

Axminster Neighbourhood Plan 2023 to 2040

Third Partial Draft:
In preparation for a third round of
public consultation in Autumn 2023.

Our Vision, Aims & Objectives, and Policies (Chapter 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan)

5. Our Vision, Aims & Objectives, and Policies

5.1. Turning a Vision into Aims & Objectives

5.1.1. A Vision Statement for Axminster was drafted by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and in 2021 it was put to the people of Axminster as part of the consultation process (see Section 4.3). Following that consultation it was amended as follows:

Our Vision is of a prosperous and adaptable parish, focused on a historic local market town which will continue to serve all of the neighbouring parishes as well as residents and visitors from further afield. We will strive to build on everything that is best about the parish, while encouraging and supporting sustainable development and infrastructure improvements appropriate to the needs of our diverse communities, while also supporting and encouraging farming, manufacturing industry, professional and business services, retail, tourism, leisure activities and the arts.

5.1.2. The Aims & Objectives which follow below have been drafted to give effect to the aspirations expressed by the Vision Statement. They have also been influenced by a range of considerations, as follows:

- (a) They are intended to address as many as reasonably possible of the various Issues which were discussed in Chapter 4.
- (b) They take into account the wider Evidence Base assembled for the purposes of this Plan.
- (c) They respond to the priorities which were expressed in the initial public consultation of August / September 2021.
- (d) They are likely to be modified further based on a second round of public consultation which is planned for Autumn 2023.
- (e) They take into account informal comments on the previous draft of this document received from EDDC, and are almost certain to be modified further in response to subsequent comments from EDDC and from other statutory consultees.
- (f) EDDC's emerging thinking over the BUAB.

5.1.3. Some of the terms within the Aims & Objectives should be interpreted by reference to the discussion of Issues in Chapter 4 (including, and in particular, the definitions and guidance in Section 4.4 relating to 'Appropriate Uses' and 'Inappropriate Uses').

5.2. Delivering Aims & Objectives through Policies

5.2.1. Wherever possible Objectives (which are more specific) are preferred to Aims (which are more general).

5.2.2. Under each set of Issue-related Aims & Objectives are Neighbourhood Plan Policies which are intended to help to deliver those Aims & Objectives. In all cases the Policies should be interpreted by reference to the Aims & Objectives to which they relate.

5.2.3. These Policies are intended to be delivered via the Town & Country Planning system, by signalling to Applicants the sort of Development Proposals which are likely to enjoy local support, and to clarify what information is required before such proposals will be considered by Axminster Town Council.

5.2.4. The headings under which Aims & Objectives and Policies are grouped are intended to be helpful to the reader, but for the avoidance of doubt, Applicants need to look at all Policies, because (for example) Policies dealing with the road traffic which is likely to be associated with an Application for residential development will be found under the heading of Road Traffic, rather than under Housing Provision and Mix.

5.3. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to open spaces and 'green corridors'

Objective OSGC1: To retain, and if possible enhance, all types of publicly-accessible open spaces within and closely adjacent to the town, and to add new ones wherever viable and appropriate.

Objective OSGC2: To retain and protect 'green corridors' which bring elements of the adjacent countryside into the town.

Objective OSGC3: To encourage responsible and managed public access to the countryside, for the benefit of both residents of, and visitors to, the town.

Policy OSGC1: Development Proposals which reduce the amount, or diminish the social or environmental value, of existing open space (whether green or not, but particularly if green) within the town will not normally be supported, unless they involve the assured delivery of nearby replacement space of at least equivalent social and environmental value. Any assessment of such equivalence must consider the impact of changing the location of the space concerned.

Policy OSGC2: Development Proposals for new public open space (whether green or not, but particularly if green) will be welcomed, particularly if the space concerned is within or close to the town centre.

Policy OSGC3: Development Proposals within or adjacent to the town which involve a need for flood mitigation should give consideration to combining flood mitigation works with planting schemes which create 'green corridors'. The provision of footpaths (whether paved or not) within such areas may be considered appropriate, particularly where they can be connected to the existing network of public footpaths.

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Policy OSGC4: Development Proposals which reduce the space currently devoted to allotments must be accompanied by a firm proposal to re-provide new and comparably-accessible allotments of at least equivalent cultivable area.

5.4. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to walking and cycling

5.4.1. The 2021 public consultation process (see Chapter 6 for details) demonstrated widespread support for ‘making it easier to get into the countryside for exercise and relaxation’ (which was ranked as the 9th priority out of 16 options) and for ‘improving facilities for cyclists and pedestrians within the town’ (which was ranked 10th).

5.4.2. In this regard, we recognise the improvements which have been made in recent years to the existing local network of footpaths and cycle routes by Devon County Council and landowners.

Objective WC1: To improve access for both pedestrians and cyclists to the town centre, and their experience once there.

Objective WC2: To improve connectivity between the town and the wider network of footpaths and cycle routes.

Objective WC3: To improve and add to the network of public footpaths so that they better reflect the priorities of modern users, and reduce the need for walkers to drive to the start of footpath routes.

Policy WC1: Any Development Proposal within the town, and particularly within the Conservation Area, which involves ground-level work on, under or adjacent to an existing road or pavement should clearly and explicitly show whether (and if so how) it can contribute to improving access for both pedestrians and cyclists to the town centre, and their experience once there.

Policy WC2: Where Development Proposals seek to improve connectivity between the town and the wider network of footpaths and cycle routes, this element of the proposal will be welcomed and supported in principle.

Policy WC3: Axminster Town Council will support initiatives by Devon County Council and/or landowners to further enhance the existing network of footpaths and cycle routes within the parish, and in particular: (a) the creation of new and safe circular countryside routes; (b) the delivery of a new connection between the Chard Road / Stoney Lane roundabout and Cloakham Sports Centre; (c) the delivery of a new connection between Gamberlake Cross and Axminster railway station; and (d) general improvements to footpath and bridleway surfacing and drainage, particularly on those sections closest to the town.

5.5. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to public transport

Aim PT1: To retain and (if possible) enhance the existing network of bus stops, which, together with the service that it supports, represents an important facility for the residents and workforce of the town.

Aim PT2: To support in principle any improvements to the station and the rail network which will protect or enhance Axminster's connection to the national and local rail networks.

Policy PT1: Any Development Proposal which involves land on or adjacent to an existing bus route should consider whether the proposal offers the chance to enhance the network or service.

Policy PT2: Any Development Proposal which includes the provision of a bus or mini-bus or similar service which has as one of its aims the reduction of private car journeys into and/or through the town centre, will be supported in principle.

Policy PT3: Any Development Proposal which is necessary to protect or enhance Axminster's connection to the national and local rail networks will be supported in principle.

5.6. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to road traffic

5.6.1. Although it is not strictly an Aim or an Objective for this Plan, we would encourage and support any initiatives by the various Highway Authorities to carry out a strategic review of the safety, useability and convenience of the network of minor roads and lanes which connect the town to those surrounding hamlets and villages whose residents treat Axminster as their primary shopping centre and source of public services (including primary health care and education). We anticipate that by widening and improving selected links, taking into full account the dimensions and needs of modern farm and commercial vehicles, this would make it safer and easier for residents of those parishes to delay the need (or perceived need) to move into Axminster, which in turn would reduce the pressures on the town's housing stock. Axminster Town Council will actively participate in any such review, and will engage with and encourage other neighbouring Parish Councils to do likewise.

5.6.2. In this connection it is relevant that the 2021 public consultation process (see Chapter 6 for details) quantified a strong shift away from in-person food shopping in favour of supermarket-operated and third party delivery services. Those services use larger vehicles, and are more constrained by narrow lanes than are private cars.

5.6.3. In relation to Objective RT1 below, we would also welcome a dialogue with Devon County Council Highways Department regarding small potential changes to the town centre traffic regime which might be feasible and affordable.

Aim RT1: To reduce the adverse effects (including congestion, physical damage, noise and air pollution) which are generated by traffic passing through the town centre, whilst ensuring proper access for residents and businesses and service providers.

Objective RT1: To discourage Development Proposals which are likely to channel general traffic through areas which were not designed to cater for it ('rat running').

Objective RT2: Wherever appropriate, to encourage schemes which have the potential to reduce the need for residents who live outside the town centre to drive through the town centre.

Objective RT3: To encourage schemes which will reduce the pressures from road traffic (and particularly HGV traffic) on the existing bridge across the river Axe at Weycroft.

Policy RT1: Any Development Proposal involving six or more dwellings which seeks the support of Axminster Town Council should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment which describes, and where possible quantifies, its likely post-construction effects on traffic movements within the town's Conservation Area. This should include an assessment of the most likely route(s) to be used by any new residents for food and general shopping.

Policy RT2: Any Development Proposal which will provide one or more new links connecting two or more existing roads, and which seeks the support of Axminster Town Council, should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment which describes, considers, assesses and reports on the likely use of such links by existing as well as new road users, including through-traffic (where relevant). Explicit consideration should also be given to the wider needs of the emergency services.

Policy RT3: Any Development Proposal which seeks to deliver, or which relies on, a new relief road or route around Axminster, and which seeks the support of Axminster Town Council, should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment which demonstrates: (a) that the Development Proposal in its entirety (i.e. including all residential or commercial development required to support the relief road or route) does not have the potential to increase traffic congestion within the town centre; and (b) that all connection(s) to the wider trunk road network (including the existing Axminster by-pass) have been fully assessed for capacity and road safety.

Policy RT4: Any Development Proposal to deliver a substantial new food retail outlet to the north of the Chard Road / Stoney Lane roundabout in a location which will serve existing and future residents and reduce their need to drive through the town centre will be supported in principle, provided that it also meets other Aims & Objectives in this Plan.

5.6.4. Although strictly outside the scope of this NP, should EDDC be minded to grant approval in future to any relief road or route around Axminster, we would ask EDDC to add a clear Planning Condition to any such approval which has the effect of preventing the Applicant or Applicants from allowing the occupation of, or completing the lease or sale of, any houses or other structures which form part of the Development Proposal until the relief road or route has been brought into full operation to the full satisfaction of EDDC and/or Devon County Council.

5.6.5. This reflects one of the outcomes of the 2021 public consultation process. Although we did not ask specifically about the proposed north-south relief road (which is the subject of two current planning applications which have attracted multiple objections), when asked for their general views on desirable changes to the town, 14 respondents commented on ways in which the town centre could be made more pleasant, though without (in most cases) addressing how this might be achieved without a relief road of some sort. Nobody commented in favour of the north-south relief road.

5.7. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to parking and electric vehicle charging

Objective PEVC1: To protect the existing public parking capacity around the town centre, and to ensure that wherever feasible off-street parking provision (whether publicly or privately owned) incorporates features such as permeable surfaces and soak-aways to reduce surface water run-off.

Objective PEVC2: To encourage Development Proposals which can deliver a network of publicly-accessible electric vehicle charging points, as well as private charging points.

Policy PEVC1: Development Proposals involving the provision of parking spaces should provide levels of off-road parking spaces and vehicle recharging points at the upper end of the ranges specified in national standards and guidance for the type of development concerned. Wherever feasible, parking spaces (whether publicly or privately owned) should incorporate features such as permeable surfaces and soak-aways to reduce surface water run-off.

5.8. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to heritage assets

5.8.1. Given the acknowledged challenges posed by town centre traffic on the obligations placed on owners of Listed Building and other building within the Conservation Area (see Section 4.4), where owners conclude that Heritage policy poses unduly onerous constraints which make a building uneconomic to repair or re-develop, they are encouraged to consult with EDDC and Axminster Town Council to explore whether (in the case of Listed Building status) Historic England's published guidance on the process for de-listing Listed Buildings may offer a way forward which is acceptable to all parties; or (in the case of Conservation Area status) how a more flexible interpretation of regulations and guidance might be able to resolve the situation.

5.8.2. The position of Axminster Town Council is that in all cases where Heritage policy applies, unless it is agreed in advance by all parties (the Applicant, EDDC and Axminster Town Council), all issues arising from Heritage policy should be fully resolved via a single process, prior to the grant of Permission.

Aim H1: To balance the general aim of retaining as many original features of Listed Buildings (and other buildings within the designated Conservation Area) as feasible against the need to keep the town centre working.

Objective H1: To encourage and enable the owners of buildings within the Conservation Area to keep them in, or to bring them back into, uses which are both sustainable in the long term and constitute Appropriate Uses for their locations.

Policy H1: Development Proposals which involve making modifications to existing buildings, whether Listed or not, should demonstrate how it is proposed to achieve modern standards of energy efficiency and (in the case of non-residential property) operational efficiency through the use of materials and design.

5.9. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to tourism and leisure development

Aim TLD1: To encourage businesses and initiatives which aim to expand local tourism and leisure provision, particularly where such proposals take advantage of Axminster's position away from, but within easy reach of, the Jurassic coast and the surrounding AONBs.

Policy TLD1: Development Proposals which are expected to increase local tourism and leisure revenues, whether spent on accommodation and meals, or on services (such as, but not restricted to, bicycle hire, guided walks etc) will generally be supported. Proposals which involve the conversion of existing accommodation should, however, be accompanied by an assessment which demonstrates that the wider benefits of any increase in tourist accommodation will substantially outweigh the loss of existing residential space.

5.10. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to environmental protection and enhancement

5.10.1. Axminster Town Council recognises the central role played by EDDC in the process of 'screening and scoping' Development Proposals under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, which in turn are intended to avoid such proposals causing significant harm to the environment. However, if Axminster Town Council, in its role as a Statutory Consultee, receives a Planning Application from EDDC for comment which appears (on the basis of the information provided within the proposal) likely to result in significant environmental effects which have not been considered via an Environmental Statement (ES), then Axminster Town Council will ask EDDC to require the Applicant either to provide an ES or to provide additional information (as applicable) under the EIA Regulations, to be provided before the Application can be determined. If the Application is for Outline Permission, then any ES should be produced on the basis of the

worst possible outcome allowable under an agreed set of Parameter Plans, or under an absence of such Plans, as applicable.

Aim EPE1: To support and encourage (rather than seeking to duplicate) the proper, active, balanced and consistent application of existing statutory and other formalised protections and controls which apply to our rivers, countryside, historic sites and wildlife habitats.

Objective EPE1: To support and help to ensure the proper application of the Environmental Assessment process at all stages of the Planning system for all types of Development Proposals.

Policy EPE1: Development Proposals which are expected to result in a loss of, or adverse impacts upon, existing trees or hedgerows should either make provision for the guaranteed re-provision of trees or hedgerows of equivalent ecological and landscape value as close as reasonably possible to where the original trees or hedgerows are proposed to be removed, or justify why that is not possible.

Policy EPE2: Development Proposals affecting or adjacent to any land which has been identified as being at risk of flooding, or which contributes to flood prevention or mitigation, should provide a full justification for the proposed works and their location which includes a summary in non-technical English for the benefit of all other land users whose interests could be affected.

5.11. Aims, objectives and policies related to design

5.11.1. Whilst the use of good design using local materials is encouraged throughout the Parish, no detailed Design Code for Axminster is proposed. Within the two AONBs we generally support the approaches to design and materials use which are taken by the relevant statutory authorities.

Aim D1: To encourage sustainable and efficient building design, construction and operation, through the incorporation of features and technologies which will help to keep our retail, office and other commercial buildings economically viable in the long term.

Aim D2: To increase the resilience of our stock of buildings to the likely future local effects of climate change, including flooding and other extreme weather events.

Aim D3: To ensure that lifetime emissions of greenhouse gases (attributable both to construction and use) from our stock of buildings are reduced.

Objective D1: Within the Conservation Area, to encourage the retention of as many existing design features as feasible, and the use within new or refurbished buildings of design elements which complement such established features and the general character of nearby buildings, without necessarily reproducing them.

Policy D1: Wherever possible, commitments will be sought, and obligations secured, via the Planning system, to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions (expressed as cubic metres of CO₂ equivalent per cubic metre of building volume or similar) attributable both to the construction and use phases of buildings and other structures are reduced by amounts which reflect the evolving understanding of climate change science and policy.

Policy D2: Wherever possible, commitments will be sought, and obligations secured, via the Planning system, to ensure that all relevant buildings and other structures, including those belonging to third parties which may be directly and adversely affected by the Applicants' proposals, are made appropriately resilient to the likely future effects of climate change, including flooding and other extreme weather events.

Policy D3: To require the use of design features and materials that enhance habitats for native fauna species such as (but not limited to) bats, bees, grass snakes, frogs, hedgehogs, lizards, sparrows, starlings, swifts and toads. This should be achieved via a combination of pre-Application discussions with the ecology team at EDDC, and clear design and specification commitments within the Development Application (whether in Outline or Full). This Policy applies irrespective of whether or not the Development Proposal is considered to constitute EIA Development.

5.12. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to housing provision and mix

Aim HPM1: To encourage, and where possible require, the use of Limits of Deviation and Parameter Plans to explain and control key features of Development Proposals (e.g. locations for different groups of buildings, building volumes and heights, access arrangements, and land uses such as landscaping, public open space and ecological mitigation features). This Aim applies irrespective of whether or not the Development Proposal is considered to constitute EIA Development.

Aim HPM2: To encourage the provision and use of residential space within retail and commercial premises.

Aim HPM3: To encourage the provision of housing which is suitable for home working and/or the provision of 'extra care' facilities.

Aim HPM4: To encourage the provision of higher-than-existing-average density housing, particularly on sites which sit within 1km of the nearest edge of the Conservation Area, in order to make it more likely that more residents will walk or cycle into the town centre.

Aim HPM5: To encourage the provision of self-build plots, including on areas (e.g. steeper slopes) where bespoke designs are likely to be particularly appropriate.

Objective HPM1: Where new housing is appropriate, to encourage schemes which will: (a) deliver a balance and diversity of housing types and costs (including affordable housing), irrespective of ownership and delivery arrangements; and/or (b) help to achieve a better match between the overall supply of housing and the needs of existing and future residents.

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Objective HPM2: Where new housing is appropriate, to encourage schemes which are accessible by foot from the town centre, and which can deliver dwellings which are less than 15 minutes' walk from Trinity Square, taking into account (a) the topography; and (b) the likely walking speeds of the group(s) for whom the housing is intended.

Policy HPM1: Development Proposals which will have the effect of increasing the amount of residential space within premises which are used for retail, office or commercial purposes, whilst retaining the commercial activity at the same premises, particularly within the town centre, will generally be welcomed in principle.

Policy HPM2: Development Proposals which will take all or a significant part of any building out of retail, office or other commercial use must include clear documentary evidence to demonstrate what has been done, by whom, and over what time period, to support the contention that there is insufficient demand to continue with the existing commercial use or uses.

Policy HPM3: Development Proposals for residential development are required to consider, and to indicate, whether and where any element of self-build can be incorporated into the scheme.

Policy HPM4: Development Proposals (whether in Outline or Full) for six or more dwellings, or any office, workshop or industrial space must state what external type or types of fuel (if any) will be required and provided; and how the buildings' and other structures' designs respond to the multiple challenges of climate change. They must also provide a clear statement describing arrangements which will be made for achieving high standards of internet connectivity.

Policy HPM5: Development Proposals (whether in Outline or Full) for six or more dwellings within or immediately adjacent to the town must include a simple town centre accessibility assessment which identifies on a scaled map one or more pedestrian (and, where appropriate, cycle) routes from Trinity Square to the centre of the development plot. This should specify (a) the total distance using existing and/or proposed foot or cycle paths; (b) all locations, and their relevant lengths, where the slope is greater than 1-in-15 (6.67%); (c) all locations, and their relevant lengths, where the slope is also greater than 1-in-10 (10.0%); (d) all locations, and their relevant lengths, where the paved path is less than 2m wide; (e) all locations, and their relevant lengths, where the paved path is also less than 1.5m wide.

Policy HPM6: Outline Development Proposals for six or more dwellings must include clear parameter-based Specifications, Limits of Deviation and Parameter Plans which illustrate the full range of allowable outcomes for which approval is being sought. Development Proposals which are deemed to constitute EIA Development must include an Environmental Statement and other technical assessments as appropriate which cover the full range of outcomes allowable under the Specifications, Limits of Deviation and Parameter Plans. Any Illustrative Master Plan (or Plans) must be fully compliant with the Specifications and Parameter Plans.

Policy HPM7: All Development Proposals (whether in Outline or Full) for six or more dwellings should achieve a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare (dph); and those which are also within 1km of the Conservation Area should achieve a density of at least 40 dph. Smaller Development Proposals should achieve a density not lower than that of neighbouring housing, in a style that is in keeping with existing neighbouring uses.

5.13. Aims, Objectives and Policies related to industrial and similar land

Aim IND1: To enjoy the benefits of additional industrial (and similar) employment opportunities without adding to HGV traffic in the town centre.

Objective IND1: To protect existing employment land for the full range of non-residential uses (including Land Use Classes B2, B8 and E(a)).

Objective IND2: To ensure a steady supply of new employment land (including Land Use Classes B2, B8 and E(a)) in order to match the needs of existing, future and start-up businesses, thereby providing additional local jobs.

Policy IND1: Development Applications for new sites for industrial (and similar) employment (including Land Use Classes A2, A8 and E(a)) which (a) have good access to the trunk road network; and (b) are sufficiently separated from residential areas to allow their impacts to be contained, will generally be welcomed.

5.14. Aims, objectives and policies related to brown- and greenfield sites

Aim BGS1: To maximise the realisation of potential benefits from brownfield sites.

Objective BGS1: To encourage the production and outline assessment of pre-Application Masterplans for all of the Significant Brownfield Sites and Principal Greenfield Sites identified in this Plan, so that those Masterplans can be agreed in principle with EDDC and Axminster Town Council before being used to guide subsequent Development Proposals which will optimise the use(s) to be made of each site as a whole, and their potential connection(s) to nearby or adjacent land, including land which is under third-party ownership.

Objective BGS2: To bring currently unused or under-used Significant Brownfield Site back into use for a purpose, or mix of purposes, which constitutes an Appropriate Use for its location, and not necessarily its previous use. The same applies in principle to Brownfield Sites which may become available after this Neighbourhood Plan has been finalised.

Objective BGS3: For any Greenfield Sites outside the town, whether or not in an AONB, our Objective is to maintain the general character of the countryside, whilst encouraging proposals which have the potential to reinforce the economic resilience of the Parish as a whole.

Policy BGS1: Unless previously agreed in writing with EDDC and Axminster Town Council, Development Proposals involving a Brownfield Site should cover the entirety of that site, and should be for a purpose, or mix of purposes, which constitutes an Appropriate Use for its location.

Policy BGS2: This Policy concerns either all or any part of the land accounted for by the Significant Brownfield Site or Sites which lie between the Railway Station, Dragons Mead, Gamberlake, Musbury Road and King Edward Road, and on both sides of Woodmead Road. In recognition of the fact that this land constitutes the best remaining opportunity to add a significant number of new dwellings to Axminster within easy walking distance of the town centre, this should be reflected (in terms of layout, higher-than-average housing density etc) in any Development Proposal(s) which may be put forward.

Policy BGS3: Any Development Proposal to renovate and to make greater use of either (or preferably both) of the former brush factories at the foot of Castle Hill will be welcomed in principle, particularly if it (a) involves retaining as much of the fabric and character of the buildings and their industrial heritage as possible; and/or (b) involves using the buildings for a tourism-related purpose; and/or (c) improves pedestrian and/or cycle connectivity between Vale Lane and Willhays Park.

Policy BGS4: Any Development Proposal to use or re-use the former St Johns Ambulance site on Trafalgar Way which is intended to deliver a high degree of public (possibly tourism-related) benefit appropriate to its location on what is a 'gateway site' for Axminster will be welcomed in principle.

Policy BGS5: Any Development Proposals to use all or part of the Greenfield Sites to the south of Lyme Road and to the east of Foxhill should give careful attention to how best to use steeply-sloping parts of the Site(s), including their allocation for self-build plots and/or for the provision of a larger purpose-built structures (such as a care home or hotel) and/or for the provision of additional allotments or other public green space.

Policy BGS6: Any Development Proposals to develop small (<1 ha) Greenfield Sites outside the town, whether or not in an AONB, should respect or complement the general character of the countryside. Proposals which are intended to reinforce the economic resilience of the Parish as a whole will be welcomed.

5.15. Broader objectives

An Earlier Vision of Axminster in 2030

5.15.1. In June 2008 Axminster Community Enterprise published an important document entitled 'Vision of Axminster 2030', which forms part of the Evidence Base for this Plan (see Chapter 6 for details). Many of the objectives expressed in that report are reflected above. Some other objectives which were put forward then reflected broader issues than those which can be delivered via the Town & Country Planning system. Nevertheless, it is worth reiterating here the full vision which was set out, and which the sponsors of the report hoped to see achieved by 2030. The vision was as follows:

Vision Statement from 'Vision of Axminster 2030', Axminster Community Enterprise (2008)

"A welcoming, vibrant, safe, people-friendly town centre. Fine historic buildings protected and enhanced – and no eyesores. A strong local economy with thriving businesses and a good variety of jobs. A quality destination with a reputation for excellence in specific areas. A perfect gateway to the Jurassic coast. Excellent community infrastructure and services. A mix of housing suitable for all household types, ages and incomes, especially to enable younger people to stay in the area. Plenty of useable and enjoyable public open space, good access to countryside and the riverside, and a culture of respect for the environment. Residents keen to keep mentally and physically active and to get involved in community life. An integrated, well-used public and community transport network.

"In short, a good place to live, work and play; a welcoming and rewarding place for people to visit, and for businesses to start up and develop; a town with character, community spirit and a sense of well-being; and a community that feels safe and at ease with itself, and is confident in meeting future challenges."

5.15.2. We endorse this vision in its entirety, including its call for excellent community infrastructure and services.

Objectives Outwith the Town & Country Planning System

5.15.3. Having carried out a public consultation process in August / September 2021 (see Section 4.3), we know that there is strong local support for some topics and actions which fall wholly or partly outside the Town & Country Planning System.

5.15.4. The Guildhall has already taken steps to expand and diversify the range of events which it hosts, and we know that there would be strong local support for any extension in the range of health, wellbeing and educational provision within the town.

5.15.5. In addition, Axminster Town Council will support in principle any initiatives which seek to increase or support the quantity and/or quality of sustainable space which is dedicated to, or supportive of, the arts, culture, entertainment and heritage for the benefit of local residents and (where appropriate) visitors as well.