

East Devon Villages Plan Update August 2015

What is the Villages Plan?

The Villages Plan is a formal planning document (known as a development plan document or DPD) that will set out detailed policies to guide development in some of East Devon's villages and small towns. It will define 'Built-up Area Boundaries' for the settlements of Beer; Broadclyst; Chardstock; Clyst St Mary; Colyton; Dunkeswell; East Budleigh, Feniton; Kilmington; Lypstone; Musbury; Newton Poppleford; Sidbury; Uplyme; West Hill; Whimble and Woodbury (please note that this list could change if alterations are made to the emerging East Devon Local Plan). Built-up Area Boundaries are 'black lines' drawn on maps around certain settlements to distinguish, in planning policy terms, the main built-up area from the countryside. Within the defined built-up areas planning policies establish in principle acceptance of many forms of development, but outside of these areas in the 'countryside' development is usually only acceptable in specific exceptional circumstances.

What has happened on the Villages Plan so far?

Community consultation spearheaded by Parish Councils, together with various technical assessments of development options helped to produce a draft 'East Devon Village Development Plan Document' for consultation early in 2014 (<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/266865/draft-villages-dpd.pdf>). The draft Villages Plan included maps showing proposed housing allocations in many of our rural settlements, some of which were subsequently granted planning permission (or have planning applications pending determination). A full list of all comments received on the draft villages plan may be accessed on our web site (Village document - Informal Public Consultation on Draft Villages Plan 2014 - East Devon), together with a summary of comments made (<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1247359/villages-feedback-report.pdf>). The strategic context for the Villages Plan is set by the main East Devon Local Plan so further work on the Villages Plan has been delayed while work on the local plan has progressed.

How does the Villages Plan relate to the Local Plan?

The draft Villages Plan considered the options for additional development in the small towns and villages in accordance with the strategy set out in the East Devon Local Plan, particularly Strategy 27, which was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2013. At that time Strategy 27 set out a specific number of new homes to be accommodated in the settlements listed (to be allocated through the Villages Plan).

That approach was questioned by the Local Plan Inspector who suggested that Strategy 27 should be revisited to consider the capacity of settlements to accommodate and sustain new development. (<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/288101/letterno8toeastdevon.pdf>). This work was undertaken and included in our 'Small Towns and Villages Development Suitability Assessment' document (<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/990902/small-town-and-village-assessment-2014.pdf>).

This document informed proposed changes to Strategy 27, which were consulted on between 16th April and 12th June 2015 as part of a wider consultation on changes to the Local Plan. The full text of the revised policy is set out below. The proposed changes are currently being considered by the Local Plan Inspector and it is hoped that the new local plan will be adopted by early 2016.

Strategy 27 – Development at the Small Towns and Larger Villages

Extract from East Devon Local Plan Consultation on Changes April – June 2015.

The following settlements vary in size and character but all offer a range of accessible services and facilities to meet many of the everyday needs of local residents and they have reasonable public transport. They will have a Built-up Area Boundary that will be designated in the East Devon Village DPD though they will not have land specifically allocated for development.

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|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| Beer | Dunkeswell | East Budleigh | Lympstone | Sidbury | Whimble |
| Broadclyst | Clyst St Mary | Feniton | Musbury | Uplyme | Woodbury |
| Chardstock | Colyton | Kilmington | Newton Poppleford | West Hill | |

If communities wish to promote development other than that which is supported through this strategy and other strategies in the Plan (at the settlements listed above or any other settlement) they will need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or promote community led development (for example Community Land Trusts) justifying how and why, in a local context, the development will promote the objectives of sustainable development.

What are the implications of the revised policy?

If the approach now set out in Strategy 27 is accepted it will mean that we will not seek to increase levels of development in our rural settlements or allocate housing sites through the Villages Plan. Those settlements with a defined Built-up Area Boundary will continue to provide for some new development within the boundaries identified, where opportunities exist and development is acceptable having regard to other planning policies and considerations. If communities without a defined Built-up Area Boundary wish to promote development (other than the exceptions provided for in the plan, most notably mixed market and affordable housing as set out in Strategy 35) they would need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or promote community led development justifying how it would promote the objectives of sustainable development. This would include the following settlements, all of which would 'lose' the Built-up Area Boundaries defined in the 2006 adopted local plan: Alfington; Awliscombe; Aylesbeare; Axmouth; Brampford Speke; Branscombe; Broadhembury; Clyst Hydon; Clyst St George; Colyton Raleigh; Ebford; Hawkchurch; Membury; Offwell; Otterton; Payhembury; Plymtree; Rockbeare; Smallridge; Stockland; Talaton; Tipton St John; Uptontery; and Woodbury Salterton.

What is happening now?

We are currently seeking views on a proposed methodology to guide the process of defining Built-up Area Boundaries for the 17 settlements included in the revised Strategy 27. Further details of this consultation are available at <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/emerging-plans-and-policies/the-villages-plan/consultation-on-proposed-criteria-for-reviewing-built-up-area-boundaries/>.

What is the timetable for finalising the Villages Plan?

The timetable for producing the Villages Plan and other planning policy documents is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme, which may be viewed at <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/emerging-plans-and-policies/detailed-work-programme-and-consultations-on-future-plans/local-development-scheme/>. Preparation work on the Villages Plan with on-going consultation on its content is scheduled for completion by the end of 2015. Additional formal consultation is scheduled for early in 2016 before submission of the plan to the Secretary of State later in 2016.

How will the Villages Plan relate to Neighbourhood Planning?

Local communities (usually through their Parish Councils) have the right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area if they wish to. In East Devon neighbourhood plans are being produced in around half the parishes. Once adopted, neighbourhood plans will form part of the overall development plan for East Devon and will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan to make planning decisions. The neighbourhood plan must comply with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, but it can allocate sites for development and other uses (such as open space) and produce its own development management policies (typically covering issues of local importance such as design, affordable housing, retention of community facilities etc.). If allocating land or promoting development the Neighbourhood Plan will need to provide evidence and appropriate justification in the context of both national planning policies and guidance and the strategy and policies set out in the East Devon Local Plan.

In those villages which retain their Built-up Area Boundary, the Villages Plan will establish the boundary position. Neighbourhood plans which are adopted subsequently may supersede elements of the Villages Plan. This means that a neighbourhood plan could contain an amended Built-up Area Boundary as well as local policies to apply to development in that area and allocated sites for specific uses or types of development. If an adopted neighbourhood plan retains the same Built-up Area Boundary, or doesn't address the matter at all, then the Villages Plan will continue to be relevant in this respect.

