

# Local Development Framework Briefing Paper Historic Environment



## Devon County Council's advice to Local Planning Authorities.

*This is one of a series of briefing papers prepared by Devon County Council to assist the preparation of Local Development Documents.*

*To view this, and other briefing papers, see <http://www.devon.gov.uk/ldf-briefing-papers>*

*For more information or comment contact 01392 382275 or email [environment@devon.gov.uk](mailto:environment@devon.gov.uk)*

**Local Planning Authorities are requested to take the following aspects of historic environment into account in preparing their Local Development Frameworks and other documents:**

- 1. Issues To Be Addressed: Local Development Documents should contain policies to preserve, enhance and manage the historic character and appearance of the historic environment, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place. They should identify, assess and incorporate the value of the historic environment into development and regeneration proposals; improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, assets; protect, manage and improve local environmental quality; achieve high quality, sustainable design that is sensitive to the locality; and require analysis and recording of components of the historic environment where loss is unavoidable [see section 4].**
- 2. Core Strategy Policy: The Core Strategy should contain a strategic policy for preserving and where appropriate enhancing the historic environment, reflecting the strategic aims of Structure Plan High Level Policy Aim 1. The absence of a national statutory designation for an archaeological site, historic building or landscape does not mean that it is unimportant and should not be preserved.**
- 3. Suggested Policies: Policies should be based on a thorough understanding of the local area, achieved through use of characterisation techniques, conservation statements, conservation plans, supplementary planning guidance and above all through access to an integrated Historic Environment Record and appropriate specialist advice. Policies should set out measures to:**
  - **Secure the preservation or enhancement, where appropriate, of:**
    - **archaeological remains and their setting**
    - **buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest and their settings**
    - **the special character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings**
    - **Historic Parks and Gardens and their setting**
  - **Secure the protection and enhancement of:**
    - **Locally important landscapes and townscapes**
  - **Secure the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Sites in Devon**

**Further detailed advice related to issues to be considered under these headings can be found in Appendix 3.**
- 4. Partnership Working**

**Devon County Council wishes to work in partnership with District Councils, in further developing the above policy areas with colleagues and other organisations and would wish to be fully involved in any discussion relating to them.**

## 1. Introduction

The County Council's strategic planning role in respect of the historic environment by overseeing, promoting and providing advice about the preservation and enhancement of Devon's Historic Environment. The historic environment is an important cultural asset and driver for economic growth, that helps build social cohesion and provide a better quality of life for all, contributing to the achievement of successful sustainable communities. The historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable resource.

The term '*historic environment*' includes not only archaeological sites, historic buildings, settlements and landscapes with statutory designation, but also the wider historic landscape and townscape together with locally distinctive, valued and important buildings, areas and features.

The historic dimension of everyday landscapes and townscapes – field patterns, shopfronts, tenement plots, etc. – forms a principal element the character of a locality. In many cases the historic resource is highly fragile and vulnerable to damage or destruction. It is important to ensure that it is not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed. Often elements of the historic environment are not obvious features, being either buried beneath the present land surface or structures such as industrial, military or church buildings that are not commonly perceived to be of either historic or architectural merit. Specialist advice will therefore be important. The current statistics of the historical heritage of Devon is set out in **Appendix 1**.

**Government Guidance** is currently set out in PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) and PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* (1990) provide guidance on achieving a balance between necessary development and protection of the historic environment. The government is currently undertaking a Heritage Protection Review that is likely to lead to a unified protection system for the historic environment. It is likely that a greater proportion of Devon will be covered by the proposed new national and local designations. The review will almost certainly require future amendments to any local policy frameworks that are currently being formulated.

**The Regional Spatial Strategy** seeks to ensure that the historic environment will be preserved and enhanced recognises the need for local authorities in their strategies and plans should adopt an approach to the historic environment which is based on adequate identification and assessment of needs and assets (Policy ENV5).

**The Devon Structure Plan** policies seek to protect Historic Settlements and Buildings (Policy CO7) and Archaeology (Policy CO8). These policies are summarised in **Appendix 2**.

**This Briefing Paper** seeks to ensure:

- The appropriate protection, conservation and management of Devon's historic environment, regardless of whether or not the resources concerned are statutorily designated.
- Recognition of the historic environment as an economic driver
- Design and urban regeneration takes account of the wider historic setting

## 2. The Vision

The historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable source of information about our past. It is part of our national and local heritage and culture and is valuable for its own sake and for its role in education, leisure and tourism.

The *Devon Community Strategy: Vision for Devon in 2015* (Devon Strategic Partnership, 2004) calls for:

***'a county with safe, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a cherished environment'***.

Devon County Council's overall High Level Policy Aim 1 for Conservation and Enhancement of the Devon Environment is set out in the *Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016, 'Devon 2016'* (October 2004):

***To conserve and enhance the quality of Devon's environment and its local distinctiveness so as to maximise the benefits to the environment - including the special beauty and***

*characteristics of the countryside, coasts, buildings, cultural and historic heritage - together with the diversity of its wildlife and habitats to achieve the following objectives:*

- 1a) Conserve and enhance Devon's landscape, coast and cultural heritage.*
- 1b) Conserve and enhance biodiversity and protect wildlife habitats.*
- 1c) Improve the urban environment, by improving safety, reducing congestion and enhancing townscape.*
- 1d) Preserve and enhance open space and access to the countryside.*
- 1e) Provide for new development where it would not conflict with the need to conserve and enhance the special environment and heritage of Devon.*

### **3. Issues to be addressed**

**There need to be adequate policies in place to protect the integrity of historic assets, and to promote understanding and enjoyment of them..** - Over the next twenty years Devon will need to accommodate significant levels of development. There is the potential for this to erode the historic quality and character of the County unless properly managed. In particular, the impacts of change will need to be carefully managed in urban areas where a greater proportion of development will be located in future.

**Historic places and attractive environments are essential to the County's tourism industry and to the well being of its residents.** Population growth will place greater demands on the historic environment for leisure and recreation. The tension between conservation of the environment and promotion of tourism and leisure needs to be addressed in LDFs.

**The changing understanding of the nature of places, based on characterisation techniques needs reflecting in policy.** Historic Landscape Character mapping has been completed for the whole County. The Government's Heritage Protection Review will probably require early amendments to LDF policies.

### **4. The content of LDF**

#### **Core Strategy**

Given the contribution that it makes to the unique character of Devon, the protection and where appropriate the enhancement of the historic environment should form part of the sustainable long term vision of each LDF. It is therefore appropriate for the Core Strategy to contain a strategic policy addressing this objective and for strategic environmental assets [and their relationship to adjoining districts] to be shown on the core strategy diagram.

#### **Other Local Development Documents**

Policies should be based on a thorough understanding of the local area, achieved through use of characterisation techniques, conservation statements, conservation plans, supplementary planning guidance and above all through access to an integrated Historic Environment Record and appropriate specialist advice.

Other local development documents should develop the core strategy policy and seek to:

- a) Preserve, enhance and manage the historic character and appearance of World Heritage Sites, archaeological sites, historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and other historical, cultural and architecturally important features and areas and their settings.
- b) Protect, enhance and manage the historic character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- c) Identify, assess and incorporate the physical, social, economic and environmental value of the historic environment in development and regeneration proposals.
- d) Improve and broaden access to and understanding of local heritage, historic sites, areas and buildings.

- e) Protect, manage and, where necessary, improve local environmental quality.
- f) Achieve high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm that is sensitive to the locality [see also briefing paper on Public Realm].
- g) Require the analysis and recording of components of the historic environment where loss is unavoidable (Preservation by record).

Suggested wording for Policies are set out in **Appendix 3**

Proposals and policies contained within many different parts of a Local Development Framework have the potential to impact on the historic environment. Devon's Local Planning Authorities should therefore include environmental safeguards in the form of criteria-based policies. Such policies should not only have regard to the statutorily designated elements of the historic environment, but should also safeguard the local historic environment, protecting and enhancing, where appropriate, local diversity and distinctiveness. **The absence of a national statutory designation for an archaeological site, historic building or landscape does not mean that it is unimportant and should not be preserved.**

Policies should have regard to cross boundary issues and the desirability of maintaining a consistent approach to the conservation, enhancement and management of historic assets which straddle administrative boundaries.

### **Partnership Working**

The County Council wish to work in partnership with districts on issues relating to the historic environment, particularly where work is commissioned to feed into the LDF.

## **Historic Environment Records Data/ Statistics**

The Devon County Historic Environment Record (HER), maintained by Devon County Council, currently contains over 68,000 records of sites of archaeological or historic interest. Of these 2074 are statutorily designated as Scheduled Monuments. In addition Devon has nearly 21,000 Listed Buildings, 350 Conservation Areas and 41 Registered Historic Parks & Gardens. Although the HER covers the whole county of Devon, responsibility for managing the historic environment within Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks and in Exeter rests with the National Park Authorities and with Exeter City Council. The Devon County Historic Environment Service currently provides specialist archaeological and historic environment planning and management advice to Devon's District Councils, as well as to other public bodies, utilities, developers, forestry and agricultural land owners and managers.

The current statutory designations are likely to be unified following the government's heritage protection review. It is likely that a greater proportion of Devon will be covered by the proposed new national and local designations than is currently statutorily protected.

Devon also has two World Heritage Sites, The Dorset & East Devon Coast and The Cornish & West Devon Mining Landscape.

Historic Landscape Character mapping has been completed for the whole county. A Devon-wide Landscape Character Assessment, integrating natural and historic environment mapping is due to be completed in 2006.

Although archaeological sites, historic buildings and elements of historic landscape are damaged or destroyed each year due to authorised or unauthorised development, agricultural activity and natural processes, the number of sites and buildings recorded on the Devon HER is constantly increasing as new research is undertaken.

### **Summary of existing Government and Structure Plan Policies**

PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) and PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* (1990) provide guidance on achieving a balance between necessary development and protection of the historic environment. There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of all components of the historic environment, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for a given development is of greater importance. Both documents state that Local Plans should set out clearly their policies for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment and sites of archaeological interest and their settings.

Current Devon Structure Plan policies provide a framework for the protection of the historic environment in the county:

#### **Policy CO1: Landscape Character and Local Distinctiveness**

The distinctive qualities and features of Devon's Landscape Character Zones ..... should be sustained and enhanced. Within the context of this broad characterisation, Local Planning Authorities should undertake more detailed assessments of landscape character in order to identify priority areas for the maintenance, enhancement and / or restoration of that character and provide an appropriate policy framework in Local Plans for each area. Policies and proposals within each part of Devon should be informed by and be sympathetic to its landscape character and quality.

#### **Policy CO7: Historic Settlements and Buildings**

The quality of Devon's historic environment should be conserved and enhanced. In providing for new development particular care should be taken to conserve the special historic character of settlements, the character and appearance of conservation areas, the historic character of the landscape, listed or other buildings of historic or architectural interest and their settings and parks and gardens of special historic interest and their settings.

#### **Policy CO8: Archaeology**

Internationally, nationally and regionally important archaeological sites and their settings, whether Scheduled Monuments or unscheduled, will be preserved. Other important sites and their settings should be preserved wherever possible, and in considering proposals for development which would have an adverse impact on them, the importance and value of the remains will be a determining factor. Where a lack of information precludes the proper assessment of a site or area with archaeological potential, developers will be required to arrange appropriate prior evaluation in advance of any decision to affect the site or area.

Where the loss of an archaeological site or area is acceptable, proper provision for archaeological excavation and recording will be required.

### **Suggest Policy Wordings for LDF**

#### **Policy ?? Archaeology**

The preservation or enhancement, where appropriate, of archaeological remains and their setting will be secured by:

- A presumption in favour of the preservation of scheduled monuments and other important archaeological sites and their settings; and
- Preservation in situ of other archaeological remains, or, where this is not justifiable or feasible, ensuring that provision is made for an appropriate level of archaeological recording and dissemination of the results (Preservation by record); and
- Requiring that an appropriate assessment and evaluation is submitted as part of the planning application in areas of known or potential archaeological interest; and
- Encouraging positive land management regimes for all sites of archaeological importance.

#### **Policy ?? Buildings of Special Architectural or historic interest**

The preservation of buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest and their settings will be secured by:

- A presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings and structures; and
- Ensuring that proposed alterations, extensions or changes of use to listed or other historic buildings, or development in their vicinity, will not have an adverse impact on the special architectural or historic interest of such buildings or their settings, and that where historic fabric is to be lost that an appropriate level of analytical record is made and the results disseminated (Preservation by record); and
- Taking measures to ensure that neglected listed buildings are appropriately repaired and re-used.

#### **Policy ?? Conservation Areas**

The preservation or enhancement, where appropriate, of the special character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings will be secured by:

- A programme of Conservation Area Appraisals, management plans and environmentally assessed enhancement schemes to manage change; and
- A presumption in favour of the preservation of buildings and structures, both listed and unlisted, identified as making a positive contribution to the special character or appearance of that conservation area; and
- Ensuring that development within or which would affect the setting of a conservation area will not have an adverse impact on its special character or appearance; and
- Safeguarding spaces, street patterns, views, vistas, uses and trees which contribute to the special character or appearance of that conservation area.

#### **Policy ?? Historic Parks and Gardens**

The preservation or enhancement, where appropriate, of Historic Parks and Gardens and their setting will be secured by:

- Ensuring that development does not harm features that form part of the special character of the park or garden or detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance or setting of the Park or Garden, or prejudice its future restoration; and
- Encouraging the preparation of conservation statements or management plans and the implementation of appropriate enhancement schemes.

### Policy ?? Locally important landscape and townscape

The protection and enhancement of locally important landscapes and townscapes will be secured by:

- Identifying and compiling a list of locally important buildings, structures and areas; and
- Ensuring the retention and re-use of buildings, structures and spaces identified as making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness. Where preservation is not justified or feasible an appropriate record will be made of the building or feature; and
- Ensuring that development is designed to reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and retains a sense of place.
- Ensuring that development and land management take proper account of historic landscape character.

### Policy ?? World Heritage Site

The Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and its setting will be secured by:

- A presumption in favour of the preservation of the World Heritage Site and its setting. Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would adversely affect the physical fabric, character, appearance, setting or views into or out of the World Heritage Site; and
- The conservation, enhancement, management, interpretation or display of the World Heritage Site will be encouraged where this does not detract from the preservation of the World Heritage Site; and
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate that full account has been taken of the impact of the proposals upon the World Heritage Site and its setting and that the proposal will have no adverse affect upon it.

### References and Contacts

#### References

Department of Culture Media and Sport 2001, *The Historic Environment: a Force for our Future*.

Department of the Environment 1990, *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16).

Department of the Environment/Department of National Heritage 1994, *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15).

Devon County Council 2003, *The Human Habitat: Devon's Historic Environment*.

Devon County Council 2004, *Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 – 'Devon to 2016'*.

Devon Strategic Partnership, 2004, *Devon Community Strategy: Vision for Devon in 2015*

English Heritage et al. 2004, *Farming the historic landscape: Caring for archaeological sites on arable land*.

English Heritage et al. 2004, *Farming the historic landscape: Caring for archaeological sites in grassland*.

English Heritage et al. 2004, *Farming the historic landscape: Caring for farm buildings*.

English Heritage 2006, *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*.

#### Contacts & Links

DEFRA Rural Development Section

See: [www.defra.gov.uk/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/)

Devon County Council

Historic Environment Service. Tel: 01392 382246 Email: [archaeol@devon.gov.uk](mailto:archaeol@devon.gov.uk)

See: [www.devon.gov.uk/environment/heritage/historic\\_environment.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/heritage/historic_environment.htm)

English Heritage South West

Tel: 0117 9750700

see: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

English Heritage: Historic Environment Local Management

[www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

See: [www.ihbc.org.uk/](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/)