

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 April 2016

DARTMOOR COMMUNITIES FUND

Report of the Communities Officer

Recommendation: **That Members note the contents of this report and welcome the commitment of West Devon Borough, South Hams District and Teignbridge District Councils to continuing to support the Dartmoor Community Fund in 2016/17.**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The “New Homes Bonus” (NHB) is a Government scheme encouraging local authorities to grant planning permission for the building of new houses in return for additional revenue. Currently the grant is paid directly to district borough councils as local housing authorities, it is not ‘ring fenced’ and can be used as the local authority determines.
- 1.2 In recognition of the housing delivery role of the National Park Authority (NPA) as a local planning authority, West Devon Borough (WDBC), South Hams District (SHDC) and Teignbridge District (TDC) transferred a proportion of the NHB accrued through new housing development on Dartmoor to the NPA to support the 2015/16 Dartmoor Communities Fund.

2 Dartmoor Communities Fund 2015/16

- 2.1 With the commitment of TDC to support the Dartmoor Communities Fund programme in 2015/16, the fund was extended to cover all of Dartmoor (excluding Mid Devon) for the first time. As previously, the Fund was run as a single grant scheme with the contributions from each Council, and underspend from previous rounds, being ring fenced as set out below:
 - Teignbridge £25,000
 - West Devon £22,093
 - South Hams £5,784
- 2.2 As previously, the grant eligibility criteria aimed to maximise community benefit and return, offering an accessible source of support to help communities maintain and enhance community facilities and infrastructure on Dartmoor. While the criteria for assessment remained the same, the application process was simplified to one step, omitting the expression of interest stage of the previous year.
- 2.3 The fund opened to applications in October 2015. While a good range of applications were received, the omission of the expression of interest stage proved telling and some applications were ineligible and the development of others needed considerable officer time and support. Total grant requests (£71,499) exceeded the

funding available, with demand particularly strong in West Devon. By working with applicants, it was possible to support all but 4 eligible projects: 2 each from West Devon and Teignbridge and these will all be in a good position to re-submit in 2016/17.

However, over £32,000 has been allocated to the 9 successful projects, with a total project value in excess of £90,000. Projects supported include the extension of the South Brent Bike Bank to allow a wider age range and ability to benefit from the scheme; the restoration and enhancement of the medieval rood screen at St Peter's Church, Buckland in the Moor which draws interest and visitors from around the world; and the provision of new hot showers for the open air Chagford Community Swimming thereby extending its season and widening use. A full list of supported projects is attached at Appendix 1. The residual underspend will be brought forward to the 2016/17 fund.

3 Dartmoor Communities Fund 2016/17

3.1 The commitment of the Borough and Districts' Councils to continue to support the Dartmoor Communities Fund programme in 2016/17 is welcomed. Allocations for 2016/17 have been confirmed as:

- Teignbridge: £25,000
- West Devon: £24,136
- South Hams: £24,606

3.2 The design of the Dartmoor Communities Fund is predicated on the needs of Dartmoor's communities and the constraints imposed by the primary funders. It is now well established and it is not proposed to change the assessment criteria or nature of the fund. However, recognising the issues arising from the significant number of ineligible or incomplete applications, it is proposed to reintroduce the simple 'expression of interest' stage into the application process. As previously, full applications will be competitively assessed against the scheme criteria and will need to show good value for money as well as deliverability. It is proposed to open to applications in early summer, allowing sufficient time for a second round in the autumn, subject to funding availability.

3.3 It is also proposed to establish within the Fund a quick access small grants 'Community Action' pot to support capital spend associated with environmental projects undertaken by local community action on publicly accessible land. The 'pot' will not exceed 10% of each Districts fund allocation and any award will not exceed £500. Awards will need to be equally matched with an 'in kind' contribution of volunteer labour provided by the community or other organisations and must have the support of their town/parish council and Ward Councillor.

3.4 Applications will continue to be assessed by the Communities Officer, with reference to the appropriate DNPA Parish Link Members, local WDBC & SHDC Ward Councillors, the Chair of the TDC Rural Aid Committee and the local Parish Council, with the final decision being delegated to the National Park Officer in accordance with the existing Scheme of Delegation.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The Dartmoor Communities Fund is invaluable in supporting Dartmoor communities to achieve their aspirations and help in the delivery of key 'Your Dartmoor' objectives. With the loss of the 'Your Dartmoor' Fund it is now the only Authority grant scheme offering targeted support and funding to Dartmoor communities.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Communities Fund is supported through the West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council and Teignbridge District Council New Homes Bonus ring fenced allocation. Accordingly there will be no direct budgetary implications for this financial year. Management of the Grant Scheme for the Communities Fund is included in the Communities Officer's 2016/17 Work Programme.

6 Sustainability and equality impact assessment

- 6.1 The Communities Fund will form a key mechanism for the Authority to engage with communities at a local level helping them to meet community needs and aspirations, supporting wider National Park Management Plan objectives. Sustainability and equality are intrinsic in the assessment of grant applications.

JOANNA RUMBLE

Attachments: [**Appendix 1 – 2015/16 Dartmoor Communities Fund Report**](#)

[**Appendix 2 – Dartmoor Communities Fund assessment criteria**](#)

20160401 JR Dartmoor Communities Fund

Dartmoor Communities Fund Awards 2015/16

Teignbridge District Area

Bridford Village Hall

The project is to upgrade the existing and improve the lighting, heating and hot water for this well used village hall. The works will enable the hall to be better utilised safely, thereby increasing use and revenue helping to secure its long term financial viability. The proposed electrical works will also significantly improve energy efficiency and accordingly will reduce the hall's running costs. The village hall is the only community space in the village (pop 500) and offers a home to a wide range of activities and services, including post office, doctor's surgery, wide range of youth groups, luncheon club and many social activities such as skittles, bingo, keep fit and fencing classes. Overall project costs are £7000, an award of £3,500 (50%) from the Dartmoor Communities Fund with the remaining match funding secured.

St Peter's Church, Buckland in the Moor

The project is to undertake works to conserve, repair and stabilise the very rare and historically significant medieval rood screen found within the Church. The conservation works will reveal the beautiful medieval artwork and figure paintings and ensure that is retained for future generations to enjoy. The Rood screen already enjoys a large number of visitors from Britain and overseas and the works will help to generate additional revenue to support this valued community building that remains open to all and regularly hosts a wide range of community events. Recent events have included 'The Buckland Art festival' Bridal exhibition and a flower festival. Total project costs of £7,700 and award of £2,100 from DCF (27%). Match funding has been secured.

Liverton Village Hall

The Community Kitchen Enhancement Project is to improve the existing poor hall kitchen through minor building works and the purchase of new kitchen and dining equipment. This will provide an attractive venue for the community to get together to share meals and to also raise additional income through private hire. This will also help diversify income streams which are currently limited, thereby improving financial resilience. 'Old Liverton' has no other meeting space, being bereft of pub, church or shop and as such the Village Hall is particularly important for community cohesion. Total project costs of £2,528 and an award of £1,264 (50%) from DCF. Match funding has been secured.

Manaton Village Hall

The project is a comprehensive refurbishment and improvement of the village hall to improve acoustics, energy efficiency, lighting and safety to enable the better use of the hall for a wider range of activities. DCF has been requested to fund is the cushioned safety edge guards to be installed on the projecting support pillars to allow sports activities such as badminton to take place. Without these, sporting activity will be severely curtailed to the detriment of existing users and hall finances. Total project costs of £10,941 and a DCF contribution of £542 (5%) awarded. Match funding secured.

South Hams District Area

South Brent Area Bike Bank

A green transport initiative offering free 'point of use' cycle hire to reduce motor vehicle traffic, increase fitness and community wellbeing. While the project is focussed on South Brent, it will also serve a number of satellite hamlets. The project will increase the number of cycles available within the village, widen range of users (young etc.) and aims to develop a second cycle pick-up point in future to complement the pick-up point at the community centre (installed October 2015). Insurance, administration and an online booking system is already in place. A DCF award of £820 to support a total project value of £2360, with match funding secured.

West Devon Borough Area

Chagford Community Swimming Pool

The project is for the replacement of the existing rusting, inefficient and unhygienic cold water outdoor showers that are insufficient for a modern community facility with new hot water showers. Works include the renovation of family changing area to install 3 concussive type showers, relevant drainage, water storage and heating facilities to improve hygiene at the pool, improve user experience and increase and extend usage, especially early and later in the swimming season thereby securing long term viability. Total project costs of £5,790 with a DCF award of £2,895.

Drewsteignton Playing Field

The project is to install a multi-purpose piece of climbing equipment called 'Atlantic Challenge' to replace the assault course which was responsible for the high risk assessment in the 2014 RoSPA review. The equipment is to benefit the local children being one of the few facilities available to them in the parish, but will also provide an activity for holiday makers too. An award of £4,800 to support a project with a total value of £9,793.

Coronation Hall, Mary Tavy

The application is for the refurbishment of the kitchen to bring up to standard, thereby extending the facilities to be able to offer cooked lunches for elderly lunch time club and also allow the hall to be hired for wider variety of functions to generate more revenue. The works include the replacement of kitchen fittings, new cooker, electrical works and new boiler. Total project costs of £13,007 supported by a DCF award of £1,500.

Princetown Playing Fields

The original application included 3 discrete elements, perimeter fencing to improve safety, storage building for maintenance and sports equipment and a parking area, with total project costs of £67,000 and a grant application of £17,000. Further discussions have highlighted a priority for the perimeter fencing and given the limited funding available a revised application for the fencing alone was agreed with a total project cost of £31,000 and a grant application award of £11,000 with match funding in place.

Sticklepath Village Field

The application is for a purpose designed 50m² open sided oak Pavilion set on granite effect concrete staddle stones with a slate roof, in keeping with the village location, the conservation area and edge of moorland setting. The Pavilion will provide shelter for community events held in the Village Playing Field, an important centre for village events. A DCF award of £3,905 to support total project costs of £21,200.

Dartmoor Communities Fund Criteria 2015/16

All applications were assessed against the following criteria. Projects that support key community services and facilities to secure a viable and long term future were particularly welcomed.

Criteria

The project should:

- Provide or improve valued community services or facilities
- Meet an identified community need or aspiration
- Provide value for money
- Will be sustained in the future
- Provide long term community benefit after the grant period

And the applicant should have:

- a clearly defined set of realistic project aims and measurable project outcomes
- a sound management structure to achieve its aims and monitor its outcomes
- a clear and achievable timetable for project delivery
- secured or are in the process of securing match funding or support in kind for the project

The Fund also looks to support the themes and priorities of the Management Plan for Dartmoor National Park. www.yourdartmoor.org

1. Who can apply?

The following types of organisations can apply to the Communities Fund:

- Community groups/Voluntary groups/Charities
- Social Enterprises (not for private profit)
- Parish/Town Councils

And must be based in, and serve the needs of, the Dartmoor community.

The group must be formally constituted, show that it is well managed and accountable.

2. What areas does it cover?

To be eligible the project must be located and serve the needs of communities:

- Within the Dartmoor National Park **and**
- Within West Devon, South Hams or Teignbridge (excluding Ashburton or Buckfastleigh) areas

3. What can be funded?

Applications will be assessed against the fund criteria, the following are ineligible for funding and will not be considered.

What is not supported?

- Non capital costs such as revenue funding, running costs, one off events etc.
- Replacement/duplication of statutory funding
- Renewable energy installations eligible for Feed in Tariffs or the Renewable Heat Incentive
- Projects submitted by individuals/businesses
- Research projects

4. How will it be sustained in the future?

Long term viability is important and we will be looking for projects that will have a long term impact without needing the support of further grant aid in the future. Projects that help existing community services/facilities to become more sustainable will be especially welcomed.

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 April 2016

ASHBURTON MASTERPLAN

Report of the Senior Forward Planner

Recommendation : That Members agree to cease further work on the Ashburton Masterplan, reviewing the position within 12 months (Option 3).

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2013 Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) adopted a local plan which set out the allocation of an area at Chuley Road, Ashburton, for mixed use redevelopment.
- 1.2 The aim of this allocation was to respond to an opportunity to improve the built environment of this area on the edge of the town centre, recognising some sites within the area were going to become available, and aiming out of this to respond in a co-ordinated way to key issues raised by the community around highways, parking and flood events.
- 1.3 Work on this project has been with the best intentions on DNPA's part, seeking to engage the community through the preparation of a Masterplan for the area which would perform that 'co-ordination' role, to deliver community benefits.
- 1.4 This report sets out the position as it stands at present, and describes potential options for how DNPA may move forward in the best interests of the community and the area.

2 Current Situation

- 2.1 The timeline of the allocation and Masterplan process is set out in Figure 1, below. The first stage of the identification of the site came through its allocation in the local plan. In identifying the site DNPA held a well attending community event in the town, which resulted in clear support for its allocation in the local plan for redevelopment. Equally there was support for this being undertaken in a strategic way, seeking to identify whether a co-ordinated approach to the redevelopment of the site, rather than ad hoc planning applications, would result in benefits greater than the sum of its parts.
- 2.2 DNPA embarked on a Masterplan, with financial assistance from Teignbridge District Council, and appointed Building Design Partnership (BDP) in spring 2013 to carry out the Masterplanning process. Through a series of community events and evidence gathering a draft Masterplan was published in spring 2014. The community response to the first draft was one of in-principle support, but that it could go further in considering and delivering on highway, parking and flood risk issues. In response DNPA and BDP prepared a second draft which was published for public consultation in autumn 2014. At this stage in consultation DNPA was first approached regarding the potential opportunity for reinstating a railway use to the

site. This came fuelled by the apparent misconception that the station building was under threat of demolition, though raised the matter of protecting the former route of the railway track through the site.

- 2.3 Given the weight of response on this new issue, albeit largely from enthusiast interest outside the community, DNPA agreed to pause in the consideration of the Masterplan in order to allow the Friends of Ashburton Station and South Devon Railway to present a case for its consideration.
- 2.4 DNPA officers held meetings with the two groups and provided clear advice as to the information which would be required to enable DNPA to consider the railway case. This was critical given the stage in the process that this new issue had been presented, and that any amendment would be a significant change in the strategy and priorities already identified through working with the community.
- 2.5 The information which was forthcoming was well presented and received support in principle from enthusiasts and interest from elected Members. However in technical terms it was left lacking and presented a weak case when balanced against the significant evidence already in support of the current strategy. Much of the case was based upon a 17 year old student study of the engineering concepts for extending the route from Buckfastleigh, this was only provided in part. The case did not identify a proposed route (recognising the original track bed is lost beneath the A38), and the apparent support of local businesses in a petition was frequently cited but has never been received.
- 2.6 The weakness in planning terms of the case presented for amending the Masterplan left DNPA little option but to progress the Masterplan. Whilst Members and officers clearly stated their interest in the concept, DNPA was at the time mindful of the risk of making amendments to the Masterplan based upon such limited evidence of the deliverability and benefits of railway reinstatement.
- 2.7 In line with the approach of the Chagford Masterplan (which was correct in that instance) a report was presented to DNPA Members in July 2015 for approval, rather than formal adoption. DNPA then received a threat of legal challenge regarding the approval process. Upon receiving legal advice the risk of proceeding giving the technical deficiency was recognised and the decision to approve was rescinded in September 2015.
- 2.8 Based upon the legal advice received, and seeking to minimise risk of further challenge, DNPA sought comprehensive environmental appraisal of the scheme (moving beyond the screening process previously carried out), and identified the text changes to be considered if the Masterplan were to be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 2.9 At this point in time a number of key issues came to the fore, which have altered officers' views as to if and how the Masterplan should continue. These key issues are detailed below.

Flood risk matters and community benefit

- 2.10 DNPA was processing an application for housing development on the Tuckers site, having given advice that the application would not be determined until such time as the emerging Masterplan was approved. In consultation response to the application, the Environment Agency (EA) raised matters around the deliverability of housing development on the eastern bank of the river in the absence of further upstream flood mitigation. This advice was contrary to the approach of the Masterplan, on which DNPA had worked closely with the EA, whereby development of this site was not dependent upon upstream flood works. This effectively new advice from the Environment Agency has significantly altered the deliverability of this part of the proposed masterplan.
- 2.12 With the above noted flood risk concerns, and a raft of government policy changes in the housing market around brownfield land, affordable housing, and Section 106 planning obligations, officers raised concerns that the limited value in the sites would lead to a case by case consideration of development viability. The principal reason for having a Masterplan, supporting the delivery of community benefits, could be significantly weakened and delivery may not reflect what the community envisaged from the site. Ultimately this could present a position of the Masterplan adding little value to the consideration of applications on the site. Having spent significant time with the community on this proposal officers are mindful of bringing forward a scheme which may not ultimately meet with expectations

A railway case

- 2.13 DNPA met in December 2015 with the South Devon Railway and Friends of Ashburton Station. At this point a planning professional had offered to work on the case for railway safeguarding and/or reinstatement. DNPA welcomed the recognition on their part that the case presented by the railway groups had not 'done justice' to the idea, and that DNPA had little option but to make the decision it had at the time.
- 2.14 DNPA encouraged the railway group to meet with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Highways England, to identify whether the significant uncertainty around deliverability that they had identified could be overcome. DNPA officers have attended these meetings with the railway groups' planning professional.
- 2.15 There is now a more positive and constructive relationship with the railway project. In the short time that there has been professional input much of the fundamental case DNPA encouraged from South Devon Railway and Friends of Ashburton Station in January 2015 is now coming together. Whilst this does not mean the railway should or will, form part of future development of the site, it does mean that decisions, be those by the community or DNPA, will be based upon a sound, understanding of safeguarding, reinstatement and deliverability.

Figure 1. Allocation/Masterplan Timeline

- 2011 - DNPA approached by landowners regarding redevelopment opportunities
- 2012 - Local Plan consultation
- Nov 2012 - Public exhibition regarding the site in Ashburton Town Hall
- Dec 2012 - 133 written responses received – key themes emerge
- Dec 2012 - local plan examination – public hearings
- Spring 2013 - Masterplan started – publicity
- July 2013 - Allocation of the site in Local Plan (adoption of DMD)
- July 2013 - first People's Panel meeting in Ashburton
- Feb 2014 - Consultation on a first draft Masterplan – public drop in
- April 2014 – Friends of Ashburton Station states it became aware of Masterplan
- Oct 2014 - Town Council/Neighbourhood Plan Group - workshop
- Nov 2014 - Consultation on a second draft Masterplan – Friends of Ashburton Station first approaches DNPA
- Dec 2014 - Planning Panel meeting to discuss railway matters
- Jan – March 2015 - delay in order to allow submission of railway evidence – DNPA attends meetings with South Devon Railway and Friends of Ashburton Station
- July 2015 - Authority meeting to consider final draft
- Sep 2015 – DNPA rescinds approval of Masterplan
- Sep 2015 – DNPA commission environment appraisal and approach railway group
- Dec 2015 – Railway Groups attend meeting with DNPA
- Jan-Feb 2015 – DNPA supports railway group in meetings with Environment Agency, Historic England and Highways England

3 Options

- 3.1 On the basis of the above, DNPA must consider its position in respect of the Masterplan. It is recognised that a significant resource has gone into the project already. The allocation of the site in the local plan is a robust policy that redevelopment ‘in principle’ is acceptable. Much of the resource on the Masterplan has been on evidence and community engagement. Whether the Masterplan progresses further or not, the evidence prepared is of value and has some material weight in informing the consideration of applications on the site.
- 3.2 Four options are described and assessed below. It is considered that these are the key options available to DNPA at this point in time in respect of how it proceeds. In summary they are:
- **Option (1)** - Proceed with the Masterplan in its current form
 - **Option (2)** - Proceed with revisions to the Masterplan with amendments incorporating railway safeguarding

- **Option (3)** - Cease the current Masterplan process, consider applications largely consistent with Local Plan Proposal ASH2 in the absence of a Masterplan, and review the position within 12 months
- **Option (4)** - Cease the Masterplan, publishing standalone evidence and potentially allowing it to be taken forward by a third party

These options are explained in more detail in the table below:

| Option (1) - Proceed with the Masterplan in its current form | |
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| What does this entail? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further study to detail and quantify highway and flood mitigation works, in order to inform S106 apportionment • Complete the Environment Report (SA/SEA) • Revisions to the Masterplan in order to bring it up to date, alter language, and make revisions identified by SA/SEA and HRA • Publish the revised draft for 6 weeks consultation • Consider comments received and amend accordingly • Adopt and publish Masterplan |
| Is development able to come forward? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the adoption of the Masterplan applications consistent with it may be considered. • Given changing national policy and further information on flood mitigation costs and interactions, viability may be marginal on some sites |
| Will key community objectives be met? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Masterplan would aim to deliver the objectives identified by the community at the outset • Depending on timescales and viability the deliverability of the full raft of planning gain may not be achievable and prioritisation may be necessary, therefore scheme may not meet original expectations |
| Are the community and other stakeholders able to influence the outcome? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Masterplan would proceed through the formal consultation process of an SPD as identified in the Statement of Community Involvement |
| What are the cost and resource implications? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further study around highway/flood mitigation specification and costing could cost in the order of £40k • The Environment Report could cost in the order of £3-5k • The revision to the plan could cost in the order of £2k • Project management, consultation and publication would require officer time, some of this could be sought externally at cost |
| What are the risks and threats? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would likely take 6 months to reach adoption. In this time applications may need to be determined, and additional evidence relating to the railway option is likely to be forthcoming • Further objection may be received relating to the railway option. Evidence may be in place which better supports further consideration of this option. • Reputational damage resulting from 'pushing ahead' • Highway/flood mitigation specification and cost study may identify viability issues which present a non-deliverable strategy • A legal challenge on procedural grounds could protract the adoption process and lead to costs in defence • Careful consideration must be given to any proposals entertained |

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| | in the interim (e.g. Tuckers) to ensure transparency and consistency in the decision making process |
| Potential implications or unintended consequences? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications could be determined in the intervening period, which predetermine, constrain or alter the outcome of the masterplan The formality of an adopted masterplan SPD could lead to inflexibility if new evidence emerges or alternative proposals come forward which were not envisaged |

| Option (2) - Proceed with revisions to the Masterplan with amendments incorporating railway safeguarding | |
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| What does this entail? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A further study to detail and quantify highway and flood mitigation works, in order to inform S106 apportionment Complete the Environment Report (SA/SEA) Revisions to the Masterplan in order to bring it up to date, alter language, and make revisions identified by SA/SEA and HRA A review of the Railway Options Report on the basis of new evidence prepared Publish the revised draft for 6 weeks consultation, consider comments received and amend accordingly, adopt and publish Masterplan |
| Is development able to come forward? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the adoption of the Masterplan applications consistent with it may be considered. Given changing national policy, further information on flood mitigation costs and interactions, and alteration to values and options as a result of the railway safeguarding, viability may be marginal on some sites |
| Will key community objectives be met? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The railway proposals do not currently present a clear and deliverable solution in the short to medium term within the allocated site The current railway safeguarding option (stage 1) proposes undeliverable development, e.g. issues with extensive parking proposals which would not comply with highways standards, development in floodplain Original community expectations may not be met, and may be necessary to revisit priorities |
| Are the community and other stakeholders able to influence the outcome? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further up front consultation prior to the publication of a revised draft would be advisable At this stage it would be questionable as to whether the economic and sustainable transport aspects of the railway option can be accurately evidenced and described |
| What are the cost and resource implications? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A further study around highway/flood mitigation specification and costing could cost in the order of £40k The Environment Report could cost in the order of £3-5k The revision to the plan could cost in the order of £2k Revisions to the Railway Options Report may be undertaken internally, but third party scrutiny is advisable at a cost in the order of up to £2k Project management, consultation and publication would require officer time, some of this could be sought externally at cost |
| What are the risks and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would likely take at a minimum of 6 months to reach adoption. |

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| threats? | <p>In this time applications may need to be determined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications which are inconsistent with railway safeguarding may be submitted prior to adoption if the Masterplan is considered a threat to their preferred proposal • Continued uncertainty regarding the short to medium term use of the allocated site may undermine deliverability, and could result in a lack of community support, or community objection • Highway/flood mitigation specification and cost study may identify viability issues which present a non-deliverable strategy • Careful consideration must be given to any proposals entertained in the interim (e.g. Tuckers) to ensure transparency and consistency in the decision making process • Potential cost of defending refusals based upon this approach |
| Potential implications or unintended consequences? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding of the route through the centre of the site could lead to an alternative 'out of town' food store proposal • Applications could be determined in the intervening period, which predetermine, constrain or alter the outcome of the masterplan • The formality of an adopted masterplan SPD could lead to inflexibility if new evidence emerges or alternative proposals come forward which were not envisaged. |

Option (3) - Cease the current Masterplan process, consider applications largely consistent with Local Plan Proposal ASH2 in the absence of a Masterplan, and review the position within 12 months

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| What does this entail? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential continued positive engagement with the railway to support the preparation of evidence, though limited officer commitment • A clear position statement on the current position regarding masterplan preparation, and appropriate stakeholder engagement • A clear timeframe for the consideration of any review of the position |
| Is development able to come forward? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development which would not prejudice the safeguarding of a rail route could be approved in the absence of an adopted Masterplan, with the criteria in the local plan allocation still applicable • Applications on the former rail line would not be encouraged where they would prejudice safeguarding (e.g. a new building on the route) |
| Will key community objectives be met? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to any adoption, development on the western river bank of Tuckers, and the Outdoor Experience site could come forward; these must still demonstrate consistency with the local plan allocation • Prior to any adoption, little weight must be given to the chosen strategy in the earlier Masterplan (with evidence and consultation outcomes given more weight), planning gain will likely focus on-site and/or required to deliver, rather than collective betterment across the whole site |
| Are the community and other stakeholders able to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications received in the absence of a Masterplan will be subject to the usual opportunity for public and stakeholder |

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| influence the outcome? | comment, however they will not be based upon an adopted masterplan |
| What are the cost and resource implications? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential continued officer engagement with the railway to support the preparation of evidence No short term costs, costs will only arise in the future if a decision is taken to continue a Masterplan. The local plan review may inform the future commitment to Masterplans for this and other sites |
| What are the risks and threats? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to deliver appropriate evidence within the given timeframe leading to project drift Applications received on the former rail line could be submitted, the Authority may be required to determine them. These would be determined on the basis of the criteria in the allocation, and relevant evidence and information available at that point in time Unwelcome applications or appeals could have significant and unplanned resource implications, with associated reputation damage Reputational damage as a result of the perceived non-delivery of the Masterplan and abortive costs, and decision making on applications in the absence of an adopted Masterplan |
| Potential implications or unintended consequences? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications could be determined in the intervening period, which predetermine, constrain or alter the outcome of a future masterplan Clear link with local plan review, which may need to identify a safeguarding route, and may alter the Authority's current approach to Masterplans and Development Briefs A community group could choose to pick up the work whilst it is not progressed |

| Option (4) - Cease the Masterplan, publishing standalone evidence and potentially allowing it to be taken forward by a third party | |
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| What does this entail? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear position statement regarding reasons for decision and the status and 'weight' of previous work The presentation of work to date (excluding any preferred options), as evidence, which might support or inform standalone applications or an alternative party in preparing a Masterplan Consideration of any support DNPA might give to an alternative party (for example the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Group, a group of landowners, or a railway interest group) |
| Is development able to come forward? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any applications could be considered in the absence of a Masterplan, with those consistent with the criteria in the allocation considered favourably There may be community resistance to applications if a community group is in the course of preparing a Masterplan |
| Will key community objectives be met? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any emerging Masterplan must be consistent with the criteria of the local plan allocation, however an alternative |

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|---|--|
| | <p>Masterplan may identify different priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty regarding how an alternative Masterplan might balance priorities and limited planning gain. It could try to focus upon specific interests to the detriment of wider balance. |
| Are the community and other stakeholders able to influence the outcome? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any third party Masterplan should be in accordance with the requirements of the allocation and consistent with Authority's guidance. This would also mean Authority approval to consider how it has been prepared. |
| What are the cost and resource implications? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on the approach taken officers may wish or be expected to support the process. Request may be made for financial support which would have to be considered. |
| What are the risks and threats? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reputational damage as a result of the perceived non-delivery of the Masterplan and abortive costs Any emerging Masterplan prepared by a third party could accumulate weight as it is prepared, and be material to the consideration of applications prior to adoption The offer to take the Masterplan forward could not be taken up by any group Multiple groups could wish to or proceed with taking the Masterplan forward A significant level of uncertainty and potential perception the Masterplan has just been abandoned for another group to pick up |
| Potential implications or unintended consequences? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications could be determined in the intervening period, which predetermine, constrain or alter the outcome of a future masterplan – this could lead to reputational damage if it prejudices the outcome of a community led plan |

4 Discussion

4.1 The options explored above set out a number of issues which must be considered. Each of the options carries a degree of risk and uncertainty, though in some it is outweighed or mitigated by the benefits of moving forward in that way. These are summarised as follows:

- **Option (1) - Proceed with the Masterplan in its current form**

This is effectively the current position as it stands, hence its inclusion. However given the progress on railway matters, advice on flood matters and concerns regarding viability this option is no longer considered feasible and reasonable.

- **Option (2) - Proceed with revisions to the Masterplan with amendments incorporating railway safeguarding**

Proceeding with immediate revisions which potentially include railway safeguarding would require a clear case to be presented now on the viability of the railway, with evidence and consultation on that option before bringing forward potential revisions to a Masterplan. Railway evidence is not currently available and applications could come in which predetermine the decision.

- **Option (3) - Cease the current Masterplan process, consider applications largely consistent with Local Plan Proposal ASH2 in the absence of a Masterplan, and review the position within 12 months**

This approach allows applications to come forward in particular where they would not prevent the future safeguarding option. It allows time to gather railway evidence and consider if and how a Masterplan is taken forward. This route could theoretically lead back to options (1), (2) or (4) in the future, or the decision to cease entirely. The Local Plan review will inform in general terms whether a Masterplanning approach to this and other sites continues to be the preferred approach.

- **Option (4) - Cease the Masterplan, publishing standalone evidence and potentially allowing it to be taken forward by a third party**

Whilst in principle an ‘open’ option inviting community or stakeholders to lead, this option has significant uncertainty as to if and how it would proceed and how it would deliver balanced community priorities. It could be perceived as a positive step with DNPA passing over the control, or could be perceived as a negative step in passing over responsibility.

- 4.2 Recommended Option: Option 3 (cease the current Masterplan process, consider applications largely consistent with Local Plan Proposal ASH2 in the absence of a Masterplan, and review the position within 12 months) is identified as offering the most pragmatic way forward at present. A more detailed discussion of the potential issues associated with this is set out below.

5 Planning applications

- 5.1 DNPA has sought legal advice in respect of the consideration of planning applications in the absence of an adopted Masterplan. This advice states that, in essence, DNPA can in considering any planning applications on the site, properly apply (a-b), and (i-iv) of Proposal ASH2 (the local plan allocation, below). The decision making process will not be invalid, or weakened in the absence of a Masterplan provided applications are advertised as departures from the Local Plan, and clear are given reasons for ceasing or pausing any Masterplan preparation.

Figure 2. Proposal ASH2 (excerpt from the 2013 adopted local plan)

An area of land 3.5 ha in extent at Chuley Road, Ashburton, is identified for redevelopment for mixed use. Development in this area may include:

- (a) housing, including a proportion of affordable housing subject to further assessment of viability;
- (b) commercial uses comprising principally business use (B1), financial and professional services (A2), shops (A1), and restaurants and cafés (A3).

Development of this site should:

- (i) meet the parking needs of existing and new commercial and residential uses, and provide further public car parking to serve the centre of Ashburton;
- (ii) conserve and enhance the site's railway heritage;
- (iii) provide a pedestrian link between Bulliver's Way and the Recreation Ground;
- (iv) adopt a sequential approach to the layout and design of development and be supported by a flood risk assessment which includes consideration of climate change and demonstrates that any development will be safe, not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduces flood risk overall.

Proposals at ASH2 should accord with a comprehensive masterplan for the entire site prepared in association with the local community, relevant stakeholders and the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

- 5.2 Provided the Authority approaches applications in this way, the legal advice is that there is no fundamental requirement to have an adopted Masterplan in place.

6 Meeting community objectives

- 6.1 In considering any planning applications within the area, DNPA must give weight to (a-b), and (i-iv) above. The evidence prepared which supported the preparation of the Masterplan drafts will be relevant and should inform any application, however the strategy or option proposed in any previous draft of the Masterplan should carry little weight at this point in time.

- 6.2 The criteria in the policy above are robust, and the priorities identified by the community (principally highways, parking and flooding) have been consistent throughout the process. If DNPA determines applications in the absence of a Masterplan it will be on the basis of case by case negotiation and site viability. Strategic benefits, such as the pooling of contributions for off-site infrastructure, which are beyond the reasonable use of Section 106 obligations will not be forthcoming.

7 Stakeholder engagement

- 7.1 The community and other stakeholders will have an opportunity to input to the decision making process on any applications through the formal application process. DNPA would, as is the case with any large application, encourage pre-application discussion with the Town Council and wider community as appropriate.

- 7.2 Within the confines of a decision on a planning application, proposals must be decided on the basis of issues which are ‘material planning matters’; issues which are not relevant to planning, or which lack evidence or foundation will carry little or no weight.

8 Resources/Costs

- 8.1 DNPA has invested significant officer time, as well as financially, in the Masterplan project. Potential withdrawal from it is therefore not to be taken lightly. However the continued benefit of further investment, particularly in officer time, must be carefully judged in the public interest. That limited officer resources, may for example be better focussed upon national park wide issues, including the local plan review.
- 8.2 It is likely resources will focus upon the consideration of planning applications in the short term. In considering the potential risks/threats described below, the consideration of applications may effectively decide the way forward. Equally the local plan review may overtake this consideration.

9 Risks/Threats

- 9.1 In choosing not to pursue a Masterplan at this point in time the risk of challenge to decisions around adoption is effectively removed. However this does pass the issue to the determination of planning applications. Applications may come forward which are largely supported by stakeholders, and enable development to proceed in the area. However contentious proposals, for example any application which proposed building on the former track bed, would force the consideration of the case for railway safeguarding and effectively move this decision from a Masterplan, to the planning application.
- 9.2 The consideration of the position on any future Masterplan could also be overtaken by the review of the Local Plan. DNPA will potentially need, in consultation with the community, to consider how the current allocation Proposal ASH2 is included in any future plan. Officers will also expect to critically review the approach to Masterplanning set out in the current local plan.

10 Review

- 10.1 It is proposed that the position would be reviewed within 12 months. Within this time it is likely that application(s) will have been forthcoming on the site.
- 10.2 Triggers for reviewing the position earlier in that 12 month period might be critical issues raised by applications, desire from a community group to take on a Masterplan, or compelling new evidence which supports further consideration of a strategic approach to the redevelopment of the area.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 The discussion above sets the context and options for moving forwards with the delivery of the allocation in the local plan. Ultimately DNPA is keen to enable development to move forward where it will be consistent with community objectives,

and mindful of the additional resource required in pursuing a Masterplan given the current uncertainty around its benefits.

- 11.2 It is recommended that Members agree to cease the current work on the Masterplan, and undertake to review this position in 12 months (Option 3).
- 11.3 If the recommendation is ratified, it is critical that we are clear on the reasons for ceasing the process and how decisions on applications will be made in the meantime. The decision should be clearly shared with interested parties, and may entail a further statement or guidance on decision making.

11.4 Financial Implications

The recommendation course of action does not have direct costs associated with it, instead it responds to a concern that further investment in Masterplan preparation may have limited public benefit or value for money.

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 April 2016

LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION – JOINT LOCAL PLANS

Report of the Senior Forward Planner

Recommendation : That Members -

- 1) Note opportunities for joint evidence gathering with adjoining local planning authorities
- 2) Agree to continue with a single local plan for the whole of Dartmoor National Park

1 Background

- 1.1 A Report to the Authority Meeting of September 2015 set out the upcoming review of the Local Plan. The Local Plan is the statutory development plan for the National Park and plays a critical role in delivering national park purposes through the Authority's planning function.
- 1.2 The process of preparing a local plan must be in line with the relevant Legislation and Regulations; however a degree of flexibility exists in respect of the form of the plan.
- 1.3 The context for local plans has changed in recent years, with the removal of County Structure Plans and Regional Spatial Strategies. Instead there is an emphasis on the Duty to Co-operate, which aims to ensure clear consideration of strategic cross-boundary issues and encourage constructive conversation between authorities.
- 1.4 Local Plans have also, following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), reverted back to a preference for a single local plan (having previously taken the local development framework structure of separating a core strategy from development management policies).
- 1.5 Consistent with the drive for public sector efficiency savings through collaboration, the NPPF also encourages joint working across local planning authorities (LPAs). It states that LPAs should consider producing joint planning policies on strategic matters and informal strategies such as joint infrastructure and investment plans.
- 1.6 This paper describes the consideration officers have given to joint working opportunities on the local plan.

2 Strategic context

- 2.1 In preparing the local plan and considering the Duty to Co-operate, a LPA must identify strategic cross boundary issues will be part of the conversation with its neighbours. In the national park context this is likely to include issues such as

housing development; economic development; infrastructure delivery; landscape and natural environment protection; recreation and green infrastructure.

- 2.2 Dartmoor National Park forms part of two Housing Market Areas (HMAs), the Exeter HMA and the Plymouth HMA. HMAs are a key geography for considering housing need and numbers across a sub-regional area; government guidance describes how LPAs should:
1. Identify functional Housing Market Areas;
 2. Identify the 'objectively assessed need' for housing within that area, and;
 3. Plan appropriately to meet that need.
- 2.3 Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessments are jointly prepared studies which consider elements 1 and 2 above. The third element is the setting of a housing target within the local plan, and where possible 'agreeing' that target with neighbouring authorities within the HMA as part of the Duty to Co-operate.

3 Plymouth HMA

- 3.1 The Plymouth HMA comprises Plymouth, South Hams, West Devon, part of Dartmoor and, until recently, Cornwall (Cornwall is now a separate HMA). Within the Plymouth HMA the recent close working around housing numbers has led to the identification of an opportunity for a joint local plan across the area. A key driver for this is providing a robust housing evidence base which demonstrates delivery across the whole HMA.
- 3.2 There are potential other benefits to joint local planning, including:
- Access to an alternative or wider specialist officer resource
 - Ability to more easily consider cross boundary benefits, for example and Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy resource
 - A different route for accessing central government or Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding by 'piggybacking' an urban growth area
- 3.3 Officers across each LPA have been involved in discussions around how a joint local plan might work. In respect of Dartmoor National Park Authority's (DNPA) involvement there exist three principal options:

1) Enter into a joint local plan arrangement for the Plymouth HMA, with the West Devon and South Hams parts of the National Park

If the key benefits of the HMA evidence are to be met, joint arrangement would take option 1, above, with a 'clean' HMA boundary for a joint local plan. Such an option would enable a robust housing evidence base, but have the following potential issues:

- Joint arrangements would not lead to efficiencies for DNPA, as we would still need to prepare a local plan for the rest of the National Park in the Exeter HMA.
- Two local plans covering the National Park has the potential to create confusion, inconsistency and inefficiency
- Whilst housing is high on the government agenda, and almost certainly a local plan priority, the 1995 Environment Act gives planning powers to national park

authorities in order to plan appropriately to deliver national park purposes. Other issues might therefore be more significant to the National Park in determining the scope of the local plan, rather than it being principally housing driven.

2) Enter into a joint local plan arrangement for the Plymouth HMA, with the whole of the National Park

This option could create greater efficiencies for DNPA in the process of preparing a local plan. However it also attracts the following potential issues:

- It creates a joint local plan which straddles the HMAs, the robustness of the ‘neat’ local plan consistent with the HMA is therefore lost
- Evidence for the National Park as a whole (i.e which straddles the HMA boundary) is not readily available, weakening the HMA case
- A joint local plan which ‘looks west’ could be perceived as functionally skewed, for example it might struggle to recognise functional travel to work areas, and weaken relationships with authorities to the east; it could also lead to community disenfranchisement

3) Identify opportunities for joint evidence and collaborative work, but do not enter into a formal joint local plan

There are two clear benefits to the joint collection of evidence; potential cost savings, and the robustness and validity of a larger study or assessment.

DNPA officers have, with officers from Plymouth, West Devon and South Hams identified in particular housing, employment/retail, landscape, recreational impacts, and open space, sport and recreation, as areas where we could consider joint evidence collection. This is not an exclusive list, but might include joint procurement and commissioning, joint studies or assessments, or shared briefs/methodologies.

Officers consider that a joint approach to evidence has the potential to offer benefits to each of the authorities, and the robustness of DNPA’s own local plan.

Plymouth City Council, West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council are continuing to explore joint local plan and plan-making arrangements. There is a clear need to engage with the authorities in this process irrespective of DNPA’s involvement in any joint plan, and it is currently proposed that DNPA is a ‘Principal Stakeholder’ with a semi-formal role in the governance arrangements for the adjoining joint local plan. This will ensure officers and Members have a mechanism to engage with, and influence, the joint plan where it may have a bearing on National Park and strategic cross-boundary issues.

4 Exeter HMA

- 4.1 The Exeter HMA comprises Exeter, Teignbridge, East Devon, Mid Devon and part of Dartmoor National Park.
- 4.2 Early discussions have been held regarding the potential for joint plan-making in all or part of the Exeter HMA. DNPA officers have engaged with these early

- discussions and considered the range of issues and options already explored in the Plymouth HMA described above.
- 4.3 On this basis a similar approach of positive engagement in evidence gathering, and a clear position as a stakeholder in the preparation of any forthcoming local plan has been discussed and agreed in principle.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 It is important DNPA openly considers the range of options available in respect of plan-making, and can show clearly the reasons for its chosen approach at the outset of plan preparation.
- 4.2 Specific issues have been identified which have led officers to recommend preparing a single local plan for the National Park. Officers have also discussed experience of different options around joint planning making with other National Park Authorities, which has helped to inform these conclusions. In addition to the specific issues detailed above there are more general issues which support the conclusions around joint local plan options. These include:
- The ability for a distinct local plan which clearly sets out how National Park purposes are delivered and considered in the context of the wider sub-regional area
 - An independent voice for the national park, recognising the national importance of the landscape and an ability to comment openly on issues which might impinge upon the delivery of national park purposes
 - A clear focus on Dartmoor's thriving communities in their own right, rather than the risk of Dartmoor perceived as the 'green infrastructure' in a wider joint plan
 - A simple and transparent approach for communities and stakeholders to engage with, which enables a focus upon national park issues and can link clearly with the National Park Management Plan and other local strategies
 - An approach which balances potential efficiencies and risk mitigation through joint evidence
- 4.3 Officers will continue positive engagement through the Duty to Co-operate on strategic cross boundary issues. This will focus upon housing numbers in the first instance, with clear consideration of a range of issues (as noted above) as the review of the local plan progresses. Equally, officers and Members will have opportunities for more formal engagement with adjoining joint plans in order to influence these where they may have relevance to national park purposes.

5 Financial implications

- 5.1 Alternative scenarios around joint plan making have not been costed, though engagement in two joint plans for the National Park is likely to require resources additional to that which currently exists within the Authority, dependant on timescales.
- 5.2 The single local plan review route recommended has already been budgeted for in 2016/17 and beyond. There exist opportunities to achieve savings in commissioned work through the closer working arrangements on evidence gathering described above.

5.3 Duty to Co-operate will take a significant portion of officer time through the review of the National Park Local Plan and engagement with adjoining joint plans. An additional Forward Planner is currently being recruited to support the Local Plan Review, giving the team the capacity to deliver the project, engaging proactively with stakeholders and communities, and positively engaging in Duty to Co-operate discussions.

DAN JANOTA

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AUTHORITY

1 April 2016

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS, SECTION 211 NOTIFICATIONS
(WORKS TO TREES IN CONSERVATION AREAS)
AND HEDGEROW REMOVAL NOTICES
DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

Report of the Trees and Landscape Officer

Recommendation : That the decisions be noted.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

Teignbridge

Ref: 15/0057 3 Amberley Close, Ashburton SX 7448 7054

Application to crown lift a walnut tree. The works are minor and will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2012 Tree Work - Recommendation

South Hams

Ref: 15/0055 Moorhaven Village SX 6678 5719

Application to fell a spruce and reduce the crowns of two beech and a sycamore. The spruce tree is in very poor condition and the remedial works are minor and will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2012 Tree Work - Recommendation

SECTION 211 NOTICES

Teignbridge

Ref: 15/0047 The Moorings, Buckfastleigh SX 7352 6605

Notification to fell a yew and reduce a horse chestnut tree. The trees are hidden from public view and have little public amenity value.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0058 Lower Wreyland, Lustleigh SX 7869 8116

Notification to fell a spruce tree. The felling will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0059 Lynnfield, Lustleigh SX 7843 8107

Notification to pollard an oak tree. The works will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

West Devon

Ref: 15/0048 The Coppice, Brentor SX 4833 8145

Notification to reduce the canopies of two beech trees. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0049 Montessori School, Chagford SX 7014 8387

Notification to remove three branches from a birch tree. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0050 Moor Park, Chagford SX 7018 8783

Notification to crown lift two beech trees. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0051 **Half Acre, Mary Tavy** **SX 5070 7906**

Notification to coppice a hawthorn and two sycamore trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0054 **The Rectory, Horrabridge** **SX 5129 6860**

Notification to fell two willow and reduce an ash tree. The works will have minimal impact character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0056 **Grovenor House, Princetown** **SX 5873 7383**

Notification to fell a cypress. The tree has poor form and liable to failure in high winds.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 15/0060 **40 New Street, Chagford** **SX 7015 8728**

Notification to coppice six ash and crown lift three elm trees. The works will have minimal impact character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

South Hams

Ref: 15/0052 **25 Church Street, South Brent** **SX 6971 6011**

Notification to fell a laburnum. The tree has partially collapsed and is hidden from public view.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

BRIAN BEASLEY