



**South Hams
District Council**

**South Hams Local Development Framework
Site Allocation Development Plan Documents
Publication Stage**

**Sustainability Threshold Assessment
Of Development Site Options**

April 2010

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Site Comparison Methodology Sustainability Threshold Assessment

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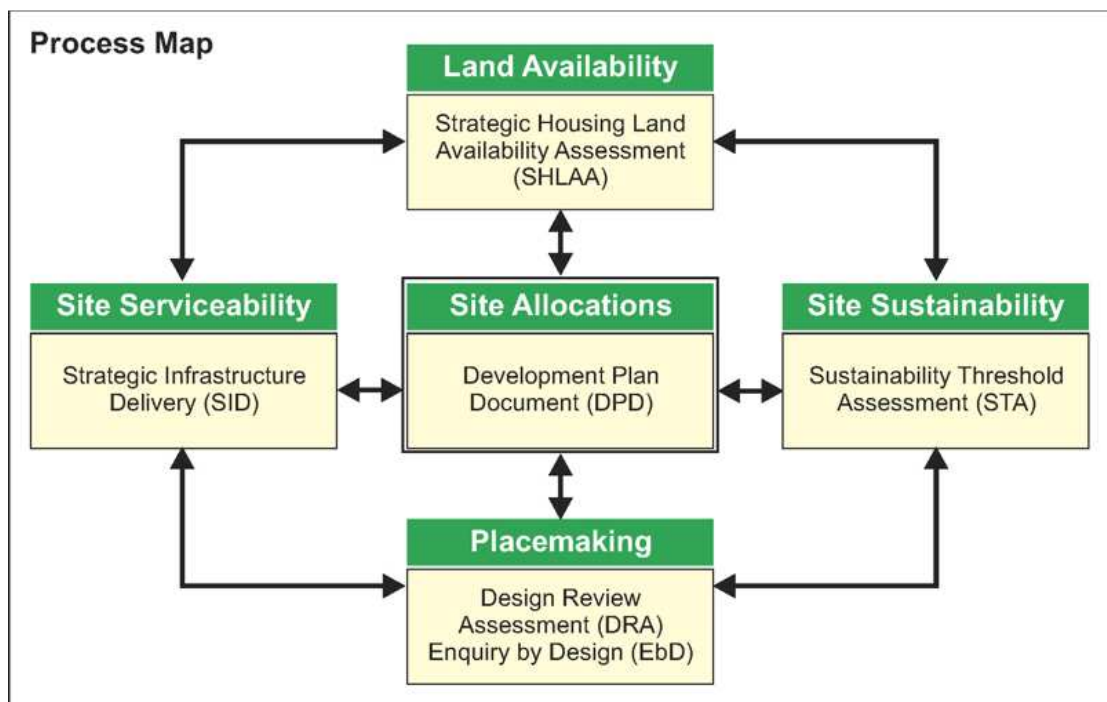
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Introduction

1. This report sets out the Council's approach to site comparison in support of allocation documents (for housing, employment and key community facilities) in the South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) through a Sustainability Threshold Assessment (STA). STA is a means to guide the comparison of all reasonable development site options to aid the site selection process.

What is a Sustainability Threshold Assessment?

2. STA is a decision-aiding tool for systematic and comparative site assessment which considers the relative sustainability of potential sites. STA uses a criteria based approach in a similar way to other methods of sustainability appraisal. The results are presented in STA matrices for the following areas: Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, Totnes and the Rural Areas.
3. STA will aid the decision making process. It will help illustrate how the Council has arrived at the most appropriate strategy when considered together with the reasonable alternatives, as required by PPS12: Local Spatial Planning. The findings of STA will need to be considered together with the results of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the Strategic Infrastructure Delivery (SID) Panel, Design Review Assessment and other elements of the evidence base. The relationship between the four main strands of the evidence base is set out in Diagram 1 below. It will be the role of the site allocation DPDs to draw these strands together to allocate sites for homes and jobs based on the evidence gathered.



Policy Background

4. The South Hams LDF comprises a portfolio of documents that together set out the planning policies and proposals for sustainable development in the district. So far the Council has produced and adopted a number of LDF documents, including the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out the over-arching principles and broad provisions for development for the whole district (outside of Dartmoor National Park).
5. The focus of the Council's LDF programme is now on making provision for sites to come forward to enable the delivery of the homes and jobs that are much needed locally. DPDs will be prepared focusing on the allocation of sites for housing, employment and key community facilities. Five DPDs will give district-wide coverage (outside of the Plymouth fringe area and Dartmoor National Park), as follows:
 - Dartmouth;
 - Ivybridge;
 - Kingsbridge;
 - Totnes;
 - Rural Areas, including the four local centres of Chillington/Stokenham, Modbury, Salcombe and Yealmpton.
6. The amount of housing and employment land to be provided is already established in the adopted South Hams LDF Core Strategy to 2016, and detailed in table 1:

Table 1: South Hams Core Strategy Housing and Employment Allocations

Location	Housing (homes)	Employment (in hectares)
Dartmouth	200	2
Ivybridge	100	5
Kingsbridge	200	5
Totnes	400	5
Modbury	50	3
Salcombe	50	
Stokenham/Chillington	50	
Yealmpton	50	
Villages	400	

7. The DPDs will also aim to indicate suitable sites to meet needs up to at least 2026, the time horizon of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy.
8. To determine which of the villages will receive a housing allocation the options consultation focused on the most sustainable locations i.e.

those villages with a primary school and a village shop. However, such an allocation is dependant upon need, sustainability and site availability. Further details on how the specific villages in the Rural Areas STA matrices were chosen are set out in the Rural Areas DPD.

Timescale

9. This paper was first published alongside the options consultation (May/June 2009), and is part of the evidence base to support the site allocation DPDs. The comments received from the options consultation have informed the preparation of the Publication (Pre-Submission) DPDs and helped guide which sites are to be allocated. The key milestones are as follows:
 - Spring 2009 – consultation on process and site options
 - Autumn 2009 – publication (pre-submission)
 - Spring 2010 – submission
 - Autumn 2010 – examination
 - Adoption during 2011
10. The DPDs will follow the same timetable of preparation with parallel processes of engagement, research and evidence gathering, sustainability appraisal, submission and examination. The aim is to submit these documents to the Secretary of State by April 2010.
11. This methodology and STA matrices have evolved as more information has become available through the plan preparation process, particularly through the options consultation of May and June 2009 and consideration by the STA Panel (further information on the panel is set out below). A Quality Assurance exercise was conducted in March 2010 which sought to double check the various criteria had been applied consistently across the whole STA process.

The STA Panel

12. A STA Panel was established to test the methodology of the STA process and consider how it was applied to individual site assessments. The panel included representatives of the SA statutory agencies, local communities, housebuilders and property agents and sat over April to September 2009.

Sustainability Appraisal

13. The STA is derived from the LDF Sustainability Appraisal framework. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required by planning legislation and Government guidance to support LDF documents. SA is an iterative, ongoing process that helps shape and informs the preparation of LDF documents, ensuring sustainable development is at the heart of decisions at every stage of plan-making.

Scope of the Sustainability Appraisal

14. During late 2004 and early 2005 a sustainability scoping process and statutory consultation was carried out to help ensure that the SA covered the key sustainability issues relevant to the development planning system in South Hams. A framework of sustainability appraisal objectives and decision-aiding questions were produced for appraising the sustainability of emerging DPDs, including the Core Strategy.
15. A STA framework was produced based on the 2005 scoping report sustainability appraisal objectives and used for two site specific documents; the Sherford new community Area Action Plan (adopted August 2007) and the Totnes/Dartington (Preferred Options stage) DPD (October 2007).
16. Since the original SA scoping report in 2004-5 the practice of SA has developed significantly, there have been policy developments at the national, regional and local level, the planning regime has changed, and there are certain key issues nationally for sustainability, such as climate change, more efficient natural resource management, and accessibility/movement that have become more important. SA/SEA is an iterative process, therefore, an update to the scope of the SA was prepared in January 2009 to make it more relevant to the five allocation DPDs and to site comparison. This report was subject to a 5 week consultation with the statutory agencies and other key stakeholders. The Baseline information and Review of Plans and Programmes have also been updated.
17. Further details on the original scope of the sustainability appraisal (April 2005), update to the scope of the sustainability appraisal (January 2009), review of plans and programmes and baseline data are available on the Council's website at: www.southhams.gov.uk.

Sustainability Threshold Assessment (STA): Method for Site Comparison

18. The update to the scope of the sustainability appraisal contained a revised framework, which is set out at Appendix I. This framework has been reorganised from the original SA/SEA framework presented in 2005, into a phased appraisal specifically suitable for comparing the sustainability of sites (in the context of the district's market towns and rural areas).

The framework comprises four distinct parts:

- assumptions common to all sites,
- environmental constraints,
- development opportunities, and
- an overall summary (balanced and healthy communities).

19. The STA will form part of a common evidence base for both the Site Allocation DPDs and the SA report.
20. The SA/STA objectives and decision-aiding questions are cross-referenced to the previously numbered SA objectives and correlated with the environmental topics listed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment European Directive¹ and the UK SA/SEA Guidance² (set out at Appendix I). This is to demonstrate compliance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment European Directive.

Pool of Sites

21. The pool of sites considered through the STA process has come from three main sources, firstly, those sites considered under the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), secondly, a desk based assessment for other potentially sustainable sites, and finally further sites suggested during the options consultation. This serves two purposes: that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and to ensure there will be a sufficient supply of sites to meet the allocations to 2016 and to consider supply up to 2026 (the time horizon of the Regional Spatial Strategy) and beyond. Where additional sites have emerged through the document preparation process, these have also been subject to an STA assessment.

Assumptions common to all sites

22. The first stage of the framework is to map out assumptions that are common to and required to be met for all site options; these are illustrated at table 2.
23. For example, it is assumed that any site will be developed to a high design quality, be adequately served by infrastructure and maximise energy efficiency. Therefore, these assumptions do not form part of the site assessment criteria.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

² ODPM, 2005 Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies & Local Development Documents: guidance for regional planning bodies & local planning authorities

Table 2: Assumptions common to and required to be met for all sites

SA No:	
3, 1	<p>Housing & Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mixed use, mixed housing type and mixed tenure developments • Adequately provide for the identified local housing need and/or identified local employment needs • Be adequately serviced by existing or new appropriate supporting infrastructure, including green infrastructure • Promote high density in new development where appropriate
4, 5	<p>Safety and Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insist upon high sustainable construction and design quality and respect for local character, distinctiveness, and surrounding environment in new development • Design out crime and fear of crime • Prevent unacceptable levels of noise, light, odour, and air pollution, through application of the precautionary principle • Ensure appropriate quantity, quality and accessibility of public space for formal / informal recreation in line with council standards
13, 16	<p>Energy Efficiency & Climate Change Proofing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise energy efficiency in the design of new development • Incorporate provision for climate change proofing, sustainable design and construction principles • Optimise viable on and off site renewable energy provision • Ensure appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems • Promote sustainable coastal and flood risk management • Increase efficient use and reuse of water
6, 7	<p>Economic Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where employment is provided it will encourage growth of indigenous companies and diversification into key growth sectors • Provide for the needs of businesses (range of premises, services, infrastructure, and skilled workforce)
10, 11, 16	<p>Natural and Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment • Promote the objectives of the Water Framework Directive
15	<p>Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage provision for local community recycling and waste management facilities, where appropriate • Promote minimisation, reuse, and recycling of construction materials and waste
12	<p>Minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise demand for primary minerals and aggregates; • Recycle local stone, where possible, to reinforce local character

The Thresholds for Sustainability Threshold Assessment

24. The STA contains five thresholds of development potential ranging from absolute sustainability constraints (red) (such as a site impacting adversely on a European designated area), through issues for sustainability that may be mitigated or negotiated (orange and yellow) (although some effects may be more difficult or expensive to address than others), to sites that have no constraints (light green) or where development may even be encouraged to help resolve particular sustainability issues (dark green). The thresholds for each sustainability criterion are set out in table 3.
25. Each category is judged according to its own standards and methods of assessment. There is no weighting or scoring, with colours being used to help consider potential effects. The aim is to make comparisons between sites and areas easier and help identify which sites are more sustainable. The development potential and environmental constraint categories may change, as may site gradings as work on the evidence base and DPD preparation evolves and further information on a particular site becomes available. For example, for many categories a precautionary principle has underpinned the current assessment, but when further information is available, such as through site surveys, the grading can be amended to reflect this.
26. For some SA criteria a red grading will not be totally prohibitive to potential development but would severely impact on the feasibility or sustainability of a scheme. Where this is the case, an explanation is provided in the appropriate section in table 3.

Application of the STA Framework

27. The following section sets out how each of the sustainability appraisal criteria has been applied during the site assessment process.
28. It is important to note that the STA process is a strategic assessment and details that would be expected at the project level will be considered through any relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). STA is useful as it identifies site constraints and opportunities, and areas where further assessment may be necessary.
29. The balanced and healthy communities summary sets out an overall threshold grading for the sites. This takes into account the thresholds received for each individual SA criteria. As there is no individual scoring or weighting of criteria, this section provides a guide to the overall sustainability of a particular site. Although certain criteria do receive greater prominence due to requirements in national planning policy, such as the consideration of flood risk. The loss of a community facility, such as car parking, parks and public open space or allotments would also result in a downgrading by one colour in this section.

Quality Assurance Exercise

30. Once the STA exercise had been completed, a Quality Assurance exercise was undertaken to ensure that each of the criteria had been applied consistently across the district. This exercise led to some additional clarification around the methodology and subsequent changes to the scoring of some criteria, and the overall scoring of some sites. The main areas of change relate to the accessibility criteria which are now more explicit in their consideration of the range of facilities considered, particularly employment uses. This has led to lower scores in some of the villages. The Quality Assurance exercise also removed the summary text around attributes and constraints, as this was difficult to apply consistently, and did not add enough added value to the process to warrant revisiting in great detail.

Table 3: Objectives and Thresholds for Assessment

SA Objective: Land Quality		
Policy Background - PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (particularly paragraph 28). South Hams Core Strategy Policy CS5: Previously Developed Land		A key aim of the planning system is to use land efficiently. Therefore, there is a presumption in favour of using Previously Developed Land (PDL) (also known as brownfield land). PDL is defined as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings).
Source of Information: Defra / www.magic.gov.uk		Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) maps for England and Wales are designed to give strategic advice on the distribution of farmland quality. Therefore, in certain instances a local interpretation of the boundaries and specific classifications has taken place. Further information on ALC is available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/environment/land-use/pdf/alcleaflet.pdf
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Not Applicable. No Agricultural Land Classification would be an absolute constraint.
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Agricultural Land Classification grades 1, 2, and 3 ³ . Development fails to protect best and most versatile agricultural land
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Agricultural Land Classification grades 4, 5. Development fails to protect poorer quality agricultural land
	No sustainability constraints	Not Applicable
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Previously developed land and therefore protects all agricultural land

³ PPS7 distinguishes between ALC 3a and 3b, however, data available from www.magic.gov.uk only specifies classification 3. Therefore, a precautionary approach has been taken and all levels of ALC grade 3 fall within the 'orange' classification.

SA Objective: Flood Risk		
Policy Background - PPS25: Development and Flood Risk		When considering flood risk the aim is to direct development away from areas of highest flood risk.
Source of Information: Environment Agency Flood Risk Zones and South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment levels 1 and 2		Where a site crosses different flood zones it has been given a dual grading. This may affect the proportion and boundaries of a site that are considered in the future. For example if a site is 50% within flood zone 1 and 50% within flood zone 3b, the boundary of the site may be redrawn to only include the parts of the site within flood zone 1. Alternatively, development may be allocated sequentially across a site, taking account of flood vulnerability of the intended uses, with more vulnerable uses, such as residential provided within zone 1 and less vulnerable such as open space provided within zone 3b ⁴ . The flood vulnerability of uses is set out in PPS25, Annex D.
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Located within zone 3b: the functional floodplain (fluvial). Only suitable for water-compatible uses and essential infrastructure
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Located within zone 3a: high probability of flooding (tidal). Only suitable for water-compatible, less vulnerable uses and essential infrastructure
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Located within zone 2: medium probability of flooding. Only suitable for water-compatible, less vulnerable and more vulnerable uses of land and essential infrastructure
	No sustainability constraints	Located within zone 1: low probability of flooding
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Located within zone 1: low probability of flooding and scope to provide remediation against flood risk either on or off site

⁴ All sites in zones 2 and 3 allocated for development and those greater than a hectare in zone 1 will require a Flood Risk Assessment and consider Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) measures as part of any planning application.

SA Objective: Contamination		
Policy Background - PPS 23: Planning and Pollution Control		The contaminated land database details points of contamination with set buffer zones (these sites would receive an orange grading).
Source of Information: SHDC Environmental Health contaminated land database, professional judgement		A precautionary principle is applied to all other sites, therefore, sites falling outside a buffer zone received a yellow grading unless it is proven that there is no contamination (light green) or that remediation of known contamination can be evidenced (dark green).
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Known, significant contamination which cannot be remediated.
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Known land contamination area or within buffer zone. Land is shown to be contaminated or has a significant proportion within a buffer zone.
	Possible sustainability issues	Possible land contamination. At this stage no contamination is evident, however, under the precautionary principle a possible sustainability issue is identified until it can be eliminated.
	No sustainability constraints	Site known not to have any contamination constraints.
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Development would deliver remediation of known contamination.

SA Objective: Biodiversity		
Policy Background - PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Core Strategy Policy CS10: Nature Conservation		This objective considers if a potential site will have an impact on an environmental designation. Therefore, a site may not be within a particular designation but adjacent or close to it and have a potential impact on the designation. This is reflected in the threshold grading.
Source of Information: Natural England, Devon Biodiversity Records Centre		The objective also considers if a potential site will have an impact on protected species. A precautionary principle is taken, therefore, a site can only receive a light green or dark green once site survey work has been conducted, which demonstrate no biodiversity constraints or impact on protected species.
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	European designated site
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Nationally protected sites or features or known protected species
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Local designated site or site contains habitats which may contain protected species
	No sustainability constraints	Site known not to have any biodiversity constraints
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Site known not to have any biodiversity constraints and to have opportunities for biodiversity enhancement

SA Objective: Protected Landscapes		
Policy Background - PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Core Strategy Policy CS9: Landscape and Historic Environment		This objective considers any potential impact of a site on the special qualities of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Dartmoor National Park. The assessment considers how potential development on a site would impact on the designations conservation and enhancement in particular visual impact. This includes sites within a designation and outside.
Source of Information: Boundaries of Dartmoor National Park and South Devon AONB, professional judgement, site work		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Unacceptable adverse effect
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Significant adverse effect
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Limited adverse effect
	No sustainability constraints	No adverse effect. Special qualities conserved.
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	No adverse effect and opportunities to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the protected landscape

SA Objective: Landscape & Settlement Character		
Policy Background - PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Core Strategy Policy CS9: Landscape and Historic Environment		Assessment of landscape and settlement character considers the sites capacity to conserve and enhance local landscape and settlement character, primarily through views into and out of the site and the visual interrelationship of a potential development with adjoining land uses.
Source of Information: SHDC Landscape Character Assessment, DCC Landscape Character Type, professional judgement, site work		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Unacceptable adverse impact.
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Significant adverse impact.
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Limited adverse impact.
	No sustainability constraints	No adverse impact.
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	No adverse impact with opportunities to conserve and enhance landscape and settlement character

Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage		
Policy Background - PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment & PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning, Core Strategy Policy CS9: Landscape and Historic Environment		Grading assesses whether a potential site would conserve and/or enhance the quality of the historic environment (which includes Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, and Scheduled Ancient Monuments). Therefore, it can apply to those sites within a particular designation or those within the immediate vicinity.
Source of Information: English Heritage, SHDC planning database, professional judgement, site work		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Unacceptable adverse effect on conservation
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Significant adverse effect on conservation
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Limited adverse effect on conservation
	No sustainability constraints	No adverse effect on conservation
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	No adverse effect on conservation and opportunities to enhance

Air Quality		
Policy Requirement: Source: PPS 23 Planning and Pollution Control		A precautionary principle has been taken to those settlements (Ivybridge and Totnes) where there are declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), it is assumed that there will be a limited adverse cumulative effect on air quality.
Source of Information: Air Quality Management Areas (Ivybridge & Totnes)		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Unacceptable adverse effect on air quality
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Significant adverse effect on air quality
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Limited adverse effect on air quality
	No sustainability constraints	No adverse effect on air quality
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	No adverse effect on air quality and opportunities to remediate existing quality issues

Movement & Accessibility	
<p>Policy Requirement: PPG 13 Transport, Devon Local Transport Plan</p>	<p>This objective assesses opportunities to provide access to a range of job opportunities, services and facilities through: walking, cycling, public transport and the private car.</p>
<p>Source of Information: site work, professional judgement, Devon County Council; Public Transport operators</p>	<p>A basic range is taken to include access to job opportunities, primary education and a shop or post office.</p> <p>A wide range of services and facilities includes the basic range and some or all of a secondary school, health facilities, leisure facilities, and wider range of shops.</p> <p>In assessing access to job opportunities, services and facilities there is a distinction between how sites in the main towns and villages perform, on the whole, villages perform poorer due to issues of rural isolation.</p> <p>Walking - Good access by walking is taken as a range of services and facilities within a 5 minute walk (about 400m). Also considered are the ease of connections (such as, are there pavements), safety and the topography of the walk.</p> <p>Cycling - Sites are assessed in relationship to links to the National Cycle Network, or whether there is a safe and inviting route to local services.</p> <p>Public Transport - Good access to public transport is taken as a bus stop within 400m of the site. Also considered are the frequency of the service, the end destination (i.e. what services/facilities are available there), and duration of the journey. Rail is also considered for Ivybridge and Totnes.</p> <p>Private Car - The district is predominantly rural, therefore the reality is that most residents, particularly those living in villages will have to rely on the private car to meet some of their daily needs. This section considers the ease with which the site itself can be accessed for car use and the capacity of road infrastructure in the vicinity to accommodate additional car movement.</p>

Threshold: Movement & Accessibility - Walking		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Isolated, poorly connected and/or difficult topography which cannot be addressed
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Relatively isolated and limitations in the range of facilities, and/or poorly connected and/or difficult topography
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Relatively close proximity but limitations in the range of facilities and/or quality of connections and/or difficult topography
	No sustainability constraints	Close proximity and good access to a basic range of services and facilities
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Close proximity and good access to a wide range of services and facilities
Threshold: Movement & Accessibility - Cycling		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Isolated, poorly connected and/or difficult topography which cannot be addressed
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Relatively isolated and limitations in the range of facilities, and/or poorly connected and/or difficult topography
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Relatively close proximity but limitations in the range of facilities and/or quality of connections and/or difficult topography
	No sustainability constraints	Close proximity and good access to a basic range of services and facilities
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Close proximity and good access to a wide range of services and facilities

Threshold: Movement & Accessibility - Public Transport		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	No existing public transport links or opportunity
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Relatively isolated from public transport link, and/or very limited service and/or limited access to a range of facilities
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Relatively close proximity to public transport link but limitations in the frequency and/or access to a range of facilities
	No sustainability constraints	Close proximity to public transport link which has good frequency to a basic range of services and facilities
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Close proximity to public transport link which has good frequency to a wide range of services and facilities
Threshold: Movement & Accessibility - Private Car		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Absolute highway constraints
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Highway constraints which significantly limit access to services and facilities
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Highway constraints which limit access to services and facilities
	No sustainability constraints	No highway constraints
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	No highway constraints and would improve current development constraints on or off site

Quality of the Built Environment		
Policy Requirement: PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, Core Strategy Policy CS7: Design		Consideration is given to how a site would relate to adjoining land uses and how its development could contribute to the quality of the surrounding built environment.
Source of Information: professional judgement, site work, conservation area appraisals		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Poorly integrated, poor relationship to adjacent land uses, no opportunities to improve quality of public realm, townscape or local character
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Poorly integrated, poor relationship to adjacent land uses, with limited opportunities to improve quality of public realm, townscape or local character
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Reasonable integration and relationship to adjacent land uses, with opportunities to improve quality of public realm, townscape or local character
	No sustainability constraints	Good integration and relationship to adjacent land uses, with opportunities to improve quality of public realm, townscape or local character
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Very good integration and relationship to adjacent land uses, with significant opportunities to improve quality of public realm, townscape or local character

Energy Use		
Policy Requirement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to PPS1 and PPS22: Renewable Energy		This objective considers energy use through location, topography and orientation. For example, a steep north facing site would perform poorly, whereas a level, south facing site would score more favourably. It also considers the relative location of a site in relation to access to services and facilities. For example, an isolated site is likely to generate greater car use and therefore the site would perform relatively poorly.
Source of Information: Professional judgement, site work		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	Not applicable. Failure to deliver any additional energy generation or efficiency over and above baseline assumptions would not be an absolute constraint.
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Steep topography, poor orientation and isolation from services severely limits additional energy efficiency or energy generation
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Topography or orientation or proximity to services favour limited additional energy efficiency or energy generation
	No sustainability constraints	Two from topography, orientation and proximity to services favour additional energy efficiency or energy generation
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Topography orientation and proximity to services favour additional energy efficiency and energy generation

Balanced and Healthy Communities		
Policy Requirement: PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy		The balanced and healthy communities section provides an overall summary of all the previous objectives, considers if there is a current land use that would have to be relocated (such as downgrading a site if it is public open space) and sets out the key attributes and constraints based on the assessment. It seeks to evaluate if and how a site could contribute to regeneration or enhance community viability or vibrancy.
Source of Information: Overall assessment of above objectives		
Threshold		
	Absolute sustainability constraints	No opportunities to contribute to regeneration or enhance community viability or vibrancy
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered problematic	Poor opportunities to contribute to regeneration or enhance community viability or vibrancy
	Sustainability issues; mitigation considered achievable	Reasonable opportunities to contribute to regeneration or enhance community viability or vibrancy
	No sustainability constraints	Good opportunities to contribute to regeneration or enhance community viability or vibrancy
	Development will support Sustainable Objectives	Very good opportunities to contribute to regeneration or enhance community viability or vibrancy

The Matrices

31. The STA matrices appended to this methodology form part of the evidence base for the following Site Allocation DPDs:
- Dartmouth
 - Ivybridge
 - Kingsbridge
 - Totnes area
 - Rural Areas (which includes the Local Centres of Modbury, Salcombe, Stokenham/ Chillington, Yealmpton, and the villages of Aveton Gifford, Avonwick, Blackawton, Brixton, Dartington, Diptford, Ermington Harbertonford, Holbeton, Kingswear, Loddiswell, Malborough, Marldon, Newton Ferrers, Stoke Fleming, Stoke Gabriel, Thurlestone, Ugborough, Wembury and West Alvington).

Conclusion

32. The STA forms part of the evidence base to help inform the LDF allocation DPDs. It is a decision aiding tool which allows for a comparison to be made between potential sites based on sustainability criteria. A STA panel was established to scrutinise this methodology and the STA matrices. The matrices have evolved, and threshold ratings may have changed during the plan preparation process as more information on a site becomes available, through community involvement activities, and consideration by the STA panel.
33. It will be the DPDs themselves that make the choices and allocate sites, informed by the accumulated evidence particularly STA, SHLAA, SID and other elements of the evidence base.

Appendix I: SA Objectives and Decision-Aiding Questions for Site Comparison

	ST A No:		SA No:
Environmental Constraints	1	Land Quality: to maintain and improve the quality of land <i>(SEA topic: Soil and Water)</i>	9
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of previously developed land? • Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land? 	
	2	Flood Risk: to protect and enhance the water environment <i>(SEA topic: Water and Climatic Factors)</i>	16
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in flood zone 3b • Be in flood zone 3a • Be in flood zone 2 • Be in flood zone 1 	
	3	Contamination: to maintain and improve the quality of land <i>(SEA topic: Soil and Water)</i>	9
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be constrained by land contamination? 	
	4	Biodiversity: to protect and enhance the diversity and abundance of semi-natural habitats and indigenous species <i>(SEA topic: Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora)</i>	10
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adversely effect an area with a defined significant environmental designation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Designated Sites & Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA), Habitats Directive Networks of Natural Habitats Nationally Designated Sites & Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR), Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), Crow Act Important Natural Features Locally Designated Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Wildlife Site (CWS), Local Wildlife Site (LWS), County Geological Site (CGS), Devon or National BAP habitat Species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon or National BAP species • Protected Species 	

	5	Protected Landscapes: to ensure that special and distinctive landscapes, and the features within them, are conserved and enhanced (SEA topic: Landscape)	8
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adversely affect the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or Dartmoor National Park? 	
	6	Visual Impact and Landscape Character: to ensure that special and distinctive landscapes, and the features within them, are conserved and enhanced (SEA topic: Landscape)	8
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve and where possible enhance landscape character and townscape Avoid unacceptable adverse visual impact Be integrated into existing landform, townscape and landscape features? 	
	7	Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage: to protect and enhance cultural resources (SEA topic: Cultural Heritage)	11
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance the setting of listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments or historic parks and gardens? 	
	8	Air Quality: to protect and improve local and global air quality (SEA topic: Air, Climatic Factors and Human Health)	14
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid any adverse impact on air quality within an Air Quality Management Area? 	
Development Opportunities	9, 10, 11, 12	Movement and Accessibility: to enhance access to jobs, education, services, cultural and leisure facilities for all (SEA topic: Population, Human Health & Climatic Factors)	2
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to a good range of job opportunities, services, and facilities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking Cycling Public Transport Private Car 	
	13	Quality of the Built Environment: to enhance the form and design of the built environment (SEA topic: Population and Human Health)	4
		Would development of the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be well integrated with the existing urban form, townscape and landscape? Relate well to adjoining land uses? Contribute to improving the quality of the public realm? 	

	14	Energy (SEA topic: Material Assets and Climatic Factors)	13
		<i>Would development in this location deliver additional energy efficiency or energy generation through?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation that favours passive solar heating or solar generation and/or • Topography that favours a decrease in built energy costs and favours walking and cycling • Close proximity to services 	
OVERALL SUMMARY	15	Balanced and Healthy Communities (SEA topic: Population and Human Health)	1, 3
		Overall, would the development of the site ensure it is located in line with sustainable principles by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging regeneration and enhancement of viable and vibrant communities? • Providing dwellings and employment provision to allow local residents to remain within their communities? • Conserve and enhance the local environment? 	