

**STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON  
LDF CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

**December 2008**

**Topic Paper 2**

**Housing**



## **Exmoor National Park Authority**

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**Your comments and views on this options paper are welcomed up to Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009**. Enquiries can be directed to Ruth McArthur/Jo Symons, Policy and Community Manager on 01398 323665.

This report is also accessible from our website located under:

[www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/living-in-ldf-core-strategy.htm](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/living-in-ldf-core-strategy.htm)

**We are happy to provide this information in alternative formats on request where reasonable.**

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## **Issues**

1. To ensure an adequate supply of housing to maintain balanced living and working communities.
2. A housing stock providing a better mix of sizes, types and affordability.
3. Meeting the local community need for affordable housing.
4. Ensuring local needs affordable housing remains so in perpetuity while enabling access to finance.
5. Making use of the existing stock of accommodation, buildings and brownfield land to reduce greenfield development.
6. Ensuring that suitable sites and buildings are available, including land currently in public ownership, to help meet the community's need for affordable housing.
7. Ensuring the design of new housing conserves and enhances the special qualities of the National Park and incorporates energy sustainability measures.
8. Meeting the needs of agricultural and forestry workers; and other workers whose work is important for the conservation of the National Park and the viability of its communities.
9. Meeting the needs of the elderly and providing for the housing needs of young people.

## **The Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-2012**

### Desired Outcome

- By 2020 Exmoor's communities retain a continuity of connection with the land; people have access to affordable services and facilities, and there is a strong, diverse and sustainable economy that benefits from and contributes to the care and appreciation of Exmoor National Park.

### Objective H1:

- To ensure housing needs are adequately met to sustain local communities and the landscape and facilities of the National Park.
  - ◆ Target H1.1 At least 60 new affordable dwellings will be completed where there is demonstrable need in the National Park over the five years to the end of 2012, and this provision will be available to help meet need in perpetuity.

### **Key statistics**

- To improve information on local needs and help develop affordable housing, a Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) was appointed in 2002.
- 16 parishes wholly and partly within the National Park have been surveyed - around 172 households are in housing need. Of these, 144 households are in need in the parishes wholly within the National Park. If the proportion of need to households were the same for all parishes within the National Park around 280 households would be in need of affordable housing.
- Not all affordable housing for local people is new build. Caractacus Housing provides accommodation for people with a strong connection to the area around Dulverton at affordable levels of rent. To date it has bought and rented 8 units of accommodation to local people in Dulverton.
- Since adoption of the Local Plan in March 2005, 25 units of local needs housing have been approved by the National Park Authority. The majority have been for rent with a number for ownership. A further three were permitted just before adoption of the Local Plan in Lynton for a shared ownership scheme whereby up to 80% of the unit can be owned and rent is paid on the share retained by the RSL. Further schemes are in the pipeline with 12 at Exford having been recently approved subject to the signing of a legal agreement.
- Some open market housing continues to be built where it was 'under construction' within 3 years of the planning permission being granted prior to adoption of the Local Plan in March 2005.

## Appendix

### **Policy and Strategy National**

#### PPS3 Housing

- Housing should produce mixed and sustainable communities, with high quality affordable housing for future generations.
- Housing provision should be related to evidence of need.
- It is permitted to allocate or release small sites for affordable housing within and adjoining small rural communities in the National Park.
- This housing should remain affordable 'in perpetuity'.
- Planning Authorities should aim for sustainable, mixed, inclusive and cohesive communities that meet the needs of the rural economy.
- Affordable housing is defined as 'non-market housing, provided to those whose needs are not met by the market e.g. homeless persons and key workers. It can include social rented and 'intermediate' housing. ('housing priced between social and open market prices or rents )
- It should meet the needs of eligible households, by being available at a cost determined by local incomes and house prices and by remaining at an affordable price for future eligible households.'

#### PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- National Parks have the highest status of protection, but should support development that is needed for the economic and social well-being of communities, (including adequate housing to meet local needs)
- Additional house building in existing towns and identified service centres and in other settlements where it is to provide some new housing to meet identified needs.
- Sufficient land should be made available in settlements to meet the needs of local people
- New houses (including single dwellings) in the countryside are strictly controlled and will require special justification.

## **Regional**

### SW Regional Spatial Strategy

- This includes no target for the National Park for the average annual net dwelling requirement 2006- 2026. Instead it gives a figure of 20 per year as an estimate of provision against strictly local needs only. This has been endorsed by the Panel Report and the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes.
- There is a zero allocation for gypsy and traveller sites

## **Local**

### Local Plan

- The Adopted Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001-2011 provides that the purpose of all new housing in the National Park is to meet the needs of local communities for affordable housing. The housing policies are based on a 'needs led' approach. Policies provide for local needs affordable housing (both new build and conversions/changes of use) in settlements. Outside defined settlements, local needs housing can be provided through conversions/changes of use in hamlets or farm groups where there is already an existing dwelling. New affordable housing for local communities can also be provided through the replacement of holiday let and agricultural ties.
- There are a few very specific circumstances, such as subdivision of existing housing in settlements and conversions to dwellings in Porlock, Lynton/Lynmouth and Dulverton, where an element of open market housing may be acceptable.
- The policies provide for rented or low cost home ownership including privately owned affordable housing occupied by those in housing need with a local connection. All new dwellings have a 'local occupancy' tie through a legal agreement (Section 106) to ensure that they meet the needs of the local community in perpetuity. For the privately owned affordable housing there is also an upper limit on the size of the dwelling of 90m<sup>2</sup>. The tie and size limit should together reduce the value of the dwelling to between 30-40% of an equivalent open market property to be 'more affordable' providing a choice for those unable to afford the open market but who earn enough to aspire to home ownership.

**Is there further evidence that you wish to draw to our attention?**

**Do you have any further issues that you wish to raise?**

## **Other Strategies**

### The Affordable Rural Housing Commission 2005:

- Recommends that cross-subsidy from market housing to affordable housing be avoided. (to preserve the long term supply of land for exceptions sites)
- Recognises that planning policies in National Parks have not been a barrier to the delivery of housing.

### English National Park Authorities Association Position Statement on Affordable Housing January 2008

- NPAs need to take action to maintain and strengthen local communities threatened by acutely distorted local housing markets. Communities should be able to live in high quality affordable homes.
- There is not a lack of housing supply in National Parks (houses for sale). High levels of external pressure have driven up prices. This and low average incomes mean existing housing is unaffordable to local communities leading to social bonds being broken and the loss of rural services
- Open market housing development has not provided housing of an appropriate size, type and affordability to meet local needs. Extensions to existing small houses have exacerbated the shortage of 'entry level housing'.
- To protect the special qualities of National Parks they are under development constraint. We cannot 'build our way out of the demand/supply problem'.
- Cross subsidy of housing is inappropriate as this relies on open market housing (which is unlikely to meet local needs and may be hard to justify against park purposes).
- Housing need data required to distinguish between genuine 'need' and aspirational 'desire'.
- Priority is to make best use of the existing stock of accommodation and buildings - public sector purchase of existing housing, conversions and the re-use of rural buildings/holiday lets/agricultural ties to meet local needs without additional greenfield development. Consider the scope for affordable housing on NPA and publically owned land and buildings.
- Empty second homes make little contribution to local economies, adding to a shortage of housing (particularly smaller units) and raising house



prices. Second home Council Tax receipts to support affordable housing locally.

#### The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (July 2008)

- Shift in approach to new development in villages is needed nationally from is this settlement sustainable to whether the development will enhance or decrease the sustainability of the community.
- Affordable housing must be so in perpetuity with a local cascade;
- An option explored is to encourage landowners to release land by allowing a small proportion of housing to cater for family or staff needs subject to the property being for local needs and affordable in perpetuity;
- Housing need evidence based on a local needs survey;
- Affordable housing must be at a scale/style appropriate to the community;
- Sites must be viable and good design is important;
- Counterproductive to introduce the possibility of market housing on exception sites;

Other relevant reports include the Commission for Rural Communities: Rural Housing -A place in the countryside