

# **Strategic Environmental Assessment for the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan**

**Environmental Report to accompany the  
Regulation 14 version of the  
Neighbourhood Plan**

**North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood  
Plan Steering Group**

July 2021



## Quality information

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## Non-Technical Summary

### What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

### What is the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan?

The North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan (NCYNP) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to be in general conformity with the Adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028), with due regard given to the emerging South Somerset Local Plan Review (2016-2036).

It is currently anticipated that the NCYNP will be submitted to South Somerset District Council later in 2021 for subsequent independent examination.

### Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The initial document was the SEA Scoping Report (June 2020), which includes information about the Neighbourhood Plan area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the NCYNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative development strategies for the Neighbourhood Plan;

- Recommendations made to plan makers at earlier stages of the plan's development;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- The next steps for the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA process.

## Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan

### Housing numbers to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

A definitive housing target has not been included in the adopted or emerging Local Plan. However South Somerset District Council have advised the Neighbourhood Plan group that it would be appropriate to aim for about 60 new dwellings over a 20-year period (based on an equivalent of 3 dwellings a year), taking into account any dwellings that already have consent for planning. This would translate into the delivery of in the region of 45 homes over the current 15 year Neighbourhood Plan period (2018 – 2033).

South Somerset have confirmed that there is are planning permissions for 27 homes which can contribute to the 45 home target. However, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group are keen to explore options for delivering an increased level of housing to facilitate the delivery of additional affordable housing and to provide a buffer against changing housing needs.

### Development strategy options considered through the SEA

Four development strategy options have been assessed as reasonable alternatives through the SEA process, as follows.

#### Option A: Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

This option would take forward up to 34 homes on a number of sites identified by the Neighbourhood Plan group as being appropriate for allocation. This incorporates the potential allocation of two sites of 14 homes adjacent to the north of North Cadbury village and three smaller brownfield sites.

#### Option B: Clare Field

This option would take forward site SSDC1, Clare Field, which is a greenfield site located adjacent to the west of North Cadbury village, and to the north of Ridgeway Lane. The site is actively being promoted for development, with the promoter proposing 80 homes on the site, of which 28 would be affordable. Given existing access issues, development of the site would require a new road link from the A359 in the north.

#### Option C: Down Ash Farm

This option would take forward a site allocation comprising agricultural land and agricultural buildings at site SSDC3, Down Ash Farm. It is located to the north of the A359 opposite the employment site at Cadbury Business Park. The site is currently being proposed by the landowner for in the region of 60 homes.

## Option D: Brownfield sites

This option would take forward a number of smaller brownfield sites, including at North Town Farm, at site NCY1 (off Stoke Lane, Woolston) and site NCY19 (at Hill Farm Barns). The option would deliver eleven homes.

The map overleaf visually represents Options A-C above.

## Appraisal findings

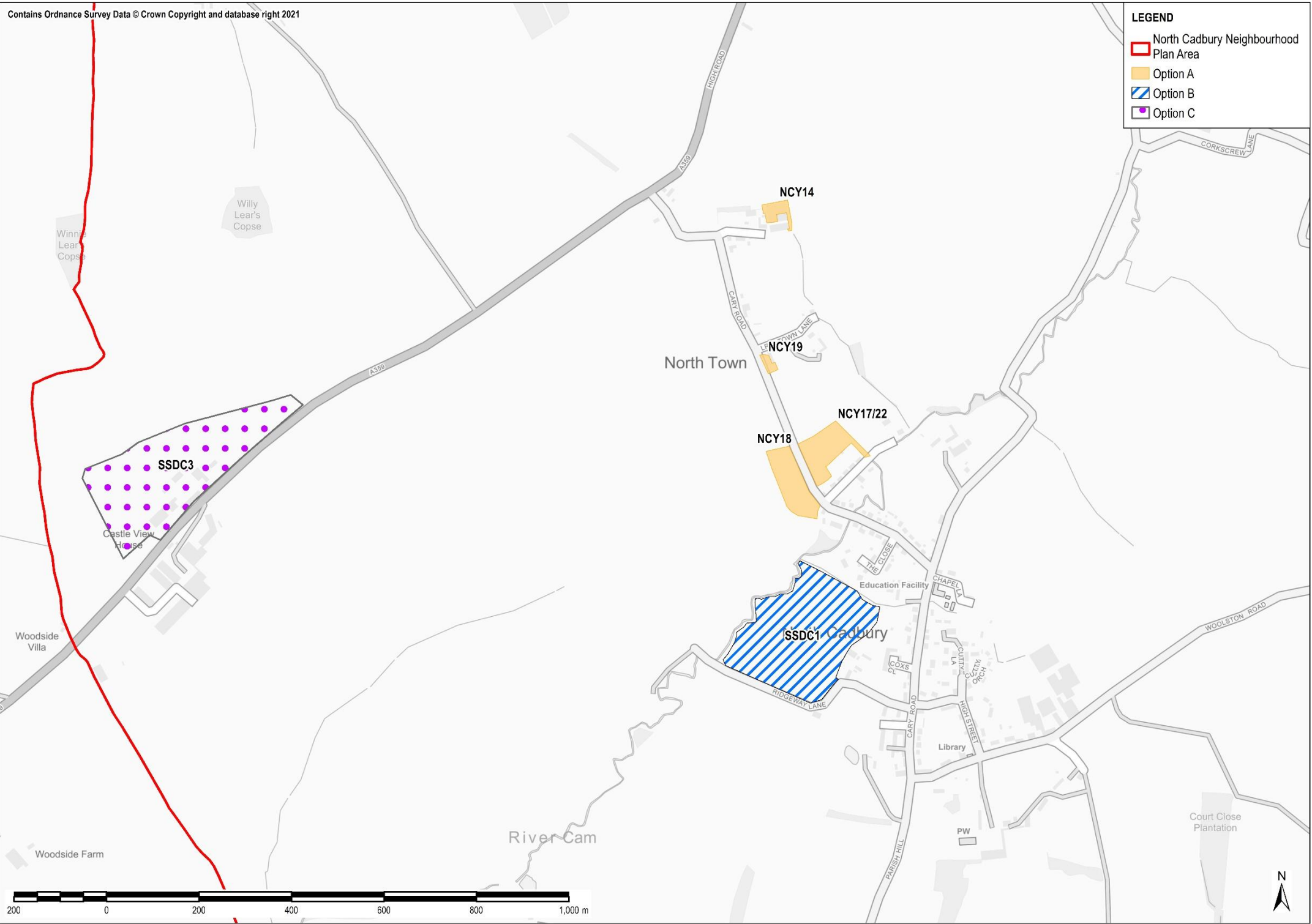
A summary of the appraisal findings is as follows:

**Option A** has the potential to deliver a range of housing types and tenures, including affordable housing, and the option would exceed the target set by SSDC for housing delivery. The majority of development delivered through the option would take place at a location accessible to the services and facilities available in North Cadbury. Key considerations associated with this option are the historic environment sensitivities present locally and potential impacts from development on the landscape setting of North Cadbury to the north of the village. In this respect, development which comes forward in this location would need to be sensitive to the significance of heritage assets present locally, and be of a scale and layout appropriate for local landscape and villagescape character.

Of the four options, **Option B** would deliver the most housing, of a range of types and tenures including affordable housing. This would far exceed the housing target set by SSDC. Due to the number of homes delivered, the option also has the potential to deliver increased Community Infrastructure Levy monies. However, given the scale of development proposed in this location (including when compared with the scale of the existing settlement), and the requirement for a new link road to the A359, the option has the potential to lead to a range of significant environmental and community impacts. This is linked to the scale of development, the likely urbanising influences of the development itself and a new road, local environmental sensitivities and the lack of safe and accessible pedestrian footpath linkages to the village centre.

**Option C** has the potential to deliver a broad range of housing types and tenures, including affordable housing, and would exceed the target set by SSDC for housing delivery. It would also help limit impacts on the rich historic environment resource of the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the location of Down Ash Farm 2.5 - 3km from key village services and facilities in North Cadbury, taking forward this option would have the potential to limit accessibility to local services and amenities, and undermine social inclusion and community cohesion.

**Option D**, through taking forward a lower level of growth on previously developed land, would help support the efficient use of land, revitalise areas of underutilised land, and help limit impacts on landscape character. However, it is very unlikely that the option would deliver sufficient housing to meet local needs, both in terms of market housing but particularly affordable housing provision. The option is also unlikely to deliver new community infrastructure or wider community benefits and would not in most cases deliver growth in locations readily accessible to key amenities in the Neighbourhood Plan area.





## Assessment of the Regulation 14 version of the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan

The current Regulation 14 consultation version of the NCYNP presents 30 planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Prior to the finalisation of the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA team undertook an appraisal of earlier versions of Neighbourhood Plan policies. At that stage, a number of recommendations were made to and considered by plan makers for further improving the sustainability performance of the plan.

Chapter 5 in the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the Regulation 14 consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the NCYNP. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

- Landscape Quality
- Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna
- Heritage Assets
- Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets
- Population and Human Health

The assessment has concluded that the Regulation 14 version of the NCYNP is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Human Health' SEA theme. This relates to the focus of the NCYNP on safeguarding and enhancing community infrastructure, facilitating the delivery of housing which meets local needs, supporting economic vitality by enhancing the prospects for employment locally, its promotion of improved and accessible public rights of way networks, enhancements to green infrastructure and open space provision to encourage active lifestyles, and the facilitation of flexible and easily adaptable dwellings for all residents. This will positively contribute to the creation of mixed, balanced, and sustainable communities.

The NCYNP is also likely to lead to positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape Quality' and 'Heritage Assets' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the parishes, conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, supporting the quality of the public realm, and through incorporating high-quality and sensitive design in new development areas.

Additionally, the NCYNP will bring positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity' SEA theme through retaining habitats, enhancing ecological networks, and delivering net gains. However, given the approaches taken forward through the NCYNP will help limit potential effects from new development areas rather than secure significant enhancements, these impacts are less likely to comprise significant positive effects overall.

Furthermore, to protect the integrity of European designated sites (and their qualifying features), the NCYNP should appropriately consider and address the

recommendations within the HRA. It is expected that the conclusions and recommendations of the HRA will be reflected in the submission version of the NCYNP.

Regarding the 'Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets' SEA theme, the Neighbourhood Plan allocations will lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land to the north of North Cadbury village. Otherwise in relation to this SEA theme, the NCYNP will potentially lead to positive effects through supporting development proposals which seek to limit pollution and improve the environmental quality of the parishes, tackle flood risk issues, deliver renewable energy generating infrastructure, and include low carbon energy sources to address the climate crisis. However, this is dependent on the extent to which development proposals incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures through design.

## Next steps

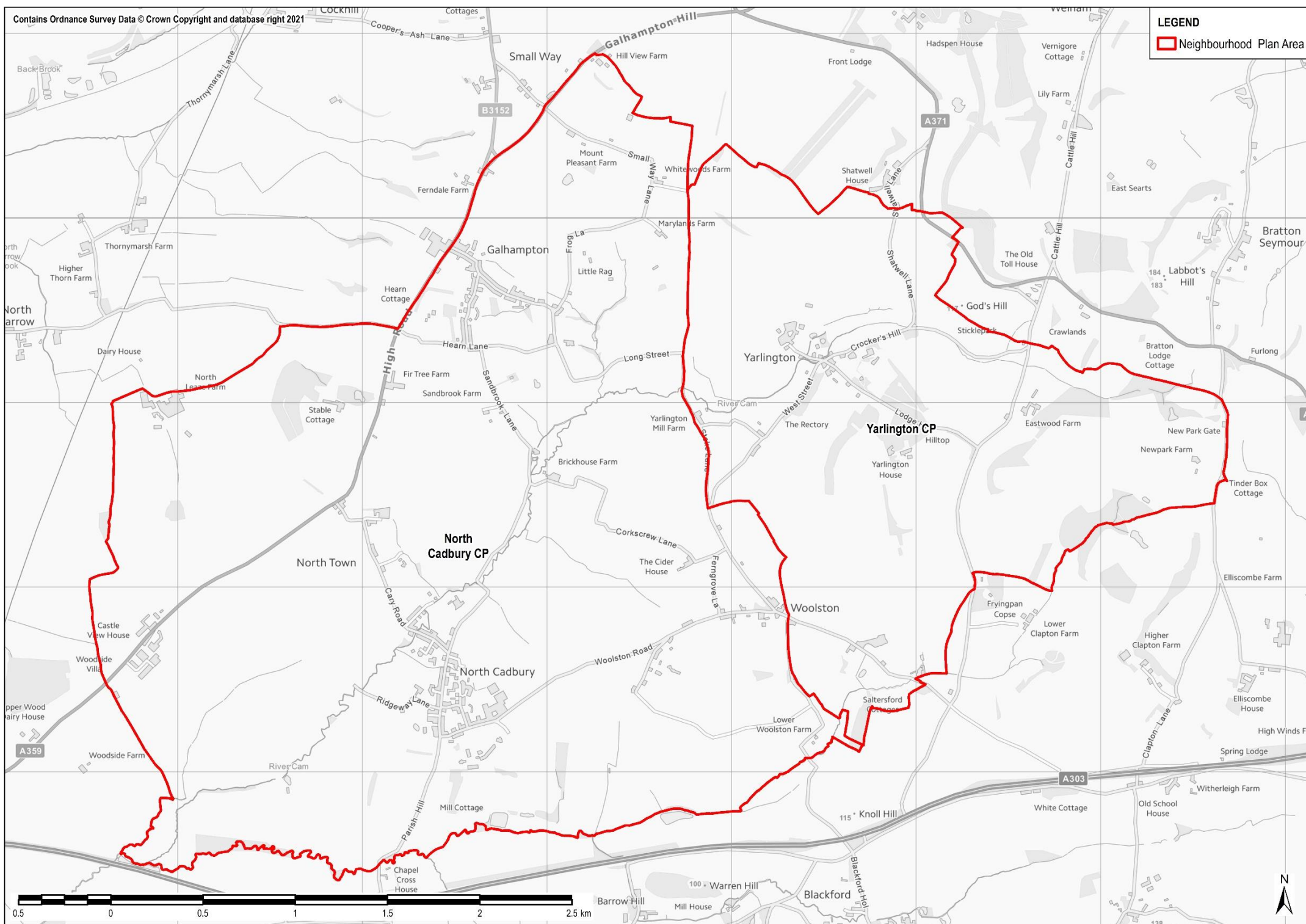
This SEA Environmental Report accompanies the NCYNP for Regulation 14 consultation.

Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Neighbourhood Plan and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, South Somerset District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, NCYNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by South Somerset District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, NCYNP will become part of the Development Plan for the parishes of North Cadbury and Yarlington.

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment in support of the emerging North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as the “NCYNP”) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028), with due regard given to the emerging South Somerset Local Plan Review (2020-2040).
- 1.3 It is currently anticipated that the NCYNP will be submitted to South Somerset District Council later in 2021.
- 1.4 Key information relating to the NCYNP is presented in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the NCYNP**

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Name of Responsible Authority | North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council  |
| Title of Plan                 | North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan  |
| Subject                       | Neighbourhood planning   |
| Purpose                       | <p>The NCYNP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) with due regard given to the emerging South Somerset Local Plan Review (2020-2040).</p> <p>The NCYNP will be used to guide and shape development within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> |
| Timescale                     | 2018 to 2033   |
| Area covered by the plan      | The NCYNP area covers the parishes of North Cadbury and Yarlington, in South Somerset District.  |
| Summary of content            | The NCYNP will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.   |
| Plan contact point            | Jo Witherden, consultant for the NCYNP<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jo@dorsetplanning.co.uk">jo@dorsetplanning.co.uk</a>  |

## SEA Screening for the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.5 The NCYNP has been screened in by South Somerset District Council as requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.6 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, the NCYNP has been screened in as requiring an SEA process for the following reasons:
- The NCYNP will allocate new development in the parishes. This includes potentially in environmentally sensitive locations, such as:
    - locations with sensitivity for the historic environment, including potentially within the setting of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, and archaeological resources.
  - Parts of the NCYNP area have sensitivity with regards to European designated biodiversity sites, particularly the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site.
- 1.7 In light of this screening outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

## SEA explained

- 1.8 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SEA for the NCYNP seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.9 SEA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>1</sup>. It also widens the scope of the assessment from focusing on environmental issues to further consider community issues.
- 1.10 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
1. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
  2. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan (i.e. the Regulation 14 version of the NCYNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC

## Structure of this SEA Environmental Report

1.11 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the NCYNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

**Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory<sup>2</sup> requirements**

| Environmental Report question                              | In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... <sup>3</sup>   |
|--|---|
| What is the plan seeking to achieve?                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.</li> </ul>   |
| What is the sustainability 'context'?                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.</li> <li>The relevant environmental protection <b>objectives</b>, established at international or national level.</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>What's the scope of the SEA?</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.</li> </ul> |
| What is the sustainability 'baseline'?                     |   |
| What are the key issues and objectives?                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key <b>problems/issues</b> and <b>objectives</b> that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the <b>alternatives</b> dealt with.</li> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>alternatives</b>.</li> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of <b>alternatives</b> appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.</li> </ul>                     |
| <b>What are the assessment findings at this stage?</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>the Regulation 14 version of the plan</b>.</li> <li>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing <b>the Regulation 14 version of the plan</b>.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>What happens next?</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.</li> </ul>   |

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>3</sup> NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

## 2. Local Plan context and vision for the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan

### Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The South Somerset Local Plan (SSLP)<sup>4</sup> was adopted by South Somerset District Council in March 2015. It provides a vision for development and sets out a series of planning policies for the district up to the year 2028.
- 2.2 The SSLP encourages communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to support the strategic development needs set out in the plan and shape and direct these in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The plan focusses development in the district's centre of Yeovil, other market towns and rural centres. Beyond, other smaller settlements (including those defined as Rural Settlements, including the villages of Galhampton, North Cadbury and Yarlington) will be able to provide for their own employment and affordable housing needs.
- 2.3 Rural Settlements will be considered as part of the countryside to which national countryside protection policies apply. However, Policy SS2 of the SSLP highlights that development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provides for an appropriate type of development above, and increases the sustainability of a settlement in general. Proposals should also be consistent with relevant community led plans and have support of the community. Whilst no target is set out specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan area, the Local Plan highlights that at least 2,242 dwellings should be built in Rural Settlements over the local plan period.
- 2.4 The SSLP is currently under review and will be replaced by a new Local Plan<sup>5</sup> covering a plan period from 2020 to 2040. The plan has undergone public consultation on Issues and Options (Regulation 18) between October 2017 and January 2018 and Preferred Options (Regulation 18) between June and September 2019. SSDC is currently reviewing the comments from the last public consultation and preparing the evidence base to bring the emerging plan forward. SSDC intends to have a public consultation on the Publication Plan (Regulation 19) in-mid 2022.
- 2.5 Policy SS1: Settlement Strategy of the emerging plan designates North Cadbury as a 'Village' where provision will be made for limited development to meet local need, support local services and economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement. Other settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area remain 'Rural Settlements' where development will be restricted, and development within or outside 'Rural Settlements' in the countryside where Policy SS4 does not apply will be limited to that for which a countryside location is essential or where it is in accordance with Policies EP4 and EP5.

<sup>4</sup> South Somerset District Council (2015): 'South Somerset Local Plan 2006 – 2028', [online] available to access via: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/>

<sup>5</sup> South Somerset District Council (2021): 'South Somerset Local Plan Review 2020 – 2040', [online] available to access via: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan-review-2020-2040/>



- 2.6 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for South Somerset, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in South Somerset, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

## Vision, aims, and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.7 The vision for the Neighbourhood Plan captures the community's views and aspirations for the parishes as expressed through the consultation process. It therefore forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.

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*In 2033 the parishes of North Cadbury and Yarlington will remain a “Jewel of Place” – safe, thriving, well-connected settlements, each with a unique character, natural environment and sense of community spirit, welcoming residents of all ages and abilities.*

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## Vision Statement for the NCYNP

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- 2.8 The vision statement is underpinned by several objectives which are grouped under the following themes:
- Heritage and design
  - Environment
  - Housing
  - Business and employment
  - Community services and facilities
  - Transport.

## 3. What is the scope of the SEA?

### Summary of SEA Scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.<sup>6</sup> These authorities were consulted on the scope of the NCYNP SEA in June 2020.
- 3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the NCYNP;
  - Baseline data against which the NCYNP can be assessed;
  - The key sustainability issues for the NCYNP; and
  - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the NCYNP can be assessed.
- 3.4 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

**Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report**

| Consultation response   | How the response was considered and addressed  |
|---|--|
| <b>Natural England</b><br><i>Consultations Team (email response received on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020)</i>  |  |
| We have no objection to the submitted SEA Scoping report.   | Comment noted  |
| Within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, the ‘Protection of Local Green Spaces’ could be expanded to include reference to their important role in providing connectivity for people and wildlife.<br><br>New green spaces, potentially providing links between existing green spaces/habitats could be provided as part of any allocations. New and enhanced green spaces could also provide net gains for biodiversity (BNG). | The role of green infrastructure (including enhancements) in supporting ecological networks has been fully recognised through the SEA process. |

<sup>6</sup> In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme’.

| Consultation response  | How the response was considered and addressed   |
|--|---|
| The protection of recreation routes and promotion of walking and cycling could also be integrated into any new green spaces. These priorities also tie in with the Climate Emergency, as recognised by South Somerset District Council.  | The multifunctionality of green infrastructure will be recognised through the assessment.   |
| <p>We welcome the inclusion of opportunities for biodiversity enhancement (this could also include reference to biodiversity net gain).</p> <p>Again, providing biodiversity net gain and improving connections between existing habitats and green spaces would also help the local area adapt to the impacts of climate change.</p>  | Comment noted.  |
| We note that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to allocate sites to meet the anticipated housing target in the emerging Local Plan. In addition, the plan may include site allocations for business and employment uses. Natural England advises that the proposed allocations have the potential to add to nutrient loads (phosphorous) within the catchment of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site, and therefore the plan is likely to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment.  | An HRA process is being undertaken alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.  |
| <b>Historic England</b><br><i>Historic Places Adviser (email response received on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020)</i>   |   |
| <p>We note that the view has been adopted that the Plan will require a full SEA as it proposes to allocate sites for development.</p> <p>At this stage in the Plan's preparation there does not appear to be any detail in terms of where and how such sites might be allocated based on the report provided and the information on the Plan's website. It is therefore possible that the process of site option assessment and eventual selection and attendant evidence base might conclude that there is no likelihood of environmental impact and consequently a full SEA might not be required.</p> <p>However, we appreciate the community may wish to proceed on an anticipatory basis.</p> | The Neighbourhood Plan has been accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment which considers in detail potential site allocations' impact on the significance of the historic environment.                   |
| <p>We are pleased to note and would endorse the imperative in para. 4.4, p17 that "An assessment of possible harm to the setting and significance of both designated and undesignated heritage assets should be undertaken".</p> <p>To assist in that exercise, we would recommend that our guidance on Site Allocations, Setting, SEAs, and Neighbourhood Plans, is followed and referenced within the SEA documents and associated evidence base. This information can be found at:</p>  | <p>Comment noted. Guidance has been referred to in undertaken the SEA.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan's Heritage Impact Assessment has been informed by Historic England's guidance on site allocations.</p> |

| Consultation response  | How the response was considered and addressed |
|--|---|
| <p>This information can be found at:</p> <p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/</a></p> <p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/</a></p> <p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/</a></p> <p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/</a></p> |   |
| <p><b>Environment Agency</b><br/><i>Planning Advisor – Sustainable Places Team (email response received on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020)</i></p>  |   |
| <p>I can confirm that from the assessment of environmental issues and relevant plans, programmes, and objectives, we are satisfied that you are considering the important issues for assessment of options and alternatives.</p>   | <p>Comment noted.</p>                         |

3.5 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**. The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

## Key Sustainability Issues

### Landscape Quality

- Whilst there are no nationally important landscapes that could be harmed, development could have a significant adverse impact on local landscape features and character.
- It is therefore considered that the impact on landscape character should be assessed, including the focus on potential harm to local landscape features and the wider countryside.
- Opportunities for enhancement (e.g. the removal of detrimental features) should also be considered.

### Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna

- The main environmental issues with respect to biodiversity are likely to be related to: the potential impact of air pollution arising from any industrial uses (although this is unlikely given the likely scope of the plan); the loss of priority habitats; and potential impact on protected species.
- It is therefore considered that the impact on local habitats and the potential for protected species should be assessed, and whether any employment uses may be liable to give rise to pollution.
- Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement (e.g. enhancing or creating new wildlife areas) should also be considered.



## Heritage Assets

- Whilst no heritage assets are noted as being at risk, there is potential for development to harm a wide number of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated.
- Whilst direct harm to Listed Buildings is unlikely, development may harm the setting of such features, the character of the Conservation Areas and may also disturb sites of archaeological interest.
- An assessment of possible harm to the setting and significance of both designated and undesignated heritage assets should be undertaken.

## Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets

- The loss of areas of best and most versatile grades of agricultural land and sterilisation of local building stone resources will need to be considered as part of the assessment process.
- Further consideration of possible contamination will be appropriate where the likelihood of historic development and associated contamination are noted.
- Flood risk areas should be avoided, and noise levels taken into account for any development in close proximity to the A303.
- The potential for sites to have good access to local jobs by sustainable modes of transport should also be considered, together with possible opportunities for carbon off-setting.
- The assessment will need to consider all of the above factors, i.e.: loss of best and most versatile grades of agricultural land, sterilisation of local building stone resources, possible presence of contaminated land, flood risk, noise pollution and accessibility to employment opportunities by public transport / non-motorised modes of transport, together with opportunities for carbon off-setting.

## Population and Human Health

- The main issues identified in relation to population and health relate to the affordability of housing in general and access to community facilities (including those providing for sports and leisure).
- The size and location of potential sites and site-specific constraints will have a bearing on the potential provision of affordable housing.
- An assessment of access to community facilities including outdoor recreation and green spaces (either as part of or connecting to the development) should also be made.

## SEA Framework

- 3.6 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard ‘tests’.
- 3.7 Each proposal within the current version of the NCYNP will be assessed consistently using the framework.

**Table 3.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions**

| SEA Objective  | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the NCYNP  |
|--|--|
| <b>Landscape Quality</b>   |  |
| Ensure development respects and reinforces the area's rural landscapes and character                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would development harm local landscape features?</li> <li>• Would development be in keeping with the rural character of the area and its settlements?</li> <li>• Would development be likely to increase light pollution in areas where there is dark night skies?</li> <li>• Is there potential to provide landscape enhancements through the removal or screening of detrimental features?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna</b>  |  |
| Ensure no ecological interests would be harmed, and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will development directly or indirectly impact on nature conservation designations or priority habitats?</li> <li>• Are there likely to be protected species / habitats on or in close proximity to the site that could be harmed by development?</li> <li>• Is there potential to incorporate measures to achieve biodiversity enhancement within the site?</li> </ul>                                 |
| <b>Heritage Assets</b>   |  |
| Protect the area's heritage assets, and where opportunities arise, enhance the historic character of the area    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the development likely to harm heritage assets (including their setting) and what impact would this have on their significance?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities to better improve our understanding and appreciation of the area's heritage?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors and Material Assets</b>  |  |
| Safeguard sites containing important minerals resources and the best and most versatile agricultural land        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the development likely to sterilise building stone resources, and, if so, is there likely to be potential for extraction prior to development?</li> <li>• Is the development likely to result in a significant area of Grade 1 – 3a agricultural land being lost?</li> </ul>   |
| Ensure development does not result in an unacceptable risk of pollution  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the site known or considered likely to be contaminated?</li> <li>• Is the development likely to give rise to pollution through industrial / manufacturing processes?</li> <li>• Is noise-sensitive development being proposed in close proximity to the A303?</li> </ul>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Reduce flood risk                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is development proposed in proximity to medium or high-risk flood zones (fluvial or surface water)?</li> <li>Would the development be likely to give rise to increased flood risk off-site that would impact on nearby properties?</li> </ul>           |
| Ensure safe access by sustainable modes of transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the development safe and accessible on foot / by cycle?</li> <li>Is there safe access to the highway network?</li> <li>What potential is there for future occupiers to access employment areas on foot / by cycle or by public transport?</li> </ul> |

### Population and Human Health

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Provide housing and community facilities to help meet local needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much housing could be provided, including affordable homes?</li> <li>How easy is it for future occupiers to access community facilities (including facilities for sport and leisure)?</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## 4. What has plan making / SEA involved up to this point?

### Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
  - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the NCYNP has been informed by an assessment of alternative locations for non-strategic scale development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.3 The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the NCYNP through considering alternative approaches for the location of new housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken since 2017

- 4.4 Significant public consultation has been carried out to date to support the emerging NCYNP. This has gathered local views and opinions, with a view to engaging local people throughout the Neighbourhood Plan's development process. This has included the following events, community surveys, and evidence base studies (the results of which are accessible on the Neighbourhood Plan's website)<sup>7</sup>:
- North Cadbury and Yarlington Community Plan (2017);
  - Household survey (February 2020);
  - Businesses and Community Facilities survey (March 2020);
  - Heritage Assessment (August 2020);
  - Housing Needs Assessment (October 2020);
  - Site Options Assessment (October 2020);
  - Options consultation (November 2020);
  - Local Green Space and Views assessments; and
  - Site Heritage Impact Assessment (June 2021)

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<sup>7</sup> North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council (2021): 'Neighbourhood Development Plan: Supporting Documentation', [online] available to access via: <https://www.northcadburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/textonly/documentation.php>



## Housing numbers to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.5 As discussed in Chapter 2, the South Somerset Local Plan (SSLP) was adopted by South Somerset District Council in March 2015, setting out a range of planning policies for the district up to the year 2028.
- 4.6 The SSLP focusses development in the district's centre of Yeovil, other market towns and rural centres. Beyond, other smaller settlements (including those defined as Rural Settlements, including the villages of Galhampton, North Cadbury and Yarlington) will be able to provide for their own employment and affordable housing needs. Whilst no target is set out specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan area, the SSLP highlights that at least 2,242 dwellings should be built in Rural Settlements over the local plan period.
- 4.7 The SSLP is currently under review and will be replaced by a new Local Plan covering a plan period from 2020 to 2040. Policy SS1: Settlement Strategy of the emerging plan designates North Cadbury as a 'Village' where provision will be made for limited development to meet local need, support local services and economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement. Other settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area remain 'Rural Settlements' where development will be restricted, and development within or outside 'Rural Settlements' in the countryside where Policy SS4 does not apply will be limited to that for which a countryside location is essential or where it is in accordance with Policies EP4 and EP5.
- 4.8 Whilst a definitive housing target has not been included in the adopted or emerging Local Plan, South Somerset District Council have advised the Neighbourhood Plan group that it would be appropriate to aim for about 60 new dwellings over a 20-year period (or a pro-rata equivalent based on 3 dwellings a year), taking into account any dwellings that already have consent. This would translate into the delivery of in the region of 45 homes over the current 15 year Neighbourhood Plan period (2018 – 2033).
- 4.9 South Somerset have confirmed that there are 27 extant planning permissions which can contribute to the 45 home target. However, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group are keen to explore options for delivering an increased level of housing to facilitate the delivery of additional affordable housing and to provide a buffer against changing housing needs.

## Site assessments undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.10 During the earlier stages of the Neighbourhood Plan's development, there was a recognition that the Neighbourhood Plan would potentially need to allocate sites for development.
- 4.11 In light of this, North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council issued a Call for Sites in summer 2020. 19 sites came forward, including a number which had also been considered in SSDC's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) from 2018 and subsequent HELAA review (2020). One site was subsequently withdrawn.
- 4.12 Subsequent to the Call for Sites, an independent site assessment was undertaken on the identified sites in the parishes. This undertook an assessment of potential development sites within the parishes, taking into account strategic policies in the adopted and emerging Local Plans, as well as

national planning criteria, to establish which, if any, of the sites are suitable for development.<sup>8</sup>

- 4.13 After the initial site assessment was complete, an additional nine sites were proposed as part of the Call for Sites process. To reflect the introduction of these new sites, a supplementary site assessment was undertaken to consider these new sites which had recently come forward.
- 4.14 The first assessment concluded that four sites were suitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. A further seven sites were considered potentially suitable for allocation subject to the mitigation of identified constraints and due consideration of Local Plan policy. The remaining seven sites were considered unsuitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.15 Of the nine additional sites considered in the supplementary site assessment, three sites were considered to be suitable for allocation for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. A further three sites were considered potentially suitable for allocation for housing, subject to the mitigation of identified constraints and due consideration of Local Plan policy. The remaining two sites were considered unsuitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.16 In association with the findings of the site assessment, consultation on the choice of sites to take forward through the Neighbourhood Plan was then undertaken with the community to determine which sites would gain community support. SSDC were also consulted on which sites may be appropriate for allocation.
- 4.17 Following this process, a number of sites were identified as preferred sites for allocation. However, given the historic environment sensitivity of some of the preferred sites, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group viewed that it would be appropriate to commission an independent Heritage Impact Assessment to consider in more detail the likely impact of potential development on the significance of heritage assets. This was undertaken in early 2021.<sup>9</sup>
- 4.18 Resulting from this process, and in recognition of heritage constraints affecting the sites (and the likelihood of effective avoidance and mitigation measures being implemented), the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group developed a preferred development strategy incorporating the potential allocation of two sites of 14 homes and three smaller sites (**Table 4.1**).

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<sup>8</sup> AECOM (October 2020) North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment Final Report

<sup>9</sup> AECOM (June 2021) North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Impact Assessment

**Table 4.1: Preferred sites for potential allocation through the NCYNP**

| Site  | Dwellings (affordable) |
|---|------------------------|
| NCY18 Cary Road West, Brookhampton          | 14 (6)                 |
| NCY17/22 Cary Road West, Brookhampton       | 14 (6)                 |
| NCY 1 Stoke Lane Barn                       | 1                      |
| NCY14 North Town Farm Barns                 | 3                      |
| NCY19 Barns at Hill Farm                    | 2                      |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>34 (12)</b>         |
| <b>All dwellings + extant consents (27)</b> | <b>61 (12)</b>         |

## Development strategy options considered through the SEA

4.19 To gain a further sustainability perspective on potential development strategies for the Neighbourhood Plan, four development strategy options have been considered as reasonable alternatives through the SEA process.

4.20 These options are as follows.

### Option A: Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

4.21 This option would take forward up to 34 homes on a number of sites identified by the Neighbourhood Plan group as being appropriate for allocation. This incorporates the potential allocation of two sites of 14 homes adjacent to the north of North Cadbury village and three smaller brownfield sites.

### Option B: Clare Field

4.22 This option would take forward site SSDC1, Clare Field, which is a greenfield site located adjacent to the west of North Cadbury village, and to the north of Ridgeway Lane. The site is actively being promoted for development, with the promoter proposing 80 homes on the site, of which 28 would be affordable. Given existing access issues, development of the site would require a new road link from the A359 in the north.

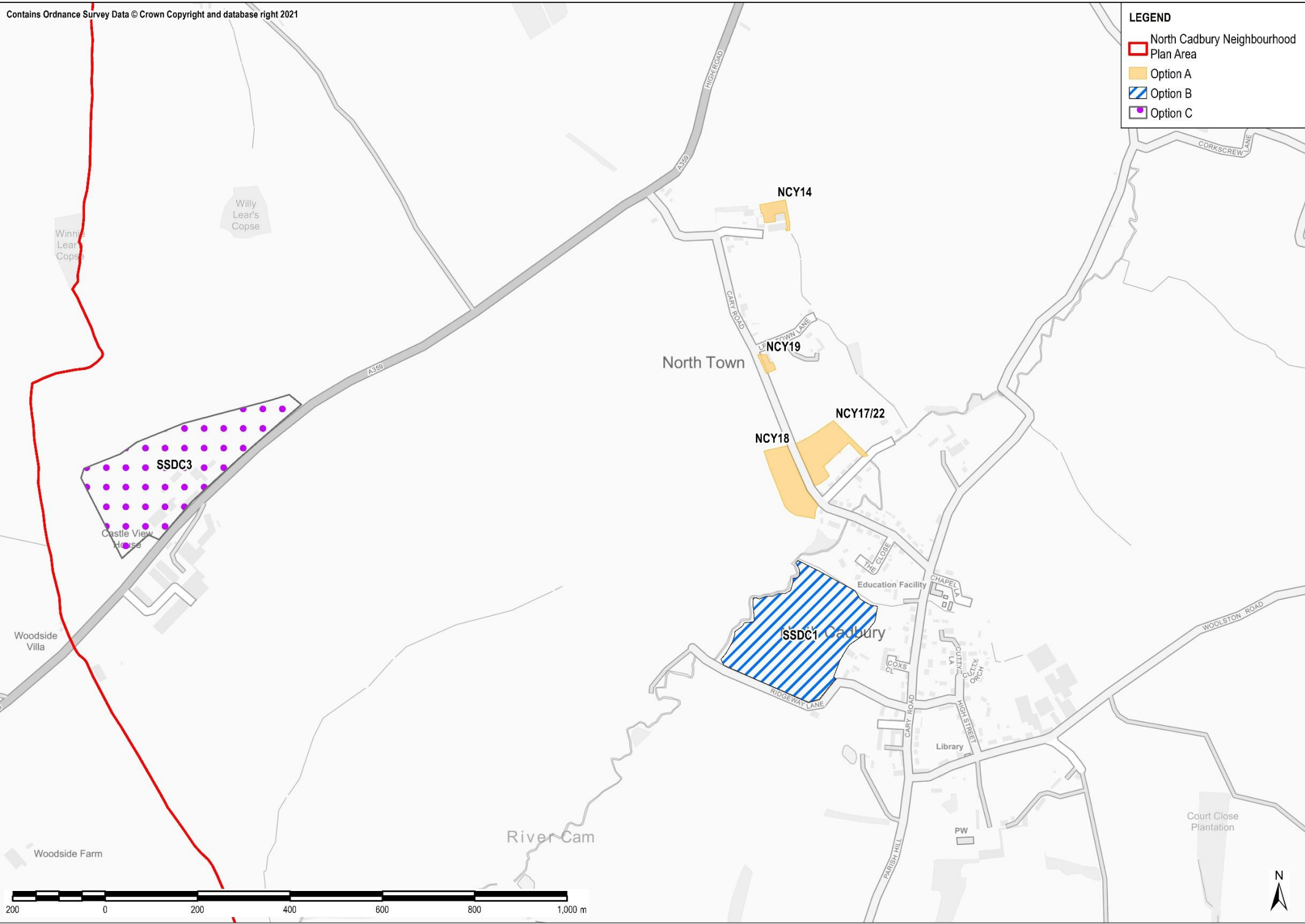
### Option C: Down Ash Farm

4.23 This option would take forward a site allocation comprising agricultural land and agricultural buildings at site SSDC3, Down Ash Farm. It is located to the north of the A359 opposite the employment site at Cadbury Business Park. The site is currently being proposed by the landowner for in the region of 60 homes.

### Option D: Brownfield sites

4.24 This option would take forward a number of smaller brownfield sites, including at North Town Farm, at site NCY1 (off Stoke Lane, Woolston) and site NCY19 (at Hill Farm Barns). The option would deliver eleven homes.

4.25 **Figure 4.2** overleaf visually represents the options.



LEGEND

- North Cadbury Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Option A
- Option B
- Option C

## Appraisal findings

4.26 Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the appraisal has been presented through the five SEA themes, as follows:

- Landscape Quality;
- Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna;
- Heritage Assets;
- Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets; and
- Population and Human Health.

4.27 The appraisal considers the relative sustainability merits of each of the development strategy options. Findings are presented as a commentary on effects. To support the appraisal findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA theme. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the four options in relation to each theme considered.

4.28 Sources of information to support the appraisal has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps, MAGIC Interactive Map<sup>10</sup>, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England<sup>11</sup>, Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification maps<sup>1213</sup>, Google Earth<sup>14</sup>, reports and interactive mapping layers available on South Somerset District Council's webpages<sup>15</sup>, the Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER)<sup>16</sup>, and baseline studies provided by the NCYNP Steering Group (available to access via the NCYNP's website)<sup>17</sup>.

4.29 **Table 4.2** to **Table 4.6** below present the findings of the appraisal of the development strategy options for each of the SEA themes.

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<sup>10</sup> MAGIC (2021): 'Interactive Map', [online] available to access via: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> Environment Agency (2021): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] available to access via: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> Natural England (2021): 'Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps and Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land', [online] available to access via: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5954148537204736>

<sup>13</sup> Natural England (2017): 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic Scale Map for the South West Region (ALC018)', [online] available to access via:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5624668800679936>

<sup>14</sup> Google (2021): 'Google Earth', [online] available to access via: <https://earth.google.com/web/>

<sup>15</sup> South Somerset District Council (2021): 'Planning Policy', [online] available to access via: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/>

<sup>16</sup> Heritage Gateway (2021): 'Detailed Search: Somerset HER', [online] available to access via: <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

<sup>17</sup> North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council (2021): 'Neighbourhood Development Plan: Supporting Documentation' [online] available to access via: <https://www.northcadburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/textonly/documentation.php>



**Table 4.2: Appraisal findings: Landscape Quality**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options  | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|---|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|   | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>Option A's larger scale allocations (i.e. on sites NCY17/18 and part of NCY22) would have impacts on landscape character to the north of North Cadbury village. This is given the sites form part of the gateway to the village on Cary Road and are part of the agricultural land that surrounds the village. As such, through extending the village into open countryside, development would have some impacts on landscape character in this location. The development area proposed through these allocations would though be located towards the bottom of a slope, which would limit wider landscape impacts. Whilst affecting views into the village from the north development would be seen from this direction in the context of the existing curtilage of the built up part of the village. In terms of other potential site allocations taken forward through this option, landscape impacts would be limited by their scale and their taking place on previously developed sites.</p> <p>Option B, through taking forward 80 homes on site SSDC1 Clare Field, would lead to the development of a large area of agricultural land north of Ridgeway Lane. Given the size of the site and the large scale of the allocation, development would have significant effects on landscape and villagescape character, and on the setting of the existing settlement. This would include through affecting the strongly rural character of the site, leading to a change in the settlement pattern of the village and affecting the landscape setting of the village to the west. The accompanying link road to the A359 would increase these impacts on landscape character further through contributing to an urbanising influence to the north of the site beyond the River Cam.</p> <p>Option C would take forward a large site north of the A359 at Down Ash Farm opposite the employment site at Cadbury Business Park for in the region of 60 homes. Given the site includes a significant area of greenfield land to the north of the A359, development in this location would impact on the integrity of the open countryside in this area. In addition, there would be potential impacts on the setting of Sparkford Wood, which is an important landscape feature. However, (the more limited scale of) development on the currently built up portion of the site would have low landscape impacts. In addition, there are existing urbanising influences from North Cadbury Business Park and existing built up land alongside the A359, which would help limit impacts on visual amenity.</p> <p>In comparison to the other options, Option D would do more to limit impacts on landscape character through 1) delivering a lower level of growth and 2) delivering growth exclusively on previously development land.</p> | 2                  | 4        | 3        | 1        |

**Table 4.3: Appraisal findings: Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options  | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|---|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|   | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>All options have the potential to add to phosphate loading through delivering additional residential uses. This issue has been considered through the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>With regards to nationally designated biodiversity sites, Option C would take forward development located approximately 400m from the Sparkwood Wood SSSI. However, the site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for residential development relating to the site.</p> <p>In terms of Option B, the link road to the site has the potential to affect the area of traditional orchard Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat located on the southern side of Ridgeway Lane (which would be widened under this option). In addition, the development of Clare Field through the option, whilst not leading to the direct loss of the traditional orchard and deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitats located to the west, south and east of Ridgeway Lane, has the potential to lead to disturbance of these habitats from noise, light pollution or trampling from enhanced access.</p> <p>The remaining options will not propose development in areas covered by or close to BAP Priority Habitat and/or located in areas with significant biodiversity interest. Whilst Options A, C and D have the potential to impact on species utilising brownfield habitats, it is not possible to significantly differentiate between the options in this regard.</p> | 2                  | 4        | 3        | 1        |

**Table 4.4: Appraisal findings: Heritage Assets**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options   | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|--|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>In terms of the allocations potentially taken forward through Option A, sites NC17/18 and 22 form part of the gateway to the village on Cary Road and is part of the agricultural land that surrounds the village. Development of the sites would extend the existing modern development on Cary Road northwards to the north of Mitchell's Row. This would change the setting of the North Cadbury Conservation Area by removing part of the agricultural context of the village. The impression of the village to those approaching it from the north along Cary Road would also be changed. Given the relative size of the parts of the sites with the potential to be allocated compared to the conservation area, their location set apart from the conservation area, and the fact that affected parts of the conservation area are of lower significance than other parts of the conservation area (in particular those areas either side of Woolston Road), it is considered that the impact of development through the option would be Low adverse on an asset of Medium significance. The Heritage Impact Assessment also highlights that high quality development of sympathetic design and materials at the southern end of the three sites would create a new northern edge to the village, softening the effect of the modern buildings that currently form the edge and enhancing the experience of the entry to the village from the north along Cary Road. Development of the sites would though change part of the agricultural setting of the Grade II listed Brookhampton House, which is located 80m to the east, with Medium adverse impacts on an asset of Medium significance.</p> <p>In terms of Option B, development of the site has the potential for impacts on the North Cadbury Conservation Area as a result of change to its setting as the eastern boundary of the site abuts the western boundary of the conservation area. The setting in this location would change from the current agricultural context to an extension of the built up area of the village. The site covers a large area and although the part of the conservation area affected is not the most significant, the change of setting would have a Medium adverse impact on the conservation area as an asset of Medium significance. While the site did not form part of the land farmed from Ridgeway Farm, the site remains an important part of the setting of the Grade II listed Ridgeway Farmhouse. Development of the site would separate the farmhouse from its agricultural setting to the north and west. This would result in a Medium adverse impact on the farmhouse as an asset of Medium significance. The accompanying link road to the site from the A359 would also impact on the historic setting of the village, and the urbanising effect of the road would impact on historic landscape character.</p> <p>In terms of Option C, development of the Down Ash Farm site, there are unlikely to be impacts on statutory designated sites or conservation areas. Development of the site is also unlikely to affect the historic environment significance of the two features located to the south of the site listed on the Somerset Historic Environment</p> | 3                  | 4        | 2        | 1        |

**Table 4.4: Appraisal findings: Heritage Assets**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options   | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|--|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>Record (54350: Brickyard, Castle View Farm, North Cadbury and 26154: Eighteenth-century Turnpike road, Sparkford to Grove Cottage, Pitcombe).</p> <p>Development of the sites proposed through Option D would not lead to impacts on the significance of nationally designated heritage features or the significance of the North Cadbury Conservation Area. Site NCY19 is located adjacent to a locally listed building.</p> <p>The option has the potential to enhance the significance of features and areas of local historic interest and better reveal their significance. This depends on the design and layout associated with the development of these brownfield sites however.</p> |                    |          |          |          |

**Table 4.5: Appraisal findings: Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options   | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|--|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>In terms of soils resources, whilst recent detailed agricultural land classification has not been undertaken in the vicinity of North Cadbury, the pre-1988 high level assessment of land indicates that agricultural land is likely to be classified as the best and most versatile in the area, with some areas of Grade 1 agricultural land. As such, the proposed greenfield sites potentially taken forward through the options are likely to be underlain by land classified as the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, including potentially, Grade 1 agricultural land. In this respect, due to the proposed scale of development on Clare Field, Option B would of the options be likely to lead to the loss of the largest area of productive agricultural land. In contrast, Option D through facilitating the reuse of previously developed land, will do the most to minimise the loss of productive agricultural land. With respect to Options A and C, both propose a degree of growth on existing built up areas; however both will lead to the loss of productive agricultural land (Option A to the immediate north of North Cadbury village and Option C to the north of the A359).</p> <p>With regards to climate change mitigation, transport is the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In this context, Option C would be less likely to encourage the use of lower carbon modes of transport to access day to day services. This given the location of Down Ash Farm 2.5 - 3km from key village services and facilities such as North Cadbury Village Stores and North Cadbury Primary School. In contrast, Option B would take forward development in closer proximity to the services and facilities in North Cadbury by foot, and most of the development taken forward through Option A would be located in proximity to the services and facilities in the village. These options would therefore support a limitation of emissions from transport. Option D would take forward a smaller level of growth on brownfield sites; however, the proposed development locations are slightly less accessible by foot to local services than the larger sites proposed through Option A and B.</p> <p>In terms of climate change adaptation (including associated with flood risk), Options C and D would not deliver development in locations at significant risk of fluvial flooding. The south western section of the potential development area associated with NCY18 (Option A) is located adjacent to an area of Flood Risk 3. This is associated with the presence of the River Cam. With regards to Option B, an area of Flood Zone 3 associated with the River Cam covers the north western section of the site. However, it is anticipated that these areas of flood risk could be readily avoided (and mitigation implemented) within new development areas at the scale of development proposed. In addition, there would be opportunities to deliver green infrastructure enhancements with a view to supporting climate change adaptation.</p> | 2                  | 3        | 4        | 1        |



**Table 4.5: Appraisal findings: Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options  | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|---|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|   | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>In terms of water quality, all options have the potential to add to phosphate loading through delivering additional residential uses, which is an issue for the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA. This issue has been considered through the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>In terms of minerals resources, most of the greenfield sites potentially taken forward through the options are within a Building Stone Area of Search. The Minerals Plan<sup>18</sup> requires that Somerset County Council is consulted on site allocations in minerals safeguarding areas to avoid the unnecessary sterilisation through consideration of whether prior extraction should be considered.</p> |                    |          |          |          |

<sup>18</sup> Somerset County Council (2015): 'Somerset Minerals Plan', [online] available to access via: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/somerset-minerals-plan/>

**Table 4.6: Appraisal findings: Population and Human Health**

**Option A:** Proposed Neighbourhood Plan sites

**Option B:** Clare Field

**Option C:** Down Ash Farm

**Option D:** Brownfield sites

| Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options   | Rank of preference |          |          |          |
|--|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Option A           | Option B | Option C | Option D |
| <p>In terms of the delivery of housing, given the higher growth facilitated through these options, Options B and C have most potential to deliver a wider range of homes to meet local needs, including an additional level of affordable homes. The options also provide further potential to deliver additional community provision through developer contributions. It is very unlikely that Option D would deliver housing to meet local needs, both in terms of market housing and affordable housing provision. Option A would deliver 16 homes more than South Somerset District Council's 45 home target for the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>Accessibility to amenities is a key determinant of residents' quality of life. In this respect, North Cadbury village contains a larger range of services and facilities compared with the other settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a village store, public house, village hall, church, primary school/pre-school, playing fields, playground and tennis courts. Galhampton and Yarlington are less well served in this regard. In terms of the relative distance of the sites from local services and facilities, the main site allocations potentially to be taken forward through Options A and B are located adjacent to the existing built-up area of North Cadbury village. This provides good accessibility to the services and facilities available locally (although Clare Field does not currently have safe pedestrian footpath access to the centre of the village). In contrast, Option C would be less likely to support accessibility to day to day services given the location of Down Ash Farm 2.5 - 3km from key village services and facilities. In this respect taking forward this option has the potential to limit accessibility to services and amenities, with a view to undermining social inclusion and community cohesion.</p> <p>In terms of health and wellbeing, Options A and B have the potential to encourage active lifestyles by facilitating development within proximity to North Cadbury village. This is given the relative proximity of the sites taken forward through these options to local public green spaces and proximity of local amenities by foot. The two options also have the potential to deliver new green infrastructure provision.</p> <p>Whilst Option B will deliver additional housing, and potentially, an increased level of new community infrastructure, it should also be noted that the delivery of the additional level of growth on Clare Field proposed through the option has the potential to contribute to traffic and road safety issues, visual impacts and community impacts on the western side of North Cadbury. This is given factors such as the large scale of the proposed development (including when compared with the scale of the existing settlement), the lack of safe and accessible pedestrian footpath linkages to the village centre, and local environmental sensitivities. Option A, through delivering a more limited scale of development to the north of the village, in a location linked by pedestrian footpaths, is less likely to have significant effects in this regard.</p> | 1                  | 3        | 2        | 4        |

## Summary of appraisal findings

- 4.30 **Option A** has the potential to deliver a range of housing types and tenures, including affordable housing, and the option would exceed the target set by SSDC for housing delivery. The majority of development delivered through the option would take place at a location accessible to the services and facilities available in North Cadbury. Key considerations associated with this option are the historic environment sensitivities present locally and potential impacts from development on the landscape setting of North Cadbury to the north of the village. In this respect, development which comes forward in this location would need to be sensitive to the significance of heritage assets present locally, and be of a scale and layout appropriate for local landscape and villagescape character.
- 4.31 Of the four options, **Option B** would deliver the most housing, of a range of types and tenures including affordable housing. This would far exceed the housing target set by SSDC. Due to the number of homes delivered, the option also has the potential to deliver increased Community Infrastructure Levy monies. However, given the scale of development proposed in this location (including when compared with the scale of the existing settlement), and the requirement for a new link road to the A359, the option has the potential to lead to a range of significant environmental and community impacts. This is linked to the scale of development, the likely urbanising influences of the development itself and a new road, local environmental sensitivities and the lack of safe and accessible pedestrian footpath linkages to the village centre.
- 4.32 **Option C** has the potential to deliver a broad range of housing types and tenures, including affordable housing, and would exceed the target set by SSDC for housing delivery. It would also help limit impacts on the rich historic environment resource of the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the location of Down Ash Farm 2.5 - 3km from key village services and facilities in North Cadbury, taking forward this option would have the potential to limit accessibility to local services and amenities, and undermine social inclusion and community cohesion.
- 4.33 **Option D**, through taking forward a lower level of growth on previously developed land, would help support the efficient use of land, revitalise areas of underutilised land, and help limit impacts on landscape character. However, it is very unlikely that the option would deliver sufficient housing to meet local needs, both in terms of market housing but particularly affordable housing provision. The option is also unlikely to deliver new community infrastructure or wider community benefits and would not in most cases deliver growth in locations readily accessible to key amenities in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Current approach in the Neighbourhood Plan and the development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

### Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

4.34 The current version of the Neighbourhood Plan reflects Option A considered above. This would deliver a supply of 61 homes across five sites, with 70% of the allocations being delivered on two sites located immediately to the north of North Cadbury village.

| Settlement           | Site                          | Dwellings<br>(Affordable) | Policy |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| North Cadbury        | NCY18 Cary Road W, Brookh'n   | 14 (6)                    | 18     |
| North Cadbury        | NCY17 Cary Road E, Brookh'n   | 14 (6)                    | 19     |
| Woolston             | NCY1 Stoke Lane Barn          | 1                         |        |
| North Town           | NCY14 North Town Farm Barns   | 3                         | 20     |
| North Town           | NCY19 Barns at Hill Farm      | 2                         | 21     |
| Total                |                               | 34 (12)                   |        |
| <b>All dwellings</b> | <b>+ extant consents (27)</b> | <b>61 (12)</b>            |        |

**Figure 4.3: Sites allocated in the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan (source Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan)**

4.35 The overview presented in **Box 4.1** below provides the NCYNP Steering Group's reasons for choosing the preferred development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Box 4.1: NCYNP Steering Group's reasons for choosing the preferred development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan**

*The preferred approach is considered to be a sustainable option to deliver the current identified housing needs and indicative housing target, and wider needs for employment and community infrastructure, which also reflected the consensus of the community consultation responses in terms of their location and design whilst safeguarding the historic and natural environment that is particularly valued.*

## Current Neighbourhood Plan policies

4.36 To support the implementation of the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Regulation 14 version of the NCYNP puts forward 30 policies to guide new development within the NCYNP area.

4.37 Policies were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering and are listed below in **Table 4.7**. The NCYNP also identified eight priority projects which support the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. These are also listed below.

4.38 Prior to the finalisation of the current Regulation 14 consultation version of the NCYNP, the SEA team undertook an appraisal of an initial version of Neighbourhood Plan policies. At that stage, a number of recommendations were made to plan makers for further improving the sustainability performance of the plan.

4.39 These recommendations included as follows:

- Incorporate an additional recognition of the potential effects of climate change in the Neighbourhood Plan flood risk policy.
- Inclusion of additional provisions relating to the Neighbourhood Plan area's archaeological resource.
- Ensure that the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment are fully recognised through plan policies.

4.40 The policies and projects presented in the current Regulation 14 consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

**Table 4.7: Neighbourhood Plan policies and projects**

| Reference       | Policy / Project Name             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Policies</b> |                                   |
| Policy 1        | The Area's Rich Heritage          |
| Policy 2        | Character and Design Guidance     |
| Policy 3        | Buildings Fit for the Future      |
| Policy 4        | Practical Garden Sizes            |
| Policy 5        | The Area's Rural Character        |
| Policy 6        | Recreational Routes and Views     |
| Policy 7        | Protecting Local Wildlife         |
| Policy 8        | Flood Risk                        |
| Policy 9        | Scale and Location of New Housing |
| Policy 10       | Use of Rural Buildings            |
| Policy 11       | House Types                       |
| Policy 12       | North Cadbury Business Park       |
| Policy 13       | Other Employment Opportunities    |
| Policy 14       | Parking                           |



| Reference       | Policy / Project Name                         |
|-----------------|---|
| Policy 15       | North Cadbury – Built Character               |
| Policy 16       | North Cadbury – Local Green Spaces            |
| Policy 17       | North Cadbury – Facilities                    |
| Policy 18       | Land North of Brookhampton, West of Cary Road |
| Policy 19       | Land North of Brookhampton, East of Cary Road |
| Policy 20       | Barns at North Town Farm                      |
| Policy 21       | Barns at Hill Farm                            |
| Policy 22       | Galhampton – Built Character                  |
| Policy 23       | Galhampton – Local Green Spaces               |
| Policy 24       | Galhampton – Community Facilities             |
| Policy 25       | Yarlington – Built Character                  |
| Policy 26       | Yarlington – Local Green Spaces               |
| Policy 27       | Yarlington – Community Facilities             |
| Policy 28       | Woolston – Built Character                    |
| Policy 29       | Woolston – Community Facilities               |
| Policy 30       | Barn off Stoke Lane                           |
| <b>Projects</b> |   |
| Project 1       | Public Rights of Way Network                  |
| Project 2       | Housing Supply Monitoring                     |
| Project 3       | Local Bus Services                            |
| Project 4       | Road Safety Improvements                      |
| Project 5       | School Parking Area                           |
| Project 6       | Local Bus Services                            |
| Project 7       | Conservation Area Status                      |
| Project 8       | Emily Estate Plans                            |

4.41 These policies have been assessed in **Chapter 5** below.

## 5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

### Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the Regulation 14 consultation version of the NCYNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the NCYNP under the five SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

### Approach to this appraisal

5.2 The appraisal is structured under the five themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA.

5.3 For each theme, 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

### Landscape Quality

5.5 In terms of landscape sensitivity, none of the proposed site allocations are within or have the potential to affect a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), or areas of Green Belt land. The nearest nationally designated landscape is the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, approximately 7.5km to the east of the Neighbourhood Plan area (at its nearest point).

5.6 Landscape and villagescape character play an important part in understanding the relationship between people and place, identifying recognisable and distinct patterns which make one area different from another. Landscape and villagescape character can assist in the assessment of the likely significance of effects of change resulting from new development areas, both in visual and amenity terms.

5.7 In this context, a summary of the local landscape and villagescape sensitivity in relation to the proposed site allocations is provided below:

- The larger scale allocations taken forward through the NCYNP (i.e. on sites NCY17/18 and part of NCY22) would have impacts on landscape character to the north of North Cadbury village. This is given the sites form part of the gateway to the village on Cary Road and are part of the agricultural land that surrounds the village. As such, through extending the village into open countryside, development would have some impacts on landscape character in this location. The development area proposed through these allocations would though be located towards the bottom of a slope, which would limit wider landscape impacts. Whilst affecting views into the village from the north, development would be seen from this direction in the context of the existing curtilage of the built up part of the village.
- In terms of the other residential site allocations taken forward through this option, landscape impacts would be limited by their scale and their taking place on previously developed sites.

5.8 Nonetheless, all the proposed site allocations have the potential to adversely impact local landscape and villagescape character in the absence of sensitive design. Reflecting these sensitivities, development proposals should include measures which demonstrate how any impacts would be appropriately mitigated through the application of sensitive design. This could include measures which seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the local landscape and villagescape, retain and enhance locally important viewpoints, incorporate local materials into the design to respond to local architectural styles, and incorporate visual screening from the surrounding landscape (including from nearby residential areas). Key policies which support these provisions include Policy 15 'North Cadbury – Built Character', Policy 22 'Galhampton – Built Character', Policy 25 'Yarlington – Built Character', and Policy 28 'Woolston – Built Character', which contain specific design principles for the four key villages within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

5.9 With specific reference to the proposed site allocations, Policy 18 'Land North of Brookhampton, West of Cary Road' and Policy 19 'Land North of Brookhampton, East of Cary Road' stipulate that the layout, scale, and detailed design (including landscaping) for the developments should be considered as part of a masterplan (as the sites are adjacent to each other). The policies also state that specific regard must be given to other NCYNP policies (particularly Policies 2, 3, 4, and 15) and the important view from Cary Road by presenting a more appropriate, positive edge to the village which is in keeping with the local character.

5.10 More broadly in relation to landscape and villagescape character, Policy 2 'Character and Design Guidance' affirms that new development should respond to the area's local character and history to reinforce the sense of place, and create places that are safe, inclusive, and have a high standard of amenity. Building heights shall be expected to vary between one and two storeys, with subtle (but not excessive) variation in pitch and roofline between adjoining buildings. High density developments are discouraged through Policy 2 unless such proposals would not adversely impact upon local character or residential amenity. Policy 5 'The Area's Rural Character' states that development should

respect, and where practicable, enhance local landscape character, including the retention and reinforcement of the following key characteristics (amongst others): general tranquillity; winding lanes, old drove roads, and sunken lanes; dark night skies; and the undeveloped gaps between the main villages.

- 5.11 In terms of visual amenity, Policy 10 'Use of Rural Buildings' states that the conversion or sympathetic replacement of agricultural and other rural buildings for housing use will be supported providing that the building is not in a location where its conversion or replacement would be detrimental to any wider views. The proposed site allocations through Policy 20 'Barns at North Town Farm', Policy 21 'Barns at Hill Farm', and Policy 30 'Barn off Stoke Lane' will be expected to be delivered in line with the provisions of Policy 10. Additionally, Policy 6 'Recreational Routes and Views' highlights that the scale, design, and layout of development should minimise adverse impacts on publicly accessible views over the open countryside and towards key landmarks.
- 5.12 To minimise the impact on the wider landscape and rural character of the NCYNP area, Policy 12 'North Cadbury Business Park' outlines the following principles which should be applied for further development or redevelopment for employment uses at this location:
- Avoid lightly coloured rendering and bright or highly reflective materials;
  - Break up the massing of form through variations in the roof height; and
  - Consider the landform and screening provided by the existing tree cover to minimise visual impacts and incorporate new landscaping of sufficient scale and breadth to reduce any remaining adverse visual impacts.
- 5.13 Delivering net gains in biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements also has the potential to help conserve and enhance landscape and villagescape character, including its special qualities and sense of place. For example, enhanced habitats (trees, hedgerows, grass, shrub, etc.) can form important parts of the landscape, and provide a role in landscape buffering and planting, providing screening to restrict undesirable views. They can also play a role in contributing towards local distinctiveness and a sense of place. This is further discussed within the 'Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna' appraisal, presented below.

## Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna

- 5.14 There are no European or nationally designated sites for biodiversity and / or geodiversity located within or adjacent to any of the proposed site allocations. Similarly, none of the proposed site allocations for residential development overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) associated with Sparkford Wood SSSI. However, North Cadbury Business Park (which is safeguarded for future employment use and expansion through Policy 12) overlaps with the following SSSI IRZs categories: air pollution, combustion, waste, and composting. However, it is important to note that outline planning application 19/00152/OUT<sup>19</sup> for land adjacent to the North Cadbury Business Park has been approved specifically for business (B1) and general industrial (B2)

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<sup>19</sup> South Somerset District Council (2020): 'Planning Application Summary: 19/00152/OUT', [online] available to access via: <https://publicaccess.southsomerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=PLHF3TOWJ0K00>

development (i.e. types of development which are not likely to adversely impact the Sparkford Wood SSSI)<sup>20</sup>.

5.15 Through changes in land management, one of the key initiatives within the UK Government's Environment Bill (2020) is to develop a Nature Recovery Network, providing 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife habitat, more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green and blue infrastructure<sup>21</sup>. An environmental net gain principle for development is also embedded within the goals and policies of the UK Government's 25-Year Environment Plan<sup>22</sup> (which was published in January 2018) and the Planning White Paper (published in August 2020)<sup>23</sup>. In this regard, Policy 7 'Protecting Local Wildlife' affirms that development should, and wherever practicable, enhance biodiversity. A thorough understanding of the existing wildlife areas and corridors (such as field boundaries and streams) which are within the vicinity of the site should be sought to appreciate the wildlife interest that may be affected by the development. In this respect, Policy 7 specifies that this should be demonstrated through the submission of a completed biodiversity checklist and any supporting ecological surveys. Net gains for biodiversity will be encouraged, and in general it is expected that:

- Existing site features that support wildlife are retained. If there are over-riding reasons for their removal, then compensatory measures should be incorporated within or adjoining the site;
- New buildings and alterations to existing buildings should incorporate provision for wildlife, such as bird / bat boxes, and bee bricks; and
- Landscaping schemes should be designed to support wildlife movement / foraging through the provision of native hedgerow and tree planting, the creation of wildlife ponds where the topography and soil / geology allows, and the use of wildflower planting in areas of open space.

5.16 As key components of local ecological networks, Local Wildlife Sites represent some of the most significant areas of semi-natural habitat in South Somerset District. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the River Cam, areas of parkland, ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland, and areas of unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland provide an important network of waterways, associated floodplains, trees, and wildlife corridors.

5.17 Whilst the loss of these habitats and natural features to development is unlikely, disturbance at these locations has the potential to take place from noise, light pollution or trampling from enhanced access. Nonetheless, the proposed site allocations have the potential to provide enhancements to ecological networks. For example, Policy 18 'Land North of Brookhampton, West of Cary Road' and Policy 19 'Land North of Brookhampton, East of Cary Road' stipulate that hedgerow and tree planting should take place at the site boundaries along with

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<sup>20</sup> However, correspondence from Natural England advises that the Neighbourhood Plan's proposals have the potential to add to nutrient loads (phosphorous) within the catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site, triggering a requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). It is expected that the conclusions and recommendations of the HRA will be reflected in the submission version of the NCYNP.

<sup>21</sup> GOV.UK (2020): 'Environment Bill – Policy Statement', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environment-bill-2020-policy-statement>

<sup>22</sup> DEFRA (2018): 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

<sup>23</sup> MHCLG (2020): 'Planning for the Future', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>



other measures as necessary to deliver biodiversity net gains. Policy 10 'Use of Rural Buildings' outlines support for the conversion and sympathetic replacement of agricultural and other rural buildings for housing use providing that, amongst other considerations, bat and barn owl surveys are undertaken prior to construction and that the proposal would deliver biodiversity net gains. Furthermore, Policy 5 'The Area's Rural Character' states that development should retain and reinforce the following key characteristics (amongst others), wherever practicable: hedgerows demarking field boundaries; mature oaks and other ancient trees (particularly along roadsides and stream corridors); and the River Cam and its associated riverside vegetation.

5.18 Overall, Neighbourhood Plan policies should ensure that ecological sensitivities are appropriately considered during the planning, construction, and operational phases for new development proposals which come forward during the plan period, whilst also delivering net gains.

5.19 **The SEA recommends** that developers consider utilising the Government's latest available biodiversity metric tools (e.g. at the current time, the latest version is v3.0, which was published by Natural England and Defra in July 2021)<sup>24</sup>. This includes a specific metric for smaller development sites (i.e. those which would deliver between one and nine dwellings) and an 'environmental benefits from nature tool' which aims to maximise the benefits from delivering net gains.

## Heritage Assets

5.20 In relation to historic environment constraints, the settlement of North Cadbury has the largest concentrations of features and areas of historic interest in the NCYNP area, such as listed buildings (including the Grade I listed 'North Cadbury Court'), North Cadbury Conservation Area, and a rich archaeological heritage resource.

5.21 In this respect, impacts to the historic environment are possible from the larger allocations proposed to the north of the village. These sites form part of the gateway to the village on Cary Road and are part of the agricultural land that surrounds the village. Development of the sites would extend the existing modern development on Cary Road northwards to the north of Mitchell's Row. This has the potential to change the setting of the North Cadbury Conservation Area by removing part of the agricultural context of the village. The impression of the village to those approaching it from the north along Cary Road would also be changed. Given the relative size of the parts of the sites with the potential to be allocated compared to the conservation area, their location set apart from the conservation area, and the fact that affected parts of the conservation area are of lower significance than other parts of the conservation area (in particular those areas either side of Woolston Road), it is considered that the impact of development through the option would be Low adverse on an asset of Medium significance. The Heritage Impact Assessment also highlights that high quality development of sympathetic design at this location would create a new northern edge to the village, softening the effect of the modern

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<sup>24</sup> Natural England & DEFRA (2021): 'Biodiversity 3.0 metric launched in new sustainable development toolkit', [online] available to access via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/biodiversity-30-metric-launched-in-new-sustainable-development-toolkit>

buildings that currently form the edge and enhancing the experience of the entry to the village from the north along Cary Road.

- 5.22 Development of the sites would though change part of the agricultural setting of the Grade II listed Brookhampton House, which is located 80m to the east, with Medium adverse impacts on an asset of Medium significance.
- 5.23 Reflecting these sensitivities, NCYNP policies should seek to ensure that development proposals seek to implement sensitive design techniques which respect and enhance the setting of heritage assets. Such measures could include:
- High quality and (where possible) locally sourced materials and detailing that contribute positively to the setting of nearby heritage assets and reflect local building traditions.
  - Addressing any principal issues and / or site-specific improvements within the North Cadbury Conservation Area (as listed within the Appraisal).
  - Safeguarding locally important viewpoints which contribute to the setting of heritage designations.
  - Retention of traditional heritage features through the design of new development areas.
- 5.24 Key policies in this regard include Policy 2 'Character and Design Guidance' which encourages proposals to include a mix of building styles, types, and design, alongside the use of local building materials for walls, roofs, and boundary and surface treatments. Such approaches should complement the traditional materials in the vicinity, with plot patterns respecting and responding to the area's local character and history. Policy 5 'The Area's Rural Character' also highlights that buildings in the wider countryside should reflect agricultural use, comprising local building stone, clay tiles, or thatched roofs. Specific design principles for the villages in the NCYNP area are also provided within Policy 15 'North Cadbury – Built Character', Policy 22 'Galhampton – Built Character', Policy 25 'Yarlington – Built Character', and Policy 28 'Woolston – Built Character'. The provisions of these policies should ensure that proposals reflect the distinctive and historical architectural style and design traditions established within the NCYNP area, integrating with the historic topography, settlement form, historic street patterns and street lines.
- 5.25 With specific reference to the proposed site allocations, Policy 18 'Land North of Brookhampton, West of Cary Road' and Policy 19 'Land North of Brookhampton, East of Cary Road' stipulate that the layout, scale, and detailed design (including landscaping) for the sites should be considered as part of a masterplan (as the sites are adjacent to each other). This is important in the local context given the potential impact to the setting of the North Cadbury Conservation Area at these locations.
- 5.26 More broadly in relation to historic environment sensitivities, Policy 1 'The Area's Rich Heritage' seeks to protect the listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Plan area (including the locally important buildings as described in Appendix 4). In recognition of North Cadbury's rich archaeological resource, development proposals shall also be expected to be accompanied by an initial archaeological evaluation. Policy 5 also states that

development should retain and reinforce the following key characteristics (amongst others), wherever practical: small historic orchards within and around settlements; and scattered farmsteads and hamlets in the wider countryside.

## Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets

- 5.27 In terms of soils resources, whilst recent detailed agricultural land classification has not been undertaken in the vicinity of North Cadbury, the pre-1988 high level assessment of land indicates that agricultural land is likely to be classified as the best and most versatile in the area, with some areas of Grade 1 agricultural land. As such, the proposed greenfield sites potentially taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan immediately north of North Cadbury village (north of Brookhampton) are likely to be underlain by land classified as the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. The other smaller allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan will take place on previously developed land, supporting the efficient use of land.
- 5.28 The UK Government has outlined a commitment to secure a 'green recovery' from the COVID-19 pandemic. Reflecting the conclusions of the Institute for Government's 'Net Zero' report<sup>25</sup>, a green recovery is only likely to happen if net zero becomes a core part of the Government's thinking and its economic policy. Within the report, net zero is described as *"decarbonising not just the power sector but much more difficult sectors including transport, housing and agriculture, where progress has long been stalled and the UK is off track"*.
- 5.29 In the context of this, it will be important for the NCYNP to encourage proposals which seek to deliver mitigation and adaptation measures through design. A key policy in this regard is Policy 3 'Buildings Fit for the Future' which outlines support for the sensitive inclusion of renewable energy and other measures to minimise the carbon footprint of the development and provide climate change mitigation. This is subject to the development not having any detrimental impacts on the local character of the area. Additionally, Policy 3 encourages applicants to submit a sustainability statement detailing the sustainable design and construction measures that have been included within the proposal. This will encourage a limitation of emissions within new development areas.
- 5.30 In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, areas within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 within the NCYNP area are broadly confined to land surrounding the main watercourse, the River Cam. Given the proposed site allocations are largely within Flood Zone 1, fluvial flood risk is unlikely to comprise a significant constraint to development. It is also considered that the provisions of the NPPF and national policy (including relating to the sequential / exception test) will help guide development away from potential flood risk areas and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.
- 5.31 Regarding surface water flood risk concerns, it is anticipated that any issues could largely be mitigated via the use of appropriate surface water management which would minimise the risk of surface water run-off to surrounding areas. A well-designed sustainable drainage approach also provides opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; remove pollutants from urban run-off at source; and combine water management with

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<sup>25</sup> Institute for Government (2020): 'Net zero: how government can meet its climate change target'. [online] available to access via: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/net-zero>

green space with benefits for amenity, recreation, and wildlife. In this context, Policy 8 'Flood Risk' states that new development should avoid flood risk from all sources and must incorporate a viable and deliverable drainage system to manage surface water run-off. Measures shall be expected to make an allowance for the likely effects of climate change on increased flood risk, and the existing drainage infrastructure must not be adversely affected by the proposal. The policy provisions seek to minimise the risk of excessive surface water entering any watercourses, which will indirectly contribute to water quality improvements through limiting suspended solids entering watercourses from surface water run-off. This is important in the local context, given the proposed allocations to the north of North Cadbury village (north of Brookhampton, see Policy 18 and Policy 19) are adjacent to areas of land within Flood Zone 3 (associated with the River Cam) and which have a medium to high surface water flood risk potential.

- 5.32 More broadly in relation to this SEA theme, the provision of enhanced green infrastructure is recognised as an important element of the solution to addressing air pollution in built up areas, including through removing different types of air pollution (i.e. particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone). Biodiversity net gain can also deliver air quality benefits at the microscale. For example, the introduction of green walls and roofs trap pollutants which in turn deliver cleaner air. In this respect, Policy 3, Policy 7 'Protecting Local Wildlife and Policy 8 affirm that development proposals should incorporate green infrastructure which includes sustainable drainage and construction wherever possible and create better places for people and wildlife. The green infrastructure should also aid resilience and adaptation to climate change and enhance the quality of soil and water. This should minimise the use of non-permeable materials through design and reduce the potential for surface water runoff.
- 5.33 Additionally, the protection of open spaces and habitats within the Neighbourhood Plan area through the provisions of Policy 7 'Protecting Local Wildlife', Policy 16 'North Cadbury – Local Green Spaces', Policy 23 'Galhampton – Local Green Spaces' and Policy 26 'Yarlington – Local Green Spaces' will safeguard natural carbon sequesters located within the landscape (i.e. trees and hedgerows). This will positively respond to the potential effects of climate change (particularly from extreme weather events) through providing summer shading and reducing surface water run-off. Relevant to climate change mitigation, these natural features also act as carbon sequesters in the landscape. The provision of these policies will also facilitate increased absorption and dissipation of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and other pollutants.

## Population and Human Health

### Housing

- 5.34 In terms of housing provision, the NCYNP seeks to exceed South Somerset District Council's housing target of at least 45 dwellings through a combination of existing consents (which totals 27 dwellings) and the following allocations:
- Policy 18 'Land North of Brookhampton, West of Cary Road' (14 dwellings, including six affordable dwellings);

- Policy 19 'Land North of Brookhampton, East of Cary Road' (14 dwellings, including six affordable dwellings);
- Policy 20 'Barns at North Town Farm' (three dwellings);
- Policy 21 'Barns at Hill Farm' (two dwellings); and
- Policy 30 'Barn off Stoke Lane' (one dwelling).

5.35 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that the scale of development will reflect each settlement's role and function, and to deliver homes to meet an identified local need (see Policy 9 'Scale and Location of New Housing' within the NCYNP). This will ensure that new development areas are predominantly located within proximity to the settlement within the NCYNP area with the largest range of services and facilities (North Cadbury), whilst also delivering homes to meet an identified local need. This will help reduce the need to travel to access the amenities available in the village and limit the need to travel by private vehicle. Given the identified housing supply exceeds the housing needs requirement, Policy 9 also states that the development of open market housing on alternative greenfield sites will be restricted until such a time that the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed.

5.36 More broadly in relation to housing provision, the NCYNP also seeks to deliver homes of a range of types and tenures to meet the general and specialist needs for housing (see Policy 11 'House Types'). This should include at least 35% as affordable housing options on sites of at least 0.5 ha or with a capacity for ten or more dwellings, with priority given to those who have a local connection to the Neighbourhood Plan area. Additionally, Policy 3 'Buildings Fit for the Future' states that developments should provide adequate internal space that allows for easy reconfiguration or re-modelling.

5.37 The quality of residential neighbourhoods and housing is a key determinant of residents' quality of life and health and wellbeing. For example, Policy 2 'Character and Design Guidance' stipulates that parking provision, bin stores, meter boxes, and similar utility requirements should be clearly shown on the planning application drawings and designed to avoid being prominent in the street scene. Policy 4 'Practical Garden Sizes' states that garden areas should be a sufficient size to meet the needs of its occupiers (e.g. for drying space; storage for bins, cycles, and gardening equipment; and places for sitting outside and for children to play).

5.38 The quality of housing will also be supported by the policies which promote the energy efficiency of new development. Key policies in this regard include Policy 3 'Buildings Fit for the Future' which encourages applicants to submit a sustainability statement detailing the sustainable design and construction measures that have been included within the proposal. This will support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents, helping to reduce energy bills and limit issues relating to fuel poverty.

## Community and economic vitality

5.39 Accessibility to amenities is a key determinant of residents' quality of life. In this respect, North Cadbury village contains the largest range of services and facilities within the NCYNP area, including a village shop, village hall, church, public house, playing fields, and a primary school. Policy 17 'North Cadbury –



Facilities' seeks to retain these facilities from harm or loss. This is reaffirmed by the NCYNP for the services and facilities within Galhampton (see Policy 24), Yarlington (see Policy 27), and Woolston (see Policy 29). Proposals to enhance the viability and community value of such assets is also encouraged through these policies.

- 5.40 The NCYNP also sets out a range of provisions for supporting economic vitality and employment opportunities locally. In this respect, land to the east of North Cadbury Business Park is safeguarded for future employment uses which are suitable for an industrial estate (see Policy 12). Elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan area, new employment proposals for offices, workshops, and homeworking will be supported subject to the conditions listed within Policy 13 'Other Employment Opportunities'. In addition to supporting the local economy, this will facilitate working and running a business from home.

### Transport and accessibility

- 5.41 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic means that the future baseline of travel demand is likely to be different for all residents. In the longer term it is hard to predict how behaviours will evolve and whether some of the travel responses observed in lockdown will be maintained in some form. However, reflecting the results of the National Travel Attitudes Study, 94% of respondents thought it likely that they would continue to rely on active travel methods (walking and cycling) once travel restrictions were removed<sup>26</sup>.
- 5.42 The dominance of vehicles on streets is a significant barrier to walking and cycling, often reducing the appeal of streets as public places. In this respect, Policy 14 'Parking' states that development proposals should meet its parking requirements on-site via the use of outside space rather than garages (so that the space is likely to remain available and not converted into other uses). Improved car parking to serve the main community facilities is supported in principle through Policy 14, subject to other NCYNP policies. The Parish Council also aim to work with the Highways Authority and local landowners to identify and introduce measures to reduce concerns raised by residents (see Project 4 'Road Safety Improvements'). This could include the introduction of speed restrictions and reducing on-street parking where this is causing significant traffic problems.
- 5.43 Further encouraging a modal shift away from use the private car towards use of active and public transport, Project 3 'Local Bus Services' outlines that the Parish Council will work with local bus operators to investigate how services could be improved, including the frequency / connectivity of services and the position of current stops. With reference to the proposed site allocations, Policy 18 'Land North of Brookhampton, West of Cary Road' and Policy 19 'Land North of Brookhampton, East of Cary Road' outline provisions for retaining and enhancing public footpaths to establish pedestrian connectivity between the sites and the neighbouring areas. In combination with their location with good accessibility to services and facilities in North Cadbury village, this will positively encourage active travel and healthier lifestyles.
- 5.44 There is now robust evidence that access to the natural environment improves people's health and wellbeing through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation

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<sup>26</sup> Department for Transport (2020): 'National Travel Attitudes Study: Wave 4 (Provisional)': [online] available to access via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-attitudes-study-wave-4-provisional>



and relaxation. The existing network of pavements, footpaths, bridleways, and a cycle trails within the NCYNP area are all heavily used and well supported by both residents and visitors alike. In the context of the above, Policy 6 'Recreational Routes and Views' confirms that development should retain the rural character of the lanes and tracks around the village and hamlets and into the open countryside, with particular regard given to the three main recreational trails: the Macmillan Way, Leyland Trail, and Monarch's Way. Development that would significantly detract from the enjoyment of these routes will not be supported. Additionally, projects that will improve recreational access to the countryside for walking and/or horse-riding will be supported (see Project 1 'Public Rights of Way Network' within the NCYNP).

## Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.45 The assessment has concluded that the Regulation 14 version of the NCYNP is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Human Health' SEA theme. This relates to the focus of the NCYNP on safeguarding and enhancing community infrastructure, facilitating the delivery of housing which meets local needs, supporting economic vitality by enhancing the prospects for employment locally, its promotion of improved and accessible public rights of way networks, enhancements to green infrastructure and open space provision to encourage active lifestyles, and the facilitation of flexible and easily adaptable dwellings for all residents. This will positively contribute to the creation of mixed, balanced, and sustainable communities.
- 5.46 The NCYNP is also likely to lead to positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape Quality' and 'Heritage Assets' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the parishes, conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, supporting the quality of the public realm, and through incorporating high-quality and sensitive design in new development areas.
- 5.47 Additionally, the NCYNP will bring positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity' SEA theme through retaining habitats, enhancing ecological networks, and delivering net gains. However, given the approaches taken forward through the NCYNP will help limit potential effects from new development areas rather than secure significant enhancements, these impacts are less likely to comprise significant positive effects overall.
- 5.48 Furthermore, to protect the integrity of European designated sites (and their qualifying features), the NCYNP should appropriately consider and address the recommendations within the HRA. It is expected that the conclusions and recommendations of the HRA will be reflected in the submission version of the NCYNP.
- 5.49 Regarding the 'Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets' SEA theme, the Neighbourhood Plan allocations will lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land to the north of North Cadbury village. Otherwise in relation to this SEA theme, the NCYNP will potentially lead to positive effects through supporting development proposals which seek to limit pollution and improve the environmental quality of the parishes, tackle flood risk issues, deliver renewable energy generating infrastructure, and include low carbon energy sources to address the climate crisis. However, this is dependent on the extent to which development proposals incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures through design.

## 6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the NCYNP for Regulation 14 consultation.
- 6.2 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Neighbourhood Plan and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, South Somerset District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.
- 6.3 At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.4 If the Independent Examination is favourable, NCYNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by South Somerset District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, NCYNP will become part of the Development Plan for the parishes of North Cadbury and Yarlington.

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# Appendix A Context Review and Baseline

## A.1 Landscape Quality

### Context Review

| Key Plans and Programmes   | Key objectives  |
|--|---|
| European Landscape Convention (2000)<br>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) | Recognise landscapes as an essential component of people's surroundings, their cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity.<br><br>Protect and enhance valued landscapes.   |
| South Somerset Local Plan (2015)   | Policy EQ2: conserve and enhance the landscape character of the area; reinforce local distinctiveness and respect local context.<br><br>Policy EQ5: Existing green infrastructure will be protected against any adverse impact of development proposals.<br><br>Policy EQ6: woodland areas, including ancient and semi-natural woodland should be maintained. |

### Summary of Baseline Information *National Landscapes*

There are no landscapes of national value within or in proximity to the area.

### *Local Landscape Character*

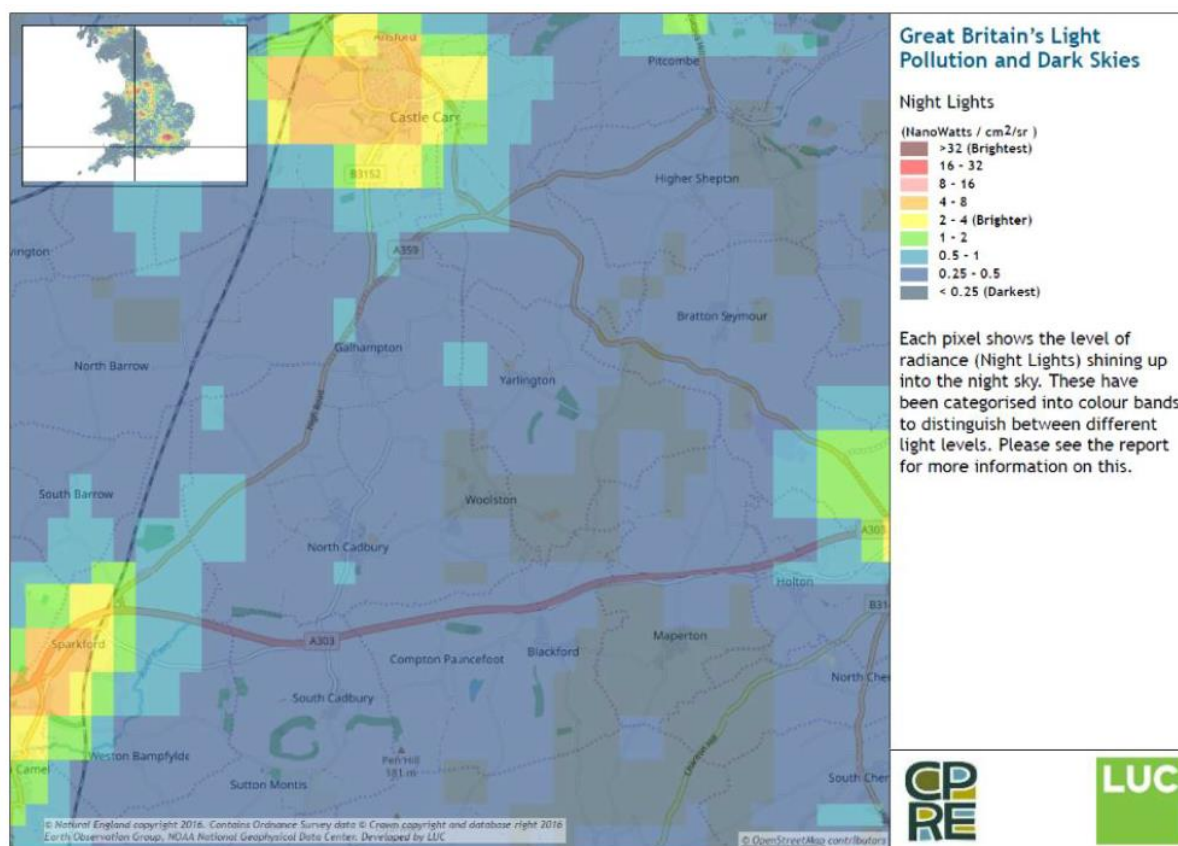
The Plan area falls within the Yeovil Scarplands National Character area (which stretches from Ilminster to Wincanton). The assessment describes the area as<sup>27</sup>:

- a remote, rural landscape comprising a series of broad ridges and steep scarps separating sheltered clay vales.
- agricultural character, and in some places the intensely rural. Mainly pastoral in nature, though in some of the clay vales between the scarps mixed farming brings a variation of character.
- extensive thick hedgerows with frequent mature to veteran trees.
- winding rural lanes, bounded by verges and hedgerows, connecting villages and hamlets cut across by busy A roads linking larger towns
- having a long history of settlement reflected through the archaeology, from Neolithic hill forts, through Roman villas, to remnant medieval open fields – along with many Listed Buildings.

<sup>27</sup> Natural England (2014): 'NCA Profile 140: Yeovil Scarplands', [online] available to access via: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5809238018359296>

- known for its collection of fine manor houses and associated parklands.
- small villages and farmsteads contrasting sharply with urban and peri-urban Yeovil.
- boasting a variety of limestones and sandstones from which distinctive local settlement character is derived.

Away from Sparkford, the area enjoys particularly dark skies and a general lack of light pollution<sup>28</sup>, but the southern portion is impacted by noise pollution from the A303<sup>29</sup>. This is shown below in **Figure A1.1**.



**Figure A1.1: Light pollution and dark skies within the Neighbourhood Plan area**

There is an extensive network of public rights of way criss-crossing the area<sup>30</sup>, including the Monarch's Way<sup>31</sup> (the longest inland trail within England, following the route taken by King Charles II after defeat his by Cromwell) and the Somerset-based Leland trail<sup>32</sup> (which follows the route traversed by John Leland during the 16th century).

<sup>28</sup> CPRE (no date): 'Great Britain's Light Pollution and Dark Skies', [online] available to access via: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk>

<sup>29</sup> Extrium (no date): 'England Noise and Air Quality Viewer', [online] available to access via: <http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html>

<sup>30</sup> Somerset County Council (2021): 'Explore Somerset', [online] available to access via: <https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>

<sup>31</sup> Long Distance Walkers Association (2021): 'Monarch's Way', [online] available to access via: [https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?path\\_name=Monarch%27s+Way](https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Monarch%27s+Way)

<sup>32</sup> Long Distance Walker's Association (2021): 'Leland Trail', [online] available to access via: [https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?path\\_name=Leland+Trail](https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Leland+Trail)



## Landscape issues

Whilst there are no significant landscape issues identified in relation to the current time, the appraisal of the emerging Local Plan notes that additional growth at the smaller and more rural settlements would be more likely to have negative effects on the wider rural character of the district, the significance of which would ultimately be dependent on the exact location, design / layout of development and any mitigation measures that may be introduced.

## A.2 Biodiversity, Geology, Flora and Fauna

### Context Review

| Key Plans and Programmes   | Key objectives   |
|--|--|
| <p>EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (2011)</p> <p>EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive (92/43/EEC and 79/409/EEC as amended)</p> <p>EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)</p> <p>Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)</p> <p>Biodiversity Action Plan (SSDC) (2008)</p> | <p>Retain the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system.</p> <p>Seek to protect and conserve habitats and wild flora and fauna and avoid adverse effects upon nature conservation sites.</p> <p>Take into account legal protection of species in developing policies relating to biodiversity and habitat protection.</p> <p>Identify and map components of the local ecological networks.</p> <p>Where development takes place, seek opportunities to protect and enhance habitats and species, ensuring that the mosaics in which they are located are retained.</p> |
| <p>South Somerset Local Plan (2015)</p>  | <p>Policy EQ4: protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings, minimise fragmentation of habitats and promote coherent ecological networks; maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats; incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate; protect and assist recovery of identified priority species; and ensure that habitat features, priority habitats and geological features that are used by bats and other wildlife are protected.</p>   |

### Summary of Baseline Information

#### Internationally important wildlife sites

The Neighbourhood Plan area is a significant distance from any internationally important wildlife site. The closest site would appear to be Mendip Woodlands SAC just under 15 km to the north. Rooksmoor SAC is approximately 15½ km to the south-east, Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar and SPA about 15½ km to the west, and Holnest SAC is about 16 km to the south. An overview of the sites is presented in **Table A2.1** below.

**Table A2.1: Overview of the internationally important wildlife sites within proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area**

| Site                                     | Distance | Brief description  | Potential threats <sup>33</sup>   |
|--|----------|--|---|
| Mendip Woodlands SAC                     | 15 km    | An extensive example of Tilio – Acerion forest located on limestone geology.   | Illicit vehicles, deer, disease, air pollution.   |
| Rooksmoor SAC                            | 15.5 km  | A variety of habitats, including bogs, marshes, heath, scrub, humid grassland and broad-leaved deciduous woodland that supports the marsh fritillary butterfly.  | Inappropriate scrub control, undergrazing, inappropriate cutting / mowing, air pollution.                                     |
| Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar and SPA | 15.5 km  | One of the largest and richest areas of traditionally managed wet grassland and fen in lowland UK, attracting significant number of waterfowl in winter, including populations of European importance. | Drainage / water levels / management, land / agricultural management practices, peat extraction, public access / disturbance. |
| Holnest SAC                              | 16 km    | Great crested newt habitats.   | None identified.  |

The SSSI risk assessment zone extending from these areas do not include any areas within the parish. Given the location of the Mendip Woodlands SAC (on the A361 between Shepton Mallet and Frome) it is unlikely that development would give rise to any notable commuter traffic on this route. Similarly, the amount of commuter traffic on the A357 near Rooksmoor SAC likely increase as a result of development is also likely to be negligible, as the household survey showed only 25% of the population commute to work outside of the parish, and it is likely that the majority would work in the nearby towns of Yeovil or Wincanton as opposed to commuting to Sturminster Newton / Blandford.

### *Nationally important wildlife sites*

There are no nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the plan area. Immediately to the west of the Plan area, Sparkford Wood is an SSSI. Its designation relates to its interest as a broadleaved semi-natural woodland situated on heavy fertile soils. It dates from at least the 18th Century and its survival amongst the prime agricultural land of south-east Somerset makes it unique. It is a good example of traditionally managed and undisturbed lowland oakwood and is considered to be in a favourable condition. The main threat from development is potential adverse impacts arising from air pollution from nearby industrial processes. This will be a consideration in relation to the North Cadbury Business Park.

<sup>33</sup> Natural England (various dates of publication): 'Site Improvement Plans: South West Region', [online] available to access via: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5755515191689216>



**Figure A2.1: SSSIs and SSSI IRZs in proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area**

### *Locally important wildlife sites*

There are a number of locally important sites shown on the Local Plan Map. Most of these appear to overlap with priority habitats.

In terms of priority habitats, there are areas identified as traditional orchards (particularly around North Cadbury and Galhampton), as well as some areas of deciduous woodland (including some close to Yarlington and south of North Cadbury), calcareous grassland and good quality semi-improved grassland (all of which are more distant from areas of settlement).

### *Protected species*

Somerset County Council report that the following protected species, listed on Schedule 2 of the Habitat Regulations, have significant populations in Somerset:

- Bats (13 known species present);
- Common (or Hazel) Dormouse;
- European Otter;
- Great Crested (or Warty) Newt; and
- Large Blue Butterfly.

Whilst a study was undertaken in 2009 to look at the distribution of European Species around the main towns, no such study has been undertaken in relation to the rural centres.

### *Biodiversity issues*

Whilst there are no significant biodiversity issues identified in relation to the current time, if employment development is considered the potential impact of any industrial

processes on Sparkford Wood SSSI will need to be considered. Similarly, there are a number of priority habitats (and the potential for protected species) within the neighbourhood plan area which could be adversely impacted by development, particularly relating to greenfield sites.

## A.3 Heritage Assets

### Context Review

| Key Plans and Programmes   | Key objectives   |
|--|--|
| <p>Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)</p> <p>South Somerset Historic Environment Strategy (Draft) (2016)</p> | <p>Conserve and enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.</p> <p>Any development proposal affecting a heritage asset (including its setting) should sustain and enhance its significance and secure a viable use consistent with its conservation.</p> <p>Where possible better reveal the significance of heritage assets.</p> <p>Reduce or remove risks to heritage assets.</p> <p>Ensure development is of an appropriate design for its context and make a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.</p> |
| South Somerset Local Plan (2015)   | Policy EQ3: safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets.  |

### Summary of Baseline Information

#### *Nationally important heritage assets*

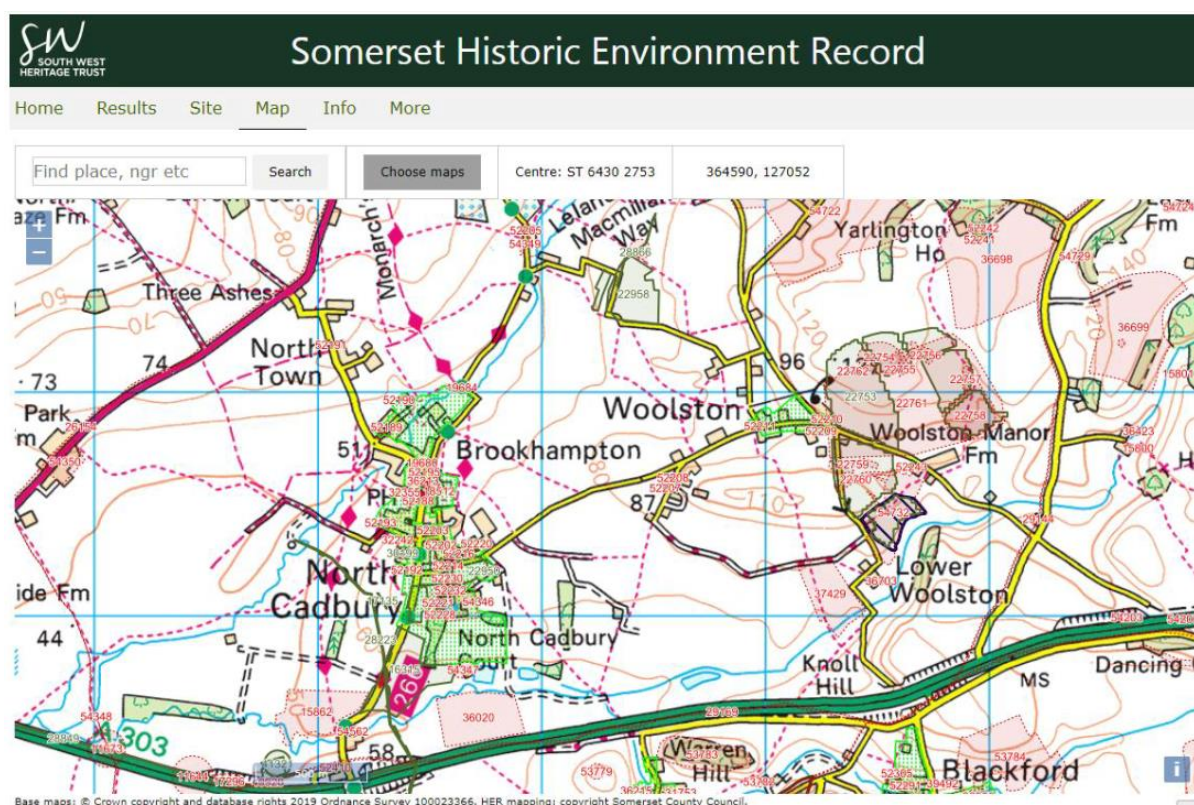
There are about 60 Listed buildings or structures within the Neighbourhood Plan, two of which are Grade I (Church of St Michael and North Cadbury Court, both in Woolston Road, North Cadbury), and a further four of which are Grade II\* (21, Woolston Road, North Cadbury, the Church of St Mary, Yarlington, The Manor House, Galhampton, and Yarlington House, Lodge Hill, Yarlington).

There are no registered historic park / gardens, and just one scheduled monument in the Neighbourhood Plan area (Lower Woolston medieval settlement<sup>34</sup>). None are on the 'at risk' register.

<sup>34</sup> Historic England (2021): 'Lower Woolston medieval settlement', [online] available to access via: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1018150>



## Locally important heritage assets



**Figure A3.1: Features on the HER within the Neighbourhood Plan area**

Two Conservation Areas have been designated, one covering much of North Cadbury and the other covering the smaller settlement of Woolston. There is a 2013 Conservation Area Appraisal for North Cadbury<sup>35</sup> which provides a detailed description of the character of the area and can include locally important buildings, spaces and views, but no such appraisal has been undertaken in respect of Woolston. The North Cadbury appraisal notes that the conservation area is generally in good condition. However, it goes on to state that:

*“the large proportion of C20th infill development is quite harmful, with prominent areas of tarmac and suburban layouts that are at odds with the historic character of the area. Every effort should be made to enhance these areas if future development schemes come forward.”*

There is significant potential for archaeological finds in the area, recognised as an ‘area of high archaeological potential’ in the Local Plan maps. These relate to much of North Cadbury and Yarlington. Further information on archaeological finds is available from the Somerset HER<sup>36</sup> (visually shown in **Figure A3.1**, above), together with historic landscape characterisation.

## Cultural heritage issues

There are no heritage assets shown to be at risk on the national register, and no local list of heritage at risk. The Conservation Area Appraisal for North Cadbury

<sup>35</sup> South Somerset District Council (2013): ‘North Cadbury Conservation Area Appraisal’, [online] available to access via: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/2658/north-cadbury-conservation-area-appraisal.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> South West Heritage Trust (2021): ‘Somerset HER’, [online] available to access via: <https://www.somersetheritage.org.uk/>

does note that the suburban layouts of c20th development has had an adverse impact on the character of the area.

Development could potentially have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of Listed Buildings within the two parishes.

## A.4 Soil, Air, Water, Climatic Factors, and Material Assets

### Context Review

| Key Plans and Programmes   | Key objectives  |
|--|---|
| <p>Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC),</p> <p>Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC),</p> <p>Nitrates Directive (1991/676/EC),</p> <p>U.K Climate Change Act (2008)</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)</p> <p>Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency, 2009)</p> <p>Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England (2009)</p> <p>River Basin Management Plan, South West River Basin District (Environment Agency and DEFRA) (2011)</p> <p>Somerset Waste Core Strategy (SCC) (2013) and Somerset Minerals Plan (SCC) (2015)</p> <p>Somerset's Future Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 (SCC) (2011)</p> <p>Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (SCC) (2014)</p> <p>Air Quality Strategy for Somerset (2008)</p> | <p>Reduce water pollution caused by nitrogen from agricultural sources and prevent such pollution in the future.</p> <p>Promote the sustainable use of water and prevent further deterioration of surface and groundwaters.</p> <p>Improve the quality of soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations.</p> <p>Prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of valuable mineral resources.</p> <p>Reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and mitigate against further climate change by reducing carbon emissions.</p> <p>Reduce carbon emissions to meet the UK target and move towards a low carbon economy</p> <p>Steer development away from areas of highest flood risk, apply sequential &amp; exceptions test, seek opportunities to relocate development to more sustainable locations.</p> <p>Support sustainable travel modes, seek to better manage traffic whilst ensuring new developments do not make conditions worse.</p> |
| <p>South Somerset Local Plan (2015)</p>  | <p>Policy EQ1: new development will ensure that carbon dioxide emissions are minimised through energy efficiency measures. Development will be directed away from medium and high flood risk areas. Climate change should be considered in the design of new development</p> <p>Policy EQ7: Any adverse impacts relating to air, light, noise, water quality or other environmental pollution or harm to amenity, health or safety must be mitigated to an acceptable level.</p>  |



## Summary of Baseline Information

### *Soils and Minerals*

Whilst no detailed maps of agricultural land value are available, the regional map indicates that the areas around North Cadbury, Galhampton and Yarlington include Grade 1 (i.e. the best and most versatile) farmland, as well as Grade 3 (moderate).

There are Minerals Safeguarding Areas within the parish as an area of search for building stone. The Minerals Plan<sup>37</sup> requires that the County Council is consulted on site allocations in minerals safeguarding areas to avoid the unnecessary sterilisation through consideration of whether prior extraction should be considered.

### *Pollution risks*

There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the area, the nearest being Yeovil<sup>38</sup>.

There is only one site on the South Somerset public Contaminated Land Register (relating to a site in Langport). However, there may be other sites which are potentially affected by contaminated land, and South Somerset have documented 3,400 potential sites of interest and of those, 116 are considered to pose possible risk<sup>39</sup>. The Council's strategy regarding planning (development control) it to include a standard planning condition for the assessment and remediation of potentially contaminated land and/or landfill gas as part of a particular development.

There are no references to the North Cadbury area in the Waste Core Strategy<sup>40</sup> that would highlight this as an issue for consideration. Similarly, there are no active or properties mineral extraction sites within or in close proximity to the plan area.

Yarlington and, to a lesser extent, the western side of North Cadbury, are identified on the groundwater vulnerability maps. The area alongside and to the west of the A359 is within a nitrate vulnerable zone, as is much of Yarlington and Woolston<sup>41</sup>. Much of the area drains into the Upper Cam (which is part of the Parrett catchment) and is considered to be of moderate to good quality, with the main issues relating to phosphate levels from poor nutrient management and sewage discharge<sup>42</sup>.

In relation to noise, the DEFRA road and railway noise level maps only cover the A30 up to the western edge of the village but do indicate that noise pollution arising from this source may need to be considered within approximately 200m buffer of the road.

### *Flood risk and climate change*

There are areas at risk of fluvial flooding relating to Yarlington and North Cadbury which the River Cam flows through<sup>43</sup>. However, these are not so extensive that

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<sup>37</sup> Somerset County Council (2015): 'Somerset Minerals Plan', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/somerset-minerals-plan/>

<sup>38</sup> UK Air – Air Information Resource (no date): 'Local Authority Details: South Somerset District Council', [online] available to access via: [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la\\_id=249](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=249)

<sup>39</sup> South Somerset District Council (2016): 'Contaminated Land Inspection strategy', [online] available to access via: [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1944/con\\_land\\_strategy\\_2016-21.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1944/con_land_strategy_2016-21.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Somerset County Council (2013): 'Somerset Waste Core Strategy', [online] available to access via: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/somerset-waste-core-strategy/>

<sup>41</sup> Environment Agency (2021): 'Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Map', [online] available to access via: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/farmers/>

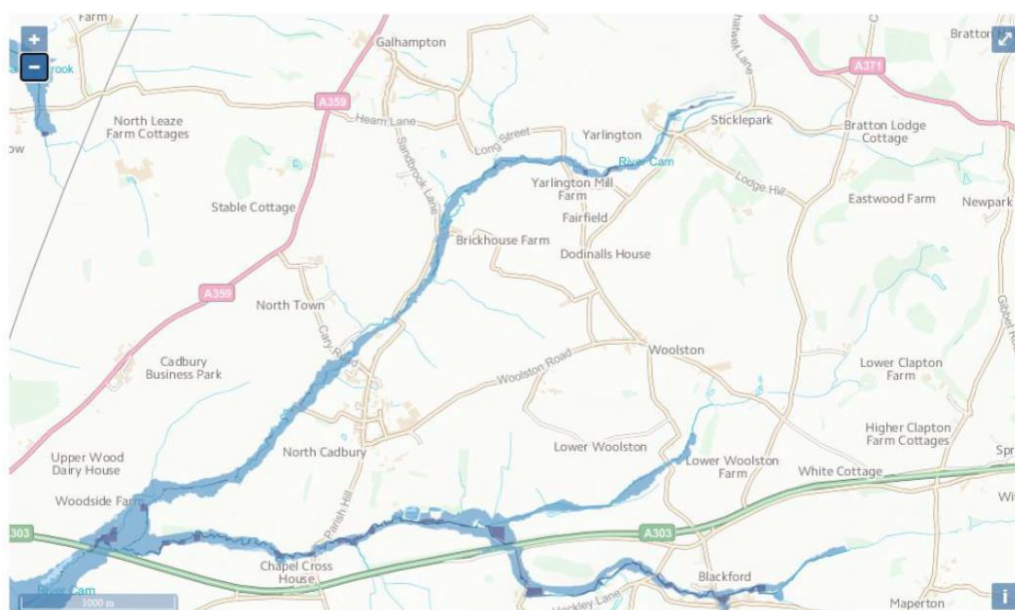
<sup>42</sup> Environment Agency (2021): 'Catchment Data Explorer: River Cam', [online] available to access via: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB108052015690>

<sup>43</sup> GOV.UK (2021): 'Long term flood risk map for England', [online] available to access via: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>

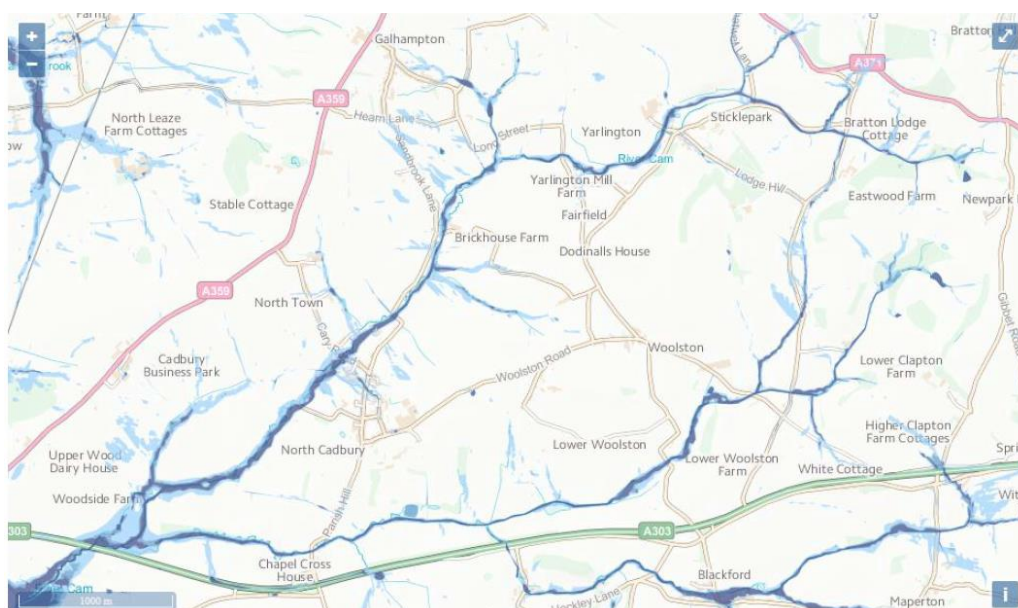
development within the flood areas would be unavoidable (shown below in **Figure A4.1**).

There are also further flood risk areas relating to surface water run-off, which is slightly more extensive. There have been records of recent flooding in March Lane, Galhampton where the likely cause of flooding has been linked to blocked / silted up drains. Surface water flood risk is shown in **Figure A4.2** below.

There is a 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment referenced in the 2017 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the South Somerset Local Plan Review. The preliminary FRA can be found on the Somerset County Council website<sup>44</sup>. Neither the report nor the maps focus particularly on the neighbourhood plan area.



**Figure A4.1: Fluvial flood risk in the Neighbourhood Plan area**



**Figure A4.2: Surface water flood risk in the Neighbourhood Plan area**

<sup>44</sup> South Somerset District Council (2019): 'SFRA', [online] available to access via: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan-review-2020-2040/>

## Carbon emissions and climate change

Emissions from the transport sector made up around a quarter (24%) of the UK's total carbon dioxide emissions, of which road traffic is a significant contributor<sup>45</sup>.

It is likely that transport will be the main contributor of greenhouse gases (and in particular carbon dioxide) arising from within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Emissions from household heating (natural gas) are also responsible for about 13% of all carbon dioxide emissions (not including carbon dioxide emissions from electricity generated at power stations).

The results of the recent household survey undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan<sup>46</sup> indicate that about a quarter of the population regularly commute to work outside of the parish. It was also clear that the current bus service is rarely used. Just 8% of respondents said that they use it regularly to go shopping, and 3% for travel to school / college. Nobody uses the bus service regularly to commute to work. The average number of cars per household was 2.0.

## Issues relating to soil, air, water, climate, and material assets

There are significant areas of the best and most versatile grades of agricultural land within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The northern part of the two parishes also includes areas from which local building stone could be sourced.

The presence of contaminated land can also not be ruled out at this stage, although this is unlikely to be an issue on land that has not been previously developed. The potential for groundwater pollution also needs to be considered. Noise pollution is a further consideration for residential and other noise-sensitive uses, particularly within proximity to the A303.

Flood risk is also a potential issue, with the River Cam running close to North Cadbury. There are also areas at risk of surface water.

The likely volume of work-related car-based trips and options to reduce car-use (such as the availability of public transport and home-working) should also be considered, in relation to limiting carbon emissions and the potential for mitigation.

# A.5 Population and Human Health

## Context Review

| Key Plans and Programmes                              | Key objectives  |
|---|---|
| European Sustainable Development Strategy (2006)      | Promote a prosperous local economy, create the conditions for enterprise to flourish and capitalise on the area's distinctive assets.                             |
| UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) | Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing to reflect local demand, to boost the supply of housing and ensure everyone can live in a good quality home. |
| The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)  | Meet identified local and essential rural needs.  |

<sup>45</sup> Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (2018): 'Clean Growth Strategy: executive summary', [online] available to access via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy/clean-growth-strategy-executive-summary>

<sup>46</sup> North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council (2020): 'Neighbourhood Plan Survey', [online] available to access via: [https://www.northcadburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/data/uploads/236\\_208836226.pdf](https://www.northcadburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/data/uploads/236_208836226.pdf)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Strategic Economic Plan 2014 – 2030 (Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014) | <p>Contribute towards the creation of mixed and balanced communities that are socially inclusive.</p> <p>Promote safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.</p> <p>Promote good public health, access to healthcare and opportunities for healthy, active, and independent lifestyles</p> <p>Ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to support growth.</p>   |
| South Somerset Local Plan (2015)   | <p>Policy SS1: provision for development will be made within rural centres to meet local housing need, extend local services, and supports economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement.</p> <p>Policy SS3/6: propose the additional provision of land for 77 homes and 77 jobs.</p> <p>Policy HG3/4: where it is viable to do so, housing schemes should provide affordable housing at the level specified in the Local Plan (for Rural Centres this is 35% on sites of more than 0.2ha in size).</p> <p>Policy HG5: the mix of open market housing should contribute to the provision of sustainable and balanced communities.</p> <p>Policy EQ5: provide and/or maintain an accessible network of green spaces and recreational opportunities.</p> |

## Summary of Baseline Information

The Local Area Reports for North Cadbury<sup>47</sup> and Yarlington parishes<sup>48</sup> provides an overview of the key 2011 Census data (see **Table A5.1**). The main findings include:

**Table A5.1: Key findings from the 2011 Census**

| Factor           | North Cadbury  | Yarlington  |
|------------------|--|---|
| Population       | 950 usual residents in 410 dwellings, with a further 26 dwellings (5.9% of the housing stock) recorded as empty. | 123 usual residents in 50 dwellings, with a further 6 dwellings (10.7% of the housing stock) recorded as empty. |
| Age profile      | The average (mean) age of residents was 45.5 years. 10.7% of the population were aged 75 or more.                | The average (mean) age of residents was 43.8 years. 6.5% of the population were aged 75 or more.                |
| Race / ethnicity | Very few (less than 1%) were non-white ethnicities.  | Very few (less than 1%) were non-white ethnicities.   |

<sup>47</sup> Nomis (2011): 'North Cadbury Parish: Local Area Report', [online] available to access via: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008737>

<sup>48</sup> Nomis (2011): 'Yarlington Parish: Local Area Report', [online] available to access via: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008772>

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| Health | Most (84%) were in generally good health. 6.4% had their day to day activities limited a lot. | Most (86%) were in generally good health. 7.3% had their day to day activities limited a lot. |
|--------|---|---|

In terms of the latest (2019) published indices of multiple deprivation<sup>49</sup>, the area ranks amongst the 40% least deprived in the country. This has not changed significantly since 2015.

In terms of the different measurements of deprivation, barriers to housing and services, and living environment were the least well performing measures (both scoring amongst the 10% most deprived in the country).

Barriers to housing and services measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. Living environment measures the quality of housing, air quality and road traffic accidents.

Data on traffic accidents (for the latest 10-year period) highlights the concentration of accidents along the A359 including a number of fatalities. There was also one serious accident recorded on the Woolston Road close to the North Cadbury Village Stores (in 2012).

### *Issues relating to population and human health*

The main issues that have been identified in relation to population and health relate to the availability of suitable housing and the affordability of housing in general and ensuring that the local population has good access to local facilities. Traffic safety is also an issue particularly with regard to the A359.

<sup>49</sup> DCLG (2019): 'IMD 2019: Interactive Map', [online] available to access via:  
[http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod\\_index.html](http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html)

