

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the St. Stephen- in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Scoping Report

St. Stephen-in-Brannel Parish Council

February 2023

Quality information

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011¹ and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012², and in the context of the adopted Cornwall Local Plan³. The key information relating to the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan is presented in **Table 1.1** below. The neighbourhood area is depicted in **Appendix A** (see Figure A.1).

Table 1.1: Key information relating to the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Responsible Authority	Cornwall Council
Title of Plan	St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a neighbourhood plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030.</p> <p>The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.</p>
Timescale	2010 to 2030
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the civil parish of St. Stephen-in-Brannel, located in mid Cornwall, as shown in the figure in Appendix A.
Summary of content	The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area.
Plan contact point	<p>Linda Ranger: Clerk and RFO, St. Stephen-in-Brannel Parish Council</p> <p>Email: clerk@ststepheninbrannel-pc.gov.uk</p>

¹ UK Government (2011) 'Localism Act 2011' can be accessed [here](#).

² UK Government (2012) 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012' can be accessed [here](#).

³ Cornwall Council (2016) 'Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030' can be accessed [here](#).

Planning policy context

- 1.3 The key document for the Cornwall Local Plan, 'Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2010-2030'⁴, was adopted in November 2016. It sets out the main planning approach and policies for Cornwall to meet the county's economic, environmental, and social needs within the plan period and work towards its aims for the future. The emerging Cornwall Climate Change Development Plan Document (DPD) adds detail to the Cornwall Local Plan, aiming to help address climate change, by expanding on and replacing some Local Plan policies. The aim is to address the impacts of climate change, sitting alongside Government legislation. The DPD was due to be adopted February 2023.⁵
- 1.4 The Cornwall Local Plan does not set out a housing requirement for the parish, however it does indicate that St. Stephen-in-Brannel parish is within Zone 5 under Policy 8: Affordable Housing. This means any housing development that comes forward in the neighbourhood area should set out to meet an affordable housing target of 25% of the total development.
- 1.5 Neighbourhood plans form part of the development plan for Cornwall Council, alongside, but not as a replacement for, the Cornwall Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Cornwall Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Cornwall Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Cornwall, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.
- 1.6 In terms of its key objectives, the St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood plan seeks to support new infill, some limited rounding-off in suitable locations, 'brownfield land' development, and for unidentified affordable housing led 'exception' sites to come forward. This reflects the provisions of the Local Plan. The neighbourhood plan therefore seeks to identify the potential housing numbers likely to be produced by these forms of development in the neighbourhood area, and then set local policies that will help secure the most appropriate and sustainable forms of development that suit local needs, character and environment.

SEA for the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan

SEA screening for the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.7 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, Neighbourhood Plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:
 - 1) the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared within a neighbourhood area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example, Special

⁴ Cornwall Council (2016) 'Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2010-2030' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵ Cornwall Council (2023) 'Cornwall Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (DPD)' can be accessed [here](#)

Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and

2) the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development⁶.

1.8 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for housing or employment uses. Instead, a central element of the Neighbourhood Plan's emerging policies is to implement development boundaries and designate local green space. However, given the neighbourhood area's proximity to a range of environmental constraints (including Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and a World Heritage Site), Cornwall Council (2022)⁷ has concluded that the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA.

SEA explained

1.9 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues.

1.10 The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.11 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- i. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
- ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

SEA scoping explained

1.12 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the policy context for the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan and SEA to summarise the key messages arising (see **Appendix B**).
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA and identifying problems or opportunities ('issues') within the neighbourhood area that should be a particular focus of the SEA (see **Chapter 2** and **Appendix A**); and

⁶ DLUHC (February 2022) 'Chief Planner's Newsletter, February 2022 "Strategic Environmental Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: Timely and effective screening"' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷ Cornwall Council (2022) St Stephen in Brannel Parish Neighbourhood Plan – SEA and HRA Screening

- Considering this information to develop an SEA Framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment (see **Chapter 3**).

1.13 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Landscape and villagescape
- Historic environment
- Air, Land, soil, and water resources
- Community wellbeing (including transportation)

1.14 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive⁸. These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects.

2. Key issues for the neighbourhood area (and SEA)

Introduction

- 2.1 A summary of the key issues for the neighbourhood area (and SEA) is presented below (by SEA theme). The key issues have been identified and informed by a review of the available baseline information for the neighbourhood area.
- 2.2 Sources of baseline information has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps, MAGIC Interactive Map⁹, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England¹⁰, Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification maps^{11,12}, Google Earth¹³, reports and interactive mapping layers available on Cornwall Council's webpages¹⁴, and baseline studies provided by the Steering Group (available to access via the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan website)¹⁵.
- 2.3 Maps and figures of the baseline information are presented in **Appendix A**. The policy context review (which includes the key plans, policies, and strategies that have informed the SEA scoping process) is presented in **Appendix B**.

⁸ The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'

⁹ MAGIC (2023) 'Interactive Map' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰ Environment Agency (2023) 'Flood Map for Planning' can be accessed [here](#).

¹¹ Natural England (2010) 'Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps and Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land' can be accessed [here](#).

¹² Natural England (2017) 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic Scale Map for the South West Region (ALC018)' can be accessed [here](#).

¹³ Google (2023) 'Google Earth' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁴ Cornwall Council (2023) 'Planning policy' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁵ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2023) 'St. Stephen in Brannel Neighbourhood Plan Website' can be accessed [here](#).

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- Within the St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area there is the St Austell Clay Pits Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located just north of Stepside. It is designated for its health, scrub, maquis and garrigue, phygrana and 'other land' (which includes the built environment, industrial sites and waste sites)¹⁶.
- Also within the neighbourhood area are a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including: Crowhill Valley¹⁷ (south of Trelion); South Terras Mine¹⁸ (in Trelion); Tregargus Quarries¹⁹ (east of Treneague); and St. Austell Clay Pits²⁰ (north of Stepside, in the same area as the St Austell Clay Pits SAC).
- There are a number of internationally and nationally designated sites within proximity to the St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area, including: Breney Common and Goss and Tregoss Moors SAC²¹ (to the north); St. Mewan Beacon SSSI²² (to the east); Trevalour Downs SSSI²³ (to the north, east of Whitemoor); and Mid Cornwall Moors SSSI²⁴ (to the north, overlapping with the Breney Common and Goss and Tregoss Moors SAC). All these designations are within 1km of the neighbourhood area.
- Locally important sites within the St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area include four county wildlife sites (Bodinnick Wood by Coombe; Harvose and Ventonwyn Wood to the south; Lanjeth Heath to the east; and Longstone Downs to the east of Goverseth)²⁵; Cornish Hedges^{26,27} and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats – purple moor grass and rush pasture, lowland heathland, ancient woodland, deciduous woodland and traditional orchard.

2.4 Although the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan is not looking to allocate sites for development, other policies included in the plan which relate to the form and distribution of new development could have an effect on these biodiversity and geodiversity designations. As such, **the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme has been scoped into the SEA process.**

Climate change (including flood risk)

- Cornwall Council was one of the first local authorities in the UK to declare a climate emergency – declaring in January 2019²⁸.
- The largest contributing sector with regards to CO₂ emissions in Cornwall was the industry and commercial sector until 2016, when the transport sector took over as the biggest contributor. The transport sector continues

¹⁶ JNCC (no date) 'St Austell Clay Pits' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁷ Natural England (no date) 'Crowhill Valley SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁸ Natural England (no date) 'South Terras Mine SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁹ Natural England (no date) 'Tregargus Quarries SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁰ Natural England (no date) 'St. Austell Clay Pits SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²¹ JNCC (no date) 'Breney Common and Goss and Tregoss Moors' can be accessed [here](#).

²² Natural England (no date) 'St. Mewan Beacon SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²³ Natural England (no date) 'Trevalour Downs SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁴ Natural England (no date) 'Mid Cornwall Moors SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁵ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Green Infrastructure / Biodiversity NDP Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁶ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Cornish Hedgerows in St Stephen in Brannel Parish' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁷ Cornish Hedgers & Cornwall AONB (no date) 'Cornish Hedge Education Pack' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁸ Cornwall Council (2022) 'Climate emergency news' can be accessed [here](#).

to contribute the highest levels of CO₂, though it has been decreasing since 2017.

- Opportunities to influence per capita emissions by encouraging integrated and connected development has the potential to reduce the need to travel and supports travel by more sustainable modes.
- The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Carbon Footprint Report²⁹ sets out the neighbourhood area's contribution to carbon emissions, and breaks it down into sectors – providing recommendations for reducing emissions linked to housing, food and diet, travel, waste and the consumption of goods and services. It is noted that there are renewable energy plants within the neighbourhood area and in proximity to it^{30,31}, and the neighbourhood plan has undertaken an investigation into onshore wind production³². The shift to renewable energy generation and use will reduce carbon emissions in the neighbourhood area.
- The St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area is subject to flooding, and includes areas of land that are in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3³³. The neighbourhood area is also at risk of varying levels of surface water flooding. Surface water run-off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
- Opportunities to enhance the resilience of the both the neighbourhood area, and its residents, to the effects of climate change should be sought. This can include adaptation strategies, green infrastructure enhancement, flood defences, and support for increased renewable energy sources^{34,35,36}.

2.5 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development. As such the Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions from a significant increase in the built footprint of the parish. Neighbourhood Plan policies also encourage proposals to incorporate sustainable energy production and sustainable design. These policies provide local detail to the higher level policy framework in place, notably the Climate Change DPD discussed in Chapter 1.

2.6 In terms of emissions from transport, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to encourage active transportation opportunities through enhancing public rights of way (PRoW). There are also policies that encourage the use of sustainable transportation options, like rail and bus journeys.

2.7 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages planning applications to incorporate green infrastructure and trees, Cornish Hedges and hedgerows and appropriate drainage, which will help with flood mitigation efforts. When combined with the lack of allocations to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, significant impacts on flood risk are not anticipated as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.

²⁹ Centre for Sustainable Energy (2022) 'Carbon Footprint Report: St. Stephen-in-Brannel Civil Parish' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁰ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Solar Farms' can be accessed [here](#).

³¹ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Renewable Energy Plant Locations in and near to St Stephen in Brannel Parish' can be accessed [here](#).

³² St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Onshore Wind Energy Assessment' can be accessed [here](#).

³³ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'St Stephen-in-Brannel – Flood Zones 2 and 3' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁴ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Renewable Energy Plant Locations in and near to St Stephen in Brannel Parish' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁵ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'St Stephen-in-Brannel – Solar farms' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁶ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'St Stephen in Brannel Neighbourhood Development Plan – Onshore Wind Energy Assessment' can be accessed [here](#).

2.8 Considering the above, effects in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation are therefore unlikely to be significant with regard to the SEA Regulations and their requirements. **The climate change (including flood risk) theme has been scoped out of the SEA process.**

Landscape and villagescape

- The St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area sits within the Cornish Killas National Character Area (NCA)³⁷, and within four local character areas – CA13: Fal Ria, Truro and Falmouth³⁸; CA14: Newlyn Downs³⁹ CA17: St Austell or Hensbarrow China Clay Area⁴⁰, and CA40: Gerrans, Veryan and Mevagissey Bays⁴¹.
 - The neighbourhood area is also designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value. As such, there are a range of landscape features present within the neighbourhood area that contribute to the character and quality of the landscape (including trees with Tree Preservation Order designations). These features should be protected and enhanced where possible.
 - The St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area is one of the most diverse parishes in Cornwall. It also has a number of distinct settlements, including (but not limited to) St Stephen, Lanjeth and Foxhole. It is important to the community that any development reflects each village's distinctive character and respects / enhances their settings, whilst protecting and enhancing the wider landscape character and setting^{42,43}.
- 2.9 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing or employment land. Policies within the Neighbourhood Plan have a close focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape, for example through protecting key features and characteristics, maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure and trees, Cornish Hedges and hedgerows.
- 2.10 The Neighbourhood Plan does seek to allocate local green space. This will help maintain and enhance the landscape and villagescape of the neighbourhood area.
- 2.11 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area has design codes in place to help maintain and enhance the area. This contains policies linked to landscape, including protecting views and landmarks, maintaining and enhancing open space and guiding development in terms of building materials and development layout⁴⁴. These design codes will work to protect and enhance landscape and villagescape quality.
- 2.12 Taking the above into consideration, any effects are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements. **The landscape and villagescape theme has been scoped out of the SEA process.**

³⁷ Natural England (2014) 'NCA Profile: 152 Cornish Killas (NE547)' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁸ Cornwall Council (2008) 'Landscape Character Area Description: LCA – Fal Ria, Truro and Falmouth' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁹ Cornwall Council (2008) 'Landscape Character Area Description: LCA – Newlyn Downs' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁰ Cornwall Council (2008) 'Landscape Character Area Description: LCA – St Austell or Hensbarrow China Clay Area' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴¹ Cornwall Council (2008) 'Landscape Character Area Description: LCA – Gerrans, Veryan and Mevagissey Bays' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴² St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Design Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴³ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Landscape Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁴ AECOM (2022) 'St Stephen in Brannel Neighbourhood Area Design Codes and Guidelines' can be accessed [here](#).

Historic environment

- There are a variety of designated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area, including 52 listed buildings (one Grade I listed, four Grade II* listed and 47 Grade II listed) and seven scheduled monuments⁴⁵. There is also a scheduled monument within proximity to the neighbourhood area, approximately 1km from Trelion.
- According to the 2022 Heritage at Risk Register for the South West⁴⁶, there are three historic features that are considered to be at risk. However, it is important to recognise that Heritage at Risk registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the neighbourhood area are at risk.
- It is also noted the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site is within 5km of the neighbourhood area to the east^{47,48}.
- The St. Stephens in Brannel Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to develop the existing evidence base in relation to the historic environment. The Neighbourhood Plan also provides an opportunity to enhance understanding and awareness of the parish's heritage resource.
- It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.

2.13 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing or employment uses. In addition, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan work to maintain and enhance the historic setting of the neighbourhood area, protect heritage features and implement high quality design. This will help protect the historic environment of St. Stephen-in-Brannel.

2.14 As such, any effects are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements. **The historic environment theme has been scoped out of the SEA process.**

Air, land, soil and water resources

- There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the neighbourhood area. The nearest are located in St. Austell and Grampound. Air quality monitoring in Cornwall is undertaken for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); the main source for this is local traffic emissions, including traffic volume, congestion and street-canyon effects. According to the latest Annual Status Report (ASR), neither the St. Austell AQMA nor the Grampound AQMA exceeded pollutant thresholds in 2021⁴⁹.
- The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Parish Council does monitor air quality, in particular PM₁₀ in relation to the Energy from Waste plan in St Dennis. The

⁴⁵ Historic England (2023) 'The List – Advanced Search Results' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁶ Historic England (2022) 'Heritage at Risk Register 2022 – South West' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁷ Historic England (2010) 'Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁸ Cornish Mining World Heritage (2020) 'About the World Heritage Site' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁹ Cornwall Council (2022) '2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)' can be accessed [here](#).

records are below the national threshold for this pollutant type; however, the Neighbourhood Plan will include criteria relating to air quality to reduce the risk to human health from increased air pollution⁵⁰.

- Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to these concerns will be explored in the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme.
- The neighbourhood area sits within a mineral safeguarding area for china clay, and there is a safeguarding area for metals; as such, the Cornwall Minerals Safeguarding DPD should be considered through the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan⁵¹. A heritage quarry is also within the neighbourhood area.
- The provisional Agricultural Land Classification data⁵² indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain by a mix of Grade 3 'Good to Moderate', Grade 4 'Poor' and Grade 5 'Very Poor' agricultural quality land outside of developed land. The neighbourhood area is considered to have a low likelihood of being best and most versatile land⁵³.
- The St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area is considered to overlap with waterbodies and their associated catchments – the Gwindra Stream Water Body⁵⁴, the Upper River Fal Water Body⁵⁵ and the Lower River Fal Water Body⁵⁶. Plan making should consider how local decisions affect water quality and water supply, such as water accessibility issues, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development areas.

2.15 As the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate land for development, St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan policies are not likely to lead to the loss of areas of productive agricultural land in the parish (the Grade 3 areas). Significant impacts on water quality, air quality, and material assets are also not likely to be significant given the lack of allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan. **The air, land, soil, and water resources theme has been scoped out of the SEA process.**

Community wellbeing (including transportation)

- The St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area has a variety of services and facilities that support community vitality and the quality of life of residents, with the availability of community assets essential for continued growth. It is recognised that residents travel out of the neighbourhood area or use the internet to access a wider range of goods, like bigger food shops, clothes and white goods⁵⁷.
- There are four unofficial local green spaces in the neighbourhood area; the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan seeks to designate these sites.

⁵⁰ St. Stephen in Brannel (2022) 'Air Quality Management St Stephen In Brannel Parish' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵¹ Cornwall Council (2018) 'Cornwall Minerals Safeguarding DPD' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵² Natural England (2011) 'Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region (ALC006)' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵³ Natural England (2017) 'Agricultural Land – Strategic scale map South West Region (ALC018)' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁴ Environment Agency (2022) 'Gwindra Stream Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁵ Environment Agency (2022) 'Upper River Fal Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁶ Environment Agency (2022) 'Lower River Fal Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁷ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Infrastructure and Community Facilities Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

This will allow for the protection and enhancement of the green infrastructure network and provide space for recreation and community interaction.

- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is likely to be a requirement for adaptable dwellings which can accommodate more flexible working practices.
- Whilst the St. Stephen-in-Brannel is not allocating sites for housing development, the residents do understand the need for future housing and have therefore prepared a Housing Evidence Report (2022) which identifies a development capacity figure for the plan period.⁵⁸ . Additionally, stipulations have been made for housing mix, tenure, first homes and park homes so that future development is as complimentary of the area and the needs of the community as possible⁵⁹.
- The road network within the neighbourhood area is a mix of A roads, B roads and local roads. The A390 runs outside of the neighbourhood area to the south, and the A30 runs outside of the neighbourhood area to the north – both of these roads allow for vehicular access to wider variety of destinations. Traffic sensitivity is centred around the more built up areas within the St. Stephen-in-Brannel neighbourhood area⁶⁰.
- Whilst there are no rail stations within the neighbourhood area (the nearest being in St. Austell and Truro), most of the villages within St. Stephen-in-Brannel have access to the bus network – which provides for work and school journeys and some late night services⁶¹.
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term. New development proposals should seek to connect and where possible extend Public Rights of Way networks to maximise opportunities for active travel.

2.16 The St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that will help to improve the quality of life for residents, including (but not limited to) improving accessibility, footways and public rights of way, bringing forward working from home and rural, sustainable tourism and designating neighbourhood area boundaries. The benefits which arise for residents from a well-designed Neighbourhood Plan have the potential to be wide-ranging. As such, in recognition of the key issues presented above, **the community wellbeing (including transportation) theme has been scoped into the SEA process.**

⁵⁸ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Housing – Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁹ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Housing – Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁰ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Accessibility and Connectivity Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶¹ St. Stephen in Brannel Parish Council (2022) 'Accessibility and Connectivity Evidence Report' can be accessed [here](#).

3. Proposed SEA Framework and Methodology

- 3.1 The SEA themes where effects have the most potential to be significant relates to ‘Biodiversity and geodiversity’ and ‘Community wellbeing (including transportation’. Whilst some limited environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan with respect to the remaining SEA themes discussed within this SEA Scoping Report, it is considered that these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements (and given the scope of the plan).
- 3.2 The proposed SEA objectives, established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise, are brought together to create one framework, the SEA Framework, and are presented in **Table 3.1** below.
- 3.3 The SEA Framework provides a methodology and consistent approach for the appraisal of the emerging St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed SEA Framework will be used to appraise the options and proposals emerging for the draft plan, and findings will be fed back to the neighbourhood group to inform plan development.

Table 3.1: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid or, if not possible, minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, including internationally and nationally designated sites, and provide net gains where possible? • Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats, species, and the ecological networks connecting them? • Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green and blue infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Community Wellbeing (including Transportation)	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility and connectivity, reducing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of high-quality and sustainable design through new residential development areas (including with respect to a mix of housing types and tenures, and affordability)?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
	deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local services and facilities? • Improve and extend green and blue infrastructure networks within the neighbourhood area? • Improve community access and connectivity to green and blue infrastructure networks? • Avoid impacts on the quality and extent of existing areas of open space/recreational assets? • Maintain and enhance the quality of life of existing residents and all sectors of the community? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable and active forms of travel and enable public transport infrastructure enhancements?

4. Next Steps

Subsequent stages for the SEA process

- 4.1 The next stage will involve exploring reasonable alternatives for the St. Stephen-in-Brannel Neighbourhood Plan. The findings of this work will be fed back to the neighbourhood group so that they might be taken into consideration when finalising the Neighbourhood Plan. The draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to appraisal, and the SEA Environmental Report will be prepared for consultation alongside it.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

- 4.2 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.
- 4.3 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. This scoping report has been released to these three statutory consultees, and Cornwall Council, for their comment.
- 4.4 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this scoping report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA Framework.
- 4.5 The consultation period runs from Friday 24th February 2023 to Friday 31st March 2023. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Emily Baker, AECOM

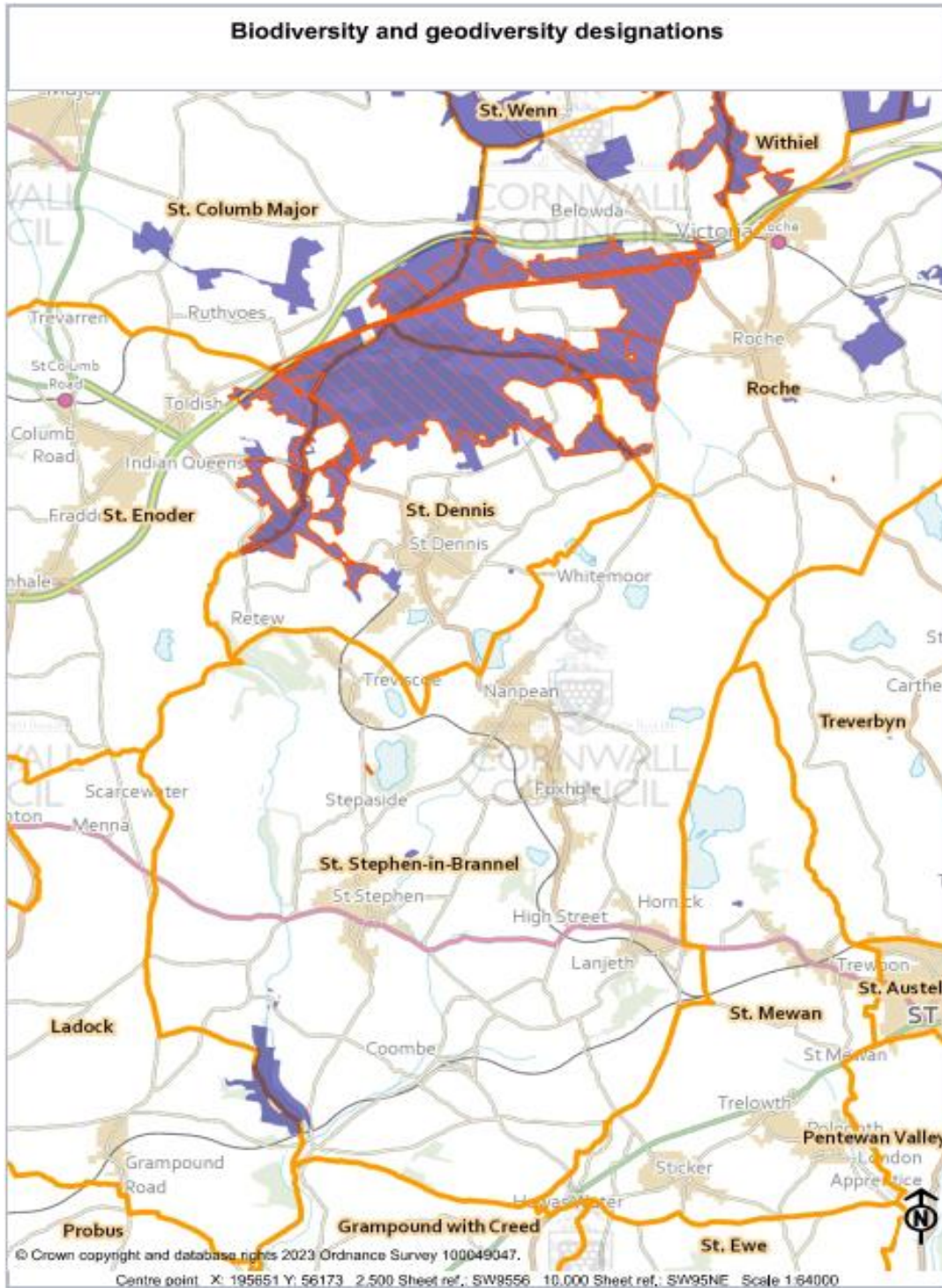
Email address: emily.baker@aecom.com
- 4.6 All comments received on the scoping report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

Appendix A Summary of baseline information (key maps and figures)

A.1 Neighbourhood area

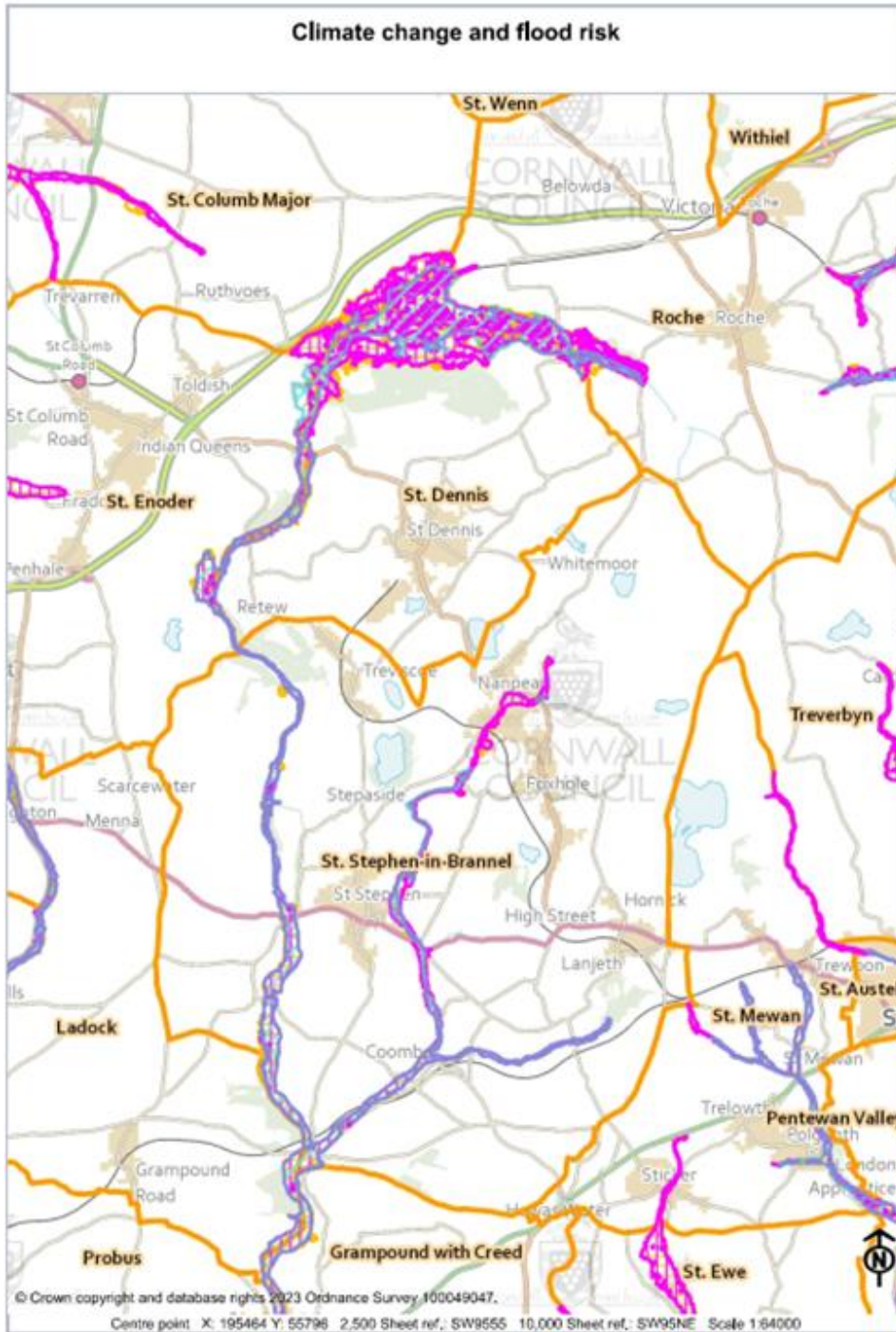


A.2 Biodiversity and geodiversity designations

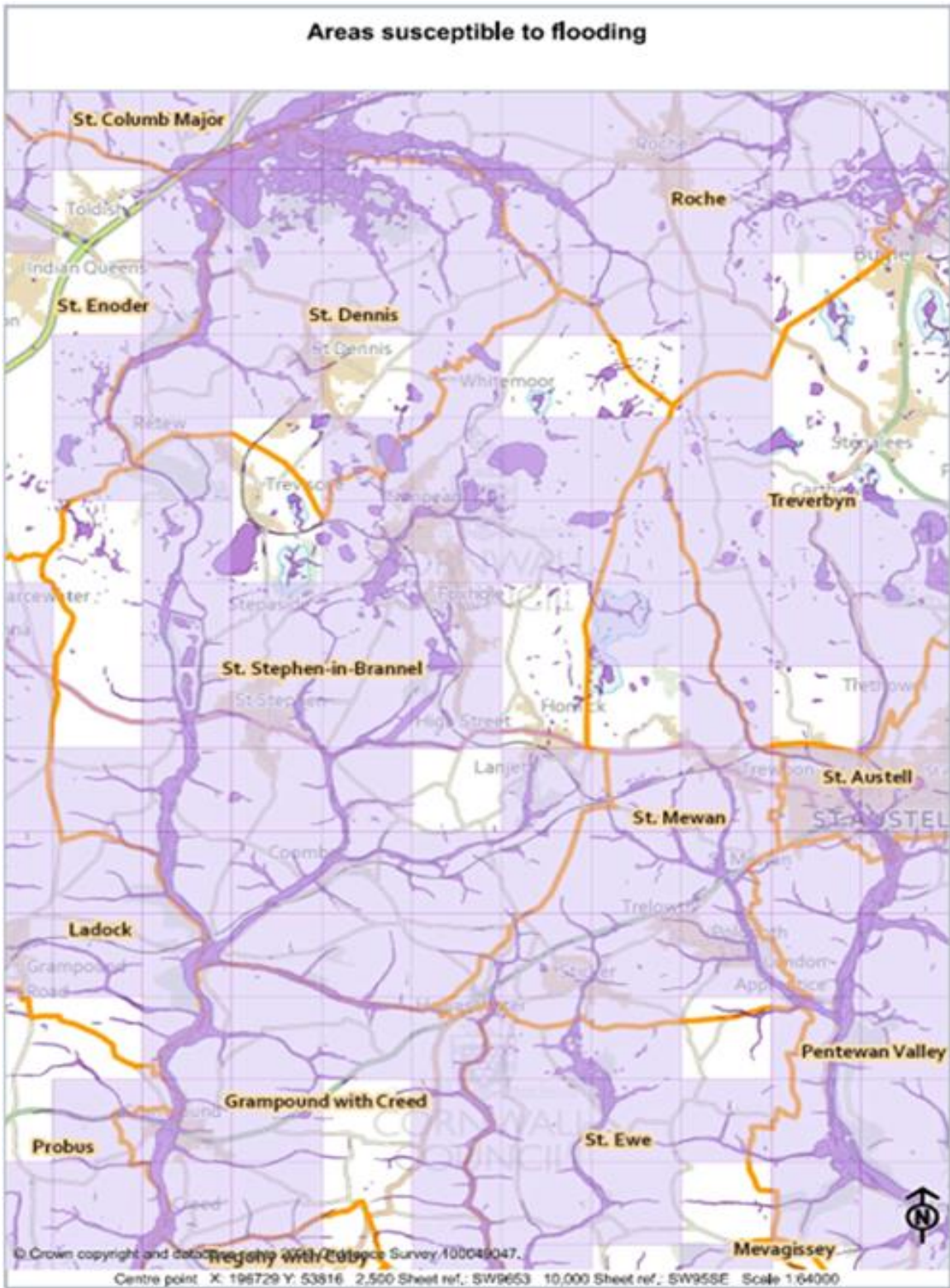


- Special Areas for Conservation
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- County Wildlife Sites - no implied public access

A.3 Flood risk

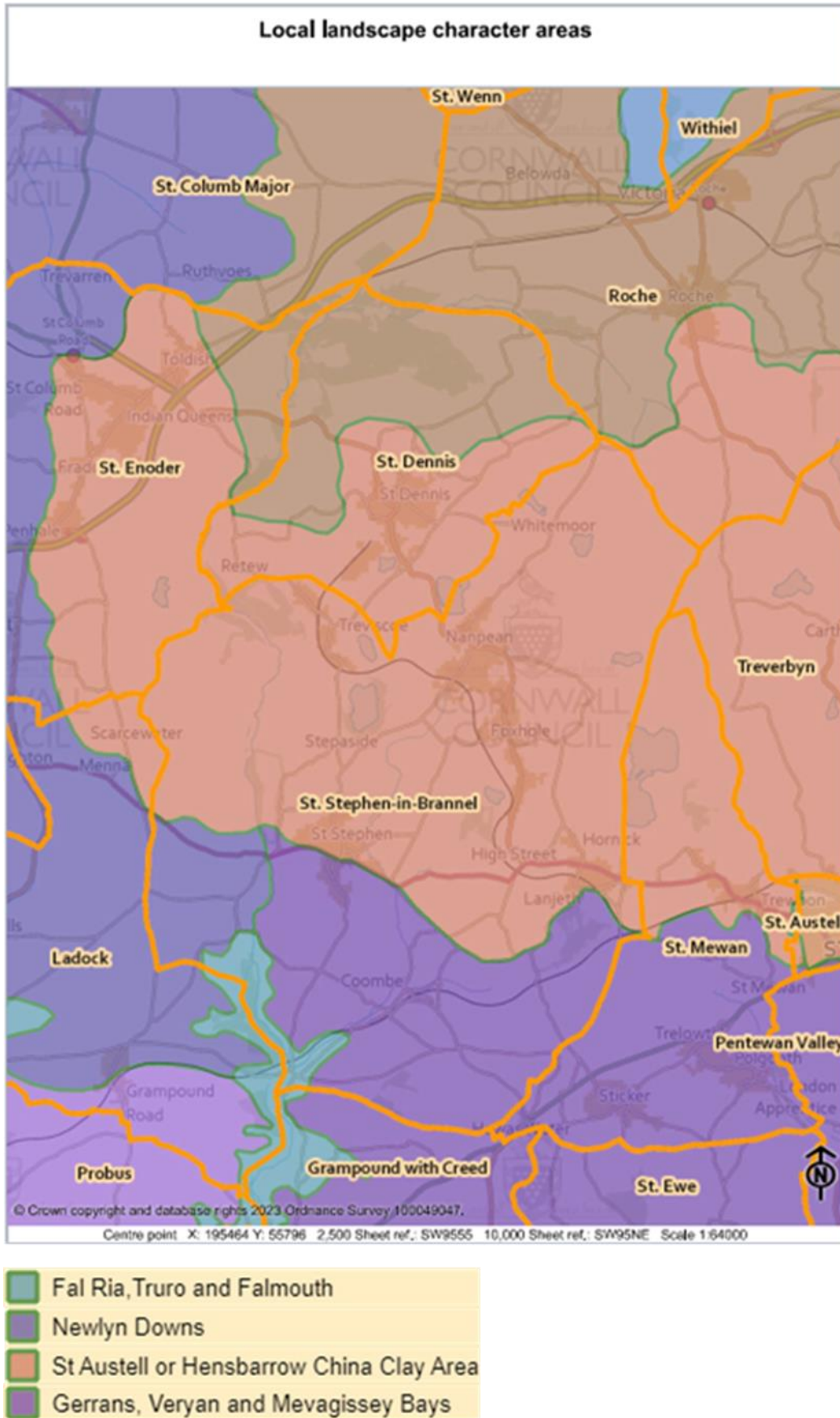


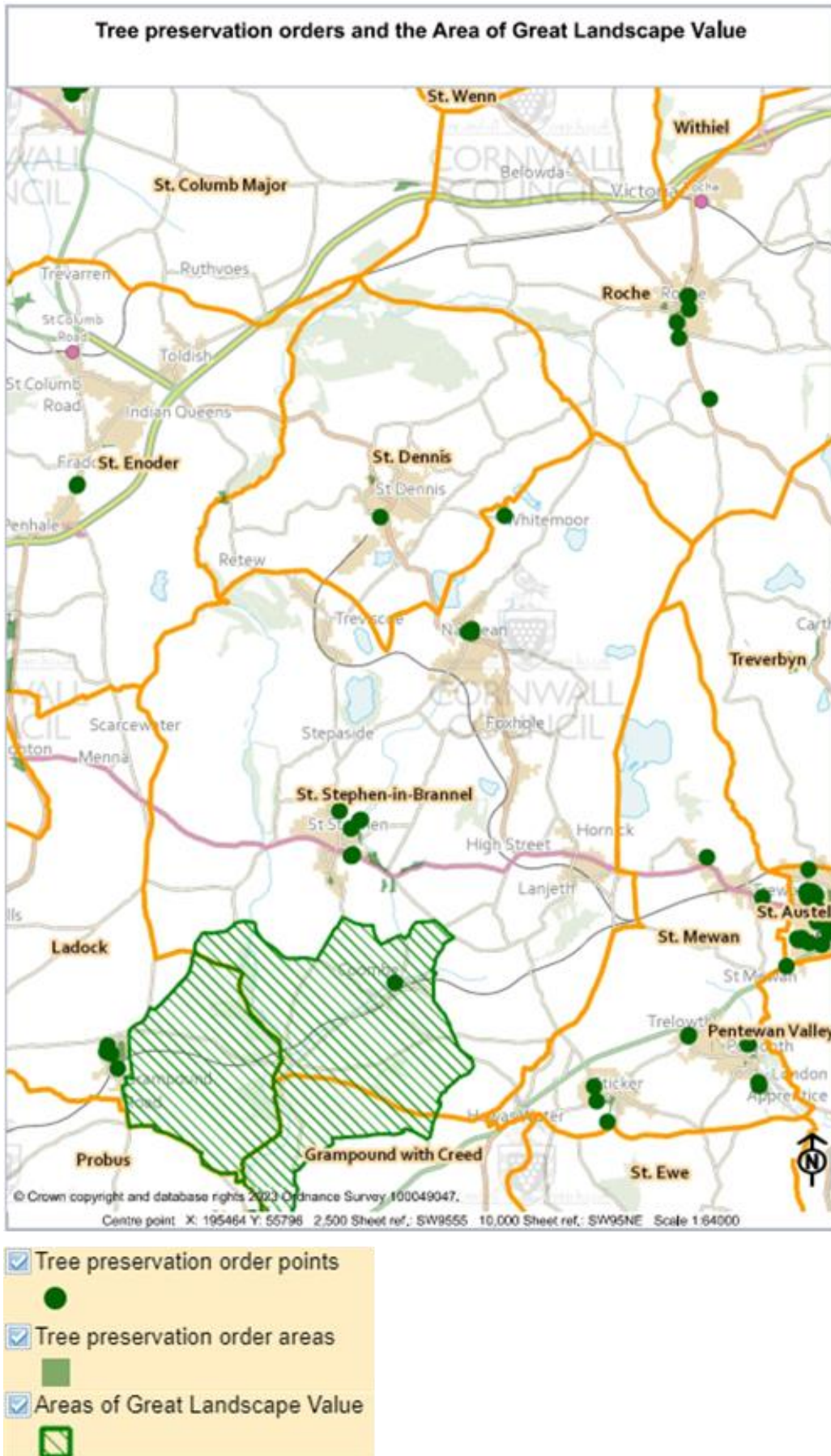
- Flood zone 3b
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2



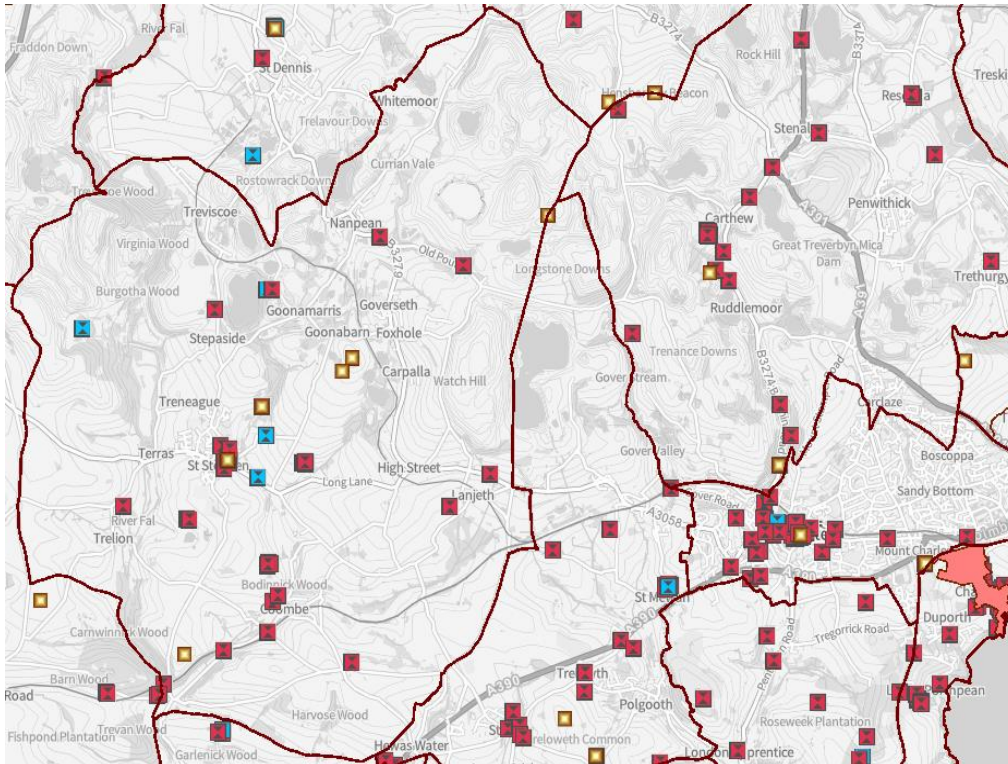
- Areas susceptible to ground water flooding
- Areas susceptible to surface water flooding

A.4 Landscape and villagescape



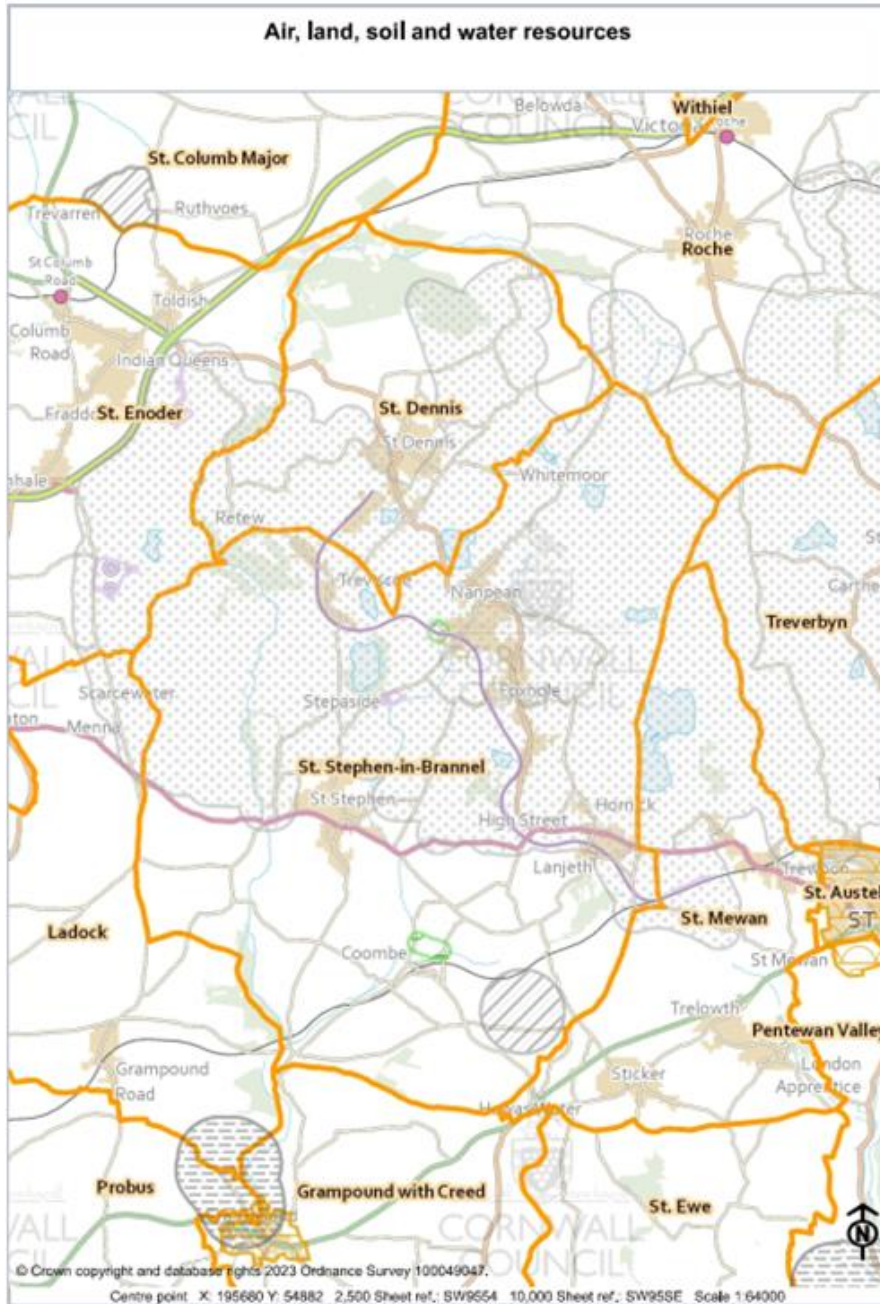


A.5 Historic environment



- Parishes (GB)
- Scheduled Monuments (England) - points
- World Heritage Sites (England)**
- Buffer Zone
- World Heritage Site
- Listed Buildings (England)**
- I
- II
- II*

A.6 Air, land, soil and water resources



- Mineral safeguarding areas
 - Aggregate
 - Building stone
 - China clay
 - Heritage quarry
 - Infrastructure
 - Metals
- Air quality management areas
 - Declared Air Quality Management Area
 - Proposed Air Quality Management Area
 - Air Quality Area of Concern

A.7 Community wellbeing (including transportation)



- Public Rights of Way
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway
- - Restricted byway





Appendix B Policy context review

Document title	Year of publication
Relevant for multiple SEA themes	
Environment Act	2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
The National Design Guide	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Cornwall Local Plan	2016
Biodiversity and geodiversity	
UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework	2012
The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)	2011
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services	2011
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	1994
Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide	2018
Climate change (including flood risk)	
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener	2021
National Infrastructure Assessment	2021
The UK Sixth Carbon Budget	2020
The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting	2018
The Clean Growth Strategy	2017
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017	2017
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	2010
Climate Change Act 2008	2008
Cornwall Climate Risk Assessment	2022
Cornwall Council Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (DPD)	2021
Historic environment	
Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change	2022
Historic England Advice Note 11 (Second Edition): Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2022
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management	2019
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017

Document title	Year of publication
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans	2015
Air, land, soil and water resources	
Cornwall Council 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)	2022
Clean Air for Cornwall Strategy 2020-2025	2020
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017
Waste Management Plan for England	2013
Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England	2011
Water for Life	2011
Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England	2009
Environment Act	1995
South West Water - Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)	2019
Cornwall Council Minerals Safeguarding Development Plan Document	2018
Community wellbeing (including transportation)	
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain	2021
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance	2019
Planning for Sport Guidance	2019
Transport Investment Strategy	2017
Cornwall Council Housing Strategy 2030	2022
Cornwall Local Transport Plan to 2030	2021

