



# Barnstaple Town Study Report

Core Strategy Evidence

October 2011



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Town Study brings together a wide range of existing information, evidence and statistics relevant to Barnstaple in order to identify the issues and opportunities facing the town over the next 20 years. It will help to inform the vision, strategy and proposals for the town that will be incorporated within the Joint North Devon and Torridge Core Strategy being prepared for the period up to 2031.
- 1.2 This document provides an overview of the key characteristics that contribute to the form and function of Barnstaple. It analyses key issues, opportunities and constraints that could impact on the delivery of future sustainable growth for the town and creates an understanding of what needs further investigation. A thorough examination of such matters will enable informed decisions on how best to accommodate and deliver the future needs of the town and North Devon as a whole.
- 1.3 One purpose of this town study is to support community focused consultation to inform the Joint North Devon and Torridge Core Strategy, which will be an important document in guiding the location, form and scale of development required to achieve sustainable growth for the town that meets the area's long term needs. It is essential that local aspirations are reflected through the Core Strategy's vision and objectives, including those of the town's residents and of visitors from the wider area. Through undertaking additional town focused consultation it is anticipated that relevant and supported visions can be established for the towns of northern Devon.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this study, Barnstaple includes the contiguous built up area around the town centre, including areas such as Bickington, Roundswell and Tower View that are within adjoining parishes (Fremington and Tawstock). Most of the statistics available for the town relate to the Town Council boundary and these will be used where information for the town as a whole is unavailable. Information for the Bickington and Roundswell wards will be considered alongside that for the six Barnstaple wards where it is available. Information relating to any alternative boundaries is identified in the text.
- 1.5 The Fremington ward within Fremington parish is considered within the separate Fremington village study.

## **2. Overview**

- 2.1 Barnstaple is one of the largest towns in Devon (after Exeter and similar in size to Exmouth and Newton Abbot) and is a sub-regional centre serving a large area of northern Devon. The town has expanded rapidly over recent years and provides the economic heart of North Devon. It provides a wide

range of strategic services, retail and commercial opportunities for the sub-region as well as meeting the needs of its resident population.

2.2 Barnstaple is located at the eastern end of the Taw estuary, about 14 kilometres (9 miles) east of Bideford accessed along the A39, and about 48 kilometres (30 miles) north west of Tiverton accessed along the A361.

### **2.3 Population – ‘*increasing more quickly than other North Devon towns*’**

2.3.1 Barnstaple, including Bickington, Tower View and Roundswell, has grown substantially over the last ten years. The combined population has increased by over 4.1% over the period 2001 to 2010, providing an annualised increase of about 135 people per year.

2.3.2 Prior to 2001, Bickington and Roundswell did not form a separate ward so only Parish wide population figures for Fremington are available for the period between 1991 and 2001. Consequently, precise information is unavailable about growth in Barnstaple as a whole since 1991. Estimated growth was at a higher rate (about 10%-15%) with substantial parts of Roundswell and Whiddon Valley constructed during this decade.

2.3.3 From 2001 to 2010 the population of Barnstaple increased by 1,214 people. The 4.1% rate of population increase in the town was slightly lower than that experienced across other North Devon towns (Braunton, Ilfracombe, Fremington/Yelland, South Molton), across the district as a whole (including the part within Exmoor National Park) but higher than across Devon. The variance in population growth across the geographic areas is shown in Table 1.

2.3.4 Age distribution within the Barnstaple population is generally younger than for North Devon as a whole (see Table 1) with significantly higher proportions under 40 years and significantly lower proportions aged over 60 compared to the District and Devon.

2.3.5 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula (2008) indicated net in of 4,400 people to North Devon between 2001 and 2006, with the largest gains for the 45 to 64 years age bracket. Other large gains aged 25 to 44 years and 0 to 15 years are indicative of inward movement of families. Overall in-migration indicates equity-cushioned older pre-pensioner households and households with dependent children, especially from London, the South East and the West Midlands. In the reverse direction, there is a steady loss of younger and more independent households, the reasons for which remain largely speculative, but which will include a combination of movement for education, employment and access to affordable housing.

2.3.6 The increasing age of the area's population is reflective of a national trend. In 2008, 16% of the population of England was estimated to be aged 65 and over, with the South West region estimated to have the highest percentage of older persons (19%). By 2033<sup>1</sup>, over a quarter of the population of the South West is projected to be aged 65 and over, a level already being approached in Barnstaple and across North Devon.

Table 1: Population

Total Population	Barnstaple	Other North Devon Towns	North Devon District <sup>2</sup>	Devon (including Plymouth & Torbay)
2001	29,702	26,376	89,097	1,136,500
2010	30,916	27,881	92,894	1,179,354
Change	1,214	1,505	3,797	42,854
% change	4.1%	5.7%	4.3%	3.7%
2010 age group proportions				
0 -19	24.2%	22.2%	22.6%	21.5%
20-39	23.2%	18.1%	19.4%	23.9%
40-59	26.6%	27.2%	27.6%	27.2%
60-79	20.5%	24.9%	24.0%	21.4%
80+	5.5%	7.6%	6.4%	6.0%

Source: 2001 Census, 2010 ONS population estimates and Devon County Town Profiles<sup>3</sup>

## 2.4 Income – ‘significant differences across the town above and below the district average’

2.4.1 Median annual employee income for North Devon was £15,648 in the 2010 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office of National Statistics). This is the fourth lowest of all district and unitary councils across the country, although at £14,419 Torridge district is even lower. North Devon is approximately 26.3% below the median annual employee income for the United Kingdom.

2.4.2 Median household income in North Devon of £24,970 (2008) is the second lowest for any district in Devon (after Torridge district). The North Devon median household income is £1,142 (7.5%) below the Devon average. The average household income for Barnstaple wards varies

<sup>1</sup> Sub national Population Projections, ONS (May 2010):

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pproj0510.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Including the parts of North Devon within Exmoor National Park

<sup>3</sup> Devon County Council Devon Facts and Figures:

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/improving\\_our\\_services/facts\\_figures\\_and\\_statistics.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/improving_our_services/facts_figures_and_statistics.htm)

considerably with four wards above and three wards below the district average. Central ward has the second lowest average household income in North Devon (£21,082), above Ilfracombe central, and is over 15.5% below the district average figure (Table 2). In contrast Bickington and Roundswell ward has an average household income (£26,025) over 4% above the district average. The differences in household incomes in part reflects the housing stock available in different wards.

Table 2: Average Incomes

	Total households	Household income average (median)
North Devon	42,770	£24,970
Devon County (excluding Plymouth and Torbay)	331,804	£26,112
Bickington and Roundswell ward	1,998	£26,025
Central Town ward	2,534	£21,082
Forches and Whiddon Valley ward	1,850	£23,242
Longbridge ward	1,841	£25,124
Newport ward	1,786	£25,187
Pilton ward	1,959	£25,480
Yeo Valley ward	1,861	£22,861

Source: CACI and Paycheck data provided by CACI (2008)

## 2.5 Benefits – ‘a high level of dependency on benefits’

2.5.1 The types of benefits identified in Table 3 all indicate a higher proportion of claimants in Barnstaple (parish) than for North Devon or Devon as a whole. Barnstaple (3.0%) is below the national average (3.7%) only for the proportion of 16 – 64 year olds claiming job seekers allowance. Overall, the figures in Table 3 demonstrate a high level of dependency on benefits within the town.



2.5.2 Claimants of disability living allowance reflect national figures, but remain above Devon and district averages. The figures in Table 3 demonstrate a high level of dependency on benefits for elderly age groups within the town.

Table 3: Benefits

Percentage of :	Barnstaple (parish)	North Devon	Devon	National
16 – 59 year olds claiming income support	6.7%	4.5%	3.9%	5.6%
16 – 64 year olds claiming job seekers allowance	3.0%	2.1%	2.0%	3.7%
Total population claiming disability living allowance	5.3%	4.3%	4.2%	5.2%
65 and older claiming attendance allowance	20.5%	17.3%	17.3%	18.2%
60 and older claiming pension credit	25.1%	17.7%	15.3%	20.6%

Source: Devon Town Profiles 2010 – Department for Work & Pensions

## 2.6 Employment – ‘retail, education, health and social care and public admin are significant sectors’

2.6.1 A large percentage of the work force within Barnstaple (parish) is involved in wholesale and retail trade (22.5%), well above the equivalent figures for North Devon (19.9%) and Devon (18.2%), which reflects the importance of Barnstaple as a sub-regional shopping centre. There is also a relatively high proportion employed in health and social work (16.7%), education (10.0%) and public admin and defence (7.8), all above the district, Devon and national averages. This mix of jobs reflects Barnstaple’s role as a sub-regional centre and the types of jobs provided within an administrative centre providing higher order services and facilities.

2.6.2 Employment in manufacturing is above county and national averages, although below that for the district as a whole. Manufacturing in Barnstaple tends to provide higher value jobs, such as in pharmaceuticals and specialist engineering, although the local economy is dependent on a few large manufacturing businesses with consequent risks.

2.6.3 In contrast, Barnstaple (parish) has a much lower proportion of its workforce involved in construction (3.9%), transport (3.2%), community services (1.4%), which are all below the equivalent figures for North Devon, Devon and nationally as set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Employment Sectors

Percentage of all employees	Barnstaple (parish)	North Devon	Devon	National
Agriculture & forestry	0.0%	1.9%	2.2%	1.0%
Fishing	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Mining & quarrying	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Manufacturing	10.8%	13.9%	9.6%	10.2%
Gas & water	0.6%	0.3%	0.8%	0.4%
Construction	3.9%	4.6%	5.7%	4.8%
Wholesale & retail trade	22.5%	19.9%	18.2%	16.6%
Hotels & restaurants	8.1%	12.8%	8.9%	6.8%
Transport, storage & communication	3.2%	3.4%	6.0%	5.8%
Financial services	1.4%	0.9%	1.6%	4.0%
Real estate & business activities	11.6%	9.7%	12.4%	18.0%
Public administration & defence	7.8%	4.9%	6.4%	5.4%
Education	10.0%	9.9%	9.4%	9.3%
Health & social work	16.7%	13.7%	13.4%	12.3%
Other community services	3.4%	3.9%	5.0%	5.3%

Source: Devon Town Profiles 2010 – Office for National Statistics

## 2.7 Unemployment – ‘significant differences across the town above and below the district average’

2.7.1 In 2011, unemployment as a percentage of the work force varies across Barnstaple, with Central Town ward being the highest (4.2%), exceeded locally only by Ilfracombe Central ward (6.4%). Along with Longbridge, Newport and Yeo Valley wards, the unemployment rate is above that of

the District as a whole and well above figures for Devon (Table 5). In contrast, equivalent rates in Bickington and Roundswell ward are much lower than district and county figures. Table 5 shows that since 2006 unemployment rates have fallen slightly in some wards, increased slightly in other wards, but increased substantially in Longbridge, Newport and Yeo Valley wards.

Table 5: Unemployment Claimants

	Barnstaple (parish)			North Devon			Devon		
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011
Number unemployed	n/a	470	563	1,635	1,075	1,305	8,581	6,138	10,159
% of working age (16 – 64) population	n/a			3.1%	1.9%	2.4%	2%	1.4%	2.2%
Bickington & Roundswell		1.6%	1.4%						
Central Town		4.0%	4.2%						
Forches & Whiddon Valley		2.7%	2.6%						
Longbridge		1.8%	3.1%						
Newport		2.0%	3.4%						
Pilton		1.9%	2.1%						
Yeo Valley		2.8%	3.4%						

Source: NOMIS: Official labour market statistics (February 2011)

## 2.8 House Prices – *‘lower than average across North Devon and increasing more slowly*

- 2.8.1 All types of average house prices are substantially below those for North Devon and Devon (Table 6). The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula<sup>4</sup> identifies Barnstaple within the Taw and Torridge Town and Rural Fringe sub-market area, an area served by and with good accessibility to the main residential centres of Barnstaple and Bideford.

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/index/igcl\\_environment/igcl\\_planning/nonigcl\\_planning\\_policy.htm](http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/index/igcl_environment/igcl_planning/nonigcl_planning_policy.htm)

Table 6: Average House Prices

2008 Average prices (£)	Barnstaple (parish)	North Devon	Devon
Overall	172,296	209,460	223,636
Detached	268,552	285,301	310,899
Semi-detached	180,739	187,493	197,547
Terrace	140,388	158,442	172,313
Flat / maisonette	141,811	164,651	160,202

Source: Devon Town Profiles 2010 – Land Registry

- 2.8.2 Average house prices in Barnstaple (Table 7) increased at a rate slightly lower than that experienced across Devon over the period 2001-2009, but significantly higher than national house price increase over the same period. In 2009 the average property price in Barnstaple was £192,903, which was below the North Devon average price (£223,636) by about 13.7%.

Table 7: Average House Prices by Year

Overall Average Prices (£)	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	% increase 2001 / 2009
Barnstaple (parish)	98,520	146,443	180,679	213,548	192,903	96%
Devon	112,813	165,264	208,323	241,523	223,636	98%
England & Wales	92,183	129,632	157,880	179,905	157,033	70%

Source: Devon Town Profiles 2010 – Land Registry

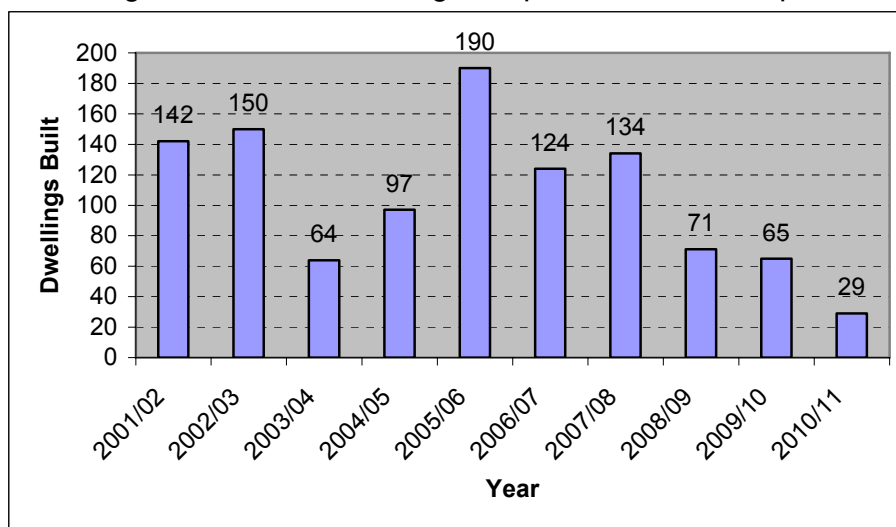
- 2.8.3 The increase in the proportion of flats in Barnstaple since 2001 (see paragraph 2.9.3) would have reduced the overall increase in average house prices.
- 2.8.4 North Devon is one of the least affordable areas to buy housing in the South West. 'Home Truths' (2011) prepared by the National Housing Federation shows a ratio of mean house prices to median income<sup>5</sup> of 14.8, the fourth highest for any District in the South West region. Whilst other districts have higher house prices, North Devon has one of the lowest average incomes in the country (see section 2.4). This affordability ratio exceeds those for the South West region (11.6) and England (11.2).

<sup>5</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2010

## 2.9 Housing Supply – ‘substantial supply of developable housing commitments’

2.9.1 A total of 1,066 dwellings were completed within the town for the period 2001 to 2011, and 2,690 for the period 1995 to 2011. Figure 1 shows that in 2005/6 there was a spike in housing delivery, which included substantial completion of developments at Westway Heights in Pilton and Meadow Brook at Roundswell. The dip in delivery that occurred in 2003/4 is partly explained by local circumstances, whereas a more recent decline in delivery is a reflection of current housing market conditions.

Figure 1: Annual Housing Completions in Barnstaple



Source: NDC Annual Housing Monitoring

2.9.2 Table 8 provides a summary of housing supply for Barnstaple on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The number of dwellings approved but not implemented is substantial (639), although the outline consent at Anchorwood Bank (Leaderflush and Shapland site) constitutes the majority (450) of these units. The allocated sites without planning permission excludes those at risk of flooding, the largest of which is the residential component of the town centre redevelopment at Queen Street and Bear Street. Other allocated sites have been discounted where land is no longer deemed available or where alternative uses have been approved.

Table 8: Housing Supply

	No. of Units
Units Under Construction	107
Units on Sites Subject to Implementation	7
Unimplemented Planning Permissions on sites of 1 – 9 dwellings	74
Unimplemented Planning Permissions on sites of 10+ dwellings	558
Units on sites approved subject to s106 agreement	136
Units on sites Allocated Without Consent	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>982</b>

Source: NDC Annual Housing Monitoring

2.9.3 In 2001, the majority (approximately 85%) of existing dwellings in North Devon were houses or bungalows, with 14% flats (either purpose built or converted). Within Barnstaple parish, there were approximately 75.3% houses and 24.3% flats, the remainder being mobile homes. The proportion of flats has increased over the last decade as a result of pressures to reuse existing building stock and to maximise density of new development. The 2009 House Condition Survey indicates a North Devon figure of 16.5% flats.

2.9.4 A high proportion of accommodation available exclusively for older people is within or just outside the town centre, for example Alexandra Court, Port Mill Court, Norah Bellot Court and Penrose Almshouses.

## 2.10 Deprivation – ‘pockets of high deprivation for most measures’

2.10.1 North Devon is ranked 146<sup>th</sup> from 326 Local Authorities in the English Indices of Deprivation (2010). At a local level North Devon is the second most deprived district area in Devon, narrowly better than Exeter City. Deprivation issues in North Devon relate to the barriers to presence of skills and training and the quality of the living environment (immediate home surroundings). With these measures of deprivation<sup>6</sup> the urban parts of the district generally experience higher than average levels of deprivation, whereas the rural areas score better than average for most indicators. The exception is barriers to housing and services (physical and financial accessibility of housing and key local services) where urban areas score better than average and rural areas generally score below average.

<sup>6</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1871208.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1871208.pdf)

- 2.10.2 Indices of deprivation for Barnstaple<sup>7</sup> indicate mixed levels of deprivation across the town. Central Town is ranked the third most deprived ward in Devon County (which excludes Plymouth and Torbay), with Yeo Valley ranked sixth and Forches and Whiddon Valley ranked ninth out of 201 wards. Along with Forches and Whiddon Valley ward, Central Town features in the bottom quartile for most indicators. Within these wards the town centre and Forches have the highest overall levels of deprivation.
- 2.10.3 Elsewhere across Barnstaple, the distribution of deprivation is patchy, with pockets of deprivation in respect of: income, employment, crime, health deprivation and disability and skills and training. Whereas most of North Devon is top quartile for crime scores according to its recorded low crime rates, parts of Central Town and Forches and Whiddon Valley ward rank much lower and stand out as an exception to the wider district. The level of crime for North Devon is average when compared to that for Devon and Cornwall, but is considerably lower than the national average. However, fear of crime remains relatively high. Barnstaple generally performs above average in respect of barriers to housing and services (physical and financial accessibility of housing and key local services), although parts of Pilton and Bickington and Roundswell wards score well below average (bottom quartile).
- 2.10.4 The transient population in Barnstaple town centre are often ‘under the radar’ and may be excluded from the published deprivation statistics.

## **2.11 Health – ‘average incidence of long term illness’**

- 2.11.1 In 2001 90.6% of residents in Barnstaple parish surveyed said they were in good or fairly good health, slightly below figures of 91.5% for the District and 91.4% for Devon (Barnstaple Devon Town Baseline Profile May 2006, extracted from Census). Approximately 18.7% of residents surveyed in the 2001 census said they had a limiting long-term illness, the same as for the District and slightly below 19% for Devon, which does not reflect the town’s younger age profile.
- 2.11.2 Life expectancy in Barnstaple is slightly below average for the district and Devon as a whole. In comparison, the highest life expectancy in Devon is at Ottery St. Mary (83.6 years), almost 4 years longer than that in Barnstaple. The life expectancy in Barnstaple is also slightly lower than the national average.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.imd.communities.gov.uk/InformationDisplay.aspx](http://www.imd.communities.gov.uk/InformationDisplay.aspx)

Table 9: Life Expectancy (in Years)

Area	Female	Male	Total Overall
Barnstaple	82.3	77.1	79.8
North Devon	82.5	77.8	80.2
Devon	83.0	78.9	81.0
United Kingdom	82.0	77.9	80.0

Source: <http://www.infopoint.devonpct.nhs.uk> ONS & Devon County Council

## 2.12 Primary and Secondary Schools – *‘limited capacity in some primary schools and both secondary schools for any future growth’*

2.12.1 There are nine primary schools in Barnstaple, in addition to those in surrounding villages (Bishops Tawton, Fremington, Goodleigh, Landkey, Marwood, Shirwell, Tawstock) which will be chosen by some parents. Several of these schools are already at or over capacity, including Newport, Orchard Vale, Sticklepath and both primary schools in Pilton. However, there is currently some spare capacity in other primary schools, primarily on the eastern side of town (see Table 10). These figures do not include pupils enrolled in pre-school and nursery schools.

2.12.2 Park School and Pilton Community College, which also serves Fremington, have some spare capacity. These colleges have limited capacity to accommodate any future growth in Barnstaple. Together, these colleges currently receive almost 200 students from Bideford. Further secondary school capacity for Barnstaple will need to be considered alongside that for Bideford.

Table 10: School Numbers

Name	Capacity	2009 Enrolled	2010 Enrolled	2011 Enrolled
Ashleigh Church of England Primary School, Bevan Road	295	226	217	223
Forches Cross Community Primary School, Forches Avenue	210	206	180	165
Newport Community School, Landkey Road	408	418	413	422
Orchard Vale Community School, Westacott Road	315	292	295	309
Our Lady’s Catholic Primary School, Chanters Hill	210	188	175	158
Pilton Infants School, Abbey Road	177	179	175	173



Pilton Bluecoat Church of England Junior School, Abbey Road	240	254	241	234
Sticklepath Community School, Woodville	315	304	313	319
Yeo Valley Primary School, Derby Road	315	223	221	209
Pilton Community College, Chaddiford Lane	1412	1344	1299	1278
Park Community School	1500	1450	1447	1424
Lampard Community School, St Johns Lane	80	76	87	82
Pathfield Special School, Abbey Road	120	114	114	117

Source: <http://schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk> & Devon County Council

2.12.3 Barnstaple also has some special schools which cater for the wider needs across North Devon. Both Lampard Community School and Pathfield School are at, or close to capacity and meet the needs of students with complex needs, autistic spectrum disorder and severe learning difficulties across a wide age range. A new school is also being built at Roundswell Business Park for students aged 10 to 16 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It has a proposed capacity of 25 places and will cater for pupils from across North Devon.

2.12.4 Petroc is a college of further and higher education for North Devon and Torridge districts offering full and part time courses, vocational training and apprenticeships. It offers tertiary education alongside colleges at Bideford and Ilfracombe.

## 2.13 Environment – *‘attractive natural environment around the town’*

2.13.1 North Devon District forms part of the world class North Devon Biosphere Reserve designated by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), with Barnstaple located in the Transition Zone. The Taw-Torridge estuary forms part of the Buffer Zone surrounding the Core Area at Braunton Burrows.

2.13.2 There are no Local Nature Reserves at Barnstaple so Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) Plus Standard of 1 hectare/1000 population is not met, although there is public access to the community woodlands at Yeo Valley and Whiddon Valley, which have potential to become future Local Nature Reserves.

2.13.3 There are Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering the Taw-Torridge estuary, along Bradford Valley to the north of the town and at Fremington Claypits to the west of Roundswell. The Taw-Torridge

estuary is also proposed as a Marine Conservation Zone. There are a number of County Wildlife Sites around the town including Shearford Lane, Frankmarsh Wood, Acland Wood, Anchor Wood and Anchorwood Bank, Bishops Tawton saltmarsh, Larkbear Plantation and Higher Gorse Claypits.

2.13.4 The main areas of ecological interest are along the main watercourses, with the Taw-Torridge estuary forming a major corridor in the green infrastructure network. It includes open space at Rock Park beside the River Taw and other open areas on the southern side of the estuary.

2.13.5 Land on both sides of the Taw estuary, including to the south of Roundswell and Tower View, is included within the Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Strategic Nature Area as one of the best places in the South West for major habitat expansion for priority habitats.

## 2.14 Open Space – ‘deficiencies in some types of open space’

2.14.1 Barnstaple has a wide selection of playing pitches including for tennis, netball and bowls, although the quality and quantity of pitches is still deficient for some sports, including adult and junior football. A substantial part of the existing grass pitch provision is at Rock Park, Pottington and Park and Pilton community colleges. The golf courses and driving range at Portmore also provide an accessible facility but are excluded from the open space figures in Table 11.

2.14.2 Barnstaple has inadequate provision of equipped play areas and informal public open space (Table 11), especially on the western side of the town. There is a skateboard park at Rock Park.

Table 11: Open Space

Typology	Number	Hectares	Deficiency
Informal Open Space	~	39.0	Yes
Equipped Play Areas	14	2.2	Yes
Sports Pitches	65	21.3	Yes
Allotments	5	4.8	Yes
Cemeteries / Churchyards / Crematorium	6	8.0	No
Community Parks	5	19.4	Yes
<b>Total</b>		94.7	

Source: North Devon Open Space Strategy

## 2.15 Heritage – *‘high quality protected historic environment’*

- 2.15.1 There are 389 listed buildings in and around Barnstaple, of which 12 are Grade II\* and 7 are Grade I listed. Most of these are within the town centre and local centres at Pilton and Newport. Many of Barnstaple’s listed buildings have a commercial history especially in and around the town centre. High quality traditional shop fronts have been retained by several units remaining in retail use today. There are 7 designated conservation areas covering the Town Centre and the historic parts of Bickington, Lake, Newport, Pilton, Rumsam and Eberly Lawn.
- 2.15.2 Castle Mound in the town centre is a scheduled ancient monument, as is Burrige Hill Fort to the north of the town. There are a large number of unlisted buildings identified as locally important that are valued for their contribution to the local street scene, the historic development of the town or past association with locally important people.

## 2.16 Landscape – *‘where woodland valleys emerge from the surrounding downs and widen into the Taw estuary’*

- 2.16.1 Land to the north east of Barnstaple is identified as an Area of Great Landscape Value that extends across higher land forming the Exmoor foothills. The Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon & Torridge (2010) identifies Barnstaple as an urban area, although the identified landscapes around the town contribute to the overall strategy of protecting their special character, views and habitats. The landscapes applicable to the area are summarised below.

Table 12: Landscape Character Types

Type	Commentary
3A Upper Farmed Wooded Valley slopes	<p>Upper catchments of the main river valleys, comprising a gently rolling pastoral landscape of fields bounded by thick Devon hedges;</p> <p>Special qualities are an open landscape with important vantage points and uninterrupted vistas, narrow sunken lanes and species-rich hedge banks, copses and little or no light pollution resulting in starlit skies;</p> <p>The overall strategy is to protect the landscape’s strong rural character and historic sense of place and a rich mosaic of fields bounded by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges.</p>
3H Secluded Valleys	The secluded valleys carve through the higher downland forming tributaries of the main rivers;

	<p>Special qualities are unspoilt secluded valleys with broadleaved woodland clothing valley sides and a mosaic of small fields and hedges;</p> <p>The overall strategy is to protect and enhance the secluded character of the river valleys, prevent downstream flooding and protect water quality, restore semi-natural habitats and create a climate resilient green network.</p>
4A Estuaries	<p>The broad Taw-Torridge Estuary and its surrounding mudflats and marshes;</p> <p>Special qualities are an open feeling and expansive views, evidence of historic quays and importance for over-wintering birds;</p> <p>The overall strategy is to protect the open character and expansive views to and from the estuary, ensuring new development on its fringes is incorporated into its landscape setting and local communities are involved in planning for future landscape change as a result of sea level rise and changes in coastal erosion.</p>
5C Downland	<p>The North Devon Downs comprises an area of high open farmland with broad, rounded ridges slowly dropping in altitude towards Barnstaple and the Taw-Torridge Estuary;</p> <p>Special qualities are dramatic and far-reaching views, smooth rolling skylines, often only broken by protruding square church towers, valued wildlife habitat within the farmland and associated with the hedge network;</p> <p>The overall strategy is to protect the flowing skylines and open views provided from the Downs, preserving the landscape's high levels of tranquility, and capitalising on the landscape's close proximity to the coast with Green Infrastructure links created from expanding settlements and holiday resorts to take the pressure away from the coastal hotspots.</p>

Source: Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon & Torridge (2010)

## **2.17 Community Facilities – ‘an extensive range of community facilities reflecting the town’s role as a sub-regional centre’**

- 2.17.1 Barnstaple has an extensive range of local services and facilities commonly found in a main town, as well as strategic community facilities to serve the wider needs of North Devon and Torridge such as the district hospital, leisure centre and Petroc (Table 13). The location of some of these community facilities is shown on Map 1. These facilities are not

distributed evenly with some facilities, such as banks and medical centres, concentrated in the town centre. There is no community hall in Yeo Valley ward.

Table 13: Community Facilities

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Number</b>
Banks/Building Soc.	10
Places of Worship	17
Cinema	1
Community College	3
Community Hall	12
County Court & Magistrates' Court	1
District Hospital	1
Leisure Centre	1
Library	1
Medical Centre	4
Police Station	1
Post Office	2
Primary School	9
Supermarkets	8
Theatre	1

Source: DCC, NDC & Barnstaple Town Council

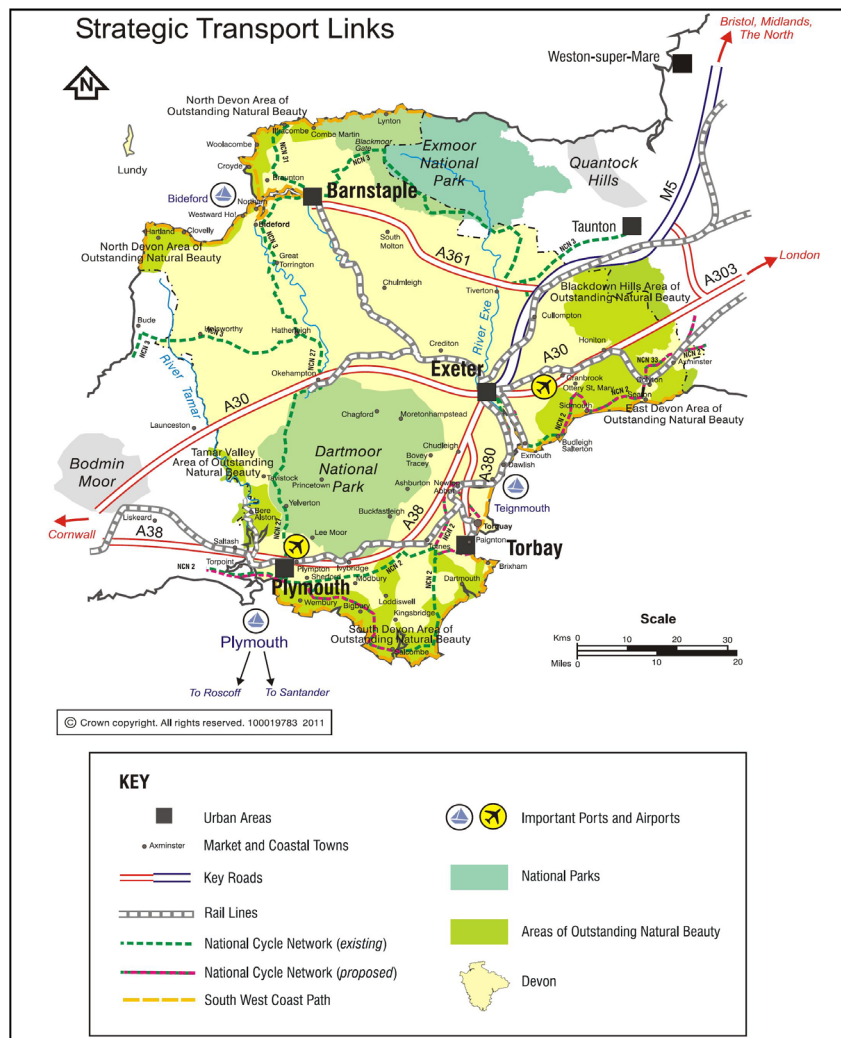
2.17.2 There are four children's centres in Barnstaple with the objective of improving outcomes for young children and their families. They will address issues such as health, low aspirations and education achievement of children and parents, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness. Children's centres have an opportunity to capitalise on their role as a welcoming environment for families by using their facilities creatively so the whole community can benefit and using the skills within the community to the benefit of the children's centre.

2.17.3 The town also has a range of cultural and leisure facilities including the museum, theatre, heritage centre, leisure centre and cinema. In addition, the Pannier Market, the Square and Castle Green provide venues for various cultural events throughout the year. Barnstaple also hosts an annual fair, carnival and the Pilton Green Man festival.

**2.18 Transport – ‘good links to strategic cycle and footpath networks, but regional and national road and rail connectivity is a problem ’**

- 2.18.1 The additional distance to the strategic road network poses problems of access to key regional and national destinations. The Tarka Line rail link between Barnstaple and Exeter is northern Devon’s only link to the strategic rail network. Whilst this service has recently experienced increasing usage, it faces problems of poor quality rolling stock, a journey time of over one hour and limited direct interchange with local bus services at Barnstaple. It also experiences peak time congestion and few early services that connect with trains to Bristol and London. There are no regular links to Tiverton Parkway station other than by car. There is no deliverable prospect of reinstating a rail link between Barnstaple and Bideford.
- 2.18.2 The A361 (North Devon Link Road), which is no longer classified as a trunk road, provides a strategic link to the M5 and the A39 links to Bideford and the Atlantic Highway. However, links to the main routes south across Devon are comparatively poor with Barnstaple relatively remote from the Plymouth area and Exeter airport. Apart from Bideford, Barnstaple is also remote from major commercial and passenger ports that link to Europe.
- 2.18.3 Barnstaple is served by relatively frequent and regular bus services to Bideford, Braunton, Ilfracombe and South Molton, operating along commercially viable ‘core’ routes with less regular links to a number of surrounding rural villages. Early buses into Barnstaple from surrounding villages are limited.
- 2.18.4 Barnstaple is well connected to long distance footpath and cycle networks. The Tarka Trail and South West Coast Path both pass through Barnstaple town centre and cross over the Longbridge, utilising the former railway lines on either side of the Taw estuary. Barnstaple also forms one end of the Macmillan Way, a long distance footpath of 346 miles across England to Boston in Lincolnshire. From Barnstaple it heads south to Bishops Tawton, east through Landkey, East and West Buckland towards Exmoor.

Figure 2: Strategic Transport Links in Devon



Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

2.18.5 National Cycle Route 3 (Penzance to Bristol) also crosses northern Devon via the Tarka Trail from Bideford and continues on to Exmoor through Goodleigh and Bratton Fleming. National Cycle Route 27 (Devon Coast to Coast) starts at Ilfracombe and crosses Devon to Plymouth via Braunton, Barnstaple and Bideford. The routes from Braunton and Bideford coincide with the Tarka Trail and South West Coast Path.

2.18.6 The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 (2010) identifies Barnstaple as a Market Town. The strategy for these towns is to improve connectivity to the main urban areas, promote sustainable travel, improve the connectivity between different modes of transport and create opportunities for walking, cycling and outdoor leisure.

2.18.7 Recent investment in major highway infrastructure including the Barnstaple Western Bypass, Taw Bridge and associated town centre improvements have improved local connectivity. There are remaining

locations on the existing road network that require capacity improvements, such as key junctions on the A39/A361 corridor between Bideford and South Molton especially around the Roundswell area.

## 2.19 Tourism – ‘an important component of the town’s economy’

2.19.1 Barnstaple has a range of hotels of varying sizes that provide a variety of serviced accommodation within the town utilised by both tourists and business visitors. Midland Caravan Park at Ashford provides static caravans just outside the town.

Table 14: Tourist Accommodation (Bed Spaces)

Serviced	Flats and Houses	Holiday Park	Touring Pitches
700	70	120	0

Source: Tourism Trends in Devon 2007 (Devon County Council)

2.19.2 In addition to tourist accommodation, Barnstaple is an important destination for tourists staying elsewhere in North Devon to enjoy its heritage, museum, cultural and leisure facilities, shops and services. Apart from the town itself, there is no key tourist attraction in or immediately around Barnstaple. The larger hotels offer small to medium sized function rooms, but the town has no large conference facility.

## 2.20 Summary of Issues.

Table 15: Summary of Issues

<b>Population</b>	Moderate population growth
<b>Income</b>	Significant differences across the town
<b>Benefits</b>	Relatively high level of dependency
<b>Employment</b>	Above average employment in retail, education, health and social care and public admin
<b>Unemployment</b>	Significant differences across the town
<b>Crime</b>	Overall crime is low but pockets of relatively higher crime rates in North Devon context
<b>House Prices</b>	Below average house prices for North Devon
<b>Housing Supply</b>	Substantial supply of developable housing commitments
<b>Deprivation</b>	Pockets of high deprivation compared to the District and Devon
<b>Health</b>	Residents are generally in good health slightly below the District average
<b>Schools</b>	Limited capacity in some primary schools and both secondary schools



<b>Community Facilities</b>	Extensive range of facilities reflecting the town's sub-regional role
<b>Transport</b>	Congestion at peak times and round key junctions. Good links to long distance cycle and footpath networks. Poor road and rail links to areas around Plymouth and international airports and ports. A need for train service enhancement.
<b>Tourism</b>	An important part of the town's economy

### 3 Major Planning Applications

3.1 A summary of recently approved but implemented large-scale permissions is listed in Table 16 below.

Table 16: Planning Permissions

<b>Year</b>	<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
2006	39442	Moghul Brasserie, 57 Vicarage Street	Demolition of existing buildings & erection of 18 apartments
2007 2008	36935 45385	Land at Willow Tree Road	Erection of 28 dwellings
2008	43599	Leaderflush and Shapland site, Anchorwood Bank	Outline application for residential development (up to 450 dwellings); retail space (A1 uses limited to bulky goods & DIY up to 10,000 sq m gross floor area); hotel (C1 uses up to 60 bedrooms); convenience retail/service uses (A1 & A2 uses with a gross floor area up to 1,000 sq m); community facilities (up to 1,000 sq m gross floor space); restaurants, cafes, public house & takeaway (A3, A4 & A5 uses); offices (B1 uses up to 4,000 sq m)
2006 2008	42849 44115	Brannam Crescent / Fishleigh Road, Roundswell Industrial Estate	Erection of manufacturing / warehouse unit with ancillary office accommodation (use classes B1, B2 & B8 (18,737 sq m gross floor space))

2009	46691	Former St Josephs Nursing Home, Landkey Road	Erection of 23 dwellings & 13 flats
2009	42054	Brunswick Wharf, North Walk	Erection of 14 flats
2010	50583	Tarka Tennis Centre, Seven Brethren Bank	Extension to tennis hall to provide additional tennis courts together with gymnastics hall
2010 2011	49577 51320	San Mar, Old Torrington Road	Erection of 14 dwellings (currently under construction)
2011	49761	Land at Forches estate	Demolition of 113 dwellings & erection of 143 dwellings
2011	43953	Land at North Devon District Hospital	Outline application for demolition of existing nurses & doctors accommodation, provision of 101 new dwellings & staff campus of 112 apartments & 18 dwellings, re-organisation of existing car parking (subject to s106)
2011	49652	Land at Woodville, Sticklepath	Demolition of 73 dwellings & erection of 124 dwellings together with associated parking & amenity areas
2011	50834	Former Gasworks Transco site, Barbican Road	Outline application for erection of 21 residential units, including revised access arrangements (subject to signing s106)

#### 4 Size, Land Use and Character

- 4.1 Barnstaple is an historic market town situated at the end of the Taw estuary. It is the largest town in North Devon with approximately a third of the district's total population. As well as meeting the needs of its residents, it functions as a sub-regional centre for northern Devon, providing a range of strategic community facilities such as the district hospital, cinema, leisure centre, magistrates' and county courts and further/higher education at Petroc. It is the commercial centre of North Devon with a large retail catchment area, the majority of employment opportunities and net commuting in from surrounding towns. The town centre is dominated by a large number of listed buildings.

- 4.2 Map 1 shows that Barnstaple is served by a number of bus routes, with good opportunities for walking and cycling around the town. Retail, leisure, community and administrative uses are dominant within and around the town centre, with traditional employment uses and large supermarkets located towards the edges of the town, including Seven Brethren and at the district centres of Roundswell and St Johns.

## **5 Constraints**

### **5.1 Flooding**

- 5.1.1 Approximately 25% of the built up area of Barnstaple is at risk of flooding (Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3). Substantial areas of land either side of the River Taw are at risk of both fluvial and tidal flooding, including much of Pottington, the Strand, Anchorwood Bank and Seven Brethren. The River Taw has a number of main tributaries also at risk of flooding, including Bradiford Water, River Yeo, Coney Gut, Muddlebrook and Lake Stream, which together place substantial parts of Pilton, Yeo Vale and Newport at risk of flooding.

- 5.1.2 A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA2) for Barnstaple identifies the current and future flood hazards with and without existing flood defences. By 2115 including projected impacts of climate change, most of the areas within the town at risk of flooding (about 25% of the current built up area) are identified as having a significant or extreme hazard from a '1 in 200 year flood' event. This means that a combination of projected flood depth and velocity of flood water would represent a significant danger for the general public.

- 5.1.3 The Environment Agency's North Devon Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009) identifies Barnstaple as an area of moderate to high flood risk where action to reduce flood risk can be taken. The flood risk is currently well managed although a relatively high number of people and associated economic impacts remain at risk from large floods.

### **5.2 Topography**

- 5.2.1 The town is at the eastern end of the Taw estuary and is enclosed by higher land to the north, east and south. Development has taken place up some of these hillsides, although the majority of the hill tops remain undeveloped, especially along the estuary sides of the ridges to the north and south of the Taw estuary.

### **5.3 Landscape**

- 5.3.1 As highlighted in section 2.16, higher land to the northeast of the town is within the Area of Great Landscape Value (see Map 2). The undeveloped hill tops and ridges around Barnstaple form an important part of the town's character and are prominent in the landscape, both from within and from outside the town.

### **5.4 Biodiversity**

- 5.4.1 Section 2.13 identifies the ecological importance of the Taw-Torridge estuary as a buffer zone for the Biosphere Reserve and as a strategic component of the district's green infrastructure network. There are a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and County Wildlife Sites around Barnstaple, where nature conservation needs to be maintained and enhanced.

## **6 Relationship to Other Centres**

- 6.1 As a sub-regional centre Barnstaple has strong links with most of the towns and villages across North Devon and across much of Torridge district. It functions as a sub-regional centre for northern Devon, providing a range of strategic community facilities such as the district hospital, cinema, leisure centre, magistrates and county courts and further/higher education at Petroc. It also provides higher order services for the town and surrounding villages including comparison shopping, healthcare, further education and alternative work, leisure and cultural opportunities.
- 6.2 Barnstaple is the hub for many of North Devon's major transport routes with main roads, minor roads and bus routes all radiating out of the town towards other towns and villages. The town is linked to Braunton and Ilfracombe along the A361 (heading north and west), South Molton and Tiverton along the A361 (heading south and east), Bideford along the A39 (heading west) and Lynton along the A39 (heading north east). The A377 heads towards Chulmleigh, Crediton and Exeter and follows the route of the Tarka branch line, the only remaining railway line in northern Devon that connects to the national rail network at Exeter.
- 6.3 Figures from the 2001 Census show commuting rates between the main towns of North Devon and Torridge. Almost 79% of the working population from Barnstaple work within the town (including Roundswell). Approximately 4.3% commute to Braunton, 2.8% to South Molton and 2.5% to Ilfracombe (including Mullacott). There are 8.8% commuting outside the district, including 2.9% commuting to Bideford and 0.9% commuting to Exeter.

- 6.4 Of the people working in Barnstaple (including Roundswell), the vast majority (82%) live within the town (including the whole of Fremington, Landkey and Tawstock parishes). There are substantial levels of commuting in from Bideford, Braunton and Ilfracombe.

Table 17: Commuting Patterns

	Where people living in Barnstaple work
Barnstaple (including Roundswell)	78.9%
Braunton (including Wrafton/Chivenor)	4.3%
South Molton	2.8%
Ilfracombe (including Mullacott)	2.5%
Rural North Devon	2.7%
Outside North Devon	8.8%

Source: 2001 Census

## 7 Community

### 7.1 Community Action Plan for Barnstaple 2006 to 2016

A Community Action Plan for Barnstaple: *Moving Forward Together* was published in June 2006. The District Council, County Council and Barnstaple Town Council prepared it jointly. Many of these actions have been delivered in whole or in part. Outstanding and ongoing proposed actions are summarised in Table 18, excluding those that have already been completed.

Table 18: Summary of the updated Barnstaple Community Action Plan

Topic	Actions
Traffic and Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and encourage bus and train usage by improving route connections, introducing bus priority measures and developing discount schemes</li> <li>• Tackle congestion</li> <li>• Promote and facilitate the development of school and employer travel plans</li> <li>• Review main route traffic signage in the town</li> <li>• Support projects to improve the quality of the town's urban environment</li> <li>• Monitor peak journey times and inform commuters of congestion – improving travel information</li> </ul>

<p>Children and Young People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect</li> <li>• Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing skills for adulthood</li> <li>• Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour</li> <li>• Economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life</li> <li>• Developing children’s centre provision</li> <li>• Addressing needs of young people not in education, training or employment</li> </ul>
<p>Community Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with business to reduce shoplifting</li> <li>• Campaigns to raise awareness amongst residents about how to protect their possessions/address volume crime</li> <li>• Targeted crackdowns on drink related incidents in hotspots</li> <li>• Review of uniformed staff / development of warden approach</li> <li>• Revitalise neighbourhood watch</li> <li>• Targeted action relating to most prolific offenders</li> <li>• Address alcohol and drug-related crime</li> </ul>
<p>Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regenerate the housing stock in Trinity / St Mary’s wards</li> <li>• Empty Homes Strategy to be written to focus on empty homes and better use of existing stock</li> <li>• Targets set on new development on brown field sites</li> <li>• Strategy / package to look at a holistic approach to financial education / support</li> <li>• Play areas and open space linked with new development</li> </ul>
<p>Heritage, Culture Sport and Leisure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Quarter Feasibility Study</li> <li>• Promote and encourage Extended Schools programme</li> <li>• Leisure Centre redevelopment</li> <li>• Review opportunities for further development of open spaces for sport and leisure for development of team sports</li> <li>• Review potential for developers of more</li> </ul>

	<p>family evening culture including cafes and restaurants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review accessibility of current facilities to low income households</li> <li>• Champion Barnstaple’s rich and diverse identity, promote cultural tourism, support creative industries and preserve historic environment</li> <li>• Explore potential for expanding heritage trail around neighbourhoods of Barnstaple</li> <li>• Continue to expand access to and use of library facilities</li> <li>• Consider how advantage can be taken on 2012 Olympics</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Business Directory of Barnstaple</li> <li>• Development of town centre including Queen Street/Bear Street car park, Cattle Market, Mill Road, Seven Brethren, Anchorwood Bank, Cultural Cluster</li> <li>• Regenerate the housing stock on Trinity / St Mary’s wards</li> <li>• Develop regeneration strategy for priority communities that have highest levels of disadvantage</li> <li>• Address needs of people in receipt of incapacity benefit in light of the pilot projects being initiated in Ilfracombe and Bideford</li> <li>• Develop financial products and services to address financial exclusion and maximise income</li> <li>• Measures to address unemployment</li> </ul>
Built and Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review neighbourhoods to identify areas that need improvements to raise pride in the area</li> <li>• Ensure that all developments are built with best design advice</li> <li>• Improve waste collection</li> <li>• Improved information for residents and business regarding climate change and reducing energy conservation</li> <li>• Act on biodiversity study to maximise public and green spaces</li> <li>• Improve flood defence</li> <li>• Sensitive development of development sites</li> <li>• Promote renewables for home and business energy</li> <li>• Education and awareness programme for</li> </ul>

	<p>landlords, owners and occupiers on energy efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle fuel poverty and other affordable warmth issues</li> <li>• Green travel plans</li> <li>• Town design statement for Barnstaple and Greenscape</li> <li>• Review use of open spaces to assess whether it is effective and sustainable</li> <li>• Negotiation and implementation of a recycling scheme for the town</li> </ul>
<p>Lifelong Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand local higher education opportunities and pursue the proposal to establish a distinct HE facility in Northern Devon</li> <li>• Share and make better use of contacts with local employers, promote apprenticeships and improve coordination of work placements</li> <li>• Continue to develop basic skills provision in formats which meet learner needs and start within their comfort zones</li> <li>• Target individuals with no or level 1 qualifications</li> <li>• Activities to bring NEET (16-20 year olds not in education, employment or training) young people into learning</li> <li>• Review curriculum and management of current arrangements for 16+ young people with learning difficulties</li> <li>• Get together key players/providers and rethink recreational learning provision in light of funding constraints</li> <li>• Support activities to offer first-steps of learning in non-threatening and non-traditional venues</li> <li>• Look at local sports and leisure clubs and organisations as a route into learning and explore the possibility of sport, multi-media and movement/dance activity as routes into learning</li> <li>• Continue to develop family learning to give parents the skills and confidence to support their children’s learning, thereby revitalising their own</li> <li>• Look at progression and learner support arrangements from basic skills and family learning programmes onto further learning</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the skills and learning needs of voluntary and community organisations including training for volunteers likely to be working with people with basic skills needs</li> <li>• As resources permit, provide drop-in face-to-face local information and advice sessions</li> <li>• Improving access: distribution / location of learning and transport to access learning</li> </ul>
<p>Promoting Independence and Equality of Opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating of Barnstaple Access Guide</li> <li>• Joined up services for older people with mental health problems</li> <li>• Carers ‘take a break’ services</li> <li>• Extension to out of hours emergency support</li> <li>• Improve use of technology, extra care housing and design of homes etc to maintain people independently</li> <li>• Improve access to leisure, learning and volunteering opportunities</li> <li>• Improve older people’s participation in the Our Town work and in their neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Improve access to information about a range of services</li> <li>• Improve availability of benefits advice and take-up campaigns to older people to pay for new expenses, such as housing maintenance</li> <li>• Develop and optimise community transport, improve public transport, training for older drivers</li> <li>• Better engagement of older people, especially hard to reach and isolated in decision-making, volunteering etc</li> <li>• Address issues of social isolation for older people living alone with few social networks</li> </ul>

Source: Thematic Actions Plans – Community Action Plan for Barnstaple

## 7.2 North Devon and Torridge Local Strategic Partnership – January 2010

7.2.1 The Local Strategic Partnership Federation Event engaged a wide range of community and economic stakeholders for each main town, each group focused on the identification of existing infrastructure deficiencies and the opportunities and solutions for future delivery to support growth proposals in each main town.

Table 19: Summary of Local Strategic Partnership Event

<b>Public Transport</b>	<b>Economy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community transport should be mainstreamed with public transport with a single point of contact. Not however a main funding priority of the LTP as congestion and road safety are the priorities</li> <li>• Shopmobility has reached capacity; need to link new facility with public transport in the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build in mechanisms to enliven the centre of the town; Queen Street / Bear Street to include community services / facilities</li> <li>• Need to enable live/work units</li> <li>• Need a mix of unit sizes</li> <li>• Villages need a few work units to assist sustainability</li> <li>• The 50 ha employment allocation should not include retail as this erodes the amount of true employment space; is 50 ha enough?</li> </ul>
<b>Sport and Leisure</b>	<b>Pedestrian and Cycle Paths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements for leisure must be fed into and inform the Core Strategy</li> <li>• Leisure Centre Development very important</li> <li>• Joined up facilities is the approach required, shared services; flexibility with a lead agency in multifunctional buildings supporting community management</li> <li>• Pitch shortage in Barnstaple</li> <li>• A real need for Youth Clubs activities based in local areas with youth workers so young people can have a safe place to gather; fights disaffection in young people</li> <li>• Health is linked to the environment and green space is important from informal recreation with mental and physical health benefits (Tarka Trail, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle town opportunities currently for Barnstaple</li> <li>• Planned cycle routes are important – help a healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Provision will encourage workforce to use these green links</li> <li>• Links to the environment are key; cycling town with DCC spending £2million with Barnstaple one of four cycling hubs. Need to get the workforce cycling with links to Ilfracombe and Bideford. Planning to upgrade the Leisure Centre and also Tarka Tennis with gymnastics regional centre of excellence with £1million extra funding</li> <li>• Green lanes are an integral part of Barnstaple, help combat anti-social behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<b>Health</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Devon College – has a capacity issue</li> <li>• Vocational Skills Centre possibly a better fit with employment land than with housing</li> <li>• Bideford College is likely to reduce pressure on Park and Torrington pupils in its catchment to use these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to agree infrastructure priorities; health linked to sport and leisure by full range of transport options</li> <li>• Requirements for health must be fed into and inform the Core Strategy</li> <li>• NHS want to bring community hospital services back into the</li> </ul>

<p>other schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall support for a new secondary school west of the Taw</li> <li>• Post-school activities for young people – plan to link between education and employment</li> <li>• North Devon College: inability to expand HE element therefore a leakage of best skills</li> <li>• ICT in the future and impact on the way education develops needs to be recognised</li> <li>• Park school – at capacity but has some space to expand</li> <li>• One stop Shop Schools – with medical facilities, youth clubs, etc.</li> <li>• Current capacity – Park School 1500; Pilton School 1350; Bideford now 1750 new 1800</li> <li>• Need to be aware of pressure on schools re. budgets and excess places</li> <li>• Obligation to provide places for all children up to age 18 – through school / college; vocational courses or apprenticeships</li> <li>• Delivery – there is a key need to plan the budgets of the different delivery partners/agencies in order to synchronise planning &amp; delivery</li> </ul>	<p>community and services devolved from Exeter; also help meet clinical targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport to health centres is an issue and should be a priority</li> <li>• Community transport is key and should be mainstreamed with explicit recognition of its potential role in the Core Strategy</li> <li>• Satellite health centres in Forches and Yeo Valley</li> <li>• Explore health satellite centres in the community with links to a Health Centre</li> <li>• Need to ‘age proof’ all health services</li> <li>• Health surgeries are changing – proposing hubs for integrated services not just ‘traditional’ GP surgeries – preventative services increasingly important</li> <li>• Want to undertake more ‘near service provision’</li> <li>• Predicted age range is important: increase of 50% in 70 – 75 year olds predicted</li> <li>• Financial constraints to health plans</li> <li>• Traditional treatment centres changing to hubs with an integrated community focus – outgrown existing health centres (Boutport Street Health centre lease about to expire so working with PCT re. new location –should relate to planned growth in Barnstaple)</li> <li>• How to weight out health centre requirements? Bring services into local practices away from bigger queue centres (for example, RD&amp; E Exeter)</li> <li>• Health projections; 2,400 (4.9%) 2006 to 2021 in 70 to 74 age group with birth rate approximately 500 p.a.</li> </ul>
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## 8 Vision

- 8.1 The following vision was published in the Pre-Publication North Devon and Torridge Joint Core Strategy (January 2010).

*“Barnstaple will strengthen its lead role as a vibrant and innovative sub-regional centre in commerce, culture, education and service provision for the north of the county. Surrounded by green hills and maximising the potential of its waterfront, the historic town will develop as an exemplar of sustainable living within its environmental limits and as a centre for new low-carbon technologies permeated by a network of green infrastructure and accessible transport initiatives linking together distinctive sustainable communities.”*

- 8.2 The vision from the Community Action Plan for Barnstaple in 2006 was:

*“modern, 21st century town - building on a proud heritage but looking to the future – a dynamic, successful town where everyone is encouraged to achieve the best for themselves, their family and the community”.*

## 9 Key Land Uses

### 9.1 Housing

- 9.1.1 The housing requirement in Table 20 was established from the now abolished Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS) based on an overall North Devon housing requirement of 10,900 from 2006 to 2026. Following consultation responses to the Pre-Publication North Devon and Torridge Joint Core Strategy, together with the proposed abolition of the RSS, it has now been decided to review the proposed level of housing provision for Barnstaple and for the district as a whole.
- 9.1.2 The strategic housing requirement for Barnstaple in the Pre-Publication North Devon and Torridge Joint Core Strategy included Fremington and Yelland and one strategic site allocation was proposed there to help meet the needs of the wider Barnstaple area.

Table 20: Housing Requirements 2006 – 2026

	Dwellings
Barnstaple housing requirement	6,000
Completions 2006 – 2011	552
Commitments 31 March 2011 (including dwellings under construction, existing planning permissions and outstanding local plan allocations)	1,333
Additional non-strategic provision	4,115

Source: North Devon and Torridge Joint pre-submission Core Strategy (January 2010) and NDC Annual Housing Monitoring

- 9.1.3 As of October 2010 there were 830 households on the housing register living in Barnstaple, which equates to about 33% of the District's overall need based on the housing register. It is also recognised that not all households in housing need will be on the register. In Barnstaple there are approximately 2,100 social houses, about 19% of the total housing stock in the area, which is higher than the overall proportion of social housing in North Devon (10%) and Devon (13%) but slightly below the national figure of around 20%. The District Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Plan identifies Barnstaple as one of the top priority areas for the delivery of affordable housing within the district.
- 9.1.4 Another 50-bed extra-care housing scheme is required within the town, in addition to existing provision at Norah Bellot Court.
- 9.1.5 In 2010 there were 74 second homes or less than 1% of housing stock.

## **9.2 Employment**

- 9.2.1 According to the Joint Rural Devon Employment Land Review (2006), the District as a whole needs to provide 45 hectares of new employment land by 2026 assuming significant provision of B1(a) office space within town centres. Demand is expected to change from light manufacturing to offices over this time frame, and mixed schemes should be promoted rather than traditional employment land. Town centre regeneration opportunities should be brought forward to fulfil an economic role rather than simply supporting retail centre functions.
- 9.2.2 Table 21 provides a summary of employment land provision in Barnstaple. There are over 5 hectares of undeveloped land at Roundswell Business Park where there is no planning permission for development apart from the original outline consent. Whilst there was permission for a new factory at Roundswell for Leaderflush and Shapland, part of that site has since been redeveloped for a new special needs school. Therefore, the extant consent on the remaining land is considered to be no longer developable. In addition there are 11 hectares allocated for future business park extensions off Old Torrington Road and west of Brynsworthy Lane (BAR3) that do not yet have planning permission.
- 9.2.3 There is currently over 19,500 m<sup>2</sup> of vacant floor space available within the town. These premises range from 34 m<sup>2</sup> to 500 m<sup>2</sup> in size and their distribution around the town is shown in Table 21. Most of the floor space at Pottington is industrial, with a mix of industrial and light industrial premises available at Roundswell and Whiddon Valley and predominantly offices in the Town Centre and at Newport.

Table 21: Barnstaple Employment Land Provision

	<b>Units</b>	<b>Gross Floor Area m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Gross Undeveloped Area (Hectare) Without Permission</b>	<b>Gross Undeveloped Area (Hectare) With Permission</b>	<b>Gross Area No Longer Available for Employment</b>
Roundswell Business Park	16	8545	11.0	5.1	1.4
Pottington & Braunton Road	15	7895	0	0	0
Town Centre	18	2122	0	0	0
Barbican & Newport	3	429	0	0	0
Whiddon Valley	2	527	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>19,518</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.4</b>

Source: North Devon Council (31<sup>st</sup> March 2011)

9.2.4 The Joint Rural Devon Employment Land Review (2006) identified 12 existing employment areas within the built up area of Barnstaple as well as a large number of offices located in the town centre. It confirms Barnstaple as the sub-regional centre. It concluded that Roundswell and Whiddon Valley both achieved a high market ranking and a high physical ranking. The Mill Road industrial estate scored below average in terms of marketability.

9.2.5 Demand for employment space in North Devon is highest in Barnstaple and along the North Devon Link Road. The level of demand from local companies may outstrip land availability if more development potential for (B1a) offices is not found in town centres and needs to be met on employment land.

### 9.3 Retail

9.3.1 Barnstaple's level of retail floor space (in 2003) is shown in Table 22. Barnstaple has a substantially higher level of retail floorspace and number of units compared to Bideford and North Devon's Area Centres, which demonstrates its importance as a sub-regional shopping centre and its range of comparison shopping opportunities. In addition to the town centre, there are substantial retail opportunities at Seven Brethren, Roundswell, St Johns and Pottington.

Table 22: Retail Floor Space & Units

Centre	Total Net Floorspace (sq.m.)	Total Number of Units
Barnstaple	71,533	427
Bideford	42,000	227
Braunton	4,384	100
Ilfracombe	8,952	162
South Molton	6,029	101

Source: North Devon Retail Study (Scott Wilson Primary Research 2004)  
(Tables 3.1 & 3.12)

- 9.3.2 The trade mix for Barnstaple identified in the North Devon Retail Study (2006) shows a relatively low proportion of food/convenience shopping gross floorspace (7.3%) and vacant units (3.8%), both less than half the national averages. In contrast, the proportion of comparison floorspace (68.0%) is substantially above the national average (53.2%), which reflects the town's role as a sub-regional centre with a comprehensive range of comparison goods to serve its catchment population.
- 9.3.3 The Retail Study concludes that if trading continues at the 2005 rate then approximately 18,094 sq. metres (net) of new comparison retail floor space would be required in Barnstaple by 2016, rising to 23,919 sq. metres (net) by 2021. The Retail Study also concluded that if trading continues at the 2005 rate then approximately 8,752 sq. metres (net) of new convenience retail floor space would be required in Barnstaple by 2016, rising to 14,246 sq. metres (net) by 2021.
- 9.3.4 Since the North Devon Retail Study (2006), new stores have opened at Lidl and Argos, a new larger store at Tesco (to replace Brian Fords), with an extension to Sainsbury's, a mezzanine floor at Homebase and a new Burger King at Pottington. These developments provide an additional combined gross sales area of approximately 8,300 sq. metres, a mix of comparison and convenience floorspace. There is also an unimplemented consent at Anchorwood Bank for 11,000 sq. metres gross floorspace and sites identified in the Local Plan for future town centre expansion. Consequently, additional comparison and convenience retail floor space for Barnstaple up to 2021 remains to be met, and additional retail needs may arise to reflect future population growth.

9.3.5 The Retail Study assessed the town centre in December 2005 as being vital, viable and providing an excellent retail choice for its immediate catchment area and the wider population of northern Devon. Leisure and entertainment facilities add variety to the town centre and generate an evening economy. Barnstaple had a large and diverse range of independent retailers that help to establish the character of the town centre. In particular the Pannier Market helps attract independent traders and tourists to the town centre.

9.3.6 In 2005 vacancy levels (5.4%) were half the national average. In November 2010 there was an 11% vacancy rate, although only 5% in the primary area, which is below the national average. This compares to the SW regional average of approximately 11%. An updated Retail and Leisure Needs Study is currently being prepared.

#### **9.4 Community Facilities**

9.4.1 Several of the town's primary schools are at or over capacity (Table 10) and additional primary schools are required to accommodate future growth in the town. The community colleges also have limited spare capacity.

9.4.2 Barnstaple has four Health Centres, three in the town centre and one in Newport. There is inadequate room to expand on the current sites, with further capacity required as the town grows over time. There is currently no provision to the west of the river Taw, apart from the medical centre at Fremington. The District Hospital in Barnstaple serves the whole of northern Devon, including a full accident and emergency service.

9.4.3 Barnstaple has a wide selection of sports provision although the quality and quantity of pitches is still deficient for some sports. There is inadequate provision of equipped play areas and informal public open space, especially on the western side of the town. The North Devon Leisure Centre is based in Barnstaple and current refurbishment will help to maintain the building to meet the future expectations and aspirations of the community.

#### **9.5 Physical Infrastructure**

9.5.1 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009) identifies that the Barnstaple tidal defence was constructed in 1984 and ranges from 6.0 to 8.0 metres above ordnance datum (AOD). Improved defences will be required as a result of anticipated rises in sea level. Surface water outfalls into the river Taw can be tide locked or locked due to high fluvial flow or a mix of both.



9.5.2 Barnstaple has a number of foul sewage pumping stations that discharge to Ashford treatment works. Each pumping station has a limited capacity that could restrict development. Sustainable drainage systems, water storage and soakaways are needed to reduce increasing surface water flows in surface water sewers and discharges to surface water sewers should be limited to greenfield runoff rates.

9.5.3 Access to superfast broadband is essential to homes and businesses in rural communities as much as in towns and cities. Funding has been secured from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) for delivery of superfast broadband across Devon and Somerset over the next 5 years.

## **9.6 Transport**

9.6.1 Traffic circulation within and around the town improved with the opening of the Western Bypass and Downstream Bridge in May 2007, although traffic flows continue to increase. Several key junctions within the town are currently at capacity, including the junctions around Roundswell and Whiddon Valley. In the longer term, the capacity of the main roads to the south of the town (A39 and A361) may also need upgrading to accommodate future growth within the town or require traffic management measures.

9.6.2 Any future development should seek to enhance the green infrastructure network within and around the town to facilitate improved opportunities for walking and cycling. There are some strategic footpaths and cycle links starting from and passing through the town as identified in section 2.18 and on Map 1. It is important to connect local feeder routes servicing key destinations with this wider network.

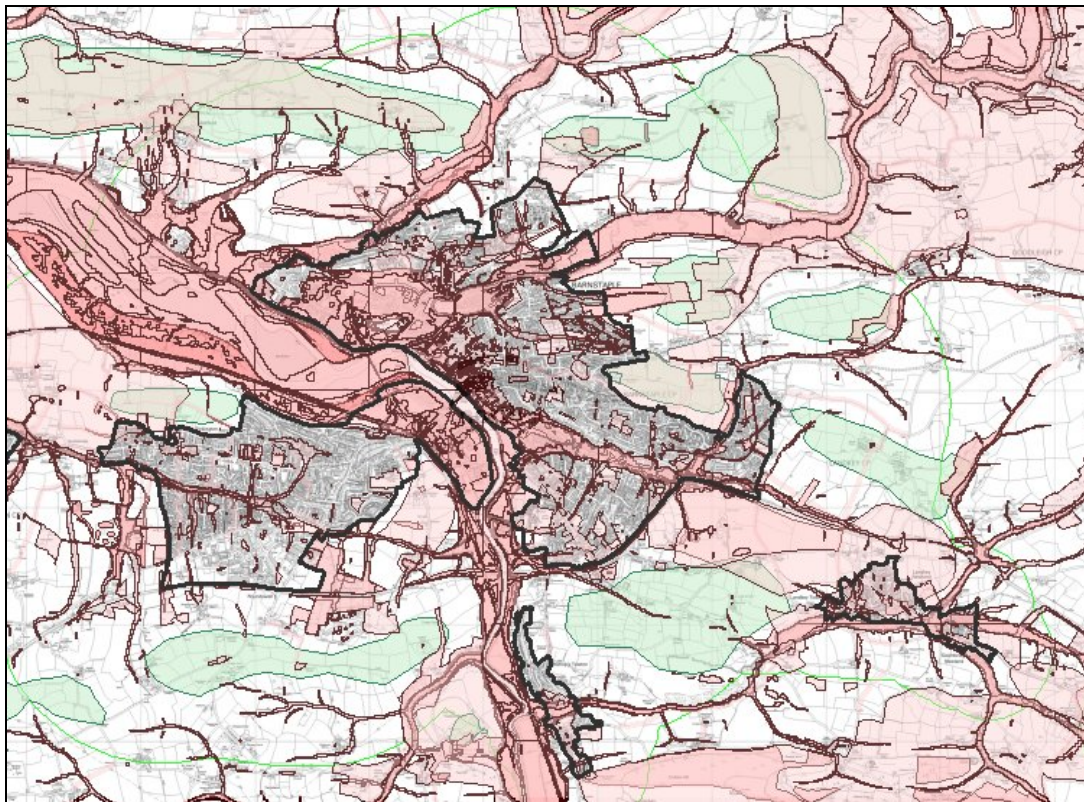
9.6.3 There are some key barriers to connectivity across the town, including the River Taw and the railway line, with connectivity focused through the key bridges. Whilst footpath and cycle links exist through the town, there are no orbital routes that would improve connectivity around the town. Additional links between Roundswell and Newport would improve connectivity.

## **10 Potential for Growth**

10.1 There are a number of environmental constraints within and around Barnstaple, including areas at risk of flooding, SSSIs, county wildlife sites and the landscape setting of the town and estuary. Consequently, potential areas of growth are restricted, although there remain some opportunities for development within and around the existing settlement.

10.2 The 'Environmental Capacity Study' for Barnstaple mapped the distribution of environmental and heritage designations around the town, reflecting their relative significance (see Figure 2). The depth of colour indicates the individual or cumulative significance of these constraints. Hilltops and other elevated land (shown in green) are the only constraint not utilising an existing designation. This map helps to identify strategic areas with no or relatively few constraints that would be capable of supporting a degree of future development without significant impact upon these constraints.

Figure 3: Cumulative constraints around Barnstaple



Source: Environmental Capacity Study for Barnstaple (2011)

10.3 Areas with potential development capacity were also assessed to establish their strategic development capacity based on local environmental and infrastructure constraints. Those strategic areas with environmental and infrastructural capacity for potential growth outside or adjacent to the development boundary were identified (see Map 2). To facilitate the assessment of these potential growth areas, the unpublished North Devon & Torridge Core Strategy Strategic Site Assessment (November 2008) have been referenced.

#### **10.4 North of Pilton – Option 1**

- 10.4.1 Land to the north of Pilton and North Devon District Hospital lays on elevated land either side of the A39 towards Shirwell. The highway network north of Pilton has limited spare capacity and the main junction serving the hospital would need to be improved for development on either side of the main road.

#### **10.5 Goodleigh Road – Option 2**

- 10.5.1 Land on the eastern side of Barnstaple is on sloping land either side of Goodleigh Road. To the north of this road, the land slopes down to the south and west, with the highest land in the north east corner forming the edge of an Area of Great Landscape Value. A public footpath crosses this land from the green lane down towards Goodleigh Road.
- 10.5.2 To the south of Goodleigh Road are Maidenford Hill and Waytown. Maidenford Hill is elevated and very prominent in the wider landscape setting of Barnstaple. Waytown is situated between Goodleigh Road and Maidenford Lane, sloping south towards Coney Gut and the edge of Whiddon Valley.

#### **10.6 Westacott – Option 3**

- 10.6.1 Land on the eastern side of Whiddon Valley and to the north of the A361 slopes down from higher land at Acland Barton. Views from the A361 are screened by the trees alongside the stream immediately to the north of the road. The access to Whiddon Valley from the Tesco roundabout is already at capacity so a separate access from the A361 would be required for this site, possibly an improvement of the existing Landkey junction.

#### **10.7 Portmore – Option 4**

- 10.7.1 Land between Portmore golf course, the A39 and Landkey Road (Mount Sandford Road) is on the south-eastern edge of Barnstaple. It is separated from Barnstaple by the A39, which reduces connectivity to the town. The land slopes down from Landkey Road, with the top of the site most visible from the A361 and Whiddon Valley.

#### **10.8 Larkbear – Option 5**

- 10.8.1 Larkbear is the area between Tower View and Lake on the south-western side of the town, north of the A39 between Old Torrington Road and the new western bypass (A361). Land slopes down to Lake stream from Petroc and Tower View to the north and from the A361 and Larkbear Plantation to the south.

10.8.2 The site is well related to the built up area and is relatively close to employment opportunities at Seven Brethren, Roundswell and the town centre. Connectivity to the town centre is constrained by the A361, River Taw, railway line and Seven Brethren and therefore traffic would be focused onto the Grade I listed Longbridge.

### **10.9 South of Roundswell – Option 6**

10.9.1 Land to the south of the A39 is close to Roundswell business park but is separated by the A39. The Roundswell roundabout forms a strategic gateway into Barnstaple, which would need to be upgraded, with undeveloped countryside to the south of the A39. The land slopes north down towards the A39, although land adjoining the A39 is relatively flat.

### **10.10 West of Roundswell – Option 7**

10.10.1 Tews Lane forms the western boundary of Roundswell and currently forms a natural boundary of the town. Land to the west is relatively flat and contains Fremington Claypits SSSI, Higher Gorse Claypits county wildlife site and is safeguarded in part for its boulder clay deposits. Roundswell playing fields are also situated to the west of Tews Lane. The site is well related to the built up area of Roundswell and is close to employment opportunities and shops at Roundswell business park.

### **10.11 North of Bickington – Option 8**

10.11.1 There is a prominent ridge to the north of Bickington, beyond which the open landscape slopes down to the Taw estuary. On the Bickington side of the ridge development would be less prominent in the wider landscape, although the setting of Bickington conservation area needs to be protected. Vehicular access from the B3233 to land north of Bickington is limited and highway improvements would be required from either North Lane or Mead Park.

### **10.12 Land within the Town – Option 9**

10.12.1 There are a number of large sites providing key redevelopment opportunities within the town. Large sites with planning consent are identified in section 3 (Table 16) and include Anchorwood Bank, the former St. Joseph's Nursing Home site on Landkey Road and regeneration of Forches and Woodville estates. Other key sites with redevelopment potential include land adjoining North Devon hospital, the Queen Street / Bear Street car park and the former gasworks site at Barbican Road, which will deliver opportunities for housing and economic growth.

10.12.2 A number of other key redevelopment sites within the town are alongside the river and consequently at risk of flooding, which will restrict the potential uses for which the sites could be used. However, appropriate redevelopment of these sites will help to improve and enhance the town's street scene and river frontage, as well as delivering required economic growth.

## **11 Key Issues**

11.1 Delivering appropriate levels of growth to enhance Barnstaple's sub-regional status and meet the community's needs whilst recognising its environmental constraints.

11.1.1 Barnstaple provides the economic heart of North Devon and it is here that pressures for new retail, leisure, commercial and industrial development are focused. The prosperity of the district, and of northern Devon as a whole, is closely linked to that of Barnstaple, so opportunities to create new jobs and support the town's economic growth have a key role in stimulating and helping to regenerate northern Devon's wider economy.

11.1.2 As a sub-regional centre, Barnstaple needs to help meet the economic and community needs across North Devon, including those of the town itself. Key infrastructure and higher order services and facilities, such as a district hospital, crematorium, leisure centre and cinema to meet the wider needs of northern Devon are, and should continue to be, focused on Barnstaple as the largest town with the best opportunities for access by means of transport other than the private car. Consequently, Barnstaple will be expected to provide key services, facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of both the town and the surrounding area.

11.1.3 There are a number of environmental constraints within and around Barnstaple, including areas at risk of flooding, wildlife designations and the landscape setting of the town, which will restrict opportunities for growth to meet the town's future needs. However there remain some opportunities for development within and around the existing settlement, as identified in section 10.

11.1.4 The key issue affecting Barnstaple is identifying appropriate levels of housing and economic growth that will: strengthen Barnstaple's economy; deliver additional housing to help meet the town's current and future housing needs; balance the provision of new homes against provision of new job opportunities; help to deliver new infrastructure to meet the needs of the town and wider area without exceeding Barnstaple's environmental capacity defined by its environmental constraints. The current imbalance of housing and employment opportunities in Barnstaple and Bideford, which currently leads to

commuting, should not be exacerbated. Housing numbers in the Joint Pre-Submission Core Strategy (January 2010) are to be reviewed in response to the spatial issues affecting the town and following the abolition of draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West.

## 11.2 Delivering Housing to Meet the Town's Future Needs

11.2.1 There has been substantial housing development in Barnstaple since the 1980s, although lower construction rates have resulted from recent recessionary market conditions. However, there remains a substantial supply of developable housing land including a number of unimplemented planning permissions (see Tables 8 and 16).

11.2.2 Housing growth will help to provide employees for future business opportunities within the town, thereby reducing the need to commute into the town from surrounding settlements. Housing growth will also facilitate and help to fund provision of new and improved infrastructure and community facilities that are currently over-stretched or lacking within the town.

11.2.3 Future growth could also facilitate provision of a broader variety of housing stock, including new homes to meet the needs of an ageing population. It would also deliver more affordable housing to meet identified needs for the town and North Devon as a whole.

## 11.3 Improving Locals Skills, Training Opportunities, Job Opportunities and Wage Levels

11.3.1 Average incomes for North Devon and Torridge are very low at a national level (section 2.4). Economic development across northern Devon should seek to increase average incomes by attracting new and better paid employment opportunities. This could include attracting growth sectors such as knowledge and skills based businesses and renewable energy technologies. Provision of superfast broadband would help to facilitate this. Delivery of adequate employment land is also important and an employment space delivery plan is required.

11.3.2 Petroc provides further and higher education courses and has established links with Plymouth University. Creating a university level resource for North Devon with close links to local universities would: provide an opportunity for students to remain in northern Devon whilst they study; enable Petroc to develop research opportunities and foster closer links with local businesses; and potentially foster a culture to attract knowledge and skills based businesses.

11.3.3 The vitality and viability of Barnstaple town centre should be strengthened to enhance its contribution to the local economy and to secure diverse retail opportunities in an accessible location for residents and for a wide catchment across northern Devon. Securing higher local wage levels in Barnstaple and North Devon should also help to improve the affordability of lower quartile house prices for many households currently unable to access the property ladder.

#### 11.4 Improving Quality of Life

11.4.1 Quality of Life is a multi-dimensional concept that reflects individual and community perceptions of health, longevity and well-being; crime and safety; education and work opportunities; access to suitable housing; financial well-being; equality and access to services; quality of the natural and built environment; culture and community identity including neighbourhood structure and community cohesion. New developments should contribute to improving Quality of Life through extensions to the town shaping places to meet the needs of the local community, as well as by taking opportunities to facilitate improvements within the existing built up area.

11.4.2 Community aspirations should be raised by improving opportunities for training towards achieving better skills and higher paid jobs, as well as by providing sufficient homes accessible and affordable to local people to meet their needs. These issues are addressed in more detail in the preceding sections.

11.4.3 The cultural profile of Barnstaple should be raised to reflect the town's role as a sub-regional centre. The public realm will be enhanced through redevelopment opportunities within the town as well as through management of public spaces and provision of appropriate street furniture. The quality of the built environment will be enhanced by high quality, local distinctive design that reinforces Barnstaple's character and identity.

11.4.4 An enhanced green infrastructure network around the town would improve opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists as well as improving accessibility to natural greenspaces within and from the town. Accessibility to green infrastructure will help to facilitate opportunities for healthy living.

11.4.5 Barnstaple does not currently have a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), so does not meet Natural England's ANGST Plus standard (see section 2.13). Opportunities to designate new Local Nature Reserves totalling at least 35 hectares should be considered, ideally with good access from different parts of the town. The community woodlands at Yeo Valley and Whiddon Valley have potential to become future LNRs as these sites have identified biodiversity value, are within public ownership and can be

managed for nature conservation value, which would fulfil the requirements for a LNR. Land along the Tarka Trail and at Anchor Wood could also be considered.

## 11.5 Securing Improved Connectivity

11.5.1 Barnstaple and the whole of northern Devon are relatively remote from strategic road and rail networks. There is little that can be done about its geographical location although opportunities to improve accessibility to Tiverton Parkway station from northern Devon should be explored, for example a direct bus route. The rolling stock on the Tarka Line needs upgrading with more carriages available at peak times.

11.5.2 The capacity of the main roads and key road junctions to the south of the town also needs upgrading to accommodate future growth within and around the town.

11.5.3 Provision of superfast broadband would enhance virtual connectivity with the rest of the country and beyond. It would facilitate greater opportunities for a knowledge based economy and would help to mitigate some of the economic disadvantages of northern Devon's relatively remote location. Access to superfast broadband is essential to homes and businesses in rural communities as much as in towns and cities. Funding has been secured from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) for delivery of superfast broadband across Devon and Somerset over the next 5 years.

## 11.6 Improving Opportunities for Sustainable Travel

11.6.1 Barnstaple has a good network of pedestrian and cycle routes, including sections of strategic routes such as the Tarka Trail, South West Coast Path and Macmillan Way. However there are opportunities to improve links to the strategic network and enhance connectivity to key destinations throughout the town, including education retail, leisure and employment uses. An enhanced pedestrian and cycle network would help to deliver opportunities for healthy living.

11.6.2 Any redevelopment along Barnstaple's river frontage should take opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle links to the Tarka Trail and enhance the town's green infrastructure network. Elsewhere in the town, future development should take opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle links towards the Tarka Trail and estuary.

11.6.3 Opportunities need to be taken to encourage and facilitate an increase in journeys made by sustainable modes of transport given that there are already regular bus links to Bideford and all the main towns in North Devon, including during evenings and weekends. Major new developments around the town should explore opportunities to connect



to these routes and facilitate improved connectivity through adjoining residential and employment areas. Improved connectivity between Barnstaple's bus station and railway station would also help to facilitate more integrated opportunities for sustainable travel within the town and from northern Devon.

## 11.7 Delivering New Infrastructure to Meet the Town's Needs

- 11.7.1 Existing infrastructure within Barnstaple has limited spare capacity including existing schools and healthcare facilities, as well as a shortage of informal open space, equipped play areas and some sports facilities. Future growth of the town will need to deliver additional infrastructure to meet the needs of new development and help address existing deficiencies. In particular, additional infrastructure provision is required on the western side of Barnstaple, where there are currently no medical facilities, no allotments, a single primary school at Sticklepath and limited provision of open space and sports facilities.
- 11.7.2 Key road junctions will need upgrading to accommodate potential growth and provision will need to be made for the funding of necessary junction improvements. Any future development on the western side of Barnstaple will need to facilitate increased capacity of the Roundswell and Cedars roundabouts.
- 11.7.3 The District Hospital will need to cater for potential population growth across northern Devon as well as the health needs of an ageing population. This growth may generate sufficient critical mass for some specialist services to be provided at the Hospital rather than at Exeter, substantially improving accessibility from the northern part of the county.

## 11.8 Regenerating Key Sites

- 11.8.1 There are several vacant or underused, previously developed sites within or adjoining Barnstaple town centre that are of strategic importance to the settlement, including Anchorwood Bank, Queen Street car park and land at Mill Road. Seven Brethren also provides an opportunity for redevelopment just outside the existing town centre. Some of these sites adjoin the river Taw and consequently are at risk of flooding. Decisions on the future use for all these sites need to address the suitability of proposed uses in terms of their current and future vulnerability to flooding and opportunities to enhance the town's built heritage and river frontage. Opportunities to make better use of sites at risk of flooding should be explored in liaison with the Environment Agency.
- 11.8.2 There may also be opportunities for water compatible uses to enhance the town centre, deliver economic growth, improve green infrastructure networks around the town or deliver additional community facilities, such

as allotments and parks. The national planning policy approach to flood risk is currently under review and may become more permissive.

## 12 Conclusion

12.1 As a sub-regional centre, Barnstaple serves the needs of both the town's population and of communities across northern Devon. It has experienced high levels of growth over recent years and remains a focus for future growth. The town is the economic heart of the district and provides an opportunity to deliver sustainable economic growth and to stimulate economic growth over a wider area. Barnstaple can help to deliver higher paid job opportunities and needs to address pockets of deprivation within the town. New and improved infrastructure is required to meet existing deficiencies within Barnstaple as well as to meet the needs of future growth across northern Devon. However, development pressures for employment, housing, retail and leisure growth will need to be balanced against a combination of environmental constraints within and around the town including substantial areas at risk of flooding.

12.2 A total of eight strategic growth options have been identified.

## 13 What Happens Next?

13.1 You are invited to comment on the issues raised in this document, including identifying any opportunities and/or issues raised by the potential growth options identified in section 10 (refer to Map 2). This is in addition to potential redevelopment of brownfield sites within the town (Option 9).

- North of Pilton – Option 1
- Goodleigh Road – Option 2
- Westacott – Option 3
- Portmore – Option 4
- Larkbear – Option 5
- South of Roundswell – Option 6
- West of Roundswell – Option 7
- North of Bickington – Option 8

13.2 You need to use your knowledge of the area, taking account of surrounding sensitive landscapes, topography, areas subject to flooding and the existing built up area, to help inform your decision.

**(1) Which of these sites are the most appropriate locations to deliver sustainable growth for Barnstaple, to meet the town's future needs and priorities?**

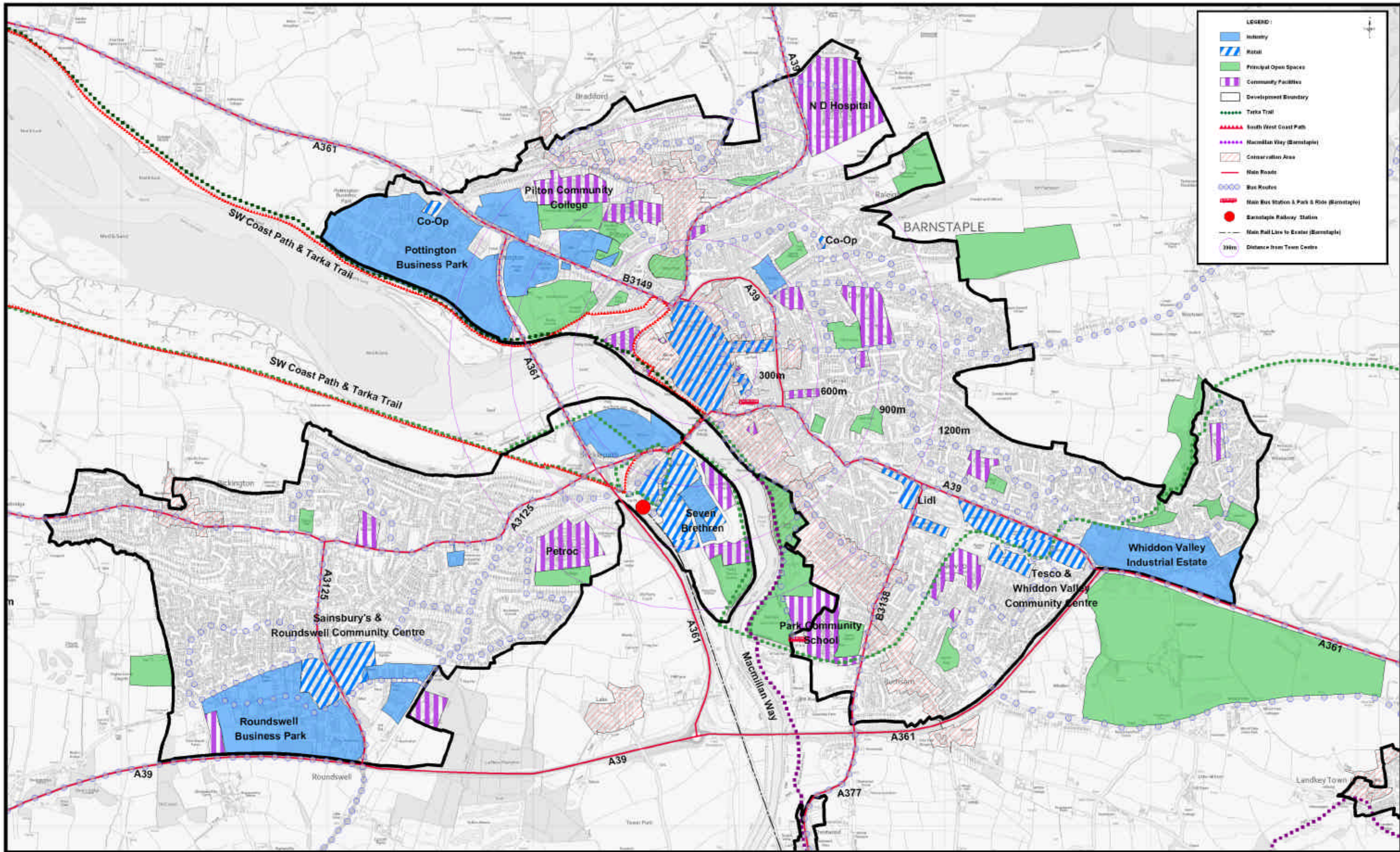
- 13.3 The Key Issues for the town are identified in section 11. These will need to be addressed by working together to help achieve sustainable growth and meet the community's aspirations. The joint Core Strategy will help to deliver this.

**(2) Have the most relevant Key Issues for Barnstaple been identified?**

- 13.4 Some of the Key Issues identified can only be addressed through further development, with funding for delivery of additional infrastructure dependent upon future development.

**(3) What level of growth is necessary and appropriate to address the Key Issues identified for Barnstaple?**

- 13.5 Feedback to this Town Study will be used to inform the vision, strategy and proposals for Barnstaple to be included within a revised version of the joint Core Strategy to be published in early 2012.

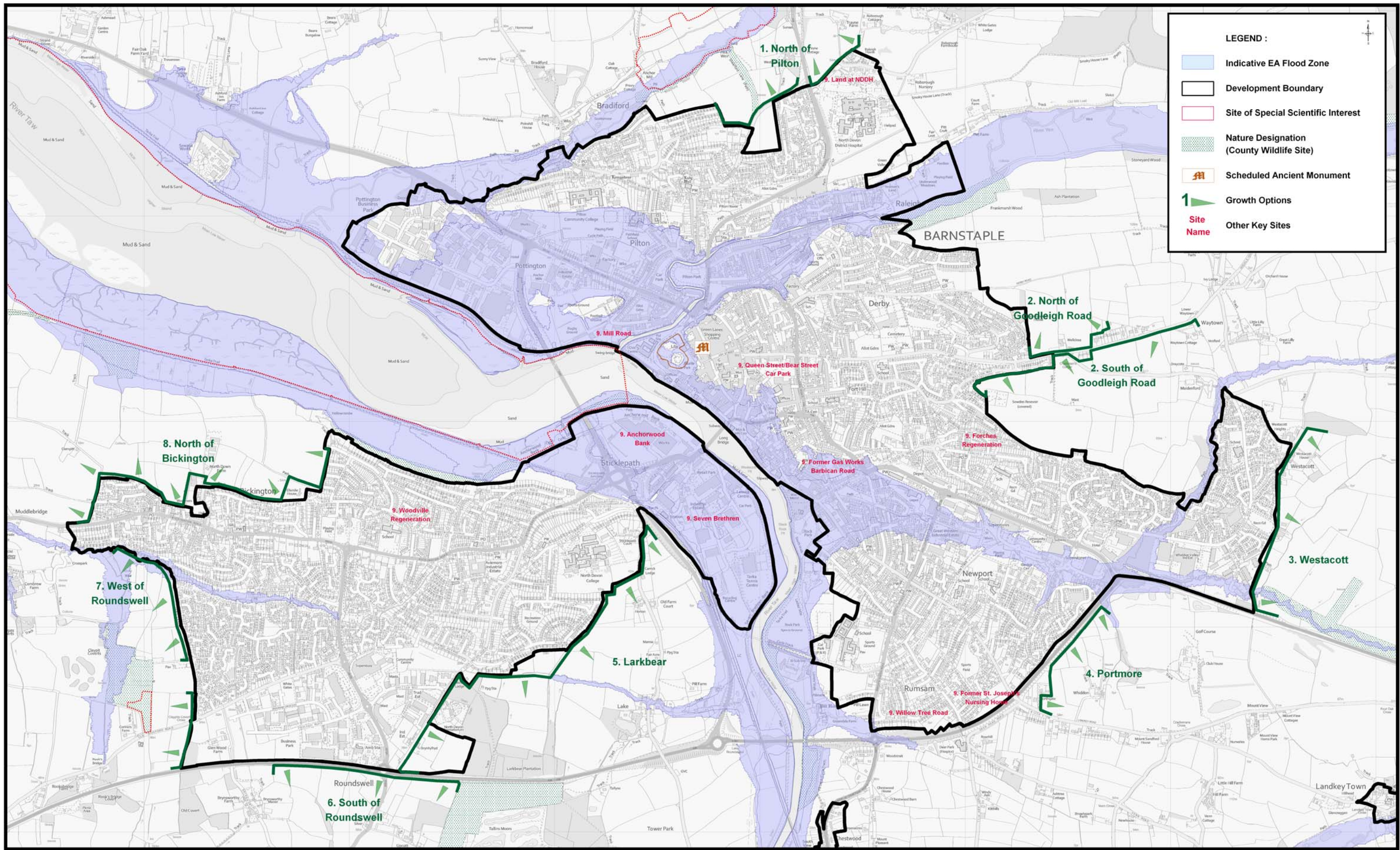


Barnstaple Town Profile  
**Map 1 : Existing Land Uses**



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Barnstaple Town Profile

## Map 2 : Barnstaple Constraints and Growth Options

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