



# Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2034



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The parish of Thurlestone is located in South Hams in South Devon. It takes its name from the Thurlestone Rock, the iconic 'thirled' or pierced arch standing offshore to the south, which is mentioned in a Saxon charter of 845.
- 1.2 The parish consists of three very distinct settlements and their rural hinterland. Bantham is the site of a large Roman and post-Roman trading settlement at the mouth of the River Avon and boasts one of the best beaches in Europe. Buckland nestles in the valley east of Bantham and is characterised by its traditional Devon thatched cottages and country lanes; and situated on the hilltop overlooking the coast is Thurlestone with its 13<sup>th</sup> century All Saints' Church, 18-hole golf course and 4-star hotel.
- 1.3 The three settlements are very different, but were all historically dependent on the sea and agriculture for their livelihood. Often known as the 'Land of the Five Beaches' and located entirely within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and part of the South Devon Heritage Coast, the area is special in having a pristine, unspoilt and undeveloped coast that draws people to visit and live in the area. Tourism is the mainstay of the local economy.
- 1.4 It is the unspoilt, undeveloped character of the area that presents the parish with its biggest challenge going forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The influx of retirees and second homeowners over the last 50 years has resulted in soaring house prices, which have put homes in the parish beyond the reach of many young families and local people. The resulting age imbalance threatens the long-term viability of the parish as a sustainable year-round community: its schools, services and facilities.
- 1.5 The area's special qualities now drive its local economy, which is why a balance needs to be struck between encouraging the right type of future development and preserving the unspoilt, undeveloped character of the area, which is the main attraction for both residents and visitors who are essential to the local economy. This is key to maintaining the viability of the community and helping to ensure a thriving and sustainable future for the parish.



## About the parish

- 1.6 The parish covers approximately three square miles and is bounded by the Avon estuary to the north, the parishes of Bigbury, Aveton Gifford and Churchstow to the north and east, South Milton to the south, and the coast to the west. The topography is typical of this part of South Devon with river valley slopes, rolling farmland, high Devon banks, arable and pasture land and includes an approximately three-mile stretch of the acclaimed South West Coast Path. The area is popular with visitors who come to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside, its beaches and wildlife.



- 1.7 Today, the three settlements each have a distinct character, although historically the parish worked as a whole. In the 1880s, the facilities in one settlement complemented those of the neighbouring settlement. Buckland was the main settlement with a blacksmith's shop, cider press, water mill, butcher and slaughterhouse, cobbler, carpenter, poor house and barber. Bantham had a coastguard station, a smithy, bakery, shop and inn; whilst Thurlestone was a small village with a church, rectory, school and a few cottages.
- 1.8 The main settlement of the parish today is **Thurlestone**, which is flanked by farmland and a cliff-top and links golf course with spectacular views, providing a stunning environment in which to play. The area is very popular with walkers because of the South West Coast Path, along with the pub and hotel, which started as a B&B for the newly-opened golf club (founded in 1897). The Yarmer estate has properties that date back to the late 1880s and grew due to the popularity of the nearby golf course.





- 1.9 It was not, however, until the 1970s that the population of Thurlestone took off and this was mainly due to the development of the Mead Estate, which is now a well-established estate with a mix of 116 bungalows and houses. In the 1901 census, the population of the parish was 354 and by 1911, it was 415. By 1971, the figure had grown to 696, and by 1981, it was 827. In the 2011 census, the resident population was 863. Today, the shop and post office in Thurlestone is a well-used local amenity, most of the local children use the primary and pre-school, and the parish hall is the venue of a variety of community events.



Whilst many houses have been modernised or rebuilt, the Grade II listed thatched cottages in the main street of the village provide a picturesque reminder of a bygone era.

- 1.10 A quarter of a mile away from Thurlestone down a steep hill and nestled in a wooded valley is **Buckland**. This is a small settlement with a number of Grade II listed 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched houses located within the designated West Buckland Conservation Area. Grade II listed Clanacombe, an Elizabethan manor house built in 1587, was once a monastery.



- 1.11 Buckland has quite an industrious history and aside from being a local cider producing centre, the Buckland Flower Farm was a major supplier of flowers and vegetables to Covent Garden and markets all over the South West from the 1920s right up until 1979. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel dates from 1908 and was not converted to a private house until 1970.





- 1.12 A further quarter of a mile or so along a narrow, single-track road is **Bantham**, which is a hugely popular visitor destination. It attracts many hundreds of tourists from home and overseas every year to enjoy the beautiful stretch of unspoilt beach, stunning views across to Burgh Island and the Avon estuary, and is popular with surfers, sailors, swimmers, kayakers and paddle boarders. A Scheduled Ancient Monument occupies The Ham, which has been the site of numerous archaeological investigations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century up until the present day.



- 1.13 Bantham has a pub (The Sloop Inn) and shop/café and a distinctive thatched boathouse located on Coronation Quay that provides a launch point for sailing boats and other craft, and is where the harbourmaster for the Avon estuary is based. There are several Grade II listed buildings including a row of 17<sup>th</sup> century former fishermen's thatched cottages running down from the pub towards the beach. This streetscape of Bantham is strikingly similar to how it was in the 1800s.





- 1.14 The Avon estuary is extremely picturesque flanked by steep wooded banks, home to egrets, herons, cormorants and swans amongst other bird varieties. The much photographed Grade II listed Jenkins' Quay with its 'pink boathouse' is one of the estuary's crown jewels and recently provides hospitality facilities for the Bantham Estate shoot during the winter months.



- 1.15 A number of properties in the settlement and much of the surrounding land is owned by the Bantham Estate, which acquired the estate in 2014 from the previous owner, Evans Estates. The Estate manages the beach and its car park, farmland and numerous properties including the Grade II listed cottages, as well as running the shoot.

## 2. Our Plan

### Why a neighbourhood plan?

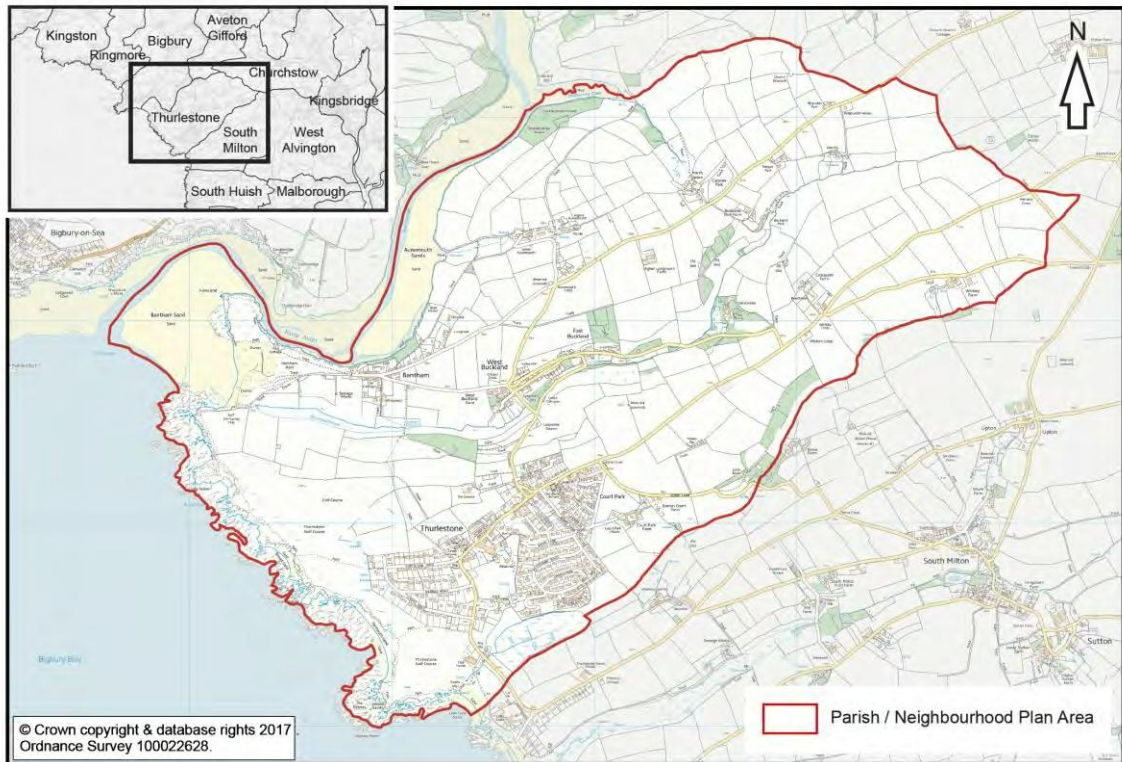
- 2.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011. A neighbourhood plan gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. For the first time, communities can produce plans that form part of the development plan for their area that (unlike parish plans) have statutory weight in the planning system. The development plan comprises the local plan and the neighbourhood plan, and the neighbourhood plan has the same legal status as the local plan.
- 2.2 The current development plan relating to the parish is the South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) which will shortly be replaced by the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (JLP), once it has passed examination and been adopted. Applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and therefore, once made (adopted) our neighbourhood plan will sit alongside the LDF (or JLP) and be used to help determine local planning applications in the parish.
- 2.3 Like many other coastal villages in the South West, the parish of Thurlestone has experienced substantial demographic and social changes over the last century. The problem of rural depopulation and decaying villages during the 19<sup>th</sup> century has shifted towards a picture of increasing affluence and the countryside becoming a more desirable place to live and retire to, raising housing prices beyond the reach of most local people and young working people.
- 2.4 By the time of the last census in 2011, the population of the parish aged 65+ accounted for just over 43% of the population, whilst 39% of dwellings in the parish were second homes, compared to the average figure across the South Hams of 15%.
- 2.5 Even at the time of the **1980 Parish Appraisal Report**, there was strong community support for any further development to be 'first homes' for the young, living on a lower income; and also, for smaller houses that should be made available for young couples who may regenerate the parish from the predominantly ageing population. This was reinforced in the **2010 Parish Plan**, which found that 40% of residents wished there were more families and young people living in the parish: over half the population was over 65, only 9% were in full time employment and 60% were wholly retired.
- 2.6 The parish benefits from being within easy access of the service centre of Kingsbridge, whilst being reasonably self-reliant with its own primary and pre-school, church, parish hall, two village shops including post office facilities, garage,

residential care home, sports and recreational facilities. However, looking to the future, the community recognises the need to support the local economy, and attract more young people to live and work here. Any future development therefore needs to be focused on the long-term socio-economic needs of the community, rather than for short-term commercial gain.

2.7 At the same time, it is vital for the local economy to protect the special, unspoilt qualities of the area that make it so special for our visitors and for the sake of future generations. Our environment is our greatest asset and sensitive development of the right type and appropriate scale will ensure that our needs are met and opportunities are created that will support the future of our local economy and enhance the quality of life of our residents. The community recognizes the need to reuse rural buildings rather than build over green fields, encourage small-scale employment opportunities and support small-scale housing provision for younger people and families to work and be able to live in the area, so as to provide a positive, sustainable future for the parish.

2.8 In order to ensure the community has a say in the future development of the parish, Thurlestone Parish Council applied for neighbourhood plan designation and in April 2015, the Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan was formally designated by South Hams District Council. The extent of the Plan area is shown below.

**Figure 1: Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area**





- 2.9 This Plan will have effect up until 2034, to coincide with the emerging JLP. It will be monitored annually and reviewed by the parish council every five years. It will be updated in accordance with the neighbourhood planning regulations.

## Achieving sustainable development in our parish

- 2.10 At the heart of the planning system is the principle of sustainable development and in order to proceed to referendum, a neighbourhood plan must be able to demonstrate that it contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes sustainable development as: *“about positive growth - making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations”* and it identifies three roles for the planning system to perform:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

- 2.11 These roles are mutually dependent and in order to achieve sustainable development there need to be positive improvements in the quality of the natural, built and historic environment, as well as in people’s quality of life. This means that plans and decisions must take local circumstances into account.

- 2.12 The NPPF states that: *“At the heart of the NPPF is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.*

*For **plan-making**, this means that:*

- *local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; and*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

- 2.13 In the case of this parish, the entire area is located within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on **Figure 2**. This is important because the NPPF affords AONBs the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations.

**Figure 2: South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



- 2.14 The NPPF restricts development in AONBs: *“Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.”* . The term ‘major development’ is not defined and is a question of fact depending on local circumstances, and much depends on the context of the proposal. What may be considered minor development in one area may be major development in another and vice versa. ‘Exceptional circumstances’ are understood to mean unusual or rare. Under paragraph 116 of the NPPF, such applications are subject to an assessment of: the need for the development and the impact of permitting or refusing it upon the local economy; the cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the AONB or meeting the need for it in some other way; and any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and extent to which that could be moderated.
- 2.15 Most of the parish also lies within the Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast, which are both non-statutory designations but nonetheless carry substantial weight when it comes to development proposals. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should: *“maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast.”* **Figures 3 and 4** show the extent of the Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast (as defined in the emerging JLP).



Figure 3: South Devon Heritage Coast

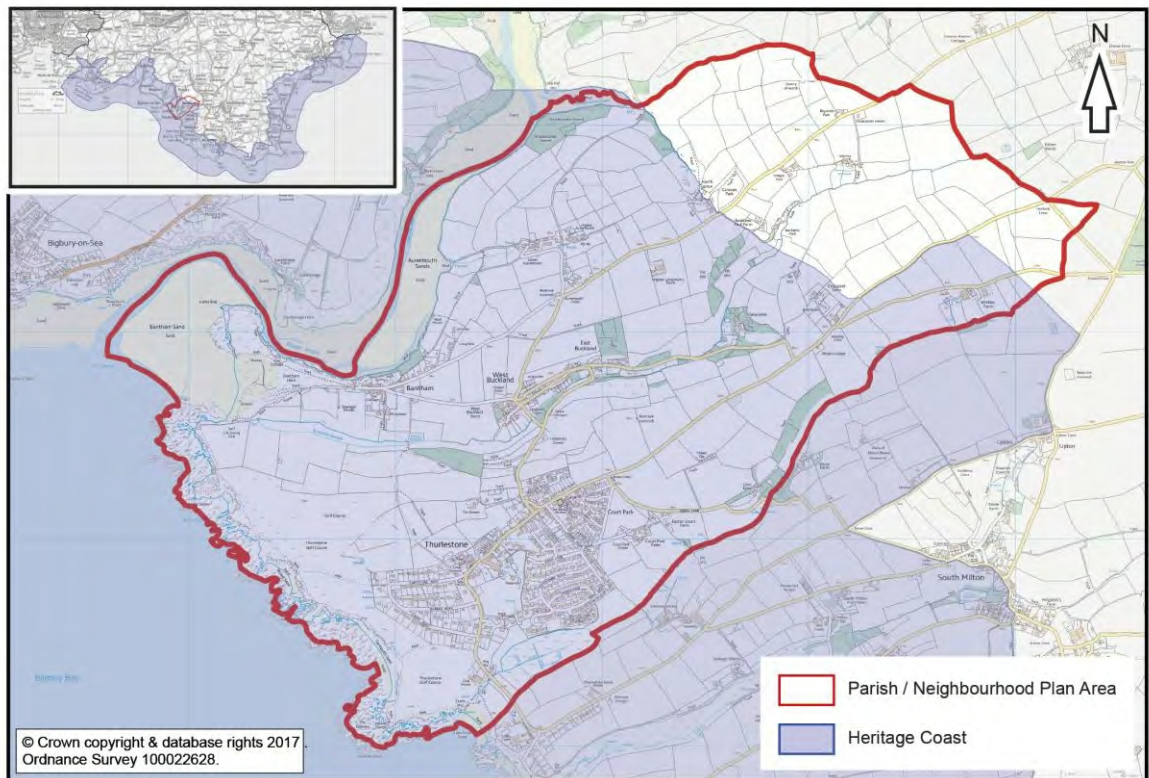
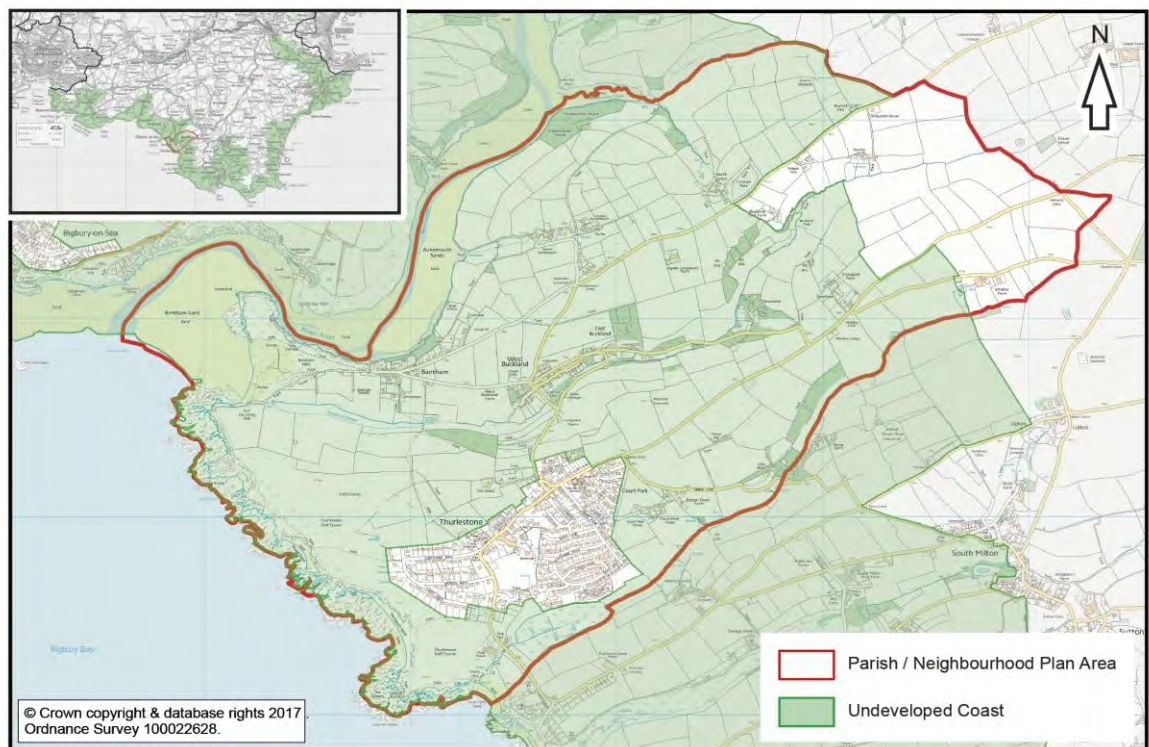


Figure 4: The Undeveloped Coast





- 2.16 The Local Development Framework states that in designated AONBs *“their conservation and enhancement will be given great weight.”* Development is permitted in the countryside only where it requires a countryside location and *“meets the essential, small scale, and exceptional local development needs of a settlement which cannot be met within development boundaries.”* The character of the undeveloped parts of the coast is also protected and *“development not requiring a coastal location will not be provided for.”*
- 2.17 The emerging Joint Local Plan also provides protection for the South Devon AONB to which it gives *“the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty”* and where major development *“will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, and where it is in the public interest.”* Further, development that would have a detrimental effect on *“the unspoilt character, appearance or tranquillity of the Undeveloped Coast, estuaries and Heritage Coast will not be permitted except under exceptional circumstances.”* The principal purpose of the Undeveloped Coast designation is to protect undeveloped coastal character.
- 2.18 Given that the parish is located within the AONB, Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast, the benefits of any development proposal must therefore be carefully balanced against its potential impacts on the environment and quality of life of this and future generations. The impact of inappropriate development is irreversible and would fail to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

## Vision

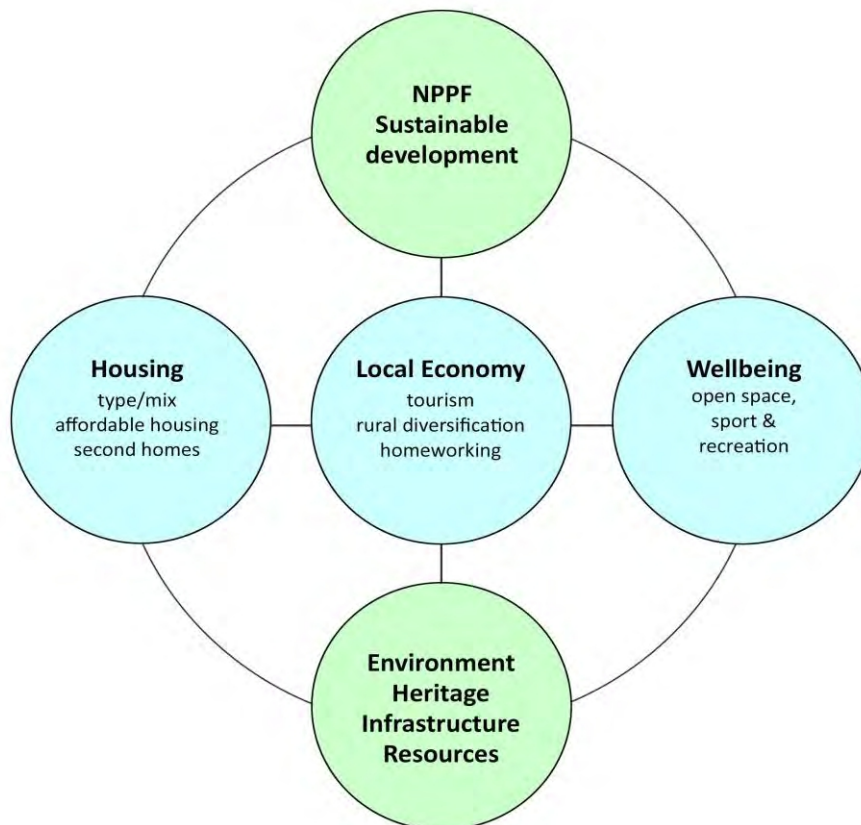
- 2.19 The importance the community attaches to the natural environment and in particular the AONB are encapsulated in the community’s Vision of how it would like to see the parish look in 15-20 years’ time:

*“A vibrant coastal and rural community where the quality of life of its residents and the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment are paramount and where any development should be proportionate, balanced and sustainable in keeping with its designation within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”*

## Objectives

2.20 In order to turn the community's Vision into reality, Objectives were identified for the seven topic areas: Housing, the Local Economy, Wellbeing, Environment, Heritage, Infrastructure and Resources. The Objectives for each topic area would help deliver the Vision and would all be subject to the NPPF, the purpose being to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

**Figure 5: Topic areas**



2.21 The Objectives for Housing, the Local Economy and Wellbeing were used to explore the need and opportunities for housing and economic development in the parish, as well as the provision of additional community facilities. The Objectives for the Environment, Heritage, Infrastructure and Resources were used to explore local circumstances that may act as constraints on any development within the parish. The Plan's Objectives are set out in **Figure 6**.

**Figure 6: Objectives**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Housing</b></p> <p>To support small-scale housing development that will contribute towards making the parish more sustainable for the future: affordable housing for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent housing on the open market and open market housing for young people on lower and middle incomes to be able to afford to buy or rent.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Local Economy</b></p> <p>To support existing businesses and provide new employment opportunities and to promote sustainable growth in the local economy which is appropriate to the parish's location within the South Devon AONB.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wellbeing</b></p> <p>To promote a healthy and socially inclusive community by supporting open space, recreational and sports facilities and services which enhance the community's wellbeing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Heritage</b></p> <p>To conserve and enhance the parish's historic environment by promoting the protection of non-designated heritage assets which are of special local historic interest.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Environment</b></p> <p>To conserve and enhance the Parish's natural environment for future generations of residents and visitors.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>To seek opportunities for improving infrastructure to make the parish more sustainable for existing and future residents, visitors and those working in the parish.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Resources</b></p> <p>To support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy generation.</p>



## General Development principles

- 2.22 In the particular circumstances of this parish, the community's Vision is to achieve sustainable development by promoting small-scale development of the right type in the right location. That means according to proven local need and where it does not detrimentally harm the AONB, the Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast.
- 2.23 This Plan does not include any site allocations but rather takes a holistic approach to sustainable development by looking at the parish in the context of a village network, where development in one settlement supports services and facilities in another for the benefit of the parish as a whole (in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF). In this way, the Plan will benefit the parish as a whole and help to satisfy the economic, social and environmental requirements needed to achieve sustainable development.
- 2.24 This Plan is not anti-development, but it will only support development based on proven local need - the right type of development in the right location, which positively contributes to the community's Vision and the achievement of sustainable development.
- 2.25 Development proposals will therefore be expected to meet general criteria in order to achieve a consistent high standard of development throughout the parish. These seven overarching criteria will apply in the case of all planning applications and will set out requirements relating to:
- residential amenity
  - design
  - infrastructure
  - dark skies
  - natural environment
  - historic environment
  - traffic and transport

## POLICY TP1 – GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

In order to achieve sustainable development, proposals for development within the parish will be supported where they meet the following criteria (where appropriate) and the requirements of other relevant policies within this Plan:

1. **Residential amenity.** Proposals should protect residential amenity and should not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties. This will be judged against the level of amenity generally accepted within the locality and could result from: loss of privacy or overlooking, overbearing and dominant impact, loss of daylight or sunlight, noise or disturbance, odours or fumes;
2. **Design.** Proposals should be locally distinctive, reflecting the style, scale and character proportionate and appropriate to the coastal and rural location of the parish within the South Devon AONB. The use of natural building materials will be encouraged;
3. **Infrastructure.** Proposals should ensure that the infrastructure needed to serve the development must be in place or provided in phase with the development. Any existing deficiencies necessary to enable the development to proceed must be remedied by new or improved infrastructure;
4. **Dark Skies.** Proposals should be designed so as to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, on intrinsically dark landscapes and the natural environment, in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals Environmental Zone E1;
5. **Natural Environment.** Proposals should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the South Devon AONB and should demonstrate that their impacts upon the AONB have been assessed, giving particular consideration to the natural beauty, special qualities, landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. Proposals should demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed and applied throughout the development process, with harm to the AONB avoided in the first instance;
6. **Historic Environment.** Proposals that may impact on a heritage asset, whether designated or non-designated, should describe the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposal upon its significance, using appropriate expertise, where necessary; and
7. **Traffic and Transport.** A safe means of access and on-site parking should be provided.

## Justification

- To avoid repetition of the same criteria in other policies
- To respect the qualities in the natural and built environment that provide local character and distinctiveness
- To minimise the impact of development in the immediate locality and on the wider landscape

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS1, CS7-CS10, DP1-DP3, DP5-DP7 & DP15

NPPF: paras 9-10, 14-17, 32, 56-59, 61, 64, 66, 114-118, 123, 125-129, 131-135 & 139

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, SPT11, TTV1-TTV2, DEV1-DEV2, DEV20-22, DEV27 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2

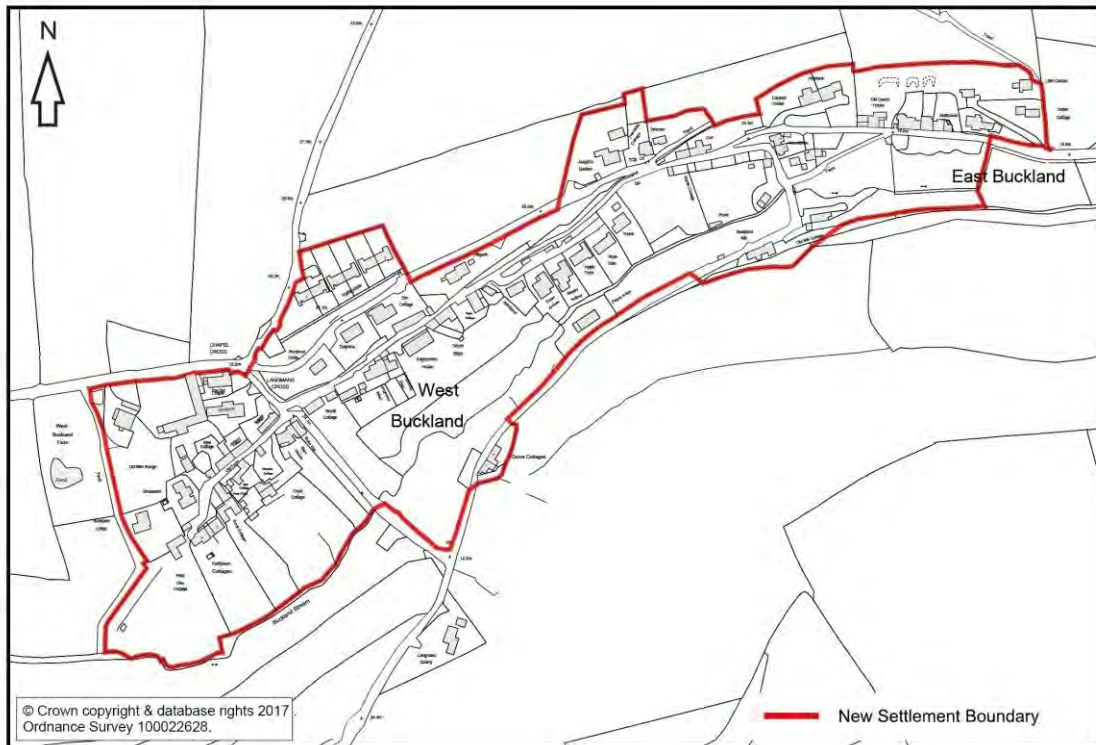
## Defining settlement boundaries

- 2.26** Up to date and robust settlement boundaries are important when it comes to identifying where development should go. A settlement boundary is a line drawn around a settlement that demarcates the built form from the surrounding countryside. The purpose of the settlement boundary is to mark the limits of settlements and to define where planning policies apply in order to prevent encroachment into the countryside. Different criteria-based planning policies apply either side of the line. Thurlestone’s settlement boundary is well over 20 years old; neither Bantham nor Buckland has a settlement boundary.
- 2.27** To ensure that the policies in this Plan prioritise infilling and the protection of the countryside in accordance with the wishes of the community, the settlement boundary for Thurlestone shall largely remain ‘as is’ so as to prevent further sprawl into the open countryside (AONB, Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast). In the case of Bantham and Buckland, this Plan designates settlement boundaries to allow for some small-scale infill, but primarily in order to protect the adjoining countryside from inappropriate development. The settlement boundaries for the three settlements are shown in **Figures 7, 8 and 9**. The criteria that have been used to define the new settlement boundaries for Bantham and Buckland, and the minor amendments to Thurlestone, are set out in **Appendix A** to this Plan.





**Figure 9: Settlement Boundary for Buckland**



2.28 Proposals for development within the boundaries designated in this Plan will be supported whilst development outside will be treated as an exception. This is consistent with the protection afforded to land designated as AONB, as set out in the NPPF, the Local Development Framework, the emerging JLP and the South Devon AONB Management Plan.

2.29 More specifically, it is important to the community that there should be no coalescence between Bantham and Buckland and that the gap between the two settlements is preserved in order to maintain the integrity and distinctive character of these two historic communities.

## POLICY TP2 – SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

1. The settlement boundaries for Thurlestone, Buckland and Bantham designated in this Plan as shown on **Figures 7, 8 and 9** shall be used for the purposes of determining all planning applications in the parish.
2. Development proposals that would lead to any coalescence of Bantham and Buckland will not be permitted.

## Justification

- To provide clarity and certainty for the future development of the area
- To control and shape development within the parish
- To conserve and enhance the AONB, Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast and protect them from inappropriate development

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS1 & CS9, DP2 & DP15

NPPF: paras 10, 14-15, 53-55 & 114-116

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, SPT11, TTV1-TTV2, DEV8, DEV9 & DEV27

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2



### 3. Housing



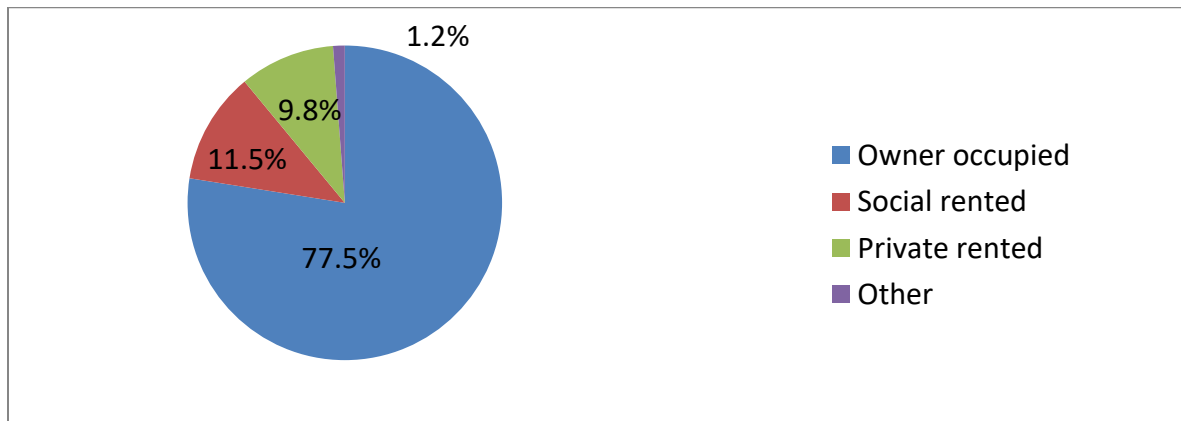
#### Objectives

To support small-scale housing development that will contribute towards making the parish more sustainable for the future: affordable housing for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent housing on the open market and open market housing for young people on lower and middle incomes to be able to afford to buy or rent.

## Background

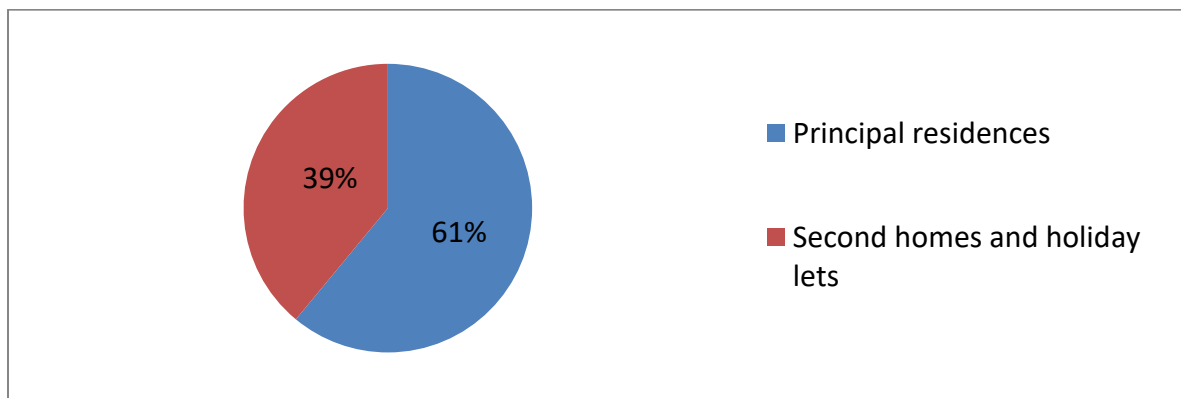
- 3.1 At the time of last census in 2011 the total population of the parish was 863, having risen by over 4% from 827 in 2001. The number of dwellings had risen by nearly 8% from 635 in 2001 to 685 in 2011; and the number of second homes and/or holiday lets had risen by 8.5% from 247 in 2001 to 268 in 2011.
- 3.2 In terms of tenure, owner-occupation is particularly high in the parish. In 2011 over 77% of those dwellings occupied year round were owner-occupied, whilst 11.5% were social rented and 9.8% privately rented. This high owner-occupation is a likely reflection of the parish's demographic profile, with 43% of the population being over 65. A further 268 dwellings were second homes and/or holiday lets, which represents 39% of all dwellings in the parish.

**Figure 10: Tenure, 2011**



Source: ONS, KS402EW

**Figure 11: Principal Residences, 2011**



Source: ONS, KS401EW



- 3.3 Many people who move to the parish can afford higher prices for their housing than existing residents and this has been to the detriment of local working people and their families who over the years have moved out of the parish in search of cheaper housing. According to one local estate agent, the greatest demand for buyers living outside the South Hams is for larger 3-4 bedroom detached houses and bungalows with sea views and larger gardens at prices in excess of £600,000. The same estate agent told us that young families tend not to ask about properties in the parish *“as they feel they have not got a chance at a price they could ever afford.”* Another estate agent told us: *“Thurlestone is a very popular coastal village where prices are generally higher than the surrounding area and is popular with buyers seeking a second home or early retired buyers seeking to enjoy the facilities in the village such as golf and access to the coastal walks.”* *“..... a high proportion of young families move from out of the area and have a significant budget to buy the higher price properties although there are other more local families who would like to buy in the Parish at c £300/£400,000.”*
- 3.4 In April 2017, the cost of 2-3 bedroom properties in the parish ranged from £349,950 to £475,000 for a bungalow or flat and £549,950 for a 3-bedroom terraced house. In October 2017, a 2-bedroom house in Thurlestone was on the market for over £1,000,000 (and is presently under offer), and five other 2-3-bedroom properties were on the market in the parish for between £295,000 for a 2-bedroom semi-detached cottage and £670,000 for a 3-bedroom bungalow. Even smaller properties which are normally aimed at first-time buyers or lower and middle-income families command high prices, as in the case of two 1-bedroom properties that were on the market in April 2017 for £200,000 and £250,000. To afford these properties, a household would need to have an annual income of around £60,000 and given that the average annual local wage for people living in the parish is in the region of £24,000, there is obviously some disparity between what the average family would earn and the house prices in the area that could make obtaining a mortgage difficult. With an annual income of £24,000, a couple may be able to obtain a mortgage of around £140,000, but they would also need to have access to a significant deposit.
- 3.5 Similarly, there is a shortage of rental properties in the parish, particularly properties that young working families can afford to rent, which would be £500-650 pcm. The maximum housing benefit payable to eligible claimants for a 3-bedroom property is currently £663.08 pcm, so rents above this amount will impact on young families trying to rent private accommodation within the parish.
- 3.6 At our **Community Engagement Meeting** in September 2015, comments on new housing in the parish fell into three categories:
- There was strong support for housing that was affordable for people earning an average wage both to buy and to rent to help redress the age profile: *“Housing [is] too expensive! We have to have a sustainable parish, enable youngsters to live/buy here.”* *“More affordable housing that will allow local people to stay within the community.”* *“We must have more affordable*

*housing. We need young people.” and “Less consideration of building for the wealthy, more consideration for the local community.”*

- Many were concerned about second homes: *“No more second homes. There are enough.”* and *“Any new housing should be for permanent residents only. No more second homes.”*
- There was also support for more suitable housing for the elderly: *“Suitable property for [the] elderly/disabled to rent, freeing up larger homes for families.”* *“Where there are existing bungalows it should be mandatory that these properties remain bungalows ... The reason for this is that if the current trend continues.... There will be fewer and fewer homes for the elderly.”*

- 3.7 In April 2016, a **Housing Needs Survey** was undertaken by South Hams District Council on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The survey was distributed to 696 households within the parish, including second homes and holiday lets. The response rate was 35%. Of the respondents, 78% lived permanently in the parish and 21% were second homeowners. The substantial number of second homeowners was surprising but reflects the high proportion of second homes in the parish. The survey was aimed primarily at affordable housing needs, but also obtained data relating to the private sector. The main objective of the survey was to find out the level of housing required to meet the needs of those living in the parish over the next 5-10 years and provide recommendations.
- 3.8 In May 2016, a wider ranging **Questionnaire** was circulated by hand to every household in the parish, including second homes and holiday lets (698 households). The response rate was 37% and this was broadly consistent across the three settlements and outlying rural areas. Of the respondents, 56% were over-65, 28% were households without children and 15% were households with children. This is representative of the household composition of Thurlestone parish when compared with the demographics from the 2011 census and it is therefore valid to break down the data by household type.
- 3.9 Whilst the parish is located entirely within the South Devon AONB and almost entirely within the Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast where development is restricted, the results of the Questionnaire demonstrated that the community supports new housing provided it is small-scale and there is a proven local need. The community recognises that notwithstanding these constraints, some housing is necessary if the parish is to become more sustainable, address local housing needs and age imbalance, and maintain its services and facilities. The community does not, however, support sacrificing green fields in the AONB for housing development that it considers does not contribute to the sustainable development of the parish, since the AONB is its greatest asset and the cornerstone of the local economy.

## Planning context

- 3.10 The NPPF supports the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes to help boost the supply of housing. Housing applications should be considered in favour of sustainable development and the local planning authorities should ensure their local plans meet full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, so far as consistent with NPPF policies, including identifying key sites, which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period.
- 3.11 Relevant policies for the supply of housing in the current Local Plan are out-of-date as SHDC has no five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Therefore, neighbourhood plans must have regard to the NPPF and to the evidence base of the emerging Joint Local Plan (JLP). In the emerging JLP, the parish falls under the Thriving Towns and Villages policy area and Thurlestone village is ranked as a Sustainable Village able to accommodate around 10 dwellings to meet local needs over the JLP plan period, 2014-2034. This figure takes into account the village's location within the AONB and Heritage Coast. Buckland and Bantham are given no indicative levels of new housing since they do not have the necessary services and facilities to rank as Sustainable Villages.
- 3.12 As stated in paragraph 2.23 above, this Plan does not include any site allocations but rather takes a holistic approach to sustainable development by looking at the parish in the context of a village network, where development in one settlement supports services and facilities in another for the benefit of the parish as a whole (in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF). In this way, the Plan will benefit the parish as a whole and help to satisfy the economic, social and environmental requirements needed to achieve sustainable development.

## Policies

- 3.13 The Questionnaire results showed that there was support for the provision of a few more homes in each of the three settlements within the parish over the Plan period and this support was consistent across the parish.
- 3.14 In terms of **housing requirements** in the parish over the next 15 years:
- 50% of respondents across the parish supported a few more homes in **Thurlestone** and 6% supported a lot more; whilst 50% of Thurlestone respondents supported a few more homes in Thurlestone and 5% supported a lot more.
  - 45% of respondents across the parish supported a few more homes in **Buckland** and 5% supported a lot more; whilst 48% of Buckland respondents supported a few more homes in Buckland and none supported a lot more.

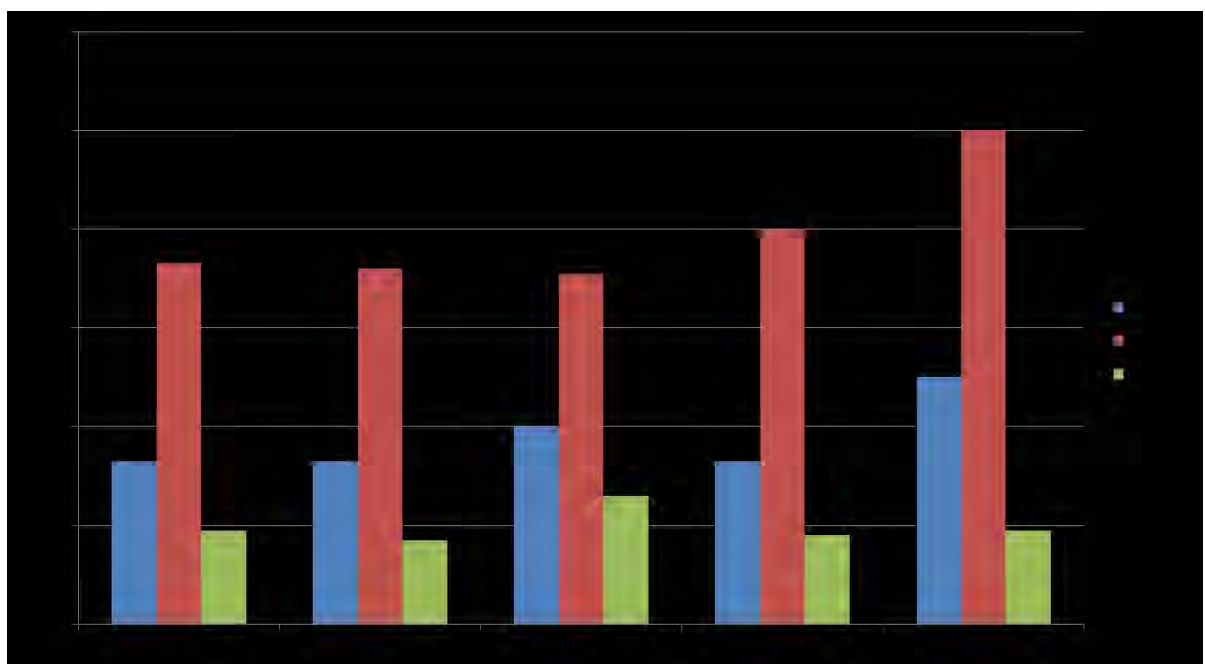


- 44% of respondents across the parish supported a few more homes in **Bantham** and 6% supported a lot more; whilst 53% of Bantham respondents supported a few more homes in Bantham and none supported a lot more.

3.15 It should be noted, however, that whilst only 48% of Buckland respondents supported a few more homes in Buckland, 36% thought that the amount of housing was about right, 16% thought it had too much already and none supported a lot more. The majority therefore supported a few more homes in Buckland over the other three options.

3.16 In terms of the **type of housing and tenure**, there was community support across the parish for houses (55%) and bungalows (45%), compared to flats (30%) (respondents were able to support more than one type). In particular, there was overwhelming support for the provision of 2-3 bedroom houses (73%), compared to 1-bedroom (35%) and 4 or more bedrooms (only 19%). See **Figure 12** below. The community recognises that the difficulty with building 4+ bedrooms houses is that there is every likelihood that they will become second homes or retirement homes and make the communities less sustainable, rather than more sustainable.

**Figure 12: Support for size of house by place of residence**



Source: Parish Questionnaire June 2016

3.17 In supporting the right type of housing development in the right places, this Plan therefore aims to enhance and maintain the vitality of all three settlements by facilitating the delivery of a wider choice of housing, in accordance with national policies and guidance, specifically:

- affordable housing for local people who are on the housing register and community-led housing for those who meet the Council’s eligibility criteria; and

- open market housing for working families on middle and lower incomes to be able to afford to buy or rent.

## Affordable housing

- 3.18** Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Low cost market housing is not included. Other forms of community-led housing such as community land trusts and co-housing, can also be considered as affordable housing if they provide a range of genuinely affordable housing in perpetuity (see 3.25 below).
- 3.19** The parish currently has a total of 47 affordable homes which are all located in Thurlestone. These properties are owned by three different housing associations and rented out to people who qualify as having a local connection. This means they live and/or work in the area and/or have immediate family living in the area. In effect, the 'area' includes neighbouring parishes, since so much depends on the time at which a property becomes available and whether there are people in housing need who qualify in the parish at that time.
- 3.20** Of these 47 affordable rental properties: there are 15 affordable homes for the over 55s comprising a mix of 1-2 bedroom bungalows; and 32 affordable homes for general needs (no age restriction) comprising twelve 2-3 bedroom houses and twenty 1-4 bedroom bungalows. Ostensibly, this is a good proportion of those houses that are permanently occupied in Thurlestone (11%); it is also a good mix of housing. However, our recent Housing Needs Survey revealed a demand for more affordable housing to meet local need.
- 3.21** According to our **Housing Needs Survey**, conducted in April 2016, there were 8 general needs households in the parish on the Devon Home Choice register, 7 of whom were in need of 1 and 2-bedroom properties, and there was 1 household registered on the Help to Buy register in need of a 2-bedroom property. Based on these figures and the rate of turnover of these properties (around 2 vacancies per year), the survey report therefore recommended the following level of new affordable housing provision for the parish over the next 5 years.

**Figure 13: Housing Need (2016 - 2021)**

Affordable rented	Discount market/shared ownership
1 x 1 bedroom general needs 2 x 2 bedroom general needs 1 x 3 bedroom general needs	1 x 2 or 3 bedroom property

*Source: SHDC Housing Needs Survey, April 2016*

- 3.22 A year later, in July 2017, there were still 8 general needs households in the parish on the Devon Home Choice register (although not necessarily the same 8 reported in June 2016). All 8 households were in need of 1 and 2-bedroom properties. The parish therefore has a proven need for five new affordable homes by 2021 and according to the results of the main Questionnaire, the community supports the provision of more affordable housing provided it can be demonstrated that there is a proven local need. Well over half of the respondents supported affordable housing for those unable to rent on the open market (58%). There was also support, although not as marked, for affordable housing for those unable to buy on the open market (51%).
- 3.23 All affordable housing to be provided will therefore be subject either to a 'local connection' requirement or to a main residence Devon Covenant-style restriction (or similar mechanism agreed by the Council). If a qualifying person cannot be found to meet the requirements of the Council's local connection requirement, then a 'cascade' will be applied whereby the criteria can be applied to someone from an adjoining parish, since houses cannot remain vacant if there is no one qualified to occupy them from the parish at the time they became available.
- 3.24 In 2014, four new eco-friendly affordable homes were completed on former council-owned land (site of the old telephone exchange) at **Parkfield**, Thurlestone. This was a brownfield site which had suffered a long period of dereliction. Since Thurlestone is situated within the AONB, this meant there were also sensitivities that needed to be overcome in the design process. At the time of completion, there were no local qualifying persons living in the parish, although it is understood that other local connection criteria were met. This inevitably leads to local scepticism as to whether more affordable housing in the parish is justified. For this reason, the Devon Home Choice and Help to Buy registers will therefore need to be kept under frequent review, since housing needs are constantly changing. This Plan accepts, however, that there is currently a proven need for five new affordable homes in the parish.
- 3.25 An alternative affordable housing solution is the provision of **community-led housing**. This is when local people play a leading role in addressing local housing problems by creating affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing. South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council have signed up to support a development programme that will help local communities provide housing to meet their own local need and have received almost £2m of government funding. The joint councils will use these funds to buy suitable sites or secure options with landowners and work with Community Land Trusts, parish councils and neighbourhood plan steering groups to bring forward development plans. Given that the parish has one of the highest percentages of second homes in the South Hams (39%) and house prices are beyond the reach of local working people, the parish is well placed to benefit from this government funding.



- 3.26 In their responses to the Questionnaire, families were particularly supportive of privately owned 2-3 bedroom houses and self/custom build plots, although the overall support for self/custom build plots across the other household types and across the parish was considerably less. Given the existing age demographic, the number of local people in the parish who would be able to drive such projects through may be small, nonetheless, this Plan supports community-led housing to address local housing needs and to provide a wider choice of housing that families can afford, in the event that such projects are put forward.
- 3.27 So far as the **location** of any new housing is concerned, the community has shown a strong preference for infill within existing villages. However, given the limited infill available and high land prices, it is envisaged that affordable housing will mainly be delivered by way of a village housing initiative and/or community-led housing on a rural exception site, i.e. land that would not normally be used for housing but would address clearly identified local housing needs.
- 3.28 A **village housing initiative** would provide a small proportion of open market houses that would cross-subsidise the affordable housing. Such a site would, however, need to be sustainable i.e. have good access to school, shops, services and facilities. In practice, this means located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of a village community and the parish as a whole. Whilst Bantham and Buckland are not identified as Sustainable Villages in the emerging JLP, they are close enough to Thurlestone to support and benefit from the services in Thurlestone, such as, the schools, shop, garage, church and parish hall. In this way, the three settlements form a village network and by supporting a village housing initiative and/or community-led housing for younger working people in or close to each settlement, this would help make the parish as a whole more sustainable.

## POLICY TP3 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Proposals for affordable housing will be supported, subject to viability, as either infill (including reuse of previously developed land) or as a rural exception site, including a village housing initiative or community-led housing, provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. can demonstrate that it will meet clearly identified local housing needs;
2. comprises a small-scale scheme of up to 10 dwellings with an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, reflecting the identified needs;
3. is located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of a village community and the parish as a whole;
4. occupied only by people with a Local Connection or who comply with a main residence Devon Covenant (or similar mechanism to be agreed by the Council) or who meet the Council's community-led housing eligibility criteria; and
5. in the case of a village housing initiative, the open market dwellings used to cross-subsidise the development are subject to a main residence Devon Covenant (or similar mechanism to be agreed by the Council) or a principal residence requirement (in accordance with Policy TP6).

'Identified local housing needs' means in accordance with the findings of the Council's Housing Needs Survey Report of June 2016 (and any revisions thereof).

'Local Connection' means people who live or work in the parish or have close links such as relatives or are wishing to move back to the parish, as defined in the South Hams Local Allocation Policy, September 2015 (and any amendments thereto). In the event that there are no local applicants, the properties will be made available on a cascade basis to applicants from adjoining parishes, namely, South Milton, Churchstow and Aveton Gifford.

### Justification

- To provide housing for young working people and prevent the further migration of local people out of the parish in search of cheaper housing
- To contribute to a more active, vibrant year-round community
- To support our schools, shops, services and facilities
- To enhance and maintain the vitality of all three villages and the parish as a whole

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS1, CS5, CS7, CS9, DP1-DP4, DP7 & AH4-AH5  
 NPPF: paras 10, 14-15, 17, 50, 54-55, 58, 111 & 114-116  
 Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, SPT11, TTV1-TTV2, TTV30-TTV31, DEV8-DEV9, DEV10, DEV20, DEV24-DEV25, DEV27, DEV31 & DEV32  
 South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2

## Open market housing

3.29 According to the emerging JLP evidence base and up to date data from the South Hams planning website, 5 new dwellings have been completed in the parish since 2014. A further 10 are under construction and 2 more have extant planning permission, but have not yet been implemented. Of these 17 properties, at least 12 are 4/5 bedroom houses that are valued (or likely to be valued) at over £1m. There are an additional 2 plots in Thurlestone within the settlement boundary that have outline planning permission.

3.30 In October 2017, the following properties were for sale in the parish:

Thurlestone	6-bedroom detached house	£ 2,000,000
	5-bedroom detached house (1 of 8)	1,100,000
	5-bedroom detached house	1,000,000
	5-bedroom detached house	860,000
	5-bedroom detached house	800,000
	4-bedroom detached house	600,000
	3-bedroom detached house	595,000
	3-bedroom bungalow	670,000
	3-bedroom bungalow	465,000
	2-bedroom detached house	1,000,000 +
Buckland	2-bedroom semi-detached cottage	295,000
	2/3-bedroom semi-detached house	469,000
Bantham	-	-

*Source: Rightmove, October 2017*

3.31 The **Housing Needs Survey** undertaken in 2016 by the Council also obtained data in the private sector and identified the following potential needs in the private sector over the next 5-10 years:

- More 2 and 3-bedroom properties for younger working people to buy in the £125,000 - £350,000 price range



- Self build/custom build plots for younger working people to buy at a discounted price
  - More rental properties for younger working people to rent for £500-650 pcm
  - Retention of a reasonable proportion of bungalows for those wishing to downsize as these are suited to the needs of the elderly and more suitable for adaptation.
- 3.32 The need for more **private rented properties** is more difficult to assess. In 2011, 9.8% of dwellings in the parish (41 dwellings) were privately rented. Of the respondents to the Housing Needs Survey, only 5% were renting in the private sector compared to 88% owner-occupiers. Similarly, only 7% of Questionnaire respondents were renting in the private sector compared to 93% owner-occupiers. Our enquiries among estate agents and local people suggested many young people had already been priced out of the area (although this too is difficult to quantify). Local employers also voiced their concerns about the lack of accommodation in the parish that was affordable for their staff to rent.
- 3.33 The Housing Needs Survey identified 5 respondents, including those with immediate family members who were living outside the parish, who would like private rental accommodation and they could afford £500-650 pcm for a 2-bedroom house or flat. The survey also flagged up the need for more rented properties for young people and families, if we were to redress our present age imbalance. The Survey Report advised that by encouraging younger people to the area, this would ensure the sustainability of the parish all year round and not just during the peak holiday period. This Plan therefore supports the provision of a few more 2-3 bedroom privately owned and privately rented properties for middle and lower income people.
- 3.34 So far as the location of any new housing is concerned, as stated above, the Questionnaire results showed a strong preference for infill rather than on land adjoining existing villages on a greenfield site. All of the land adjoining the three settlements is classified as Grade 3 agricultural quality and is, or could be, in beneficial agricultural use. Only if the community is to receive the maximum possible benefit, for example, by meeting clearly identified local housing needs, does this Plan consider the countryside should be sacrificed for development.
- 3.35 The provision of new open market housing in the parish will therefore only be supported if it is confined to infill, i.e. built within the settlement boundaries designated in this Plan and including reused previously developed land. This is consistent with the parish's location within the South Devon AONB which has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. It is also consistent with its location within the Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast, whose distinctive landscapes must be protected and enhanced, and where only development that can demonstrate that it requires a coastal location and cannot reasonably be located outside the Undeveloped Coast will be permitted.

## POLICY TP4 – OPEN MARKET HOUSING

1. Proposals for open market housing within the settlement boundaries designated in this Plan will be supported as infill (including reuse of previously developed land) provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:
  - i. comprises a small-scale scheme of up to 5 dwellings, or individual plots, of a size, type and tenure that reflects clearly identified local housing needs;
  - ii. each dwelling is subject to a principal residence requirement (in accordance with Policy TP6).
2. Proposals for open market housing on land adjoining the settlement boundaries designated in this Plan (apart from as part of a rural exception site where the market housing is required to cross subsidise the affordable housing scheme), including agricultural or amenity land, and in the open countryside within the South Devon AONB, Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast will not be supported.

‘Identified local housing needs’ means in accordance with findings of the Council’s Housing Needs Survey Report of June 2016 (and any revisions thereof).

### Justification

- To provide housing for young working people and prevent the further migration of local people out of the parish in search of cheaper housing
- To contribute to a more active, vibrant year-round community
- To support our schools, shops, services and facilities
- To enhance and maintain the vitality of all three villages and the parish as a whole

#### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS1, CS5, CS7, CS8-CS9, DP1-DP4, DP7, DP11

NPPF: paras 10, 14-15, 17, 50, 54-55, 58, 111 & 114-116

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, SPT11, TTV1-TTV2, TTV30-TTV31, DEV5, DEV8 - DEV10, DEV20, DEV24-DEV25, DEV27, DEV31-DEV32

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2

## Reuse of farm and rural buildings for Residential Purposes

- 3.36 The Questionnaire results showed strong support (83%) for the conversion of existing rural/farm buildings to residential use. This is consistent with national and the current local plan policies, but only provided priority is given to economic uses before residential uses and the character of the building and its landscape setting is not harmed.

### POLICY TP5 – REUSE OF FARM AND RURAL BUILDINGS FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES

Proposals for the reuse of farm and rural buildings for residential purposes outside the settlement boundaries designated in this Plan will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. can demonstrate that the use of the premises is no longer required for agricultural or any other economic use;
2. the building is structurally sound and is capable of conversion without significant rebuilding or extensions and respects the original architectural and/or historic character of the building;
3. the new dwelling is subject to a principal residence requirement (in accordance with Policy TP6);
4. any proposal will be required to assess the impact of the proposal on protected species, to propose appropriate mitigation and ensure that, as a result of the development, there is no loss of existing biodiversity interest; and
5. any proposal will be required to assess the impact of the proposed development on the building and provide a record of the historic fabric.

### Justification

- To bring disused farm and rural buildings back into use
- To enhance and preserve the historic fabric of the parish in accordance with AONB and Heritage Coast principles
- To minimise impact on biodiversity

#### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS1, CS7-CS9, DP1-DP4, DP7, DP15-DP16

NPPF: para 55

Emerging JLP: SPT11, TTV31 & DEV27

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2

## Principal residence requirement

- 3.37 At the time of the last census in 2011, 39% of all dwellings in the parish were second homes and/or holiday lets. The average figure across the South Hams was 15%. The number of second homes and/or holiday lets had risen by 8.5% from 247 in 2001 to 268 in 2011. Following on from the original Community Engagement Meeting in 2015 where second homes were a major concern, the Questionnaire results showed strong community support for a restriction to be imposed on all new open market housing to ensure it is used as the occupier's principal home and not as a second home and/or holiday let: 67% of respondents supported such a requirement. This reflects the community's concerns about the impact of second homes on the sustainability of the area.
- 3.38 Whilst it is recognised that second homes do bring in work to the local area as they employ local trades and businesses, the pressure for retirement homes and second homes has helped push up house prices in the parish to 7-figure sums.
- 3.39 In some parts of the parish, notably, the Yarmer Estate, Whimbrels Edge (which adjoins The Mead) and the main street in Thurlestone, the proportion of second homes and/or holiday lets far outweighs the number of homes occupied all year round. On the Yarmer estate, 60 out of 80 dwellings (75%) are second homes and/or holiday lets, whilst in Bantham, 33 out of 57 dwellings (58%) are second homes and/or holiday lets and in Buckland, 30 out of 71 dwellings (42%).
- 3.40 There is a further problem in that 2 or 3-bedroom new build housing that may be affordable to young working families and downsizers make attractive second homes. In 1998, planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of two sites in Thurlestone that were previously occupied by farm buildings and village shop: none of the 19 new properties (which included three 2-bedroom and eight 3-bedroom houses) are currently occupied year round.
- 3.41 Of the Questionnaire respondents who were principal home owners, 78% supported a principal residence requirement. The concern is that a further increase in the proportion of second homes would be detrimental to the viability of the area, its services and facilities, and would only exacerbate problems already raised by both the existing high proportion of second homes and the existing age imbalance. Whilst second homes support tourism, they do so mainly on a seasonal basis only, and do not support the year-round vitality of the community, for example, the clubs and societies, the schools and parish hall. Similarly, the local people they employ are in low paid jobs, for example, gardening, property maintenance and house cleaning. The question as to whether or not second homes contribute to the achievement of sustainable development has been the subject of numerous academic works and press articles, and a High Court challenge.
- 3.42 The recent case of R. (on the application of RLT Built Environment) v Cornwall Council and St Ives Town Council [2016] EWHC 2817 (Admin) confirmed that a



principal residence requirement on new open market housing is legally enforceable where it can be shown that further development without the restriction would be unsustainable and that such a requirement would contribute towards sustainable development. The same holds true for Thurlestone parish, where the proportion of second homes is 39% compared to 25% in St Ives.

- 3.43 This Plan therefore supports a requirement to restrict the uncontrolled growth and any adverse impact of additional second homes and/or holiday lets on the basis that it considers this is necessary for the economic and social wellbeing of the community. The argument that the restriction would depress the value of market housing to the extent that it would become commercially unattractive and not deliver any affordable housing, cannot be sustained in the parish due to its location within three landscape designations where there are national and local policies restricting development to local housing needs.
- 3.44 The imposition of a principal residence requirement is undoubtedly a necessary and proportionate response to a local issue, which has recently been recognised at national and district level. Due to the high gap between earnings and house prices, compounded by the high demand for second homes, South Hams and West Devon have been awarded almost £2m of the Community Housing Fund, with further funding anticipated, which the parish would hope to benefit from in order to bring forward community-led housing in the parish (see 3.25 above).

#### POLICY TP6 – PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

1. Proposals for open market housing (excluding one for one replacement dwellings) will be supported where there is a Section 106 agreement to ensure occupancy as a principal residence. A principal residence is defined as a dwelling occupied as the resident's sole or main residence, where the resident spends the majority of their time when not working away from home. Proof of principal residence includes, but is not limited to, being registered on the local electoral roll, at the local school or for local healthcare.
2. Proposals for open market housing (excluding one for one replacement dwellings) without a requirement to ensure occupancy as a principal residence will not be supported.
3. Where proposals for the replacement of existing dwellings by more than the number of dwellings to be demolished is approved, the additional properties will be subject to a Section 106 agreement to ensure occupancy as a principal residence.

## Justification

- To help meet the housing needs of local people and prevent the further migration of young working people out of the parish in search of cheaper housing
- To contribute to a more active, vibrant year-round community
- To support our schools, shops, services and facilities
- To enhance and maintain the vitality of all three villages and the parish as a whole

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS1, CS9, & DP11

NPPF: paras 10, 14, 114-116

Emerging JLP: SPT1 - SPT2 & DEV9

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2

## Replacement dwellings and extensions to existing dwellings

- 3.45 Where there are proposals to replace existing dwellings or extend existing dwellings, there was strong community support from Questionnaire respondents for the imposition of conditions to establish criteria for such development to ensure that it is appropriate, for example, in terms of its scale and impact on the character of the area. There was almost unanimous support for a policy to control such development in the parish (94%).
- 3.46 The protection of views is clearly important in the parish as a whole, but particularly on the Yarmer and The Mead estates and elsewhere in Thurlestone, where development follows the contours of the coast so as to optimise sea views which are an integral part of their visual amenity. Since no one has a legal right to a view, it is even more pertinent to the parish that residents have a policy in place that they can rely on.
- 3.47 In the case of the Mead estate, a substantial majority of the 116 residential dwellings are bungalows, with houses located at the top of the estate. Bungalows are not always suited to the needs of a family, but they do meet the needs of older people due to their adaptability for disability. In the Housing Needs Survey, 29% of respondents occupied a bungalow and 6% of respondents stated that their property had been adapted for disability, detailing grab rails, wet rooms and stair lifts.
- 3.48 This Plan therefore supports restrictions on the ridge height, bulk and scale of all replacement dwellings as a means of retaining bungalows, rather than building more bungalows on land adjoining the existing settlements. The retention of a

reasonable proportion of bungalows would also serve the needs of those wishing to downsize (see 3.50 below).

- 3.49 It is also recognised that there is a trend towards small businesses being run from home, which has been facilitated by superfast broadband. Accordingly, this Plan supports any proposals for extensions (including annexes) or conversion to enable homeworking, subject to the same criteria that govern all replacement dwellings and extensions to existing dwellings.

## POLICY TP7 – REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS AND EXTENSIONS

1. Proposals for the replacement of existing dwellings will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:
  - i. outside the settlement boundaries designated in this Plan the number of dwellings is no more than the number of dwellings to be demolished or replaced and excludes the inappropriate sub-division of plots; and
  - ii. the size of the replacement dwelling (including garage and any accommodation below ground) does not exceed the floor area or total volume of the original dwelling by more than 25%; and
  - iii. the replacement dwelling (including garage and any accommodation below ground) is located on the same footprint as the existing dwelling, unless on design, landscape, highway safety, residential amenity or other environmental grounds, a more appropriate location can be agreed; and
  - iv. the bulk, scale, ridge height, materials and design of the replacement dwelling and of any associated works (such as boundary fences or walls) is in keeping with the form and character of the locality, particularly, in areas where bungalows predominate and create an open, relatively uniform streetscape.

‘The original dwelling’ means the size of the dwelling as at 31 March 2018, subject to any extant planning permission relating thereto.
2. Proposals for extensions to existing dwellings (including annexes to facilitate homeworking), which do not have the benefit of permitted development rights, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:
  - i. is subordinate in scale and form to the existing dwelling; and
  - ii. in the case of annexes, the use of the annexe remains ancillary to the original dwelling and cannot be occupied by an independent household.

## Justification

- To prevent overdevelopment, inappropriate development and adverse impact on the South Devon AONB, Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast
- To provide certainty for planning applicants and the community, and obviate disputes
- To facilitate homeworking and help contribute to sustainable development
- To support a healthy and socially inclusive community by helping to address the needs of older people

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS7, CS9, DP1-DP4, DP15 & DP17

NPPF: paras 9-10, 17, 56-59, 61, 64, 66, 114-116 & 123

Emerging JLP: TTV32

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/P1 & Plan/P2

## Housing for older people

- 3.50** Between 2001 and 2011, the population aged 65+ grew by just over 3% and by 2011, accounted for just over 43% of the population. In the Housing Needs Survey, 61 respondents considered they or someone in their household may need to move within the next 5 years, of whom 50% gave age or health-related reasons, including the need to downsize or move out of the parish to be near family for support. This number increased to 81 respondents who considered their own housing requirement or need was likely to change within the next 10 years: 75% gave age or health-related reasons, including 16 respondents who stated they may need to downsize.
- 3.51** There was overall strong community support in the Housing Needs Survey for the provision of suitable housing designed for older people. At least 22 respondents stated that they would like to move to sheltered or assisted living accommodation, offering a mix of 2-bedroom flats and bungalows over the next 5-10 years. Assisted living accommodation offers assistance with daily activities, such as, dressing, bathing, eating and toileting. There are, however, particular criteria that sheltered or assisted living accommodation would need to meet in terms of accessibility, which is why an urban location is more suitable.
- 3.52** The provision of specialist housing for older people is a County matter and for the long term, Devon County Council has a Strategy for Extra-Care Housing involving existing residential care homes in or near market towns. This is intended to complement other types of provision for older people, particularly for those unable to continue living in their own homes. For the short term, this Plan supports



restrictions on the ridge height, bulk and scale of all replacement dwellings and extensions (in accordance with Policy TP7 of this Plan) as a means of retaining bungalows, which are suited to adaptation for disability and will go some way to serving the needs of those wishing to downsize. Further, as the research undertaken by Devon County Council shows, the aspirations of older people are changing, and there is evidence to indicate that up to four-fifths of older people would prefer to stay in their own home for as long as possible. The provision of care packages to more homes, with alarms linked to a 24-hour care system, will assist.

## 4. Local Economy



### Objectives

To support existing businesses and provide new employment opportunities and to promote sustainable growth in the local economy which is appropriate to the parish's location within the South Devon AONB

## Background

- 4.1 Traditionally, farming and fishing were the main sources of employment in the parish. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were 48 farms extending over 900 acres and around 65% of the working male population were employed in agriculture. Today, there are eight working farms in the parish and at the last census in 2011, only 12 people, representing 4% of those economically active in the parish, were employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- 4.2 Agriculture in the parish comprises a mixture of arable and pastoral farming (mainly cattle and sheep) and the land is of good to moderate agricultural quality. All the farms are privately owned and mainly operated by family members. Consequently, with very few additional employees, farming does not provide many employment opportunities and those few that are employed are at the lower end of the pay scale. Generally, in line with farmers elsewhere in the country, farm owners are looking to supplement their businesses with other activities, such as camping, renting out farm buildings for self-employed craft industries and storage; and in one case, developing an organic vineyard.
- 4.3 Historically, fishing too was an important source of employment in the parish. Huge shoals of pilchards came into Bigbury Bay which were cured with salt at Bantham and then exported throughout Europe from the 1600s up until 1866, when the pilchards mysteriously disappeared. There was also netting for salmon at the Salmon Pool in Bantham but the licence to fish salmon granted by the Duchy of Cornwall, which owns the fundus of the estuary, lapsed in the 1980s. There was also commercial farming of oysters and mussels in the Avon estuary for many years. There remain salmon, sea trout and bass nursery areas in the Avon estuary, but there is no commercial fishing at Bantham today.
- 4.4 According to the last census in 2011, the number of people resident in the parish who were economically active was 336 and those in employment numbered 325. The main sources of employment are shown below.

**Figure 14: Industry, 2011**

<b>All Usual Residents aged 16 to 74 in Employment</b>	<b>Total = 325</b>	<b>% age</b>
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	43	13%
Construction	37	11%
Accommodation and food service activities	37	11%
Human health and social work activities	35	11%
Education	32	10%

Source: ONS, KS605EW

- 4.5 The main employers in the parish (including part time and casual workers) are: the Thurlestone Hotel, Thurlestone Golf Club, Thurlestone Court Care Home, the Sloop Inn, All Saints' Primary School, the Bantham Estate and Pearson Pre-school. Most of their employees live outside the parish, mainly due to the cost of accommodation within the parish. The only exception being those working for the Bantham Estate who rent properties from the Estate in Bantham; and there is some accommodation for hotel staff within the grounds of the Thurlestone Hotel and elsewhere in the village.
- 4.6 A substantial number of those who are economically active in the parish are self-employed. According to the 2011 census, 37% of those economically active in the parish were self-employed. Businesses currently range from skilled trades and construction, gardening and catering, to recruitment, floral design and a travel agency.
- 4.7 At our **Community Engagement Meeting** in September 2015, there was positive support for more small-scale, year-round employment opportunities within the parish. Comments ranged from: *"Yes – it would enable people to live and work locally"* and *"Jobs are the only way to sustainable prosperity"* to: *"Maybe a small complex for businesses and individuals to work from"* and *"Business initiatives, office space, a small business park especially now superfast broadband is here."* More specifically, there was support for a small artisan development of arts and crafts workshops and for boat building at Bantham on the basis that this would benefit the community and make it a year-round village, vibrant in the winter as well as the summer.
- 4.8 The interviews that were subsequently conducted with landowners, local employers and employees in the parish, and the results of the Questionnaire, also demonstrated strong community support for small scale, proportionate and sustainable economic development in accordance with our Vision statement.
- 4.9 The parish lends itself to the perfect 'work-life balance' and there are signs that the younger families that have moved in over recent years respect and are enjoying the benefits that the area offers in terms of wellbeing and quality of life. According to the 2011 census, 19% of those economically active in the parish were home workers (well over the South Hams average of 11%). Now, with the arrival of superfast broadband, these figures are set to rise.
- 4.10 Of the total number of people in the households represented in the **Questionnaire** in 2016, 23% of those in employment worked from home. Homeworkers include those working flexibly away from their normal place of work and those who can work from home because their businesses can rely on the internet. They include businesses ranging from PR/marketing and events consultancies, medical research, financial services, to caterers, specialist film making and photography, outward bound and team building, importing and distributing sports equipment, building and selling model train engines, and building state-of-the-art lignum surfboards and paddle boards.



- 4.11 This Plan seeks to encourage more homeworking, which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by reducing dependence on the car and supporting the use of local facilities and services.

## Planning context

- 4.12 The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

- 4.13 To promote a prosperous rural economy, the NPPF states that local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural buildings;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- 4.14 The Local Development Framework supports the provision of year-round, high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable economic development including tourism; and maintaining and developing a prosperous countryside, encouraging sustainable development including rural regeneration and diversification. It also supports the enhancement and provision of new local facilities and resists the change of use and redevelopment of local facilities, including small commercial uses in rural communities, such as village shops, post offices, pubs and garages (or petrol stations and repair services).

- 4.15 The emerging Joint Local Plan supports sustainable rural communities and development in the countryside, but only where it meets the essential, small-scale local development needs of the community and provides a sustainable solution. Proposals that seek to improve the balance of jobs within rural areas and diversify the rural economy, such as business start-ups, home working and small-scale employment, and the development and expansion of small business, will generally be supported, subject to an assessment of their impact on neighbouring uses and the environment.

## Policies

- 4.16 The results of the Questionnaire demonstrated that there is a strong level of community support for more employment within the parish (72%). This support was from all household types, but notably from households with children (86%). It was also evenly spread across all three settlements and outlying rural area.
- 4.17 The South West is regarded as a magnet for tech companies and in this digital age, the opportunities for start-ups and entrepreneurs have never been greater. There are concerns, however, that economic development in the parish should be weighed against any significant harmful impacts it may have on the surrounding countryside, since the whole of the parish lies within the South Devon AONB. Most of the parish also lies within the South Devon Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast (excluding Thurlestone village), where stringent national and local policies already apply. Any proposals should therefore be small-scale and serve the needs of the parish, its residents and its visitors, but not at the expense of what the community value most – the natural beauty of the area.

### POLICY TP8 – NEW ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

1. Proposals for economic development and new commercial or business premises will be supported within the Parish where a proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and other relevant policies within this Plan.
2. Proposals that facilitate homeworking and flexible working practices, such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit, will be supported where they meet the requirements of Policy TP1.

### Justification

- To provide opportunities for local employment
- To help contribute to a more active, vibrant year-round working community
- To ensure a sustainable community by generating more jobs to attract younger people to the area
- To secure the sustainable future of the local economy
- To help build resilience in the local economy
- To help support local schools, shops, services and facilities

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS3, CS7-10, CS13, DP15-DP16

NPPF: paras 9, 17, 19-21, 28 & 37

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV15 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/05, Econ/P3 & Plan/P1

## Tourism

- 4.18 In the first quarter of 2016, visits to the South West saw a 17% increase from 2.9 million in 2015 to 3.5 million; and spending by visitors rose from £596 million to £676 million, up 13%. Tourism is the key economic and employment activity in the parish, although the majority of employment is at low income levels. In 2011, it is estimated that just over 15% of those economically active in the parish were employed in tourism. Tourism is a significant part of the local economy and helps the viability of smaller-scale businesses, including local public houses and shops. However, due to the seasonality of the tourist industry, there is support in the community for seeking ways by which the industry might be extended throughout the year.
- 4.19 The challenge is therefore how to extend the tourist season beyond the peak holiday periods and ensure that development relating to the tourist industry has economic, social and environmental benefits for the whole parish. This depends on us being able to embrace progress but not at the expense of the natural environment, which is our most valuable resource. Through enabling the small-scale expansion and provision of new facilities, this Plan therefore seeks to contribute to positive sustainable growth.
- 4.20 The Questionnaire results showed strong community support for the expansion of the existing **shops** (59%), **cafes/restaurants** (64%) and **bed and breakfast businesses** (82%). At present, the parish has a village shop in Thurlestone; a village shop and café in Bantham; and in excess of 100 holiday lets and B&Bs evenly spread throughout the parish. Of those who participated in the Wellbeing Family Events held over Easter 2016, 73% used the café at Bantham, 91% used the shop in Thurlestone and 56% used the shop in Bantham.
- 4.21 The Questionnaire results showed support (albeit less) for the expansion of **hotels and pubs** (43% & 48% respectively). This would seem to reflect the view that the area is already well provided with these facilities. The parish has a 4-star hotel in Thurlestone with 65 rooms and 12 suites, a spa and leisure club, 9-hole golf course and pub which serves food; and in Bantham, a pub with 6 rooms and family unit, which serves food. But there are also widespread concerns that such expansion could have a harmful impact on the already congested narrow roads, the limited infrastructure and South Devon AONB.

## POLICY TP9 – EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

Proposals for the expansion of the following tourism-related businesses: shops, cafes and restaurants, bed and breakfast businesses, hotels and pubs, which do not have the benefit of permitted development rights, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and is proportionate in scale and extent to the existing premises.

### Justification

- To help support existing local businesses, their sustainable growth and expansion
- To help support sustainable tourism that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respects the character of the Undeveloped Coast and countryside
- To help extend the tourist season

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS13 & DP12

NPPF: paras 17, 19-21 & 28

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, DEV15 & DEV 31

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P9, Plan/05, & Plan/P1

## New Businesses

- 4.22 There was also strong support from Questionnaire respondents for the provision of the following new business premises: **a farm shop** (82%), **arts and crafts workshops** (72%), **cafés and restaurants** (54%), but not at the expense of existing businesses. At present, the parish has no farm shop, no premises for arts and crafts industries, and aside from the three Citroen H vans in the Ham car park (Gastrobus) offering refreshments to beach users, one café attached to the Bantham village shop.
- 4.23 Respondents expressed their support for the development of quality businesses, rather than simply more businesses. The parish already has numerous artisans (painters, potters, sculptors, timber house builders, jewellery and furniture designers and makers) and a high survival rate for start-up businesses. Workshop space for artisans, which could include retail studio space, was particularly well supported by attendees at the initial Community Engagement Meeting and by those who took part in the Questionnaire, as a means of enabling people to work and live locally and help make the parish more sustainable. A farm shop was also well supported although there were concerns about its potential viability.



- 4.24 The highest levels of support for these new businesses were from households with children and second homeowners (as high as 86%, in the case of arts and crafts workshops), apart from the farm shop, which had the most support from households without children (88%) and second homeowners (95%).
- 4.25 Support for the provision of a **surf and watersports shop** was more evenly balanced overall (a 50/50 split), but there was a high level of support from households with children (61%) and from second homeowners (72%). At present, there is the Bantham Surfing Academy which operates out of two containers, offering lessons and courses in surfing, stand-up paddle boarding, lifeguard and surf instruction. Surfboards, and watersports equipment are sold at the business park in Churchstow, outside the parish, but there are no retail facilities in Bantham.

### POLICY TP10 – NEW BUSINESSES

Proposals for the development of new premises suitable for the following tourism-related businesses: cafes, restaurants and surf and water sports shop, as well as arts and craft workshops and farm shop, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. is appropriate and proportionate in scale and extent to the rural and coastal character of the locality; and
2. located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of a village community and the parish as a whole.

### Justification

- To help contribute to and retain a more active, vibrant year-round working community
- To ensure a sustainable community by generating more jobs to attract younger people to the area
- To help support sustainable rural tourism that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respects the character of the Undeveloped Coast and countryside
- To help extend the tourist season
- To secure the sustainable future of the local economy
- To help build resilience in the local economy

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS13 & DP12

NPPF: paras 9, 17, 19-21 & 28

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV 15 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P9, Plan/05, Plan/P1 & Econ/P1

- 4.26 By contrast, there was strong opposition from Questionnaire respondents to the expansion and provision of new **caravan and campsites** (75% and 78% respectively). Whilst 51% of households with children supported new sites, 71% of households without children and 91% of those aged 65+ were against them. This was principally on the grounds that they would exacerbate the existing problem of traffic congestion on the narrow lanes within the parish.
- 4.27 There are presently two caravan sites in the parish: one is a static caravan park with 30 static caravans plus Caravan Club field with tents; the other is a camping field with 50 pitches in peak season and available April to September (inclusive). Some people have been coming to these sites for 50 years or more and clearly, local tourism depends on repeat business.
- 4.28 This Plan therefore supports the small-scale expansion of these existing caravan and campsites and recognises that if there is a proven demand for such facilities and provided there is no significant harmful impact upon the AONB, particularly on the roads, it will make a policy exception. New caravan and campsites will not, however, be supported.

## POLICY TP11 – CARAVAN, CAMP AND CHALET SITES

1. Proposals for the expansion of existing caravan and campsites will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:
  - i. can demonstrate that there is a proven demand for such use;
  - ii. of an appropriate scale in relation to its setting; and
  - iii. sited to be visually unobtrusive, given the location of the parish within the South Devon AONB, the South Devon Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast.
2. Proposals for the development of new caravan, campsites and chalet sites, will not be supported given the location of the parish within the South Devon AONB, the South Devon Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast.

## Justification

- To help support existing local businesses, their sustainable growth and expansion
- To help support sustainable rural tourism that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respects the character of the undeveloped coast and countryside

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: DP12 - DP13

NPPF: paras 28 & 114-116

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, DEV15 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P9, Plan/05 & Plan/P1

## New Business Hub

- 4.29 Other economic development that has community support is the development of a new business hub (57% of respondents). A hub would take the form of a flexible interactive workspace that offers shared facilities, including office space and meeting room, and provides a full range of IT and photocopying facilities. Sharing such a space with other businesses provides many benefits, including collaboration, networking and other social and economic benefits that contribute to sustainable development. This would particularly benefit the homeworkers and the self-employed. The Questionnaire results showed 89% support from households with children and 57% support from households without children for a new business hub. It was recognised that small professional and service businesses would benefit, such as, import/export and consultancy-type businesses

### POLICY TP12 – NEW BUSINESS HUB

Proposals for the development of a new business hub for B1 Business Use with shared facilities for small businesses will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. the premises are of a small scale and extent proportionate to the coastal and rural character of the locality; and
2. located where they will enhance or maintain the vitality of a village community and the parish as a whole.

## Justification

- To help contribute to and retain a more active, vibrant year-round working community
- To help support rural regeneration and diversification
- To enhance the sustainability of the community by less dependence on the car

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS13, DP15 & DP16

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV15 & DEV31

NPPF: paras 9, 17, 19-21, 28 & 37

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P9, Plan/05, Plan/P1 & Econ/P3

## New Marine-related Workshops

4.30 The Questionnaire results also showed that there was community support for new small-scale workshops, for example, for boat building, boat repairs and outboard engine servicing (66%). The support for new small-scale workshops was evenly spread across all households: 84% support from households with children, 69% support from households without children and 59% support from those aged 65 and over. These workshops would require specialist skills that already exist in the parish and would be encouraged. The Bantham Estate has 140 moorings on the River Avon and at present, boat storage, maintenance and repair is carried out at Coronation Quay and Boathouse. Opportunities exist for various enterprises centred on boating activities at Coronation Quay, Dixons Quay and on or close to the Avon estuary that this Plan would support, on the basis that they would provide a form and level of employment that would enhance rather than harm the character of the area and be in keeping with local tradition.

### POLICY TP13 – NEW MARINE-RELATED WORKSHOPS

Proposals for the development of new marine-related workshops for e.g. boat building, boat repairs and outboard engine servicing, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. the premises are of a small scale and extent proportionate to the coastal and rural character of the locality; and
2. located on or close to the Avon estuary.



## Justification

- To help contribute to and retain a more active, vibrant year-round working community
- To ensure a sustainable community by generating more jobs to attract younger people to the area
- To help extend the tourist season
- To help build resilience in the local economy and secure its sustainable future

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS13, DP12, DP15 & DP16

NPPF: paras 17, 19-21 & 28

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV15 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Est/P2, Plan/05, Plan/P1, Econ/P1 & Econ/P3

## Storage Space

- 4.31 The Questionnaire results showed that support for the provision of more storage space for local businesses was evenly balanced (50:50 split). Storage is important for local businesses and residents, particularly those employed in outdoor events and water sports. Interviews conducted in the parish confirmed that there is a shortage of storage space in the parish and a significant demand for more storage space. At present, local businesses are forced to rent premises outside the parish and the provision of more storage space would assist the local economy. It would also help to reduce the number of traffic movements on our narrow country lanes, which are already congested.
- 4.32 This Plan therefore supports the provision of more storage space for local businesses and there are a number of redundant or disused barns and rural buildings in the parish that could be used for this purpose.

### POLICY TP14 – STORAGE SPACE

1. Proposals for the development of more storage space for local business or commercial use, e.g. for boats and watersports equipment, which do not have the benefit of permitted development rights, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the premises are of a small scale and extent proportionate to the coastal and rural character of the locality.
2. The loss of storage space will not be supported as there is a lack of storage space for local business and commercial use within the parish.

## Justification

- To help support existing local businesses, their sustainable growth and expansion
- To support rural regeneration and diversification

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS13, DP15 & DP16

NPPF: paras 17, 19, 20-21 & 28

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV15 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/05, Plan/P1 & Econ/P3

## Change of use of farm and rural buildings for Commercial Purposes

- 4.33 The change of use of farm and rural buildings to create new opportunities for local business, commercial or storage purposes also received substantial community support from those who took part in the Questionnaire (77%). This can be seen as a way of minimising environmental impact in the open countryside provided that their conversion is in keeping with the surrounding area, the South Devon AONB. The recent conversion of a piggery to a home office and music studio in West Buckland is a particularly good example of how a small, dilapidated farm building can be sensitively brought back into use for local employment purposes and enhance the historic fabric of the settlement.
- 4.34 Since May 2013, the change of use of redundant agricultural buildings with a floor space of less than 500 square metres to alternative commercial uses can be made without planning permission, although prior written approval must be obtained from the local planning authority for buildings in excess of 150 square metres. However, given our location in the South Devon AONB, this Plan encourages all such proposals to adopt the same standards as those conversions that require planning permission.

## POLICY TP15 – CHANGE OF USE OF FARM AND RURAL BUILDINGS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Proposals for the change of use of farm and rural buildings to create new opportunities for local business, commercial or storage purposes (B1 or B8 Uses), which do not have the benefit of permitted development rights, will be supported provided that the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. can demonstrate that the use of the premises is no longer required for agricultural purposes;
2. the building is structurally sound and no significant rebuilding or extensions are involved and the original architectural and/or historic character of the building is respected;
3. any proposal will be required to assess the impact of the proposal on protected species, to propose appropriate mitigation and ensure that, as a result of the development, there is no loss of existing biodiversity interest; and
4. any proposal will be required to assess the impact of the proposed development on the building and provide a record of the historic fabric.

### Justification

- To support rural regeneration and diversification
- To help support existing local businesses, their sustainable growth and expansion
- To secure the sustainable future of the local economy
- To help build resilience in the local economy

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS13, DP15 & DP16

NPPF: paras 19-21 & 28

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV15 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Plan/05, Plan/P1 & Econ/P3

## Loss of Employment Uses

- 4.35 There was also almost unanimous community support from those who took part in the Questionnaire for keeping existing business and commercial premises, including shops and pubs, in uses that support employment (97%). There were particular concerns about the future of the existing garage in Thurlestone, which occupies over a quarter of an acre site next to Thurlestone Parish Hall and provides valuable car servicing, repairs and MOT service for the local community. For change of use, it will be necessary to provide evidence that the premises are no longer economically viable and have been extensively marketed at a reasonable market price for at least a year, and that the proposed alternative use would provide benefits for the local economy and sustainable future for the community.
- 4.36 In particular, the loss and change of use of hotels, guest houses, residential institutions and dwellings currently restricted by condition for use as holiday accommodation to residential use will be supported only provided that such premises are used for affordable housing to meet local housing needs.

### POLICY TP16 – LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT USES

1. The loss of employment land, business and commercial premises including but not limited to A1 (shops), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (pubs), B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) Uses to other uses, which do not have the benefit of permitted development rights, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:
  - i. can demonstrate that the use of the premises is no longer economically viable for its existing lawful use;
  - ii. the premises have been extensively marketed at a reasonable market price for a minimum of 12 months; and
  - iii. the proposed alternative use would provide benefits for the local economy and supports a sustainable local community.
2. The change of use of C1 (hotels and guest houses), C2 (residential institutions) Uses and dwellings currently restricted by condition for use as holiday accommodation to C3 (dwelling houses) Use, which do not have the benefit of permitted development rights, will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and is used to meet local housing needs (in accordance with Policy TP3).

## Justification

- To protect the few existing sources of local employment and key local facilities that are available in the parish
- To help contribute to and retain a more active, vibrant year-round working community

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF Policies: DP9, DP12 & DP14

NPPF: paras 28 & 70

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, DEV3, DEV14-DEV15, DEV18 & DEV19

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P9 & Plan/05



## 5. Wellbeing



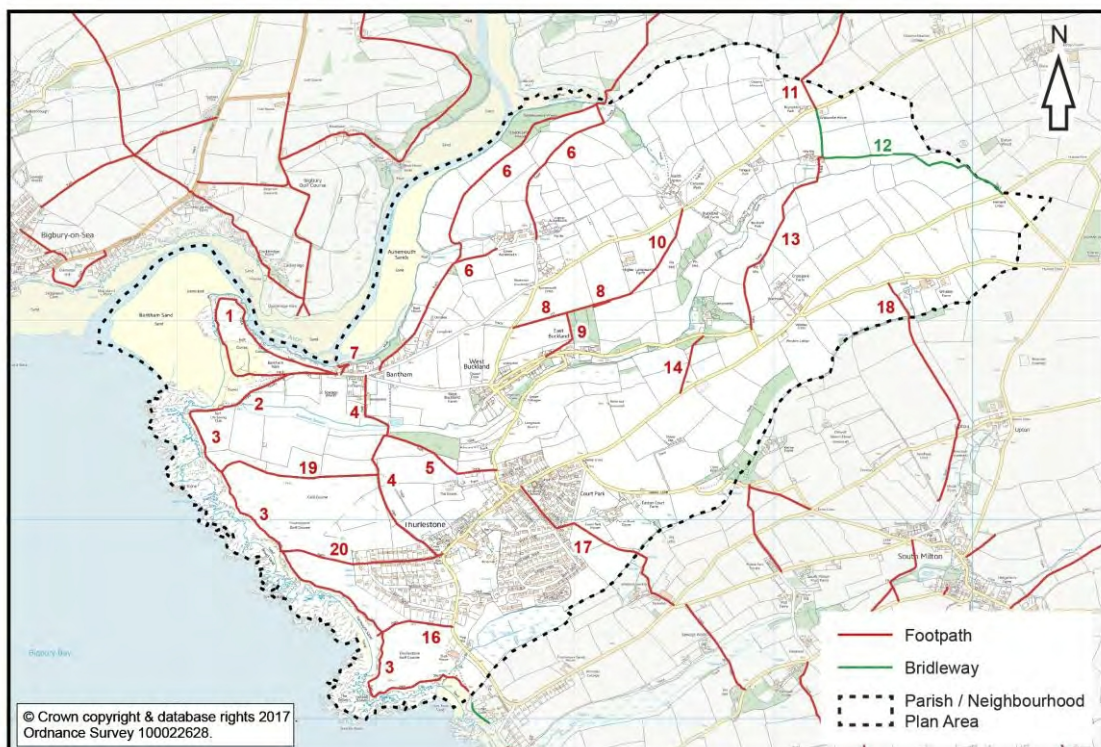
### Objective

To promote a healthy and socially inclusive community by supporting open space, recreational and sports facilities and services which enhance the community's wellbeing.

## Background

- 5.1 The whole of the parish lies within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including part of the Heritage Coast, and is renowned locally and nationally for its large, open areas of countryside, coastal paths and beaches. This not only attracts visitors but is also one of the reasons people choose to live here. The open-air lifestyle, easy access to the sea and estuary, footpaths, woodlands and outdoor sports facilities lend themselves to a healthy and active lifestyle for most residents. The parish hall and the church meeting room provide venues for other community activities such as the WI, bridge, yoga, table tennis, art classes, bowls, badminton, concerts, toddlers groups, coffee mornings, film afternoons and publication of Village Voice, the community magazine for Bantham, Buckland and Thurlestone.
- 5.2 While there are clearly identifiable strong and well-used recreational resources in the community, there are certainly areas for improvement, as well as a desire to see better amenities for families in the parish. Although there are 18 public footpaths and a bridleway which criss-cross the parish, access between the villages is a problem with few off-road paths linking the settlements. Historically, children from Bantham and Buckland walked to school in Thurlestone, but car ownership has increased over the years to such an extent that children cannot use this narrow, winding road unaccompanied. There are no pavements or paths solely dedicated to pedestrians or cyclists.

**Figure 15: Public Rights of Way**





- 5.3 Existing recreational and sports facilities include the Golf and Tennis Club, Sailing Club, Surf School and the Surf Life Saving Club. The beaches provide a setting for informal recreation and it is worth noting that Bantham ranked sixth in the Lonely Planet's 2015 Guide to the best 10 beaches in Europe - the only one named in England. Waterskiing, kayaking, paddle boarding and open-air swimming are also regular activities on the Avon estuary. Whilst many of these activities are more popular during the warmer months of the summer, surfers, kayakers and paddle boarders flock to the beaches all year round.
- 5.4 The most recently available statistics reflect the parish's healthy lifestyle. In the 2011 census, over 80% of the population were in good or very good health, which is high given that over 43% of the population were aged 65 and over. There has also been a recent increase in the number of children living in the parish. Between 2001 and 2011, an additional 75 children (0-17 years) had either been born or moved to the parish, whilst the number of children in the age group 0-9 years almost doubled from 26 in 2001 to 49 in 2011. If we are to address the present demographic imbalance and attract more young families, we need to focus on creating a shared vision for a future healthy and socially inclusive community.
- 5.5 At our **Community Engagement Meeting** in September 2015, there was positive support for more community leisure facilities within the parish. Comments included: *"We need more and better sports and recreational facilities for the young – a playground, youth club, public open space and recreation area"* *"More outdoor year-round activities"* *"More facilities to benefit all types of visitor."* *"A small play ground for younger children to promote younger families."*

## Planning context

- 5.6 The NPPF promotes healthy communities and states that to deliver 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 space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
  - guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
  - ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and 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.

- 5.7 The Local Development Framework supports the protection of all open space, sport and recreation areas, and the presence of local facilities that can make an important contribution to the quality of local life through the provision of accessible services. Local facilities are defined as community facilities including open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 5.8 The emerging Joint Local Plan supports more opportunities for sport, physical activity and active leisure where a local need has been identified, but resists development proposals that result in the loss of sports and recreational buildings and land. Footpaths, bridleways, hedgerows and Devon hedgebanks are protected.

## Policies

- 5.9 Over the Easter school holiday in 2016, we held a couple of drop-in sessions aimed at families who lived in the parish or had a connection with the parish, such as, through the school, work or family. The objective of the **Family Events** was to find out from families, using a questionnaire, whether and how we could improve amenities or develop new projects to enhance family life in the parish. Parents were asked their views on a range of issues including access to our local beaches and countryside, sports and play facilities, footpaths, cycle tracks, allotments, health services, school and shops. Children were asked what they liked most about living in the area and that if they had a wish list, what more could be provided in terms of play areas, sports or recreational facilities. The main points they raised were as follows:
- the unspoilt nature of the beaches was much valued and most people did not want more facilities
  - the toilets at Bantham needed to be improved and outdoor cold showers would be welcome, particularly by those involved in water sports
  - top of the sports and recreation wish lists came a playground (near Bantham and Buckland) and a skateboard park, followed by a level grass sports pitch, swimming pool and adventure playground
  - there was little support for more allotments
  - there was a very positive response to cycle tracks, in particular, between Buckland and Bantham
  - there were concerns about the safety of walking between Buckland and Bantham, and Buckland and Thurlestone, particularly with children or by children on their own, and
  - support for more parking provision for the primary school

#### 5.10 The Family Events also revealed:

- almost 50% of participants took part in surfing and sailing; and swimming, running, tennis, walking and cycling were close behind
- almost 25% of participants were members of the Sailing Club in Bantham
- almost 25% of participants were members of Thurlestone Golf Club

5.11 Further evidence was gathered about the viability of existing community facilities and services, and any improvements that could be made to support and enhance the community's health, social and cultural wellbeing, by interviewing local facilities and service providers (including school and pre-school, golf club and care home) and landowners. This evidence together with the evidence gathered from the original Community Engagement Meeting and the Family Events were used to inform the questions in the parish Questionnaire.

## Footpaths and Cycle tracks

5.12 The results of the Questionnaire demonstrated that there was a strong level of community support for **new footpaths** (84%) to be provided to link our villages in order to improve the safety of pedestrians. This support was from all household types and consistent across the parish; in particular, there was 87% support from adults with children. There was also strong support from the Family Events participants for new footpaths linking the three settlements, as well as more permissive paths around the parish (75%). Whilst there is concern in the community about improved access spoiling the area, there are opportunities for providing new footpaths, including permissive paths, in the parish and this Plan supports such proposals, should suitable land and funding become available.

5.13 The provision of **new cycle tracks** to link the villages also had strong support from those who took part in the Questionnaire (67%). Again, this support was from all household types and consistent across the parish; in particular, there was strong support from adults with children (83%). There was also strong support from the Family Events participants (75%). Aside from the stretch between Buckland and Bantham, the provision of cycle tracks in the parish is clearly more problematic to address, given its topography and narrow rural roads. However, should suitable land and funding become available, this Plan would support the provision of cycle tracks both to link the villages and off-road.



## POLICY TP17 – FOOTPATHS AND CYCLE TRACKS

1. Proposals to provide new footpaths (whether public rights of way or permissive paths) and cycle tracks to link the three settlements and to provide greater access to the coast and the countryside will be supported provided that the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1.
2. Existing public rights of way and access will be protected and enhanced where it is appropriate.

### Justification

- To promote a healthy and socially inclusive community
- To enhance the sustainability of the community by less dependence on the car
- To improve the safety and accessibility of existing services and facilities.

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

NPPF: paras 17, 69, 70, 75 & 114

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, SPT11, TTV31 & DEV3

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P1, Acc/P2, Acc/P3 & Acc/P4

## Play areas

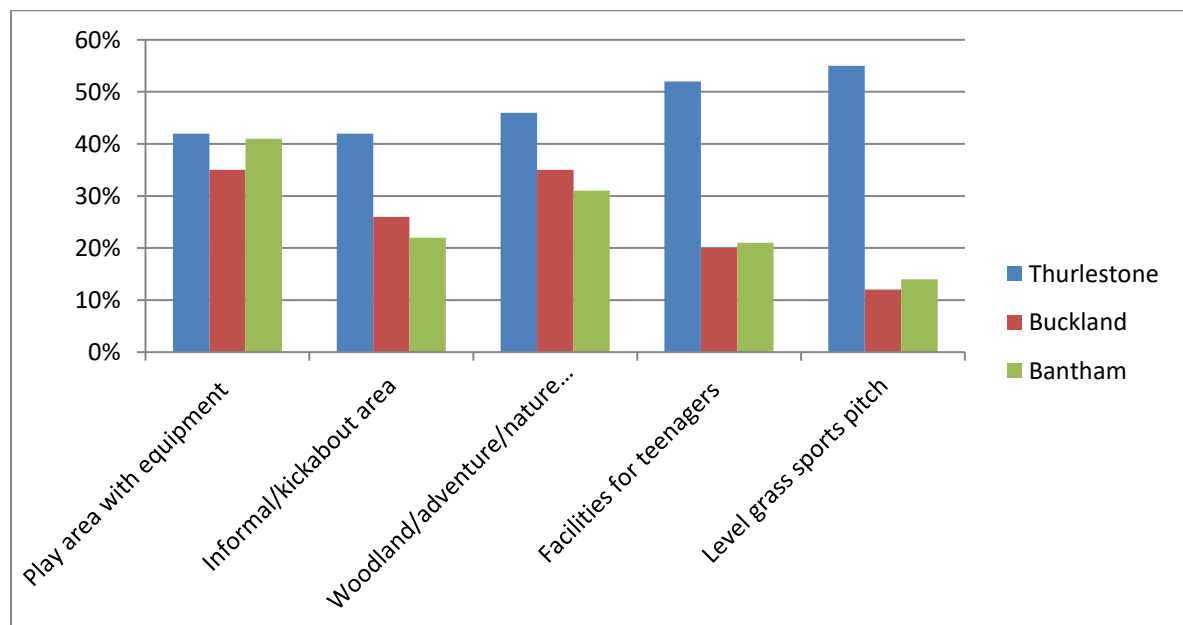
- 5.14 In terms of **play areas**, there are limited public recreational facilities in the parish - but there are, after all, the beaches. Thurlestone has a small area of open space at Island View and an equipped playground at the Primary School, which is open to the public outside school hours. However, neither of these areas is easily accessible to children in Buckland and Bantham, even for those old enough to go out on their own, as the road is considered to be too dangerous.
- 5.15 Notwithstanding the lack of existing facilities, the provision of more play areas and more equipment in play areas was not well supported overall by those who took part in the Questionnaire: the majority of respondents (64%) felt the current provision of play areas and equipment in play areas was 'about right' or 'more than is needed'. However, these results are likely to have been swayed by the proportionately low number of households with children: 44% of households with children thought the current provision of play areas was inadequate and 41% thought they were inadequately equipped. Many over 65s who took part, possibly themselves grandparents, also thought the current play areas were inadequately equipped (41%).

## Additional play and youth facilities

5.16 The results of the Questionnaire demonstrated that community support overall for additional play and youth facilities was relatively low, as shown on **Figure 16** below. The only majority support was for a level grass sports pitch and facilities for teenagers in Thurlestone. One of the most frequent comments was: *“The beaches should be recognised as play facilities – they are a massive playground.”* However, a breakdown by village was more revealing. For Bantham respondents, the strongest response was for an equipped play area in Bantham; for Buckland, it was an equipped play area, nature trail and informal kickabout area in Buckland; and for Thurlestone, it was a sports pitch. The support in Buckland is likely to be due to the proportionately higher number of younger families who live there.

5.17 Further, as stated above, the **Family Events** identified the following “wish list”: a level grass sports pitch, a playground near Bantham or Buckland, an adventure playground, a skateboard park, swimming pool and facilities for teenagers. But the overwhelming message from these events was that families valued the unspoilt nature of the beaches and did not want additional facilities at the beach. This was best summed up by a 14 year old: *“I have lived here all my life and I love it the way it is now.”*

**Figure 16: Support for play and youth facilities**



Source: Parish Questionnaire, June 2016

5.18 This Plan therefore supports low-key, small-scale recreational and sports facilities provided that they do not detrimentally impact on the attributes of the area that the community values most.

## POLICY TP18 – RECREATION AND SPORT

1. Proposals to provide more play areas and youth facilities for recreational and sports purposes will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:
  - i. can demonstrate that there is a proven need for such proposal; and
  - ii. will enhance the sustainability of the community and make an important contribution to its wellbeing.

### Justification

- To promote a healthy and socially inclusive community
- To maintain the character of the Undeveloped Coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscape
- To provide the appropriate level of recreational and sports facilities to meet the identified needs of the local community and local tourism

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: DP9

NPPF: paras 9, 17, 69-70 & 73

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, TTV2, TTV31, DEV1, DEV3, DEV24, DEV25, DEV27, DEV30 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P1, Acc/P3, Acc/P4 & Plan/O5

## Change of Use to Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 5.19 The parish is well served in terms of private recreational facilities. Thurlestone Golf Club is an 18-hole golf club covering some 350 acres, together with 12 tennis courts; it currently has a total membership of 1020, of which 533 are full-time members, 86 are junior members and 81 are tennis members. Like many golf clubs nationally, Thurlestone Golf Club is working hard to increase membership and has been particularly successful in having increased its junior membership by 50% over the last 5 years. There is also discussion to evolve the Club's facilities to provide a more 'all-round' sporting club and improve guest facilities. The Thurlestone Hotel Spa and Country Club located in the centre of the village covers some 12 acres and has a 9-hole golf course, 2 tennis courts, swimming pool, badminton and squash courts; and currently has 149 members.

5.20 In Bantham, there is a Sailing Club with 280 members and a Surf Life Saving Club with 180 members - 100 of whom are children, 'nippers', and about 20% of members are from the parish. The Surf Life Saving Club is an important vehicle in generating the lifeguards of the future, but the number of volunteers available to help out constricts numbers, and these are often the parents themselves. More families living in the area may be one way of safeguarding its position for future generations.

5.21 It is clear from the above and the evidence gathered in the course of preparing this Plan, the findings of the Questionnaire and Family Events and meetings conducted across a wide spectrum of the community, that Wellbeing and quality of life generally is given the highest priority in the parish. This was reflected in the strong support in the Questionnaire for the change of use of greenfield/ farmland to open space, sport or recreational use (65%), provided such activities are not noisy or intrusive and respect the area's natural beauty.

#### **POLICY TP19 – CHANGE OF USE TO OPEN SPACE, SPORT OR RECREATION**

Proposals for the change of use of agricultural or amenity land to open space, sport or recreational use will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. can demonstrate that there is a proven demand for such use;
2. will make a positive contribution to the wellbeing, social and/or economic needs of the local community; and
3. any proposal will be required to assess the impact of the proposal on protected species, to propose appropriate mitigation and ensure that, as a result of the development, there is no loss of existing biodiversity interest.

#### **Justification**

- To promote a healthy and socially inclusive community
- To contribute to the wellbeing and social needs of the community

#### **RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

LDF Policy: DP9

NPPF: paras 17, 69-70 & 73

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2,TTV2,TTV31, DEV1, DEV3, DEV24-DEV 25, DEV27-DEV28 & DEV30

South Devon AONB MP: Acc/P1, Acc/P3, Acc/P4 & Plan/O5

## Change of Use from Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 5.22 The priority given to Wellbeing is also reflected in the community's support for a policy that places restrictions on the change of use of open space, sport and recreation land and facilities to other uses and forms of development (75%).
- 5.23 The Plan therefore supports the criteria set out in current Sport England guidance for the protection of existing sports facilities, which are consistent with the NPPF and the emerging JLP.

### POLICY TP20 – CHANGE OF USE FROM OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION USES

Any loss of open space, sport and recreation land and facilities to other uses will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no harm to the character and openness of the surrounding area and the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. an assessment is produced to demonstrate that the land and/or facilities is surplus to requirements; or
2. the loss resulting can be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location; or
3. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

### Justification

- To protect and maintain the wellbeing and social needs of the community
- To promote a healthy and socially inclusive community
- To help maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscape

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: DP8 & DP9

NPPF: paras 17, 69-70, 73 & 74

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, DEV3, DEV15, DEV24-DEV25 & DEV27

South Devon AONB Management Plan: Plan/O5



## 6. Heritage



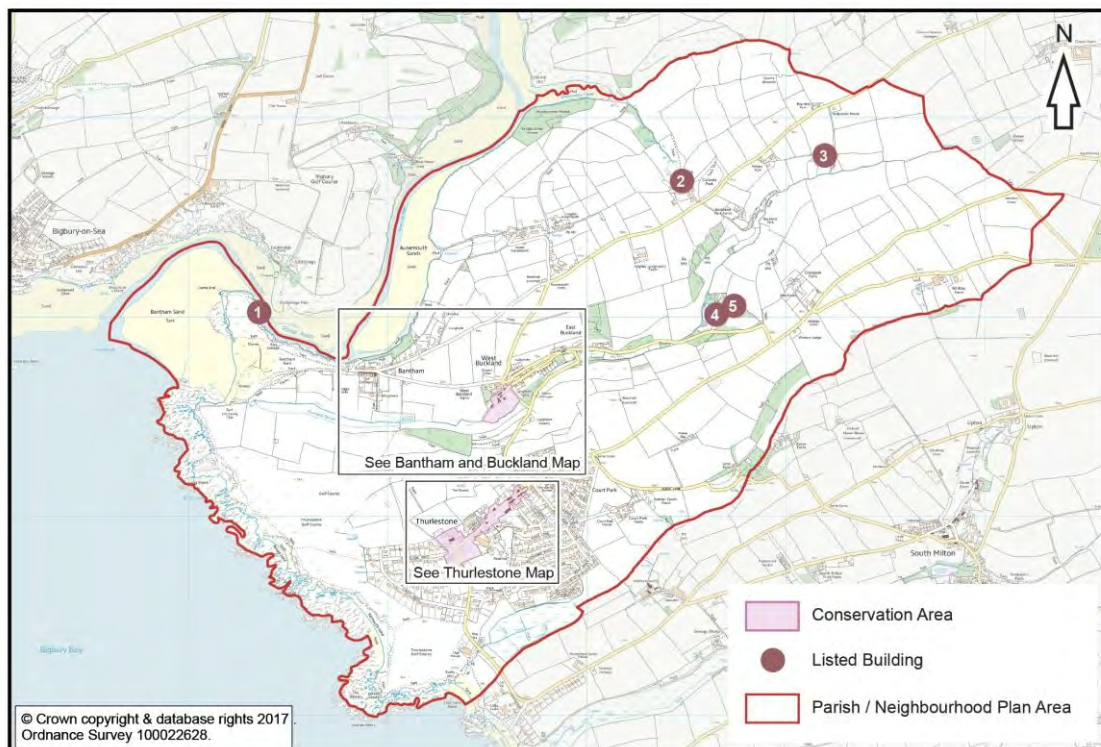
### Objective

To conserve and enhance the parish's historic environment by promoting the protection of non-designated heritage assets which are of special local historic interest.

## Background

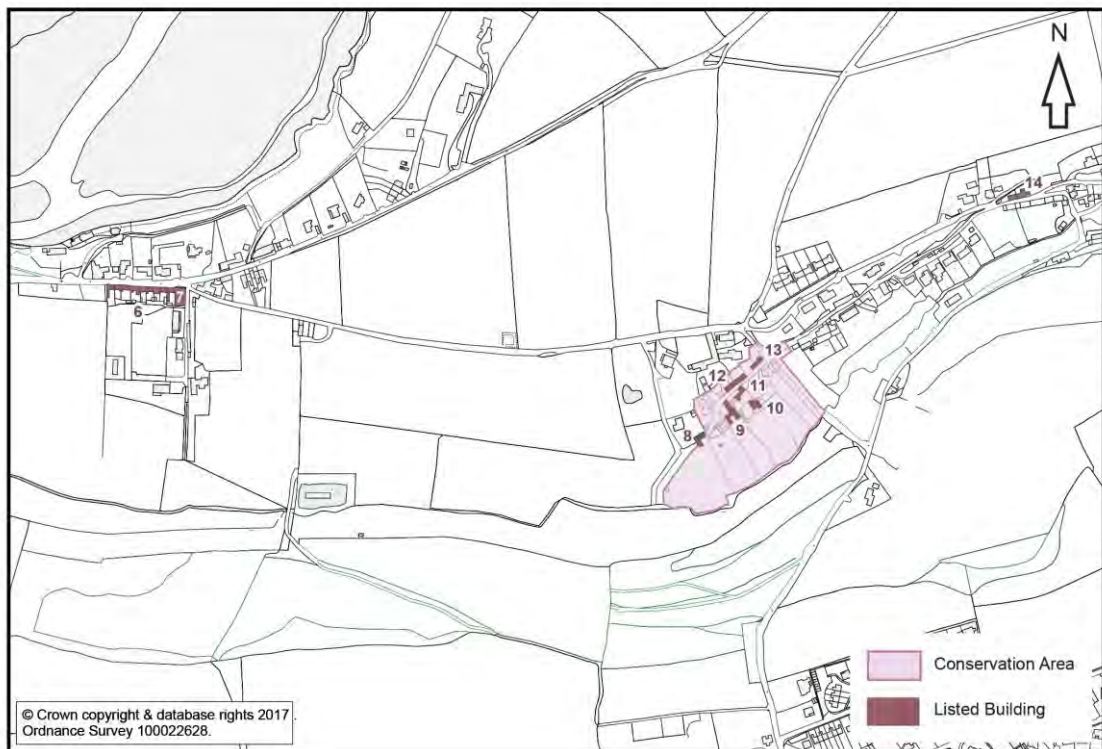
- 6.1 Documentary evidence indicates that Thurlestone and Buckland have Saxon origins while Bantham is the site of a large Roman and post-Roman trading settlement with evidence also for much earlier, prehistoric activity. Historically dependent upon each other and on the sea and agriculture for their livelihoods, the three main settlements each developed their own separate characters which is reflected in the designated and non-designated heritage assets surviving in each.
- 6.2 The parish contains 25 listed buildings in total, 24 Grade II and 1 Grade II\*. These buildings are listed by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) and often consist of more than one individual property. They are all designated heritage assets which have statutory protection and are mainly located in the Conservation Areas of Thurlestone and West Buckland. They include the Grade II\* 13<sup>th</sup> century Church of All Saints' in Thurlestone, numerous 17<sup>th</sup> century thatched cottages in Thurlestone and Buckland, and the Elizabethan manor house known as Clanacombe, near Buckland, which was built in 1587. Bantham has a number of Grade II listed buildings which include Jenkins' Quay boathouse, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Sloop Inn and the adjoining thatched cottages, but no Conservation Area status. Conservation Area status ensures the special historic character and appearance of an area is preserved or enhanced.

**Figure 17: Conservation areas and Listed Buildings in Thurlestone Parish**

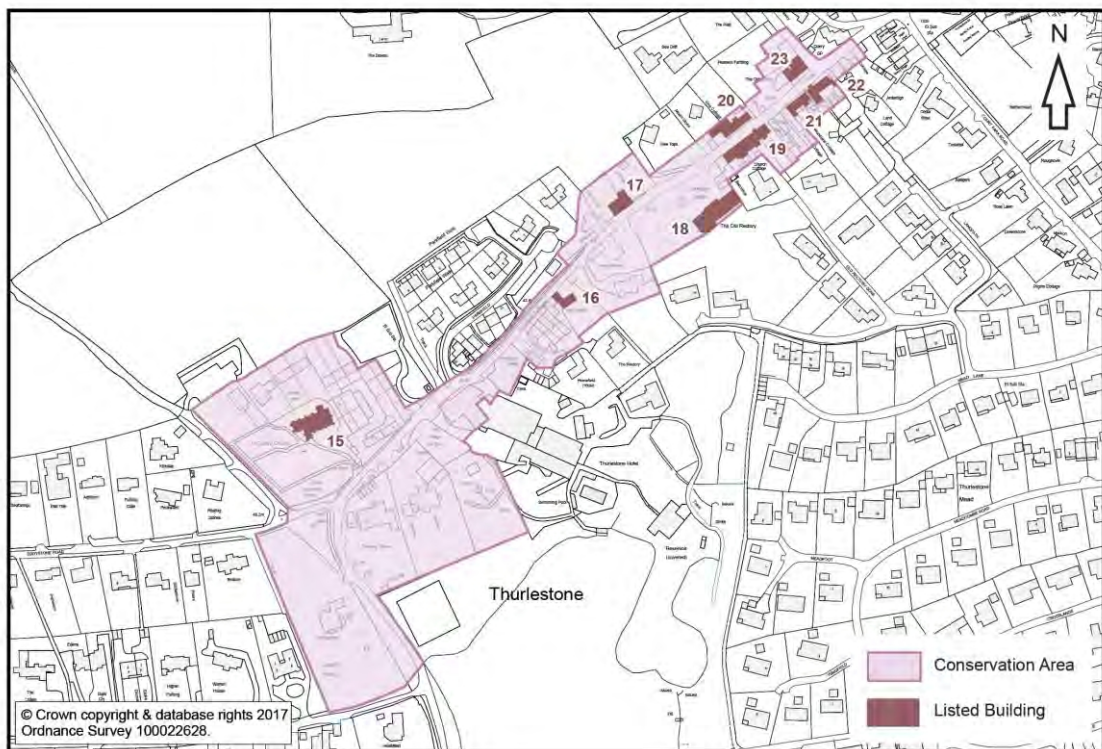




**Figure 18: Conservation areas and Listed Buildings in Buckland and Bantham**



**Figure 19: Conservation areas and Listed Buildings in Thurlestone**



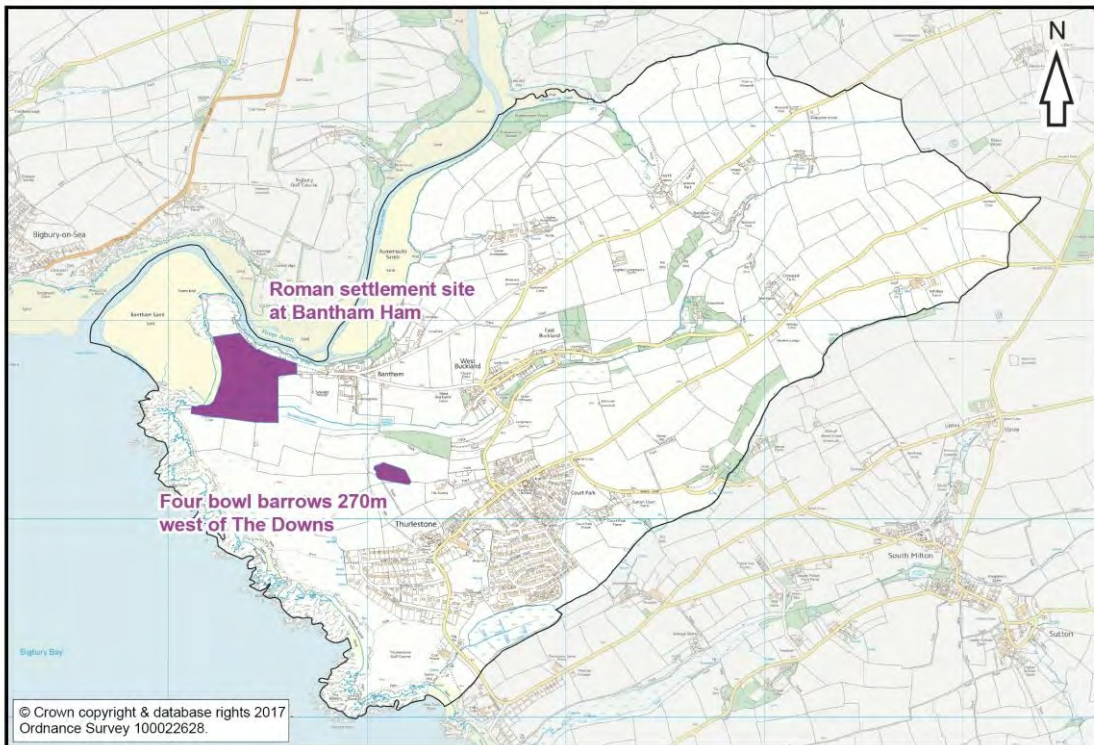
## Key to Listed Buildings

1. Boathouse at Mouth of River Avon (Jenkins' Quay) – Grade II
2. North Upton Farmhouse – Grade II
3. Worthy Farmhouse – Grade II
4. Clanacombe – Grade II
5. Dovecote approx 10m NE of Clanacombe – Grade II
6. Nos. 1-10, Sloop Cottages – Grade II
7. Sloop Inn – Grade II
8. Pear Tree Cottage – Grade II
9. Peep O'Day and Rock Cottage – Grade II
10. Clematis Cottage and Court Cottage – Grade II
11. May Cottage – Grade II
12. Old Farm and Old Farm Cottage – Grade II
13. Buckland Cottage – Grade II
14. Myrtle Cottage and Cob Cottage – Grade II
15. Church of All Saints – Grade II\* and Chest Tomb
16. The Cottage – Grade II
17. Thatchways (inc. Nuthatch) – Grade II
18. The Old Rectory – Grade II
19. Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Church Cottages, Bay Tree Cottage and The Nook – Grade II
20. Vine Cottage and Village Stores – Grade II
21. Just-a-Cottage and Trethurl – Grade II
22. Home Cottage – Grade II
23. Snowdon's (formerly Old P.O) – Grade II

6.3 The parish also boasts one of the most important archaeological sites in the UK. At the mouth of the Avon Estuary, on an area known as **Bantham Ham**, is the site of a large Roman and post-Roman settlement with evidence of occupation from the earlier Bronze Age through to the Medieval period. The Ham is recognised as a coastal trading centre and the quantity of ceramics recovered is second to that of Tintagel, providing invaluable data about the links between western Britain and the Mediterranean during the post-Roman Period.

6.4 Other archaeological features on Bantham Ham include a 70-metre earth bank which runs along the north side of the car park, a medieval corn ditch enclosing fields to the east of The Ham, medieval lynchets which are terraced into the hillslope south of the car park; and in 1997, a further enclosure was discovered on the site which is thought to be of Roman origin. Today, the whole area is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and is on the Heritage at Risk Register, due to its vulnerability to visitor erosion. There are also **four bowl barrows** on the ridge overlooking Bantham, in the field next to the golf course, which are thought to date from the Late Neolithic-Bronze Age and these too are a designated SAM. The location of the two SAMs is shown on **Figure 20**. Where scheduled sites are affected by development proposals, there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. There is also a presumption against any development which has a significant impact on the integrity of the setting of scheduled sites.

**Figure 20: Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Thurlestone Parish**



- 6.5 However, there are many **non-designated heritage assets** in the parish that are lesser known which do not have any statutory protection and are an important part of our historic environment. These non-designated assets are important to the community as they are locally distinctive and add to our sense of place, wellbeing and cultural identity. If they are not protected, then they are at risk of neglect or irreversible damage.
- 6.6 At our **Community Engagement Meeting** in September 2015, the question was raised as to whether preservation of the historic and natural environment should take priority over all other issues. The overwhelming majority of post-it responses (90%) agreed, however, the remaining 10% who disagreed added that there is a need to strike a balance.

## Planning context

- 6.7 One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. The effect of a planning application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application:
- "In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*



- 6.8 The Local Development Framework supports the conservation and enhancement of historic features that contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. It recognises the South Hams' historic environment to be one of the richest and most varied in England, where features of architectural, archaeological or historic interest abound, contributing towards the distinctive character and identity of the district's towns, villages and countryside.
- 6.9 The emerging Joint Local Plan encourages communities to embrace their local heritage assets in terms of understanding their significance and valuing their contribution to local distinctiveness. Non-designated heritage assets positively identified as having significance in terms of the historic environment are to be protected and enhanced.

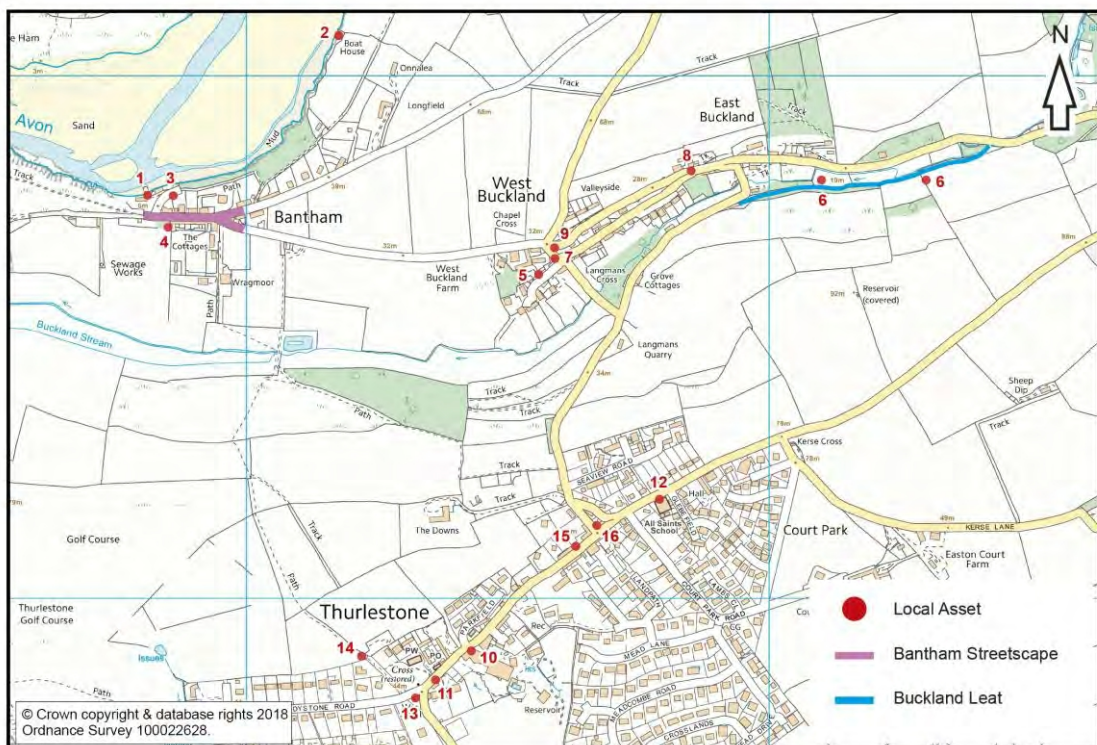
## Policies

- 6.10 The results of the Questionnaire showed that there was a strong level of community support for the protection of the non-designated assets of local historic significance.
- 6.11 In March 2017, children aged 5-10 years from All Saints' School in Thurlestone undertook two historic trails to give us their thoughts about how particular local heritage assets contributed to their 'sense of place' and connection to the area in which they live. The children were asked to complete a question and answer sheet to get them thinking about how the area had changed, both environmentally and socially.
- 6.12 The Thurlestone telephone box prompted much discussion about life before mobile phones, which some children found hard to imagine. It came as a revelation that people would sometimes have to queue to wait their turn and then put coins in a machine to make a call. Other action along the way involved miming out the pumping of water at the Pump House, demonstrating how to use a two-man saw and carrying the buckets on a yoke, which helped bring it all to life for them. In Bantham, the children learnt how lime kilns work and about building Bantham boats; and in Buckland, they learnt about the leat, the old water mill, water trough and butter wells.
- 6.13 Over the Summer Term 2017, further heritage-related activities followed. The children performed a short dramatization reliving the last moments of the great sailing vessel, the Chanteloupe, as she made her final voyage back from the West Indies to England in 1772, culminating in the discovery of the ship's cannon in 1989 now in situ on the green opposite the Thurlestone village shop. The cannon and all the other Thurlestone assets were then the subject of an exhibition of miniature sculptures made by the children, accompanied by a presentation.
- 6.14 Details of the school's contribution to this section of the Plan are set out in the Consultation Statement and will be used by the school as a teaching resource, covering aspects of the Literacy, History and Geography curriculum. The non-

designated heritage assets that have been identified for the purposes of the Plan are shown on **Figure 21** and the selection criteria used are set out in **Appendix B**.

6.15 It is proposed that a sub-committee of Thurlestone Parish Council will oversee these non-designated heritage assets and keep them under review. The day-to-day maintenance of those assets that are not in private ownership will be the responsibility of the Parish Council with the assistance of the Parish of Thurlestone Society, which has a track record in the preservation of historic features, having been the main force behind the restoration of the Thurlestone Pump House.

**Figure 21: Non-designated Heritage Assets in Thurlestone Parish**



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Coronation Quay and Coronation Boathouse, Bantham | 9. Wrought iron railings in Buckland                  |
| 2. Dixon's Quay, Bantham                             | 10. Village Inn steps, Thurlestone                    |
| 3. Lime kiln, Bantham                                | 11. Ship's cannon and Thurlestone Phonebox            |
| 4. Stone stile and Sign by Sloop Cottages, Bantham   | 12. Queen Victoria's bust                             |
| 5. Well and pump in Buckland                         | 13. Cobbled road, War Memorial and Green, Thurlestone |
| 6. Butter Wells (2) in Buckland                      | 14. Stone stile near church, Thurlestone              |
| 7. Water Trough in Buckland                          | 15. The Pump House, Thurlestone                       |
| 8. Buckland Box                                      | 16. Water Trough in Thurlestone                       |

## POLICY TP21 – NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The historic environment should be conserved and enhanced. Proposals that directly or indirectly affect the significance of the following non-designated heritage assets located within the parish should be judged according to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset to the parish:

**Bantham:** Streetscape, Coronation Quay and Boathouse, Dixon’s Quay, Lime kiln, Stone stile by Sloop Cottages and traffic sign;

**Buckland:** Well and pump, Leat, Butterwells, Water trough, Buckland Box and Wrought iron railings; and

**Thurlestone :** Village Inn steps, Ship’s Cannon, Queen Victoria’s Bust, Cobbled road by All Saints’ Church, Stone stile leading to field by All Saints’ Church, Pump House, Water trough, War Memorial and Green and Thurlestone Phonebox.

The location of the above non-designated heritage assets and extent of the site covered by the designation are shown on **Figure 21** and details of the selection criteria used are set out in **Appendix B** to this Plan.

### Justification

- To protect and enhance the character and special interest of non-designated heritage assets
- To contribute to the community’s sense of place, wellbeing and cultural identity

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS9 & DP6

NPPF: paras 17, 126 & 135

Emerging JLP: SPT1, DEV21 & DEV22

South Devon AONB MP: Hist/P1 and Hist/P2

## 7. Environment



### Objective

To conserve and enhance the Parish's natural environment for future generations of residents and visitors.



## Background

- 7.1 The whole of the parish lies within the South Devon AONB. AONBs are protected landscape areas which receive the highest degree of protection due to their national significance. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONBs and protect them against development that would damage their special qualities. 'Natural beauty' includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features. All development should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the South Devon AONB.
- 7.2 Natural England is the principal statutory consultee on planning applications affecting AONBs; although under the Planning Protocol agreed with the local planning authorities, the South Devon AONB Unit is involved as a non-statutory consultee on any planning applications significantly affecting the AONB (whether sited inside the AONB or likely to affect it). The South Devon AONB Management Plan, including recently adopted Planning Guidance, is a material consideration in plan-making and decision-taking where there is the potential to affect the AONB.
- 7.3 The South Devon AONB Management Plan also serves as a management plan for the South Devon Heritage Coast, since the South Devon AONB incorporates the South Devon Heritage Coast. Heritage Coasts are the finest stretches of undeveloped coastline in England and Wales. The boundary of the Heritage Coast stretches some 300m inland and 2km out to sea, and covers almost the whole of the parish. Figures 2 and 3 show the extent of the South Devon AONB and the South Devon Heritage Coast.
- 7.4 Most of the parish, excluding Thurlestone village, also lies within the Undeveloped Coast (as defined in the JLP) where development is restricted. The villages of Buckland and Bantham are included in this designation on the basis that they positively contribute to the coastal character of the area and their exclusion may perpetuate harmful forms of development in an otherwise undeveloped coastal location. Figure 4 shows the extent of the Undeveloped Coast.
- 7.5 The South Devon AONB Management Plan and Planning Guidance, considers the ecosystems of the area in some detail, particularly the importance of effective estuary and coastal management. This is relevant to the Bantham bank of the Avon estuary which is tidal up to the weir at Aveton Gifford, and the whole of the coastal area in the parish from the Estuary to Leasfoot beach, by the Golf Club.
- 7.6 At our **Community Engagement Meeting** in September 2015, the question was raised as to whether preservation of the historic and natural environment should take priority over all other issues. The overwhelming majority of post-it responses (90%) agreed, however, the remaining 10% who disagreed added that there is a need to strike a balance.



## Planning context

- 7.7 The presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is at the heart of the NPPF, is subject to two specific policies in the NPPF that indicate development in the AONB should be restricted:

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

*“Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

- 7.8 The NPPF clearly states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... and minimising impacts on biodiversity.”* There is also the following protection for the Undeveloped Coast particularly Heritage Coast:

*“Local planning authorities should ... maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.”*

- 7.9 The Local Development Framework supports the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, the protection of the character of the undeveloped parts of the coast; and development not requiring a coastal location is not supported.

- 7.10 The emerging Joint Local Plan gives the South Devon AONB: *“the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty”*. It supports the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, whilst encouraging small-scale proposals that are sustainably and appropriately located and designed to conserve, enhance and restore the protected landscapes. Further protection is given to the distinctive landscapes of the Undeveloped Coast, particularly within the South Devon Heritage Coast, where improvements to public access to and enjoyment of the coast will be supported. The principal purpose of the Undeveloped Coast designation is to protect undeveloped coastal character.

## Policies

### Landscape

- 7.11 The parish has a number of distinctive seascapes (including beaches, estuarine views and foreshores), riverscapes and skylines. The results of the Questionnaire demonstrated that there was a strong level of community support for the protection of these features from inappropriate development. The unspoilt nature and tranquillity of the area is clearly paramount. Participants in our Family Events commented:

*“The natural environment and particularly the coastline should be protected at all costs.”*

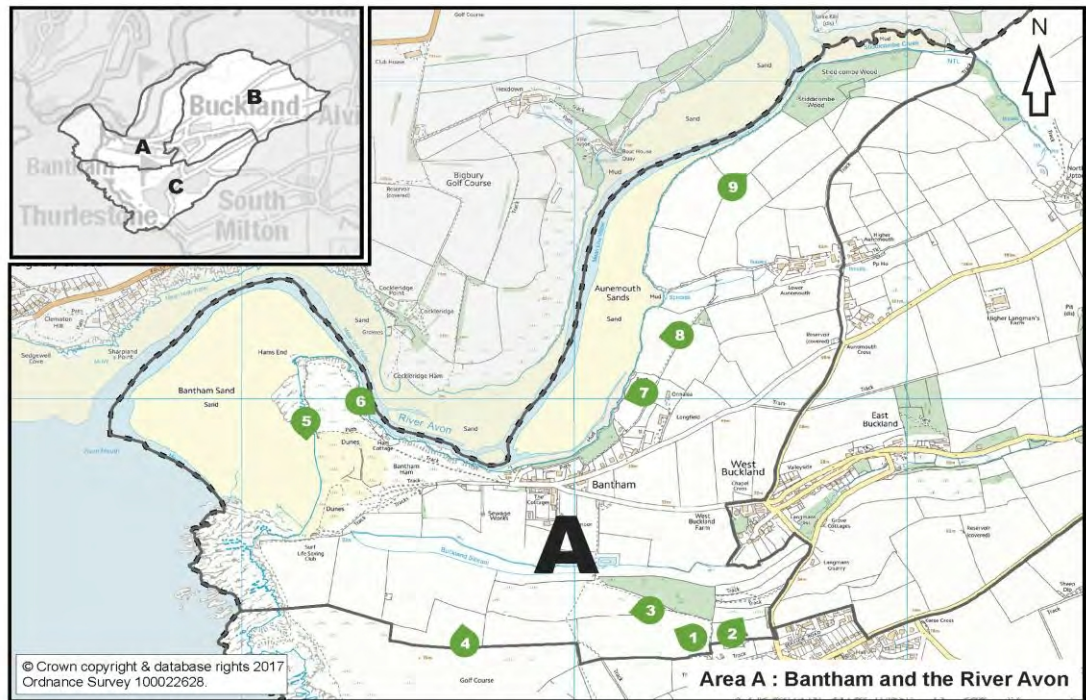
*“I would like to see little change to the river and the estuary area to maintain the appeal of the area. I would like my children to enjoy what I have enjoyed.”*

*“I have lived here all my life and I love it the way it is now.” (aged 14)*

- 7.12 Some of the parish’s most important skylines and long uninterrupted views of its seascapes and riverscapes, mainly taken from public footpaths (marked FP), are shown in **Figures 22, 23 and 24**. This Plan aims to protect these views from the harmful impact of inappropriate development.



Figure 22. Area A - Bantham and the River Avon



1 View NW from FP5



2 View NE from FP5



3 View W from FP5



4 View N from FP19



5 View S from Hams End



6 View E from Jenkins Quay



7 View SW from FP6



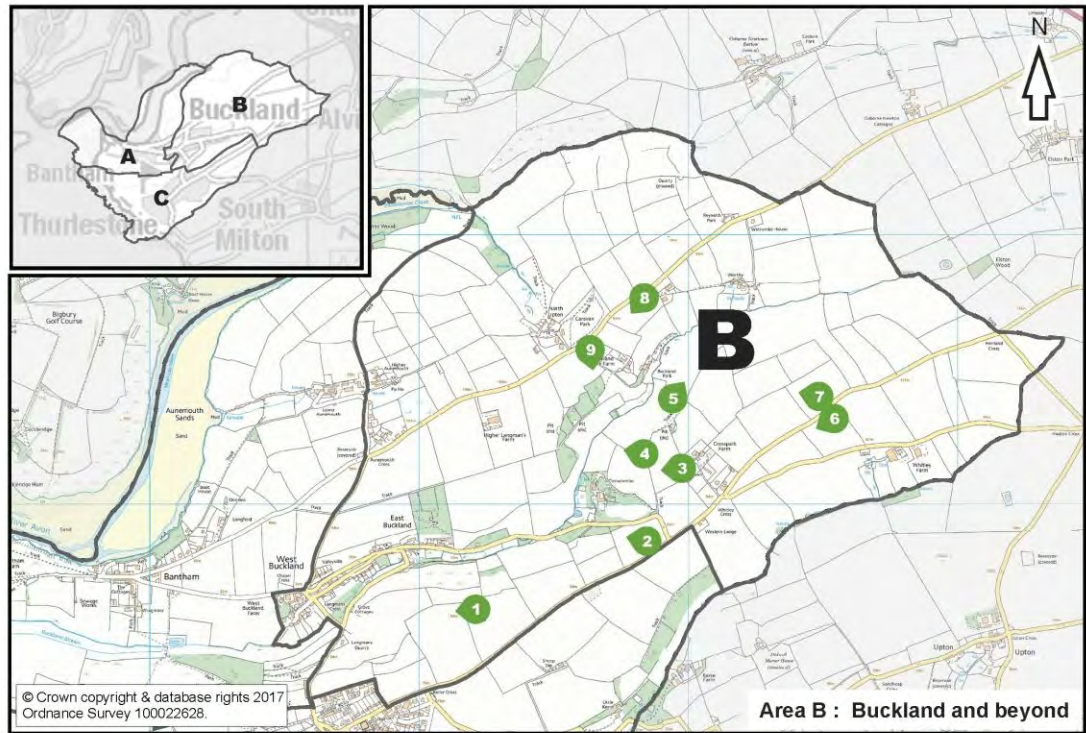
8 View W from FP6



9 View NW from FP6



Figure 23. Area B - Buckland and beyond



1 View W from the Marquee field



2 View NW by road to Clanacombe



3 View W from Crosspark Farm



4 View NW from FP13



5 View NE from FP13



6 View SW from road towards Churchstow



7 View NW from road towards Churchstow



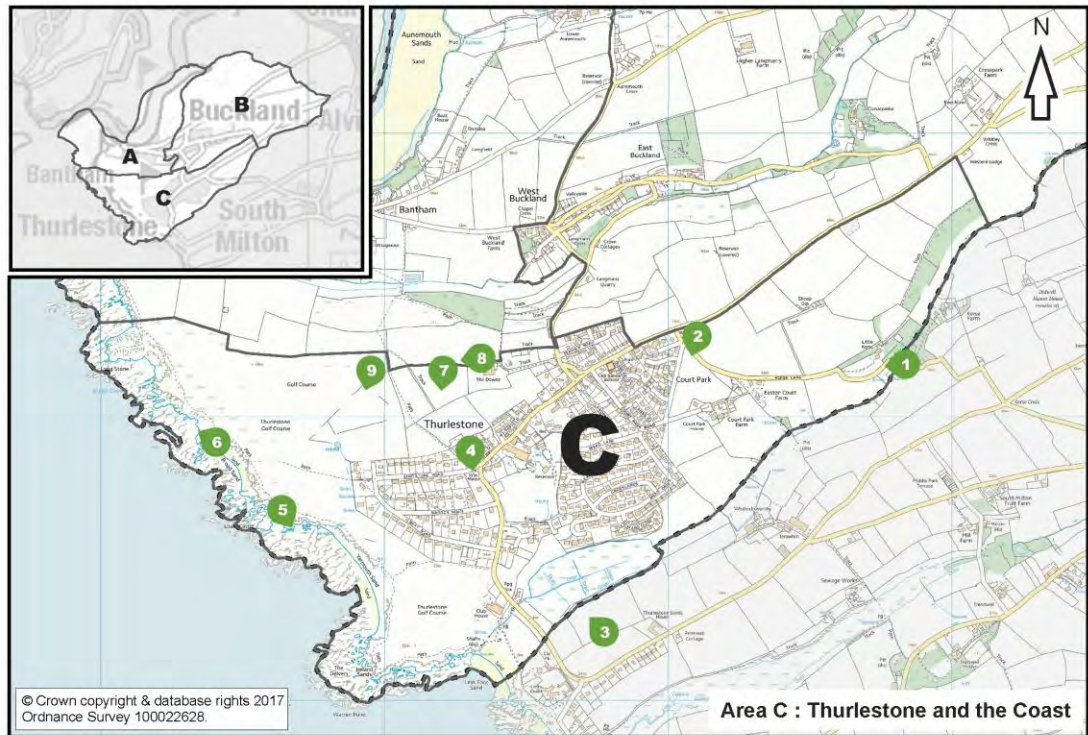
8 View SW from Tongue Park



9 View SE from North Upton



Figure 24. Area C - Thurlestone and the Coast



1 View W from Kerse Lane



2 View S from Court Park



3 View NW from Thurlestone Sands House



4 View S from All Saints Church



5 View SE from coastal FP 3



6 View NW from coastal FP 3



7 View SE from path by The Downs



8 View W from path by The Downs



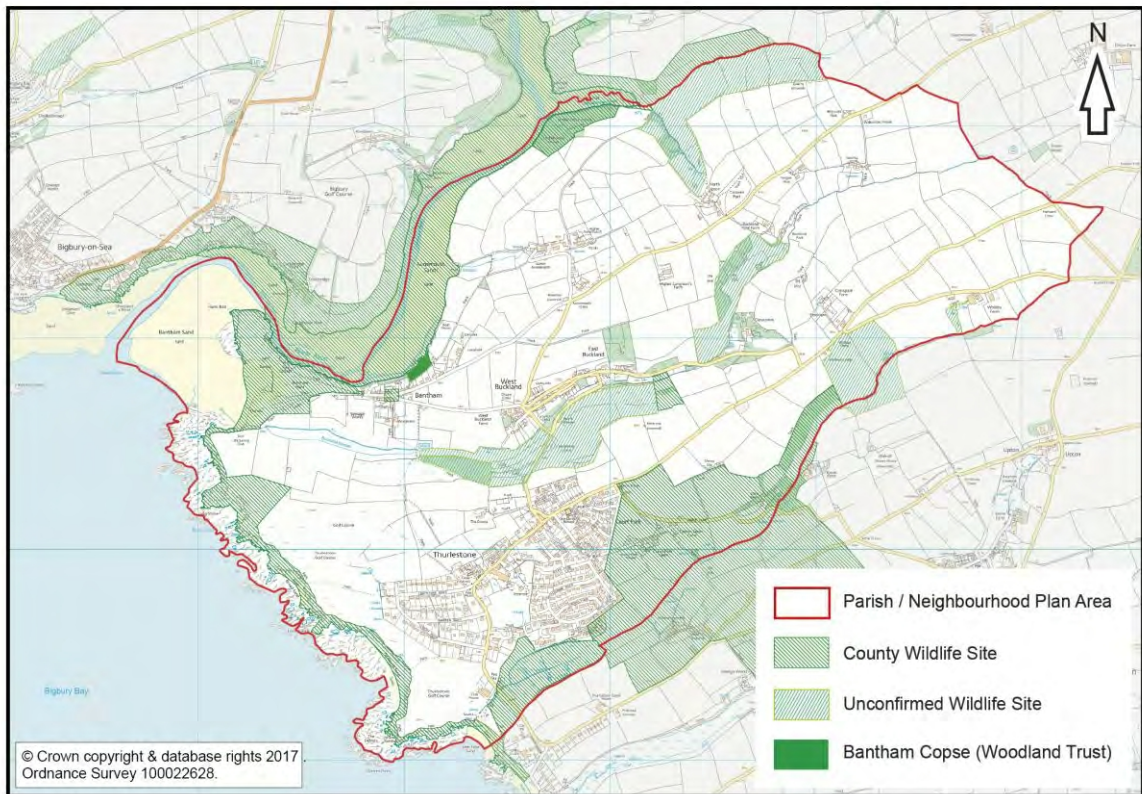
9 View S from FP4



## Biodiversity

- 7.13 The parish has no statutory sites, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It does, however, have a number of non-statutory sites, including County Wildlife Sites and Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites, which are shown below.

Figure 25. County Wildlife Sites and Bantham Copse



- 7.14 County Wildlife Sites are sites of county importance for wildlife, designated on the basis of the habitat or the known presence of particular species. They include Thurlestone Marsh, the coast between Thurlestone and Bantham, and along the Avon Estuary. These sites have no statutory protection but there is national and international legislation to protect a wide range of animal and plant species that inhabit them. Glow worms, which are an endangered species, are also present in the parish.
- 7.15 The parish also contains the breeding territories of a number of rare birds, including barn owl and cirl bunting. In the most recent national **cirl bunting** survey in 2016, the RSPB recorded 5 breeding territories of cirl buntings in Thurlestone Parish. South Hams district supports about 60% of the UK population. Cirl buntings are rare farmland birds and 3 of these breeding territories were between Thurlestone and Buckland. While the new settlement boundaries do not remove habitat used as part of those territories, since the boundaries relate to the existing built form of the settlement, this Plan supports appropriate mitigation/compensation measures to

ensure replacement areas of suitable habitat equivalent to that lost to any development are provided in order to retain the curlew population. To retain curlews, it is important to retain mixed farming (pasture and arable) of the type that provides habitat for grasshoppers and plenty of seeds for birds in winter (e.g. from weedy winter stubbles).

- 7.16 In addition to the designated sites, the parish contains many areas of Priority Habitat, including deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, traditional orchards, and coastal and flood plain grazing marsh; as well as hedgerows and streams which act as wildlife corridors, and Devon hedgebanks which are of landscape as well as wildlife value. Due to the exposed nature of much of the parish, broadleaf trees struggle except in the valleys away from the coast. There are a few oaks, but beech and sweet chestnut are to be found at Clanacombe and Stiddicombe Wood. There is also a small wooded area on the banks of the River Avon, known as Bantham Copse, which is owned by the Woodland Trust and shown on **Figure 25**.
- 7.17 Those species that are considered most important by local authorities in the planning process are identified in Devon Biodiversity Records Centre's Wildlife site resource map and species information for Thurlestone Parish, which is included in the evidence base to this Plan.
- 7.18 The results of the Questionnaire showed that there was a strong level of community support for the protection of wildlife sites and habitats.

## POLICY TP22 – THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Proposals should contribute and enhance the natural environment by meeting the following criteria:

1. the character of skylines, seascapes and riverscapes which contribute to the character and quality of the area, and the long uninterrupted views into, within and out of the South Devon AONB as identified in **Figures 22, 23 and 24** should be protected and enhanced;
2. any proposals that affect wildlife sites and habitats should be minimised and where there is likely to be harmful impact on protected and priority species or habitats, proposals for mitigation and/or compensation (as necessary) should form part of the application, and opportunities to provide enhancement for biodiversity should be included whenever possible;
3. any proposals that affect woodland and hedgerows, including Devon hedgebanks, and the Bantham Copse, as identified in **Figure 25**, should be minimised; and
4. proposals for new development should include Devon hedgebanks where appropriate.

## Justification

- To conserve and enhance distinctive and valued landscapes, including those that form part of the Undeveloped Coast, in particular, the South Devon Heritage Coast
- To conserve landscape and scenic beauty within the South Devon AONB
- To minimise impact on biodiversity

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: CS9, CS10, DP2 & DP5

NPPF: paras 17, 109, 111, 114-116

Emerging JLP: SPT1, SPT11, DEV2, DEV24-DEV25, DEV27-DEV28 & DEV 30

South Devon AONB MP: Lan/P1, Lan/P5, Lan/P6, Mar/P1, Plan/P1, BioGeo/P2, LanMan/P3 & Trans/P2

## The Coast

- 7.19 The coastline is an important asset. Between 2010 and 2014, South West Coast Path users grew by 11% from 7.8 million to 8.7 million, and the overall spend by walkers increased by 22.7%, compared with an increase of 12.2% for tourism as a whole within the South West region. Set against this is the constant threat of coastal erosion and the cost of repairing the cliffs and beaches.



- 7.20 Over the winter of 2013/14, the coast of the parish took a severe battering. Storm Petra on 5 February 2014 is considered to have been probably the most damaging



storm in terms of coastal impact on the south coast of Devon and Cornwall for the last 50 years. Further, the sequence of storms from mid-December 2013 to 10 February 2014 represent the most energetic wave activity to have hit the southwest coast of England since 1950, representing at least a 1:60 year event. As a consequence, a stretch of road that ran alongside Thurlestone golf course and formed part of the South West Coast Path was washed away. Devon County Council, funded by the Coastal Communities Fund, subsequently negotiated an alternative route with the Golf Club, which maintains a significant section of the coastal landscape and three of the beaches in the parish, and a new section of the footpath was cut over a corner of its land. In March 2015, there was another substantial cliff collapse on the headland north of Yarmer beach which led to further diversion of the South West Coast Path over part of the golf course.



- 7.21 The recommendation of the current Shoreline Management Plan in this area is for ‘no active intervention’ along the Parish’s coastline, which assumes that existing defences are no longer maintained and will fail over time or undefended frontages will be allowed to evolve naturally. However, the ongoing threat of further coastal erosion and its impact on the golf course remains a local concern. When asked at the Community Engagement Meeting in 2015 what three things they would like to see happen over the next 20 years, the protection of the coast and preservation of the natural environment received the most community support. It was therefore not surprising that there was strong support in the Questionnaire for sympathetically designed schemes to help manage coastal erosion. Such schemes would be consistent with the South Devon AONB Management Plan and Planning Guidance, which support soft engineering solutions that work with natural physical processes.
- 7.22 The Plan does not support any other development on or within the immediate vicinity of any of the beaches, given that the beaches form part of the South Devon Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast where development is restricted, unless it has been demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the facilities to be



provided in that location and the design and landscaping is of the highest design quality that minimizes any visual or environmental impact on the coastal landscape. The community values its unspoilt beaches - as do its visitors who are essential to the local economy.

### POLICY TP23 – COASTAL MANAGEMENT

1. Proposals to help manage coastal erosion and dune preservation will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and any related scheme is sympathetically designed.
2. Any other proposals for development on or within the immediate vicinity of any of the beaches in the parish will not be supported unless it has been demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the facilities to be provided in that location and the design and landscaping is of the highest design quality that minimizes any visual or environmental impact on the coastal landscape.

### Justification

- To maintain the character, protect and enhance the Undeveloped Coast and, in particular, the South Devon Heritage Coast

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

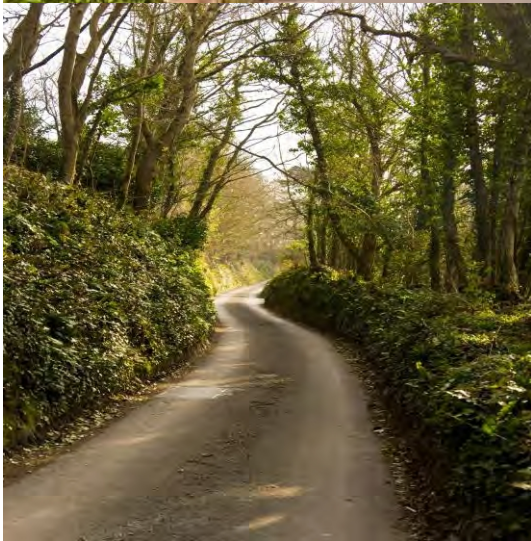
LDF: CS9 & DP2

NPPF: para 114

Emerging JLP: SPT1, SPT11, DEV24-DEV25, DEV27-DEV28 & DEV38

South Devon AONB MP: Mar/P4

## 8. Infrastructure



Devon Air Ambulance Trust



### Objective

To seek opportunities for improving infrastructure to make the parish more sustainable for existing and future residents, visitors and those working in the parish.

## Background

- 8.1 The term ‘infrastructure’ covers basic services, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities, all of which are necessary for development to take place. For the purposes of this Plan, however, we have focused on those matters that are achievable through the District planning process that would help improve the quality of life of those who live in, work in and visit the area. This would include improving levels of connectivity and car parking, and provision of a night landing site for the Devon Air Ambulance Trust – all matters which involve land use which fall within the remit of this Plan.
- 8.2 Given our location in the South Devon AONB, the Heritage Coast and the Undeveloped Coast, any infrastructure improvement would necessarily be small-scale. The matters that are supported in this Plan will not ‘fix’ the shortcomings of the existing infrastructure, but they will go some way towards improving it. The Parish Council will need to continue to raise traffic-related issues with Devon County Council, since highways fall within their remit and not the District Council.
- 8.3 At the **Community Engagement Meeting** in 2015, when attendees were asked what they considered to be the main disadvantages of living in the parish, 40% said the lack of mobile phone coverage and 64% said poor broadband. These two issues ranked second and third after traffic-related issues including access, parking and road safety, raised by 71% of attendees. There was broad recognition that for new employment, the parish would need improved communications and that priority should be given to such improvements so as to encourage entrepreneurial interest and create more small business opportunities.

## Planning context

- 8.4 The NPPF supports high quality communications infrastructure:

*“Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.”*

- 8.5 The Local Development Framework supports the provision of new or improved infrastructure where the existing infrastructure is inadequate to serve new development so as to remedy deficiencies.
- 8.6 The emerging Joint Local Plan supports improved internet connectivity for rural communities, where appropriate, and the appropriate level of facilities to meet the identified needs of the local community.

# Policies

## Connectivity

- 8.7 Since the time of our original Community Engagement Meeting in 2015, superfast broadband has been successfully rolled out across the parish. However, the lack of satisfactory mobile phone coverage remains a real issue for the parish.
- 8.8 According to Ofcom, in December 2016: one provider (02) covered 70% of the built development of Thurlestone; Vodafone covered about 45%; and EE, Three, and other networks, had virtually no coverage. Further, the criteria for mobile phone coverage is based on “Outdoor Voice Calls only” which means the assessment is based on 2G coverage. Given that much of the country has 3G coverage, that most urban areas have 4G coverage and that 5G is imminent, it is questionable whether an assessment on the basis of 2G is appropriate. Also, over 80% of the UK population uses a smartphone (Deloitte, May 2016), a phone that uses Apps as well as makes voice calls, for which 3G coverage is essential. Apps do not work with 2G.
- 8.9 The mobile phone coverage in Buckland and Bantham is worse. Apart from on Bantham Ham, where a small Wi-Fi transmitter has recently been installed for the benefit of beach visitors, there is little to no mobile phone coverage in either settlement or in the surrounding rural areas. Most residents have a signal generator connected to their internet so they and their visitors can still use their mobiles in their homes. However, there is still a significant delay with text messages, which can sometimes be received a day later. There is no signal along the lane to the beach or up the hill to the school in Thurlestone, and this is a concern for parents and most importantly, there are difficulties contacting the emergency services.
- 8.10 Historically, there have been efforts to explore options for improving mobile phone signal and an in-depth review was undertaken, but given local opposition on potential health grounds and the local topography, the parish was informed that all options had been exhausted. In April 2016, the Department for Culture Media & Sport wrote to our MP, Dr Sarah Wollaston, confirming that there are currently no plans to extend funding for the Mobile Infrastructure Project, which was developed to reduce the number of mobile not-spot areas across the UK and contracted to end on 31 March 2016.
- 8.11 The results of the Questionnaire showed that the majority of respondents were dissatisfied with their mobile phone coverage, both at home and in the parish – 74% and 83% respectively – although most respondents were satisfied that their broadband speeds met their needs. None of the respondents who were happy not to have mobile phone coverage worked in the parish. Other respondents considered that access to mobile phone and broadband services were a basic right and were essential, provided that any additional equipment required was inconspicuous:



*“Effective and reliable communications are a necessary part of life now... businesses/tourism cannot progress without decent broadband and mobile communications.” “Inconspicuous must mean exactly that and not at all intrusive.”*

- 8.12 This Plan therefore supports improved connectivity in the parish provided that any equipment is inconspicuous and not intrusive on the South Devon AONB. The provider O2 is proposing to install a mast on top of the Thurlestone Hotel that would cover the remaining parts of the built development of Thurlestone that it does not already cover. Bantham and Buckland are not covered.
- 8.13 Developing a community Wi-Fi network could be another way of overcoming mobile phone signal and any broadband speed problems, should they arise. Such networks typically involve the erection of a single pole with a box attached, which may be disguised as a bat box, containing a transmitter. Possible locations would be adjacent to existing woodland or tree groups or on existing buildings and structures, and close to existing roads or access tracks. The transmitter needs to have a clear line of sight to the area concerned where a number of small boxes containing receiver equipment are attached to individual properties which, in effect, form a ‘daisy chain’.
- 8.14 The development of a community Wi-Fi network, which would require the erection of inconspicuous transmitters and receivers, was supported by 81% of respondents in the Questionnaire and is currently in the course of being explored.

#### POLICY TP24 – COMMUNITY WIFI

Proposals to develop a community Wi-Fi network will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. the transmitters and receivers (or other structures) are located close to existing buildings and an existing road or access track;
2. the equipment is sympathetically designed and camouflaged, where appropriate; and
3. there is no harmful visual impact on skylines and long uninterrupted views within, into and out of the AONB (in accordance with Policy TP22).

#### Justification

- To provide access to emergency services and improve the quality of life of the community
- To support sustainable growth within the local economy, in particular, homeworking, rural diversification and tourism

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: DP2

NPPF: paras 42-43 & 114-115

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, DEV1 & DEV15

South Devon AONB MP: Lan/P5

## Car Parking

- 8.15 Car parking is an issue that is constantly raised at parish council meetings, particularly the lack of parking provision near the primary school in Thurlestone, which gives rise to serious safety and amenity issues. The parish hall would also benefit from additional parking facilities to alleviate parking in the main street and adjoining streets.
- 8.16 The majority of Questionnaire respondents (81%) considered that car parking in the parish was a problem to some degree in the summer, and 54% of respondents considered that it was a year-round problem to some degree. Of those who considered parking to be a problem there was overall support for a single new car park on a greenfield site in preference to the provision of more parking spaces in the villages. The Plan therefore supports a new car park within or adjoining Thurlestone, should the land become available to resolve the school and parish hall overflow parking issues.

## POLICY TP25 – CAR PARK

Proposals to develop a car park within or on agricultural or amenity land adjoining Thurlestone will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and is limited to 20 parking spaces.

## Justification

- To improve the sustainability of the parish, its local services and facilities
- To support the safety and welfare of users, and the local community

## RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: DP9

NPPF: paras 9, 17, 40 & 70

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2, DEV30 & DEV31

South Devon AONB MP: Lan/P1 & Trans/P3

## Air ambulance night landing site

- 8.17 In the event of a medical emergency, the parish benefits greatly from the Devon Air Ambulance Trust. Our main hospital, Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, takes just under an hour by road, traffic permitting. At present, Kingsbridge has only one land ambulance available at night and it covers a wide area of the South Hams. If it is in use, then ambulances stationed in Plymouth and Dartmouth can step in. By air ambulance, the flight time is just 5-6 minutes to Derriford Hospital.
- 8.18 In the course of 2016, the Trust started working with communities throughout Devon to develop a network of night landing sites as permanent fixtures. By January 2016, they had 25 fully operational landing sites up and running, and more than 100 night landing sites in development. The Trust says it currently attends some 50 patients over the summer months when it flies up until 9pm, patients whom it would not be able to reach in the winter.
- 8.19 A night helipad requires a flat area of at least 50m x 50m (half a rugby pitch) and may be on grass, tarmac or concrete. Possible locations include a playing field, park or field. The site needs pedestrian and vehicle access nearby and floodlighting is essential for safety and practical reasons. A typical lighting system consists of a 10m high column secured to a concrete base with a set of 2 LED panel lights. Each lighting system incorporates an integral mobile phone SMS control box that enables the lights to be turned on and off remotely by the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service dispatch team.
- 8.20 The night helipad would be funded and managed by the local community and in our Questionnaire, there was overwhelming support for the provision of a night landing site in the parish, with 96% of respondents in favour.

## POLICY TP26 – AIR AMBULANCE NIGHT LANDING SITE

Proposals to develop an air ambulance night landing site as a permanent fixture on agricultural or amenity land to serve the parish will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1.

### Justification

- To provide night time access to medical emergency facilities to meet local needs
- To support the health and social wellbeing of the community

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF: DP9

NPPF: paras 9, 17 & 70

Emerging JLP: SPT1-SPT2 & DEV1

South Devon AONB MP: LAN P1 & LAN/P5



## 9. Resources



### Objective

To support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy generation.

## Background

- 9.1 The UK is committed to binding European Union targets to reduce its carbon emissions by being more efficient with the energy we use and generating energy in ways that does not release carbon into the atmosphere. By 2020, 15% of our energy needs must come from renewable sources (including 30% of electricity, 12% of heat and 10% in transport); and by 2050, we must emit 80% less carbon than we did in 1990. Renewable sources – such as sun, wind and water – are free, occur naturally, and do not release carbon into the atmosphere when they generate energy. More recently, the UK has committed to generating 30% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020 and to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 50% from 1990 levels by 2025, increasing to 80% by 2050.
- 9.2 The South West leads the country in solar electricity and many residential dwellings and community buildings in the parish use both solar thermal and solar photovoltaic panels for heating water, and reducing purchased electricity consumption by around 50%. The average home generally needs a solar array of 10-20 solar panels to provide enough electricity to be viable and on the whole such arrays do not compromise the landscape character and special qualities of the South Devon AONB. Larger scale commercial initiatives that export energy off-site are not appropriate and should be located outside the AONB.
- 9.3 Protection of the landscape character and special qualities of the South Devon AONB are a priority for the parish, since this is why people live and visit the area. At the Community Engagement Meeting in 2015, there was support for sustainable construction methods, but strong opposition to solar panels at ground level and to large wind turbines due to concerns about their potential impact on the environment.

## Planning context

- 9.4 The NPPF supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure and considers it central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It states that local planning authorities: *“.....should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should .....support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy...”*
- 9.5 The Local Development Framework requires development to progress to reduce energy usage to a minimum, to mitigate the impacts of climate change by promoting sustainable development, which promotes low or zero carbon emissions.
- 9.6 The emerging Joint Local Plan supports the increased use and production of renewable energy and low carbon energy development. It supports proposals that have been robustly assessed in terms of their likely impact on landscape sensitivity.

For wind turbine proposals, it supports sites allocated for that use within a neighbourhood plan.

## Policies

### Solar Panels

- 9.7 Whilst there is widespread use of photovoltaic panels to generate solar electricity, there are no solar farms in the parish. Solar farms generally cover many acres and given their industrial appearance run the risk of being harmful to the purposes of AONB designation. A renewable energy development that conserves and enhances the special qualities of the AONB will be small-scale, aimed at providing energy for use on site and operating at an individual farm, household or community level, and visually unobtrusive in the landscape. Installations on farms should be limited to the generation of energy to offset farm energy costs and located on or close to existing farm buildings, using topography and landscape features to minimize the visual impact.
- 9.8 In 2014, a planning application was made in the parish to erect ground-mounted solar PV panels covering 90m<sup>2</sup> of farmland, with an estimated output of 15kW. This was a small-scale scheme to provide energy for use on the farm, with any excess fed into the National Grid. The main issue was the visual impact of the proposed development within the landscape, the South Devon AONB. Despite objections from the parish council and notwithstanding pre-application advice to mount the panels on the roof slopes of the existing farm buildings where they would have a negligible visual impact within the AONB, planning permission was granted and the panels have recently been installed about 40 metres from the buildings. The arrays can be seen from the main public highway to the south (the C39 near Whitley Cross) which is on the ridge approximately 800m away, but the application was considered acceptable by SHDC on the basis that the arrays would either appear within the context of the existing grouping of buildings or would be obscured completely behind them, depending on the viewing location from the road.
- 9.9 For the purposes of the Questionnaire, the distinction was made between development of solar panels on farm buildings and solar panels/arrays on farmland. Whilst there was strong support for solar panels on farm buildings, with 83% of respondents considering they were possibly or definitely appropriate, the majority of respondents were against the development of solar panels/arrays on farmland, with 58% considering that they were definitely inappropriate.

## POLICY TP27 – SOLAR PANELS AND ARRAYS

1. Proposals for the development of solar panels on the roofs of farm buildings and small-scale solar arrays on farmland close to farm buildings will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and can demonstrate that it has no harmful impact on the South Devon AONB, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts.
2. Proposals for solar arrays on open farmland will not be supported.

### Justification

- To promote energy from renewable resources which is central to sustainable development

### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF Policies: CS11 & DP2

NPPF: para 17, 93 & 97

Emerging JLP: SPT1, DEV34 & DEV35

South Devon AONB MP: NatRes/P6 & Lan/P5

## Wind Turbines

- 9.10 There are presently two 5kw wind turbines in the parish located on farmland north-east of Buckland. One turbine is on an 18-metre tower and another on a 15-metre tower, due to the slope of the site. The wind turbines generate a total of 10kw. Notwithstanding local opposition and strong objections from the parish council, mainly in respect of their potential visual/landscape impact on the AONB, permission was granted in 2012 conditional upon the structures being removed and the land being restored to its former agricultural use within 25 years, and that any turbine which failed to produce electricity for a continuous period of 12 months should be removed. SHDC considered that the overall visual impact of the turbines was not significant and would not dominate the character or degrade the quality/integrity of the AONB landscape; further, that given their distance from the nearest residential dwelling, noise impacts on those properties and on the quiet rural character of the area were considered acceptable.



9.11 For the purposes of the Questionnaire, the distinction was made between development of wind turbines on farm buildings and wind turbines on farmland. Whilst there was support for wind turbines on farm buildings, with 67% of respondents considering they were possibly or definitely appropriate, the majority of respondents were against the development of wind turbines on farmland, with 65% considering that they were definitely inappropriate. Given the parish's location in the AONB, this Plan therefore only supports the development of small-scale wind turbines close to or attached to farm buildings where any landscape and visual impacts have been addressed.

#### POLICY TP28 – WIND TURBINES

1. Proposals for small-scale wind turbines close to or attached to farm buildings will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and can demonstrate that it has no harmful impact on the South Devon AONB, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts.
2. Proposals for wind turbines on open farmland will not be supported.

#### Justification

- To promote energy from renewable resources which is central to sustainable development

#### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF Policies: CS11 & DP2

NPPF: paras 17, 93 & 97

Emerging JLP: SPT1, DEV34 & DEV35

South Devon AONB MP: NatRes/P6 & Lan/P5

SoS for DCLG, Written Ministerial Statement 18 June 2015

## Community Heating

9.12 None of the parish is on mains gas and most households rely on oil for domestic heating. According to the Energy Saving Trust, when burning oil, CO2 emissions are approximately 37% greater than from burning natural gas to give an equal amount of heat and 13% higher than from burning LPG. The Thurlestone Hotel uses LPG and already has a couple of biomass boilers. There is also at least one residential dwelling in the parish that has its own biomass boiler.

- 9.13 Within Thurlestone village there is an opportunity to investigate the feasibility of developing a community heating scheme to heat the school, parish hall and possibly the church, through two or more shared boilers using wood fuel. This may allow local farmers, other landowners and the community to work together to harvest and use wood fuel at reasonable cost, supporting the economy and creating employment
- 9.14 The facility would involve the erection of a boiler and fuel store close to the existing buildings. Whilst there was scepticism about the financial viability of such a scheme, there was strong overall support: 63% of respondents were in favour of developing a community heating scheme for Thurlestone. A grant has been received from Devon Association for Renewable Energy to pay for a full feasibility study.

#### POLICY TP29 – COMMUNITY HEATING

Proposals for the development of a small-scale community heating scheme for use by community facilities in Thurlestone village will be supported provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1 and the following criteria:

1. the boiler and fuel store are located close to existing buildings, or reuse an existing building; and
2. there is an existing road or access track.

#### Justification

- To support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy
- To reduce energy costs within the community and improve local resilience

#### RELEVANT HIGHER LEVEL POLICIES AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LDF Policies: CS11 & DP9  
NPPF: paras 17, 93 & 97  
Emerging JLP: SPT1 & DEV36  
South Devon AONB MP: NatRes/P6