribute to the built and landscape character of Ashburton; and/or
 - iii. do not exacerbate identified constraints but satisfactorily mitigate adverse impacts which arise from the proposal.
3. Proposals should contribute positively to reducing, adapting to and mitigating locally generated impact which would result in climate change and contribute positively to moving the town up the sustainable transport hierarchy.
4. Proposals should, where relevant, improve accessibility for all persons through consideration to disabled access including (but not limited to) direct route desire lines between crossing points at dropped, tactile kerbs, and pavement widths. Pavements should allow for mobility vehicles to pass alongside other users, and facilitate good access to business premises, shops and services.

Establishing Dedicated Cycle Routes and Multi-use Trails

Policy Justification

Ashburton is on the Dartmoor Way Cycle Route (Sustrans 272). Negotiations are underway to improve the cycle path between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh and onwards towards South Brent. There were many requests from the respondents for more and improved cycle paths. Also, for secure cycle parking in the town centre.

There are several Public Footpaths within the parish; these are the responsibility of Devon County Council. Ashburton is not currently part of the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme. Several respondents requested better maintenance of existing footpaths and new routes were suggested.

Bullivers Way, which follows the line of the old railway branch line from Chuley Road to Peartree is managed by Ashburton Parish Council. It is currently only a footpath.

Policy TAP2: Establishing Cycle and Multi-use Trails on the Dartmoor Way Cycle Route

Proposals which deliver or enable the delivery of dedicated cycle routes and footpaths to connect to the Dartmoor Way Cycle Route (Sustrans 272,) will be supported.

Traffic Arising from Major Development.

Policy Justification

Several respondents mentioned a park and ride option with potential for such a scheme at either the western or eastern end of the town.

The two main car parks are in Kingsbridge Lane and there are both short and long stay car sections. On street parking in the town centre is limited in scope due to the layout of the roads. Where available, it is generally limited

to 30 minutes. The Long Stay Car Park in particular is very popular with walking groups who do not spend much time in the town. Many traders feel that this restricts the options available to customers who may want to shop in town.

There is a smaller car park at the bottom of St Lawrence Lane, and the Grey Matter car park in Chuley Road is available due to their generosity at weekends (see Map 8).

Respondents wanted more “resident only” parking.

There were many suggestions that the existing parking restrictions (i.e. double yellow lines) should be more strictly enforced, with St Lawrence Lane coming in for particular mention.

Any future development in Ashburton should endeavour to provide for good accessibility. This extends to the provision of sufficient parking spaces of adequate size for the modern household which, despite this plan’s aim to help reduce carbon emission, will likely continue to own more than one vehicle in housing which accommodates a growing family (both in numbers and age).

The national phenomenon of lack of housing and problems with affordability is leading to young people living at home for longer periods. In effect, this creates more than one household in a dwelling and often increases the number of vehicles owned by a household. While the move towards low carbon emission vehicles is likely to grow through time, without a sufficient increase in housing supply and/or options to access housing, there will continue to be a practical need for parking spaces of a sufficient number to prevent parking on pavements or other inappropriate parking which can prevent access for emergency, refuse and delivery vehicles.

Recent procedures by businesses to reduce on costs have resulted in some employees sometimes having to keep a “work vehicle” at home rather than such vehicles being base at a depot. This Plan therefore has to provide a balance between sufficient spaces to provide practical capacity yet also not encourage greater use and ownership of private cars which could exacerbate

carbon emissions and, whatever type of engine used, will be a draw on natural resources. It also has a duty to encourage active travel and short journeys being taken on foot or by mobility vehicle, manual/electric bicycles and scooters, rather than by private car. This in itself will require additional specialist parking provision.

The introduction of appropriate and realistic numbers of parking spaces should therefore not compromise or be provided at the cost of good accessibility throughout the site.

Policy TAP (*to be confirmed*) therefore seeks to introduce this balance. It also requires the provision of electric charging points in moderate sized developments to support the introduction of more electric powered cars. It is important to design these into a development from the start, rather than attempting to retrofit infrastructure and charging points.

Policy TAP3: Traffic Arising from Major Development

Proposals for all new housing developments of 10 or more dwellings, major employment or retail proposals and expansion of existing employment and retail premises which are likely to generate significant additional vehicle movements into and out of the site should demonstrate, as part of a Transport Assessment, how vehicular access into and out of the site and circulation within the site will mitigate impacts of additional traffic onto the local road network (including permeability, safety, journey delay, air quality and noise), both during construction and after completion.

Public Car Parking

Policy Justification

Public Parking in Ashburton has been in short supply, particularly during the summer months, for many years. A long-term car park with a capacity of 99 cars with an adjacent/coupled short term car park of 74 cars, are located in a central position on Kingsbridge Lane.

Although their position is central, they both suffer the major disadvantage of narrow ingress and egress through the Bull Ring and Kingsbridge Lane.

Therefore, to meet the objective of providing additional parking in a more suitable location and in order to try to relieve congestion in the Bull Ring, the plan identifies potential parking areas located southeast of the town centre in the Chuley Road area (Map...).

The ability to park is important not only for residents and visitors but also local businesses in the town centre.

Policy TAP 5 seeks to protect the existing number of off-street spaces from loss.

Map 8: Existing Public Off-street Car Parks and Potential Areas of Search for Additional Off-street Parking (to follow)

Policy TAP: Public Car Parking

1. The following off-street car parks (see Map.....) are important assets to the local community and essential to the functionality of the town as a visitor destination:
 - i. Kingsbridge Lane, Long and Short Stay;
 - ii. Chuley Road area.

Their use as car parking areas will be safeguarded, their capacity at least maintained and increased where feasible.
2. Proposals which propose additional off-street public car parking sites will be supported in the preferred “Areas of Search” identified in Map..... .

Electric charging Points for Plug-in Vehicles

Policy Justification

There were many requests for electric vehicle charging points, for both cars and cycles.

Electric charging points are available at Dart Bridge, and there are approved plans for more at Dolbeare Meadow. However, these are geared towards travellers using the A38 Devon Expressway, and not local residents. .

TAP.....: Electric Charging Points for Plug-in Vehicles

1. Development proposals for the provision of electric vehicle charging points where planning permission is required, will be supported where they have no adverse impact on:
 - i. safe and good accessibility of pedestrians, those with impaired mobility and the disabled and cyclists along

footpaths and cycle paths; and,

- ii. the character of the built and natural environment where relevant.
2. Proposals for commercial charging “stations” or “hubs” on existing fuel station’s locations, or new bespoke facilities, will be supported, subject to other policies in this Plan.

Protecting the existing Footpath, Bridleways and Cycle Network

Policy Justification

Map 9 shows the existing public rights of way network (*To follow*)

Map 9: Public Rights of Way Network (To follow)

Policy TAP (To be confirmed) : Protecting Existing Footpath, Bridleway, Cycle Paths and Establishing new Multi Use trails Network

1. Development proposals which result in the loss of public footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths or reduce permeability within the parish boundary will not normally be supported.
2. Proposals on or affecting existing or new Rights of Way and other public non-vehicular routes (for example, which could enhance accessibility to local amenities, community facilities and services), should where relevant:
 - i. help to increase opportunities for recreational access to and within the countryside;

- ii. **provide better links between existing areas of green infrastructure and Local Green Space used for recreational purposes;**
- iii. **help to retain and enhance safe and easy pedestrian and cycle access to local amenities including schools, community facilities and services;**
- iv. **ensure permeability and desire line access for pedestrians, those with impaired mobility, disabled and cyclists;**
- v. **provide safe routes with appropriate lighting, where necessary;**
- vi. **not compromise local amenity;**
- vii. **provide sufficiently wide pedestrian pavements for use of mobility vehicles and pushchairs;**
- viii. **have no adverse impact on landscapes or built character, or such impacts are satisfactorily mitigated;**
- ix. **cause no significant harm to heritage assets and their setting; and,**
- x. **meet the most up-to-date standards of design (including preferable use of permeable and/ or utilising sustainable drainage system (SuDS) where feasible).**

Community Actions and Projects

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 of this Plan.

For this topic, the community actions and projects are:

- Working Parties to clear footpaths and improve/repair walking surface.
- Enforcement re pavement parking.
- Work with bus service providers and the County Council to help continue to retain and improve the frequency of bus services to and from Ashburton.

AIR AMBULANCE NIGHT COMMUNITY LANDING SITE.

Policy Justification *(To follow)*

The night landing site is located on the Ashburn Cricket Club Ground at...

10 | NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



As of 23rd December 2024

Introduction

The parish of Ashburton extends to 2775 Ha (6850 Approx. acres); a distance of 9km North to South and 6.5km West to East.

It lies on the south-eastern edge of Dartmoor National Park, with the northern part as open moorland. It is bounded on its western side by the River Dart, with the River Ashburn running from North to South through the centre of the parish. This is joined within Ashburton by the Balland Stream which rises by the quarry at Linhay Hill, east of the town.

Planning Context

The NPPF (Dec.2024 Page 54,) states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
- c) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- d) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;
- e) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, and where appropriate giving great weight to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty in National Parks;
- f) ensure that the site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination;

g) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Objectives.

Our understanding of the key issues derived from evidence base and community consultation frame, our aims and objectives for this topic which and the policies which flow from them are as follows-

Objective 24.

- i) Identify the nature and extent of sensitive landscape, ecological and geological areas including those priority species and rich bio-diversity, protecting these sensitive areas where necessary.
- ii) support effective and appropriate proposals which resolve any resilient issues of the former railway line.
- iii) establish appropriate limitations on development and public access in the interest of protecting sensitive areas and locations.

Objective 25.

- i) Improve public accessibility to the countryside wherever it is appropriate to do so.

Natural Environment Assessment

The parish has sections of SSSI within its boundaries on the western side associated with Ausewell Woods; and, on the southern boundary adjacent the A38 there is a geological SSSI located just outside the parish. Most of the parish is within SSSI impact zones; meaning that Natural England require to be consulted on planning applications.

There are three scheduled ancient monuments within the parish; the Hillfort at Boro Wood; Cairns at Ausewell Woods; and a medieval farmstead south-east of Cold East Cross.

There are many archaeological sites and features covering the wide range of human habitation of the area, from the early Iron Age to Victorian Umber and

other mineral mining activity in the mid nineteenth century and later. The features include hillforts, winding-houses, shafts and adits.

Habitat designations include several areas listed as lowland meadows, including the fields over which the Terrace Walk passes, sections northwest of Linhay Hill Quarry and two fields in the Ausewell area. Others are a section of lowland heath adjacent to the Old Butts north of Welstor, upland heathland on the flanks of Rippon Tor and a number of areas of ancient woodland (AW) and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

The majority of the land outside the urban centre is farmland, mostly grazing leys or permanent pasture and woodland. In common with other Dartmoor edge parishes, it has a higher percentage of woodland cover than rural parishes to the south and east.

The southern half of the parish covers areas which would be eligible for countryside stewardship in relation to providing habitats for brown hairstreak butterflies. The majority of the parish is within the target area for higher level stewardship schemes.

There is an extensive network of public footpaths surrounding the town with access to the land at Ausewell within walking distance.

The geology of the parish is complex and can be most easily summed up as being zoned from north-west to south-east; with the Dartmoor Igneous intrusion to the north-west; metamorphosed sedimentary rocks along its south-eastern edge in the main part of the parish, and Chercombe Bridge limestone, an important quarry mineral, at the south-eastern part of the parish. The southern deposits comprise areas of shillet / mudstones and other sedimentaries. In the river valleys are deposits of the once economically important umber clay.

Development pressures in the rural parts of the parish are constrained by all the parish NW of the A38 dual carriageway being within Dartmoor National Park (DNP) and the planning policies therein. A strip of the parish to the SE of the A38 is outside the National Park, and within Teignbridge DC. Within DNP, most of the areas identified by the DNPA in their 'Land Availability

Assessment' (2017) for the parish, listing areas having potential for future development, are within the urban part of the town – e.g. Kenwyn, the former site of Outdoor Experience, and Chuley Road.

There are three greenfield sites on the edge of the town – the undeveloped section of Longstone Cross and, a field at Tower Hill Farm.

Since the assessment was carried out, further areas south-west of Peartree Garage, and the undeveloped section of Dolbeare meadow have been granted outline planning permission, leading to a creeping urbanisation along the A38 edge.

Within the Teignbridge section SE of the A38 are more areas where development might be attempted, existing developments expanded, or where off-grid living is increasing.

Linhay Hill Quarry has gained permission to expand to the NE over current agricultural land for mineral extraction purposes.

Within the urban boundary the main areas of concern will be of an architectural nature, relating to historic and listed buildings and their expansion or conversion; but within the rural part of the Parish, the development pressure on the level land adjacent the A38, both large and small-scale, will degrade the landscape and the dark skies enjoyed in many areas. In the wider parish the continuing erection of large barns to house in-wintering cattle is another area of potential concern.

The two hills flanking North St, Bowden Hill to the south-west, and the Terrace to the north-east, are both listed as adjuncts to the Conservation Area of Ashburton, restricting development.

Biodiversity

The Neighbourhood Plan policies will seek to retain and improve biodiversity within the parish and reduce the impact of any new development on the dark skies currently enjoyed over most of the parish; and, where appropriate, to restore the habitat value of Devon hedge banks, introduce appropriate new

ones, and seek to link habitat areas such as dispersed areas of woodland with sufficiently wide wildlife corridors.

The rivers and streams within the parish will become more prone to sudden increases in flood rainfall events continue to become more severe. Any new developments need to have regard to the effect on the catchment area and those close to the streams and rivers must be designed so that they are not within flood risk areas, and not liable for flooding.

Any development proposals should avoid damage to statutorily designated areas of conservation importance, priority species and habitats; scheduled ancient monuments, other heritage assets and archaeological features.

Proposals to increase woodland cover by conversion of arable land to woodland should be encouraged, especially where these abut onto or link isolated existing woodlands. Within the urban area of Ashburton town, the plan seeks to encourage reversal of the ongoing loss of large mature trees by encouraging planting of suitable species which will grow into large sizes in the future.

Natural Environment

It is important that the DNP Planning Authority gives equal weight to the importance of the lowland parts of the National Park within the parish boundaries when it comes to control of development as it does to the High Moorland.

A landscape assessment of Dartmoor as a whole, shows a patchwork of high moorland, and (mostly) low intensity agriculture in the valleys and moorland edges. Both are intrinsic parts of the park landscape and should be given equal importance. There will always be a temptation to allocate development adjacent to existing settlements such as Ashburton or alongside areas which are considered to be visually degraded - such as the A38 corridor. However, given the importance of these lowland habitats, often in proximity to streams or rivers, the natural environment that these represent should be given full

consideration and development resisted where this will degrade such an environment.

EU and National legislation, and policies at both county and district levels all mandate or encourage the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity of the natural environment; this is important everywhere; but particularly so in a neighbourhood/parish such as Ashburton, where the quality of the landscape and the existing habitats is so high.

Natural Environment Policies

A Valued Natural Environment

Policy Justification

Key evidence required

Landscape character assessment

MAGIC GIS mapping constraints and designations,

Devon environment viewer

Devon nature map

Biodiversity records

Understanding of green infrastructure network

Map 10: Green Infrastructure Network (Important Open Spaces, Habitat Areas, Views and Landscape)

(To follow)

Policy NE1: A Valued Natural Environment

Development proposals will be required to conserve and protect the valued tranquil natural environment identified in Map 10 by:

- i. protecting and/or enhancing the natural landscape from the impacts of development;**
- ii. respecting, protecting and enhancing important open spaces, views and the area's landscape quality;**
- iii. respecting topography; that is not being visible against the skyline when seen from a distance, whether the development is residential, agricultural or industrial;**
- iv. conserving, protecting and enhancing local habitats and areas of biodiversity value;**
- v. conserving and protecting woodlands and smaller stands of native trees;**
- vi. conserving and protecting mature trees and hedgerows and incorporating these features into landscaping schemes;**
- vii. planting a high proportion of native tree/hedge species within any new development; and,**
- viii. protecting existing geodiversity.**

Tree Planting and Protection

Policy Justification (To follow)

Tree Preservation Orders.

The DNP Planning Authority and the Teignbridge D.C Planning Authority can make a Tree Preservation Order if it appears to them to be “expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area.

The Steering Group have carried out an inspection of all trees that are located within “ Areas of Search” for possible housing.

Landscape Character Assessment

MAGIC GIS mapping of constraints and designations

Devon environment viewer

Devon nature map.

Biodiversity records

Understanding of green infrastructure network

Trees provide a wide variety of both aesthetically positive benefits - their intrinsic beauty or elegance and their ability to screen ugliness - and ecosystem services; providing shade and shelter; filtering pollutants from the air; absorbing large volumes of water from the soil, thus reducing the potential for flooding; and reducing noise levels from adjacent roads or factories (though research has shown that this effect is partly due to the reduction in visibility of the source of the noise as well as physical noise reduction). Large mature existing trees are important both aesthetically and as conservation habitat for a variety of organisms; many such trees were planted in the 19th century and sometimes earlier and are now coming to the ends of their safe useful lives; a number of these have been lost over the preceding decades and it is important that they are replaced to allow continuity and assist in combatting climate change.

Policy NE2: Trees Planting and Protection

1. Development proposals will, where relevant:

- i. **be required to protect significant existing trees on site, as per BS5837:2012 as a minimum standard; both those that already provide a positive landscape benefit; and those with the potential to do so as they grow and mature; and,**
- ii. **provide sufficient tree planting as part of national biodiversity net gain requirements to benefit the development in landscape, habitat, health and aesthetic terms.**

2. Each tree planting position will be provided with sufficient root zone exploitable by the tree to reach its normal maximum size over time.

3. Trees planted will be required to be maintained until they are established; provided with irrigation points; protection against mower and strimmer damage, and secure low staking or other means of ensuring stability post planting, such as underground guying.

Wildlife Corridors

Policy justification (To follow)

Key evidence needed

TPO records

Landscape character Assessment

MAGIC GIS Mapping of constraints and designations.

The linking of isolated areas of habitat, whether woodland, unimproved grass land or moorland, to form wildlife corridors to allow isolated pockets of habitat to connect, should be championed.

The maintenance of existing Devon-hedge banks, the restoration of degraded ones, and the formation of new ones where appropriate (e.g. on the line of an historic grubbed-out hedgebank) should be encouraged, along with measures to improve their effectiveness as barriers to wind and weather, and their species-richness. This interacts with the need to preserve and improve the remaining burgage strips on the hills flanking the town.

To be effective, wildlife corridors have to be sufficiently wide that birds and animals are protected from predation from the exposed sides as they traverse the corridors from one area of habitat to another; although narrow for this, Devon hedge-banks can be effective as refuge for plant species, as well as allowing such species to move slowly by seed or vegetative means from one area of habitat to another (and laterally into adjacent habitats. Hedge-banks can also be an important navigational aid for bats and birds.

To retain a hedge-bank within or adjacent to a development it will be necessary to provide sufficient space on either side of the bank to allow for maintenance-hedge laying, steeping, and repair. Current legislation already requires hedge-banks in agricultural land to be protected from the effects of pesticide spraying and other potentially damaging operations with buffer strips along their sides.

Where there are isolated patches of similar habitat in proximity to one another, then their linking using wildlife corridors should be encouraged; existing hedge banks, which may be important navigational aids for birds and bats, as well as valuable refuge for plant and animal species, shall be retained, and their condition improved where necessary by suitable maintenance work, gapping-up, and the encouragement of the regeneration of tree cover at regular intervals along such banks by selecting suitable coppice growth and allowing it to grow up into maiden trees.

Map 10 identifies likely and known wildlife corridors. The areas identified does not represent an exhaustive detailed set of areas, as site specific and more detailed corridors may be identified from ecological and habitat surveys during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy NE3: Wildlife Corridors

- 1. Identifiable wildlife corridors and habitats are shown in Map10. These, and others not identified on the map which may be defined through ecological and habitat surveys, should be protected and proposals will be supported where they enhance the network.**
- 2. Development proposals which result in the unavoidable loss of these areas (in whole or in part) will only be supported where:**
 - i. There are no other suitable sites for the proposed development;**
 - ii. The areas (quality, land area and habitat, biodiversity and geodiversity value) can be replaced in close proximity to their original location with a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity;**
 - iii. A funded Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) is agreed between the applicant and Local Planning Authority to ensure that a minimum net gain of 10% in biodiversity is realised, in line with national requirements;**
 - iv. The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the site's wider landscape setting which is integral to habitat retention and enhancement (with regards to biodiversity and geodiversity) or such impacts can be mitigated.**

3. Sufficient space will be allowed on either side of hedgebanks where these abut a development, to allow for the maintenance of the hedgebank.

Hydrological Issues

Policy Justification

Development within or adjacent to flood risk zones will be subject to national policy relating to flood risk, including the sequential test applied to determine the acceptability, or not, of various types of development in flood risk zones. This Plan discourages development in flood risk zones and proposals which could increase run-off. Surface water run-off should be mitigated through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to ensure no adverse impact as a result. Exacerbating the problem cannot be acceptable. Maps 11 and 12 reproduce Environment Agency (EA) maps showing areas of flood risk. It should be noted that these can change with time as the EA reviews data. The maps are extracts only to illustrate the challenges, and so readers should see the EA website²⁰ to see these in detail and be able to see detail and areas outside of the town area across the rest of the parish.

Map 11: Flood Risk Areas (To follow)

Map 12: Surface Water Flood Areas (To follow)

Upstream systems of flood control, using 'upstream' soft engineering responses, such as by raising the bed of a river in order to temporarily store water in meadows and wetlands, constructing contour berms, and planting new woodlands, should be negotiated with the relevant landowners where current or proposed development is at risk of flooding.

²⁰ See <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Given the presence of rivers and streams within the parish which have the tendency to rise rapidly during heavy rainfall events, and the already occurring increase in extreme weather events including very heavy precipitation, potential developments in the lowland areas surrounding Ashburton, as well as existing sections of the town, are, or will, be vulnerable to flooding.

Current thinking is that upstream soft engineering solutions, slowing the flow of water away from the upper parts of the catchment, are better than old-fashioned flood relief schemes involving speeding up the flow through the development area to get the water away. The main problem with such proposals is that they would have to occur on land upstream of where a problem is being created by development or already exists because of urbanisation. Due to the fragmented nature of land ownership and the aims of landowners, it is often difficult or impossible to think in a holistic manner about such things, so short term fixes such as flood relief attenuation lagoons or tanks are used instead. Westcountry Rivers Trust are actively liaising with local landowners in the catchments of the Ashburn and the Balland Stream.

Policy NE4: Flood Risk

- 1. Where, appropriate, development proposals should demonstrate that they do not increase local flood risk, with particular regard to locations of known surface water flooding identified on up-to-date surface water flood risk maps.**
- 2. Where sustainable drainage systems are introduced, a management plan should be put in place for future maintenance of the system.**

Dark Skies

Policy Justification

Reduce the impact of any new development on the dark skies currently enjoyed over the majority of the designated plan area.

Given the importance of Dartmoor National Park as an area with little light pollution and hence the ability to see the night sky and all its wonders, and the position of Ashburton on the periphery of the park, any developments or redevelopments should not use lighting which will be visible outside their immediate area.

The plan will encourage awareness of light pollution and endeavour to retain and improve the views of our-time skies.

Policy NE5: Dark Skies

Development proposals will be supported where they have no adverse impact on “dark skies” and do not introduce unacceptable light pollution. Planning proposals that include external lighting will be required to demonstrate the following:

- i. the nature of the proposed lighting is appropriate for its use and location and demonstrates that it has mitigated against light impact;**
- ii. the proposed lighting does not materially alter light levels outside of the development which will adversely**

affect the use or enjoyment of nearby buildings or open spaces;

iii. the proposed lighting does not impact upon highway or individuals’ safety within the locality;

iv. the proposed lighting does not have a significant impact on protected species or wildlife within the locality.

Community Actions and Projects

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 of this Plan.

For this topic, the community actions and projects are:

- The Town Council and others in the community can play an important role in identifying trees of particular value for DNP or TDC to designate them with TPOs and should continue to identify such trees for protection.



11 | ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

As of 23rd December 2024.

Introduction

For a town of around 4000 people there is a wide range of business activity from small one person businesses, working from home, to nationally and internationally recognized operations ranging from the practical to the high tech.

We have a busy town centre, drawing in antique collectors (and associated TV programme makers), food-lovers and others to explore their wide range of independent shops that the 'Jewel in the Crown', has to offer.

Outside the bustling town centre lie the Industrial and Business areas, which provide employment and create wealth for Ashburton.

More than a dormitory town, we are uniquely placed, roughly halfway between the Cities of Exeter and Plymouth, with fast access to both via the A38 dual carriageway.

Planning Context

The NPPF (Dec. 2024, page 240 states that planning policies and decisions should help the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

Objectives.

Our understanding of the key issues derived from evidence base and community consultation frame our aims and objectives for this topic and the policies which flow from them which are as follows-

Objective 27.

i) Facilitate an agreed economic development strategy for Ashburton which responds positively to the challenges of climate change.

ii) Community enterprise, micro and small businesses should be supported

Objective 28.

i) Support development within the high tech and growth sectors within the context of an economic strategy for the town including improving internet connections.

ii) Promote developments that support the sustainable growth of the local economy.

Public Consultation

The well attended Public Consultation drew comments on all the topics covered in this document, with car use and pavement parking coming high on the list. With reference to Economy, Employment and Business, more cycle paths were sought, allowing businesses to promote alternative ways to get to work. Associated cycle parking at Business Sites, with charging facilities for E-bikes, were recommended, to promote better employee health with fewer car journeys necessary.

Young people were concerned with large goods vehicles coming past the schools. Access to the Town Centre shops is necessary, but Ashburton, has narrow (or no) pavements and L.G.V. vehicles of any sort provide difficulties. The recently introduced 20mph speed limit is going to go some way to reduce anxiety and potential accidents.

Industrial Areas

Chuley Road Business Park

Chuley Road has a range of Businesses from industrial vehicle repairs to retail premises and offices. Their diversity reflects the development of Ashburton since the arrival of the railway in 1872.

The railway, historically, provided daily links to the outside world. Now,

however, access to industrial premises via St. Lawrence Lane and Whistley Hill (past the Primary School) by LGVs and others creates problems of damage to heritage assets such as pavements and kerbstones.

Some businesses on Chuley Road have purpose-built premises, others have established a customer base at the same location over many years and would have no desire to move. Others are overcrowded and would welcome relocation to larger units with easier access for delivery and service vehicles.

Chuley Road has a collection of railway heritage buildings, one of which is listed. Most buildings have been converted into offices and small workspaces. They are ideally placed close to the centre of town and within easy walking distance of the recreation ground.

Housing development is proposed on the former site of the Caravan and Camping sales area (Outdoor Experience) which will add to the diverse nature of Chuley Road.

The proximity to the town centre should offer a positive incentive for the location of elderly person's dwellings.

Possibly one of the buildings could become a 'railway heritage centre', housing memorabilia, photographs and an exhibition of Ashburton's connection with the former railway.

Along the existing Bullivers Way a cycle/foot path linking Ashburton with the South Devon Railway at Buckfastleigh, using what a s part of the old track bed, could provide a link for local people, pass the proposed new businesses at Pear Tree. Additionally, it would provide visitors and railway enthusiasts with the opportunity to see the former line of the railway and its unique heritage buildings.

To reinvigorate Chuley Road area, small office units, craft workshops and additional public parking, should be encouraged, with any new buildings sympathetic to the existing vernacular, being both a practical use of historic buildings and create an interesting environment.

The possibility of a regular market should be explored, possibly on a Sunday, so as not to compete with the local weekly traders.



Linhay Business Park



Chuley Road

Eastern Road Industry

To the east of the town centre are located two business areas on the right. Towards Exeter is the internationally renowned Ashburton Cookery School and Chef's Academy, housed in a purpose-built school. Three businesses lie adjacent to the school, housed on a small industrial area, all specializing in vehicle maintenance and repair.

To the left-hand side is the Linhay Business Park, purpose-built units housing a range of businesses. Recognized names alongside smaller specialist businesses.

Linhay Quarry

Beyond the Eastern Road industry lies Linhay Quarry, a large limestone quarry with a tarmac and ready-mix concrete plant with blockworks and associated concrete products.

The quarry and its offices are by far the largest employer in Ashburton, providing many local people with employment and creating wealth for the town. The quarry itself supplies building materials to both large and small building companies and road building products and services.

The quarry has helped many local groups and sand firms and is an important benefactor to the community.

Lorn Haven Business Park, Dolbeare

On the Teignbridge side of the A38 at Dolbeare, just off the Plymouth slip road, lies a new small industrial development. They are purpose-built with easy access to both Plymouth and Exeter via the A38. A mixture of construction, training and specialist motorcycle businesses already have premises on the site, reflecting the diversity of businesses throughout Ashburton.

Dolbeare Meadow

Dolbeare Meadow lies, opposite Linhay House offices. Police buildings are currently the only occupied buildings on site, but further commercial premises are now under construction.



Dolbeare Meadow Business Park

Pear Tree

At the western end of town is a developing site opposite the existing Pear Tree garage, car sales and workshop. Next to the garage is the Dartmoor Lodge Motel bar and restaurant.

The site at Pear Tree will provide services to the agricultural and equestrian sectors.

There is a link to Pear Tree from the town, via Chuley Road and the existing footpath, Bullivers Way.

(To be confirmed)

Conclusion

In addition to the industrial units mentioned above, Ashburton hosts many other small businesses as diverse as cake-makers and IT consultants.

Farming and the surrounding agricultural sector and equestrian businesses make up a huge part of the local economy as well as employing local people. They are crucial to the local economy.

As the largest town in Dartmoor National Park, Ashburton is designated a Local Area by DNPA and has some sites singled out for development (DNP Local Plan). Proposal 7.4 refers specifically to Chuley Road, page 133.

The Ashburton Neighbourhood Plan encourages the Town Council, Traders, Dartmoor National Park, Teignbridge District Council and residents to work proactively to develop a positive strategy which supports a sustainable growth of the local economy.

Economy, Employment and Business Policy

Business Development

Policy Justification (To follow)

PolicyEEB1: Business Development

Development proposals for employment and business uses will be supported where the scale and nature of the proposals have no significant adverse impacts on the following, or such impacts can be mitigated satisfactorily by:

- i. the amenity and existing uses of adjoining businesses;**

- ii. the amenity of existing neighbouring residential properties (such as noise, light pollution and odour); and,**
- iii. the landscape and habitat.**

Community Actions and Projects

It is recognized that much of what needs to be done by and in the community within this topic cannot be achieved through planning policies or through the planning system. Therefore, to reflect the wider picture of potential solutions to key issues, Community Actions and Projects for this topic are set out below. **These actions and projects are not planning policies**, but instead set out statements of intent. They are also expanded upon in Part 2 of this Plan.

For this topic, the community actions and projects are:

- Defibrillators are installed in prominent external locations in accordance with regulation requirements

Working Draft