



**EXMOOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK**

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20 February 2020

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**To: All Members of the Exmoor National Park Authority**

A meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton on **Tuesday 3 March 2020 at 10.00am.**

The meeting will be open to the press and public subject to the passing of any resolution under s.100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

There is Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairperson will allow members of the public two minutes each to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition relating to any item relevant to the business of the Authority or relating to any item on the Agenda. Anyone wishing to ask questions should notify the Corporate Support Officer by 4pm on the working day before the meeting of the agenda item on which they wish to speak, indicating a brief summary of the matter or matters to be raised (contact Judy Coles on 01398 322250 or email [jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

Please be aware that this is a public Authority Meeting and will be **audio and video recorded**. We will make the recordings available via our website for members of the public to listen to and/or view, within 72 hours of the meeting taking place.

Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairperson so that those present may be made aware.

(The agenda and papers for this meeting can be downloaded from the National Park Authority's website [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

Sarah Bryan  
Chief Executive

## **A G E N D A**

The first section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, the Chairperson of the Authority. If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson shall preside.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying of Members/Unaccompanied Site Visits**

Members are asked to declare:-

- (1) any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting;
- (2) any lobbying by anyone concerned with a planning application and any unaccompanied site visits where contact has been made with any person concerned with a planning application.

(NB. When verbally making these declarations, members are also asked to complete the Disclosures at Meetings form – attached for members only).

### **3. Chairperson's Announcements**

4. **Minutes** (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 4 February 2020 (Item 4).

- (2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

5. **Public Speaking:** The Chairperson will allow members of the public to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition. Questions of a general nature relevant to the business of the Authority can be asked under this agenda item. Any questions specific to an agenda item can be posed when that item is considered subject to the discretion of the person presiding at the meeting.
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**Agenda items relating to the Authority's role as sole local planning authority for the National Park area including determination of planning applications.** This section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr S Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson (Planning)). If the Deputy Chairperson (Planning) is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall be preside.

### **6. Appeals:**

- 6.1 To note the decision of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to allow Appeal A, quash the enforcement notice and grant planning permission and to dismiss Appeal B – Monkham House, Exford (Item 6.1)

- 6.2 To note the decision of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to dismiss the appeal against a refusal to grant a certificate of lawful use or development (LDC) for the existing use for the stationing of a caravan for holiday letting purposes in excess of 10 years – Application 6/26/19/103 – Orchard View, Rodhuish, Minehead, Somerset (Item 6.2)

- 6.3 To note the decision of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to refuse an award of costs against the part refusal of a certificate of lawful use or development (LDC) for the stationing of a caravan for holiday letting purposes - Orchard View, Rodhuish, Minehead, Somerset (Item 6.3)

7. **Development Management:** To consider the report of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on the following:-

Agenda Item	Application No.	Description	Page Nos.
7.1	6/15/19/106	Proposed removal of condition 4 of approved application 6/15/17/106 to remove the occupancy condition on Goosemoor Farm (the Farmhouse) (Alteration/Lift Condition – Goosemoor Farm, Armour Lane, Exton, Somerset	1 - 14
7.2	62/50/19/015	Proposed extension to pavilion to form community shop and café (Full) – Coronation Playing Fields, Parracombe, Devon	15 - 32
7.3	WTCA 20/05	Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Crown reduction of copper beech, limb removal of larch & Fell Thuja Plicatia (WTCA) – Littleclose, Parracombe, Barnstaple	33 – 36
7.4	WTCA 20/06	Cut and lay trees in hedge (WTCA) - Hedge between Village Hall and Sunnyside Bungalow, Church Lane, Parracombe, Devon	37 - 39

8. **Application Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:** To note the applications determined by the Chief Executive under delegated powers (Item 8).
9. **Site Visits:** To arrange any site visits agreed by the Committee (the reserve date being Friday 28 February (am)).

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The remaining section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, Chairperson of the Authority. If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall preside.

10. **Confidential Business:** To consider passing a resolution pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the duration of Item 11 (County Gate) on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business arising in Item 11 below and that the following information will be considered which is exempt information as presented in Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended):-

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

11. **County Gate:** To consider the report of the Land and Property Manager (Item 11)
12. **Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25 and Budget 2020/21:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 12).
13. **Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020/21:** To consider the report of the Head of Strategy and Performance (Item 13).

- 14. Exmoor National Park Authority Response To Somerset West And Taunton Local Plan Issues And Options, And Duty To Co-Operate:** To consider the report of the Head of Strategy and Performance (Item 14).
- 15. Personnel Update**  
Leavers:  
07.02.20 Philip Kiberd – Funding Officer – resignation
- 16. Any Other Business of Urgency**

Further information on any of the reports can be obtained by contacting the National Park Authority at the address and telephone numbers at the top of the agenda. Details of the decisions taken at this meeting will be set out in the formal Minutes which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions can be obtained from Judy Coles, Corporate Support Officer, at Exmoor House.

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 4 February 2020 at 10.00am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

**PRESENT**

Mr R Milton (Chairperson)	
Miss A V Davis (Deputy Chairperson)	
Mr S J Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson (Planning))	
Mrs L Blanchard	Mr E Ley
Mr R C Edgell	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr M Ellicott	Mr J Patrinis
Mr N Holliday	Mr M Ryall
Mr J Holtom	Mrs E Stacey
Mr J Hunt	Mr N Thwaites
Mr M Kravis	Mr V White

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C M Lawrence, Mr P Pilkington, Mr B Revans and Mrs S Takle.

**99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were no interests to declare.

**100. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The Chairperson advised the meeting that:

- The advert for 3 vacancies for Secretary of State Members to Exmoor National Park Authority has gone live on the HM Government Public Appointments webpage. Members were encouraged to pass the link to any suitable candidates they may know: <https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/appointment/national-park-authorities-and-area-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-conservation-boards-secretary-of-state-members/>
- The Authority is likely to receive confirmation within the next two weeks regarding the level of the National Park Grant for the next 12 months.

**101. MINUTES**

- Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 7 January 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

**102. PUBLIC SPEAKING:** There were no public speakers.

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**103. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2020-21**

The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the report of the Chief Finance Officer.
- (2) To approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2020-21 as set out in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.
- (3) To note the Prudential Indicators for 2020-21 to 2022-23 as set out in Section 4 of this report (Although some are currently set at zero, all Treasury Management indicators are included for completeness of information and others may well be used in the future).

**104. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2020/21**

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Finance and Operations.

**The Authority's Consideration**

In light of the Authority's aims to become carbon neutral by 2030, Members requested that consideration be given to including mileage rates for green methods of transport, such as traditional bicycles and electric bicycles, motorbikes and motor vehicles, when the Scheme of Members' Allowances was next modified.

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to future adjustments to Members' Allowances as linked to staff cost of living awards.

**105. EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK RURAL WORKER AND SUCCESSION FARM WORKER DWELLINGS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – ADOPTION**

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Strategy and Performance.

**The Authority's Consideration**

The meeting was reminded that the Rural Worker and Succession Farm Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was drafted to provide clarity in regard to Local Plan Policies HC-D9 Rural Workers and HC-D10 Succession Farming – Second Dwellings on Established Farms. The SPD is supplementary to the Local Plan and cannot change the policy approach that is set out in the adopted Local Plan.

Whilst supportive of the intent of the document, a number of Members still had concerns about how flexible implementation of the guidance would prove to be, particularly in relation to those applicants who may be engaging in farm diversification activities in order to make their business sustainable.

It was therefore proposed and agreed that the Authority's monitoring report should be amended to include an assessment of how implementation of the guidance has affected decision-making in practice. Should any issues be identified, the Authority would have the opportunity to revisit the guidance, in line with any future review of the Local Plan policies.

The Committee was aware of the lengthy consultation process that had been undertaken in order to produce the Supplementary Planning Document and wished to formally record their thanks to the Planning Policy for all their hard work.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the Representation Statement and comments received (Annex 1).
- (2) To approve the Rural Workers and Succession Farm Work Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document for Adoption (Annex 2).
- (3) To note and approve the Adoption Statement (Annex 3).
- (4) To delegate to the Chief Executive / Officers authority to:
  - (a) Make any factual or typographical corrections to the Adopted SPD
  - (b) Provide and make available the Adoption Statement
  - (c) Make available copies of the Adopted SPD
- (5) To report on the practical implementation of the SPD within the Authority's monitoring report.

**106. EXMOOR CONSULTATIVE & PARISH FORUM:** The Authority received and noted the **draft minutes** of the Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum meeting held on 17 December 2019.

**107. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none.

The meeting closed at 11.05am

(Chairman)

## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 28 November 2019

**by A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 6 January 2020**

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**Appeal A: APP/F9498/C/18/3219078**

**Appeal B: APP/F9498/C/18/3219079**

**Monkham House, Exford**

- The appeals are made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991.
  - The appeals are made by Mrs Cassandra Midgley and Mr Christopher Midgley against an enforcement notice issued by Exmoor National Park Authority.
  - The enforcement notice was issued on 14 November 2018.
  - The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is a material change of use by way of the sub-division of the existing dwelling known as Monkham House situated on the Land to create two separate dwellings.
  - The requirements of the notice are:
    1. Cease the independent, residential use of the unit of accommodation edged in red on the attached plan, to ensure that a single dwelling is reinstated at the dwelling known as Monkham House.
    2. Reinstatement the internal door between the dwellings (the subject of this enforcement notice).
  - The period for compliance with the requirements is 6 months.
  - Appeal A is proceeding on the grounds set out in section 174(2) (a) and (d) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended. Appeal B is proceeding on the grounds set out in section 174(2) (d) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended. With respect to Appeal B, since the prescribed fees have not been paid within the specified period, the appeal on ground (a) and the application for planning permission deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Act as amended have lapsed.
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### Decision

1. Appeal A is allowed, the enforcement notice is quashed, and planning permission is granted in the terms set out below in the Formal Decision.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

### The Appeals on Ground (d)

3. The ground of appeal is that at the date when the notice was issued, no enforcement action could be taken. Under s171B (2) of the Act, no enforcement action may be taken at the end of the period of four years beginning with the date of a breach of planning control consisting of a material change of use of a building to use as a single dwellinghouse. The enforcement notice was dated 14 November 2018 and therefore the material date for the use of the property will be 14 November 2014.
4. Evidence by John Hudson is not in the form of a statutory declaration and therefore attracts limited weight. In addition, it is clear that he does not



- specify the dates of between 1992 and 2000 with any degree of certainty and, as such, his evidence gives little to the appellants' case.
5. There is also correspondence between the appellants' solicitors and the property's previous owner, in which reference is made to the construction of the annex rather than there being lawful use of the annex as an independent unit of residential accommodation. Therefore, this also gives little weight to the appellants' case.
  6. The evidence relating to the supply of utilities to the property, including a separate gas cannister supply, but in my mind that is not evidence that the property has been in separate occupation, since an annex may have a separate cannister gas supply of its own in any case. As such this is of limited value in support of the appellants' arguments.
  7. The appellants also contend that the annex is registered with the District Council as a separate dwelling for Council Tax purposes. However, under Council Tax regulations, there would have been a requirement for two separate payments, irrespective of whether or not the annex was ancillary accommodation or a separate residential unit. Consequently, the evidence in this respect gives little weight in favour of the appellants. The fact that Council Tax is being paid for both the annex and the main house is not clear evidence that the annex is a separate residential unit in planning terms.
  8. The evidence with respect to the actual occupancy of the unit sets out that since May 2014 there have been successive occupants. However, in my opinion the evidence in this regard is rather sketchy, comprising lists of payments into a bank account, although the details of the bank account have not been provided. Furthermore, there is insufficient clear evidence to demonstrate what these payments are for or that they are payments that are associated with this property rather than other property or business interests. Therefore, the evidence of occupancy is inadequate. In addition, there are no statutory declarations from either the appellants or the previous or current occupants of the appeal property.
  9. I am also concerned with respect to the type of occupation of the property by Ms Richardson as it appears that her occupation was more akin to that of living in an annex rather than a separate unit of residential accommodation. Indeed, the appellants' own evidence describe the time she occupied the "annex" and the tasks she undertook during that period.
  10. Furthermore, according to case law<sup>1</sup>, an annex will become a separate dwellinghouse when it is self-contained with all necessary living facilities. Other case law<sup>2</sup> paints a somewhat complex picture of the concept of an annex, indicating that an annex that enables a person to live independently from the rest of a family does not always amount to the creation of a separate planning unit and the intention of building an annex or other building in the first place is important. If the purpose of an annex is incidental to the enjoyment of the main house (for example to accommodate a house keeper or similar) then it may well be the case that it is not a separate residential unit. As stated above, the occupation of the unit by Ms Richardson appears to be as an annex between May 2014 and August 2015 because she provided

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<sup>1</sup> Gravesham BC v SoS & O'Brien [1982]

<sup>2</sup> Uttlesford DC v SoSE and White [1992] and Whitehead v SoS & Mole Valley DC [1991]

“substantial services” for the appellants’ property and provided security. Therefore, this type of occupancy along with the reduced rental indicates to me that her occupation was ancillary to the main house due to her role in managing the property. I understand that other than working at Monkham House she had little employment, which again supports the theory that her main role was to look after the property.

11. In the light of the case law I have identified, the fact that the annex has a separate kitchen, bathroom and other facilities does not alter my opinion that the occupancy of the annex between May 2014 and August 2015 was anything other than incidental to the single residential planning unit known as Monkham House.
12. As such, given the inadequate evidence with respect to the occupancy and also the conclusion that until August 2015 it was occupied as an annex rather than an independent unit of residential accommodation, under the scenarios discussed above, the appeals on ground (d) must fail.

### **Appeal A on Ground (a)**

13. The ground of appeal is that planning permission should be granted. The main issue are whether the sub-division of the existing dwelling is acceptable, in principle and the effect on the safe, convenient and efficient movement of highway users.
14. Policy HC-D14 and HC-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 (the Local Plan) state that the sub-division of existing buildings will be permitted in specific circumstances, including where the new dwelling will be principal residence housing which will require the imposition of a suitable worded condition to restrict occupancy. The appellant is agreeable to a condition which ensures the property is used only as a principal residence and not as a second home or as a unit of holiday accommodation. On that basis the principle of the development is acceptable in accordance with the provisions of the Local Plan.
15. The access to Monkham House is rather narrow with some restricted visibility onto the highway. However, I have noted that there is no dispute between parties with respect to this matter. Furthermore, I do not consider that the additional vehicle movements that may be associated with a new independent dwelling are likely to be significant to a degree. Therefore, on this issue I conclude that the development would not result in harm to the safe, convenient and efficient movement of highway users.

### **Conclusion**

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that Appeal A should succeed on ground (a) and planning permission will be granted. Appeal B is dismissed.

### **Conditions**

17. I have specified drawing numbers to ensure the property remains in a suitable layout for two independent residential uses. In order to comply with Policy HC-D14 of the Local Plan the residential unit should be restricted to use as a Principal Residence dwelling and shall only be occupied as a principal home and not as a second home or as holiday letting accommodation. Finally, in order to control external lighting in the interests of the Buffer Zone of the Exmoor Dark

Sky Reserve's Core Zone I have also imposed a condition restricting external lighting.

### **Formal Decisions**

18. Appeal A is allowed, the enforcement notice is quashed, and planning permission is granted on the application deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the 1990 Act as amended for the development already carried out, namely the material change of use by the way of the sub-division of the existing dwelling situated on the land to create two separate dwellings on land at Monkham House, Exford, as shown edged red on the plan attached to the notice, subject to the following conditions:
- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be retained in accordance with the following plans: 001, 002, 003, 004, 005 and 006.
  - 2) The residential unit hereby approved shall only be used as a Principal Residence dwelling (Use Class C3). It shall not be occupied otherwise than by a person as his or her only or principal home. The occupant shall supply to the Local Planning Authority (within 14 days of the local planning authority's request to do so) such information as the Local Planning Authority may reasonably require in order to determine compliance with this condition. For the avoidance of doubt, the dwelling shall not be occupied as a second home or for use as a unit of holiday letting accommodation.
  - 3) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), no external lighting shall be installed on the residential unit hereby approved unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated fully in accordance with the approved details.
19. Appeal B is dismissed.

*A A Phillips*

INSPECTOR



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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2019

**by A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 14 January 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/X/18/3233040**

**Orchard View, Rodhuish, Minehead TA24 6QZ**

- The appeal is made under section 195 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 against a refusal to grant a certificate of lawful use or development (LDC).
  - The appeal is made by Mrs Tracy Stevens against the decision of Exmoor National Park Authority.
  - The application Ref 6/26/19/103, dated 26 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 July 2019.
  - The application was made under section 191(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.
  - The use for which a certificate of lawful use or development is sought is stationing of a caravan for holiday letting purposes.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mrs Tracy Stevens against Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA). This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

### Main Issue

3. Since the certificate sought by the appellant was granted with respect to the siting of the caravan, the main issue in this case is whether the ENPA's refusal in part to grant a certificate of lawful use in respect of the use of the caravan for holiday letting purposes was well-founded. In cases such as this, the burden of proof rests with the appellant and the relevant test of the evidence is the balance of probabilities.
4. In support of her appeal the appellant has submitted a range of documentation, including a written statement, photographs, letters from local residents and statutory declarations. The ENPA contends that with respect to the use of the caravan for holiday letting purposes the evidence is inconsistent and contradictory.
5. The statutory declaration by Mr Moore states that the caravan was used from 2005 for a period in excess of 28 days but for no more than 33 days. In addition, the Planning Contravention Notice that was returned by Mr Moore in August 2013 states that the caravan the subject of this appeal was used for sleeping purposes for approximately 6 nights each year. The applicant's

statutory declaration dated 29 April 2019 does not satisfactorily explain this discrepancy in the evidence.

6. Furthermore, there is evidence from a local resident that brings into doubt whether the caravan has been occupied for holiday letting purposes for the three year period up to the date of the application for the lawful development certificate.
7. Therefore, due to the inconsistencies in the evidence submitted by the appellant with respect to the holiday letting purposes, there is insufficient evidence before me that demonstrates, on the balance of probabilities, that the caravan has been used continuously and without significant breaks.

### **Conclusion**

8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the ENPA's refusal in part to grant a certificate of lawful use or development in respect of use of the caravan for holiday letting purposes was well-founded and that the appeal should fail. I will exercise accordingly the powers transferred to me in section 195(3) of the 1990 Act as amended.

*A A Phillips*

INSPECTOR




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## Costs Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2019

**by A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 14 January 2020**

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### **Costs application in relation to Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/X/18/3233040 Orchard View, Rodhuish, Minehead TA24 6QZ**

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 195, 322 and Schedule 6 and the Local Government Act 1972, section 250(5).
  - The application is made by Mrs Tracy Stevens for a full award of costs against Exmoor National Park Authority.
  - The appeal was against the part refusal of a certificate of lawful use or development for the stationing of a caravan for holiday letting purposes.
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### **Decision**

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

### **Reasons**

2. The Planning Practice Guidance advises that costs may be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably and thereby caused the party applying for costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.
3. The appellant contends that the local planning authority has acted unreasonably in respect of several issues, namely that they have:
  - clearly prevented and delayed development which should be permitted;
  - failed to provide evidence to substantiate each reason for refusal on appeal and made vague or inaccurate assertions about the proposal's impact;
  - acted contrary to well-established case law;
  - imposed a condition that is not necessary, relevant to planning and the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and unreasonable in all other respects, and thus does not comply with the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework on planning conditions and obligations; and
  - has not reviewed their case promptly following the lodging of the appeal against a refusal of planning permission, or an application to remove or vary one or more conditions, as part of a sensible on-going case management.
4. I shall deal with each of these, in turn.
5. With respect to the contention that the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) has clearly prevented development that should have been permitted it seems to me from the evidence presented by the appellant that her argument is based on human habitation in accordance with Section 1(4) of the Caravans sites and

Control of Development Act 1960. However, in this case the proposal for which the lawful development certificate was sought is for the retention of the caravan for holiday letting purposes. The ENPA's evidence is clear that the application was determined under section 191(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended (the 1990 Act). The evidence is that the ENPA's decision to partially refuse to grant the certificate was sound as is demonstrated by my decision to dismiss the appeal. Therefore, I am not convinced that their decision prevented or delayed development that should have been permitted.

6. In a case such as this the burden of proof rests with the appellant and the relevant test of the evidence is the balance of probabilities. I agree with the ENPA's conclusion that on the balance of probabilities the evidence does not satisfactorily prove that the caravan has been used for holiday letting purposes for a period of not less than ten years leading up to the date the application for a certificate of lawful development was made (26 February 2019).
7. In coming to my decision I have taken account of the consideration that seasonal breaks may occur with respect to holiday letting, but that does not overcome the concern I have in terms of the discrepancies in the evidence provided by the appellant.
8. The evidence submitted by the ENPA demonstrates satisfactorily that relevant matters were taken into account in determining the application. The appellant has referred to a single piece of legislation (the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960), but that does not take precedent over the primary legislation in this case which is the 1990 Act. The ENPA has not acted unreasonably in determining the appeal and have demonstrated the legislative basis for their decision.
9. The appellant's contention that the ENPA have imposed a condition that fails to meet the necessary tests is misguided as far as I can see. There are no conditions imposed on the decision and it would be wrong for the local planning authority to attach conditions to the grant of a certificate of lawfulness in any case. The questionnaire has been completed correctly in this case because the appeal does not relate to a planning condition, but rather a certificate of lawfulness.
10. I understand that the appellant is frustrated with the Council's decision and, in particular, the communication between her and the ENPA during the application and appeal process. I understand that there was an administrative error relating to the plan attached to the certificate, but that was replaced when the error was identified. Although I agree with the appellant that greater care should have been given by the local planning authority, that does not constitute unreasonable behaviour.
11. I therefore find that unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary or wasted expense, as described in the Planning Practice Guidance, has not been demonstrated.

*A A Phillips*

INSPECTOR

# 7.1



## Committee Report

Application Number:	6/15/19/106
Registration Date:	03-Dec-2019
Determination Date:	02-Jan-2020
Applicant	Mr & Mrs RS & CM Webber
Agent:	Mr. B Dinnis, Acorn Rural Property Consultants
Case Officer:	Dean Kinsella
Site Address:	Goosemoor Farm, Armoor Lane, Exton, Somerset, TA24 7BY
Proposal:	Proposed removal of condition 4 of approved application 6/15/17/106 to remove the occupancy condition on Goosemoor Farm (the Farmhouse).
Recommendation:	Refusal
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Given the planning history associated with the application the Chief Executive and the Head of Planning & Sustainable Development consider it necessary to report this application to the Planning Committee

### Relevant History

6/15/17/102 – Proposed construction of farm managers’ dwelling and garage and associated works - Approved 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

6/15/16/109 – Proposed residential extension and change of use of barn to provide additional domestic accommodation on first floor and farm office on ground floor – Approved – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

6/15/17/106 – Proposed variation of condition 2 (Development accord with Plan condition) to amend the siting of the approved managers’ dwelling and garage – Approved – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

6/15/18/105 – Proposed removal of condition 4 (occupation of dwelling by Mr & Mrs Webber or persons solely or mainly, or last working in the locality in Agriculture) of approved application 6/15/17/106 – Refused – 03/10/2018



# 7.1

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## Site Description & Proposal

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This application is the resubmission of planning application 6/15/18/105, for the removal of condition 4 of planning permission 6/15/17/106 to remove the occupancy condition on Goosemoor Farm (the Farmhouse). Planning permission was granted in 2017 for the construction of a mangers' dwelling and garage. The approved dwelling would be the second dwelling at Goosemoor Farm.

Goosemoor Farm lies in open countryside on the Brendon Hills south of the B3224 and alongside the single width (classified 3/C) public highway, Armour Lane.

The Farm comprises a farmhouse and a traditional stone outbuilding with a range of post war farm buildings closely group together. Planning permission has been granted (under application reference 6/15/16/109) that permits the use of part of the first floor of the traditional stone outbuilding as additional accommodation for the farmhouse. The barn is also proposal to accommodate the farm office at ground floor level.

The Applicants farm a total of approximately 752 acres in the Exmoor National Park (the ENP) comprising Putham Farm (64 acres), Goosemoor Farm (228 acres), Gupworthy Farm (430 acres) and rented land (30 acres). The Applicants also own Weekfield Farm (199 acres) that is let on a long-term farm business tenancy. The main farming enterprises are beef and lamb production.

The applicants purchased Goosemoor Farm after 2010 and have subsequently secured planning permissions for new farm buildings and yard space as part of works to improve and modernise the existing building complex for the farming enterprise being carried out.

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## Consultee Representations

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SCC Highways Authority – No Objection

ENPA Ecologist – No Objection

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## Representations

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None received at the time of writing this report.

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## Policy Context

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Exmoor Local Plan

GP1 National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

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CE-S1 Landscape Character  
CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscape and Seascape  
CE-S2 Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky  
CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure  
CE-S6 Design & Sustainable Construction Principles  
CC-D5 Sewerage Capacity & Sewage Disposal  
CC-S7 Pollution  
HC-S2 A balanced Local Housing Stock  
HC-D8 New Build Dwellings in the Open Countryside  
HC-D9 Rural Workers  
Annex2 Rural Land Based Workers Dwellings  
CC-D1 Flood Risk  
AC-S1 Sustainable Transport  
AC-D1 Transport and Accessibility Requirements for new development  
AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development  
AC-S3 Traffic Management and Parking  
AC-D3 Parking Provision and Standards

The NNPF is a material planning consideration

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## **Planning Considerations**

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### Principle of Development

Planning decisions need to be taken in accordance with policies of the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

The main planning issue in this case is considered to be whether the proposal to remove a condition (specifically number 4) of planning permission reference 6/15/17/106, which would impose an occupancy restriction on the existing farmhouse at Goosemoor Farm, is acceptable having regard to the applicant's case against the proposed occupancy condition and the requirements of Policy HC-D8 of the Local Plan.

Policy HC-D8 refers to 'new build dwellings in the open countryside'. The policy says:

1 New dwelling(s) in the open countryside will only be permitted where:

a The accommodation is designed to meet a proven need for a rural worker in accordance with HC-D9 or succession Farm worker in accordance with HC-D10 that cannot be met:

- i Within the existing housing stock including through the subdivision of an existing dwelling, from sites/buildings already with planning permission; or
- ii through the provision of a temporary residential caravan in accordance with HC-D11 Residential Caravans; or

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iii the conversion/change of use of an existing building in accordance with CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings, and HC-07 Conversions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside;

B The dwelling is well related to existing buildings on the holding such that the dwelling and farm buildings operate as a single entity; and

c The design and layout of the development meet the requirements of CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles, and the size will accord with HC-D9 Rural Workers, or HC-D10 Succession Farming- Second Dwellings on Established Farms, as appropriate.

2 Where permission is granted a condition will be attached removing permitted development rights in respect of extensions.

3 Where permission is granted for a new dwelling on an agricultural or forestry holding that has an existing dwelling(s) under the control of the applicant, which needs to be used in connection with the enterprise, a condition will be attached to ensure that the occupancy of any existing dwelling(s) is also limited to persons able to demonstrate a proven essential need for that accommodation.

Criterion 3 of this policy is the main point of contention.

### BACKGROUND

Permission was initially granted for the proposed dwelling under application reference 6/15/17/102 in July 2017. A subsequent application was submitted, reference 6/15/17/106, which essentially proposed to amend the siting of the approved agricultural dwelling by seeking to vary the 'approved plans' condition and represented a minor material change to the scheme already granted planning permission. The planning permission was granted in November 2017.

Condition 4 of that subsequent planning permission (granted in November 2017) states: "*The Occupation of the existing dwelling known as Goosemoor Farm (the farmhouse), and within the blue outline area of the approved drawing number 1 and outlined in green on the plan, labelled 'PLAN 1', attached with this decision notice, shall be limited to Mr R S Webber and/or Mrs C M Webber (the applicants) or to a person or persons solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture (as defined in Section 336 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), or in forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.*"

The reason for the condition is: "*To acknowledge the justification for the application, with the existing dwelling required to meet the functional requirements of this farm holding, but also having regard to the particular circumstances of the applicants and*

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*their related involvement with local, longstanding diversified agricultural business activities, and to accord with Policy HC-D8 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan".*

In 2018 an application was submitted to remove the above mentioned condition 4 from planning permission 6/15/17/106. This application was heard by the planning committee in October 2018 and was refused for the following reason:

*Having regard to the particular business needs of the holding and the requirements of the adopted Policy HC-D8 of the Local Plan seeking to apply an encumbering condition to the existing farmhouse at Goosemoor Farm, it is necessary and reasonable to include an occupancy condition, because there is an agricultural need for the existing dwelling to be used in connection with the farm. Without the occupancy condition, the existing farmhouse could be sold and this might generate the need in the future for a further dwelling to serve the needs of the farm, which have already been identified as requiring two dwellings and presenting the need and special circumstances for approving the second dwelling.*

*There is no compelling evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development is not viable with the imposition of the proposed occupancy condition, and there is considered to be justifiable planning reasons to impose the planning condition, in accordance with Policy HC-D8 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (including minerals and waste policies).*

This current application again seeks to remove condition 4 of planning permission 6/15/17/106, with the applicant's aim being to not have the occupation of the existing farmhouse at Goosemoor Farm encumbered with occupancy condition and the requirements of Policy HC-D8 of the Local Plan as set out in this report.

When the initial application was considered for a second dwelling at Goosemoor Farm (6/15/17/106), the agricultural appraisal submitted with the application explained that the applicants main farming enterprises were beef and lamb production, and that the beef enterprise operates from Goosemoor Farm. The sheep enterprise is mainly centred at Putham in Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross, with Lower House Farm (also at Cutcombe) being sold in 2016/17. A farmhouse previously owned at Putham was sold by the applicants during the 1990s.

The details provided with the application for the second on-farm dwelling also explained that in addition to the farming business, the applicants own and run Shearwell Data Ltd that operates from premises at Putham. Shearwell is engaged in the manufacture and sale of livestock identification tags, electronic identification systems and the supply of other services to the farming industry in the United Kingdom and internationally. The details explain that the applicants farming business also works closely with Shearwell, and is important to Shearwell, in that it provides the company with the ability to test and demonstrate its products and services.

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In giving consideration to the specific agricultural business carried on at Goosemoor Farm, it was considered that there was an essential need for a second permanent dwelling on the holding, and this led to the Authority's decision to grant planning permission for the second dwelling proposed.

The matter that the Local Plan policy required a condition to be attached to the existing dwelling to ensure that the occupancy of the dwelling is also limited to persons able to demonstrate a proven essential need for that application, was specifically discussed in the Committee report and debated at the Authority Meeting. The matter that the agent advised that he was not content to see the imposition of such a condition on the existing dwelling, was also raised and discussed.

During the consideration of the previous application, consideration was given to the applicant's case that the restrictive condition provided financial constraints on Shearwell Data and its continued development. However, officers and members resolved that the purpose of the original condition was to ensure that there was sufficient on farm living accommodation to sustain the business needs of the holding.

### CURRENT APPLICATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In terms of the "tests" for planning conditions, the NPPF, adopted July 2018, at paragraph 54 states that "local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions".

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states "planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects." These are typically referred to as the "6 tests" for planning conditions.

When considering these tests, the agent raises the "necessary" test and "reasonable in all other respects" test, and considers that these tests are not satisfied.

In terms in of the test of necessity, the agent argues that because the position of the existing farmhouse and its relationship with the setting of the farm buildings is both immediate and intimate, there is no reason to expect that it will ever cease to be owned and occupied together with the farm. The agent concludes that it is, therefore, extremely unlikely that it would ever be separated from the rest of the other farm. The agent advises that there is no evidence that the motive of the applicants is in any way speculative and/or that the intention is to complete the development to facilitate the sale of the existing dwelling.

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The NPPF is clear that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances, such as for the essential need for a farm worker.

Through the initial application for the proposed farm dwelling, the agricultural appraisal submitted on behalf of the applicant, and the National Park Authority's own agricultural consultant's appraisal, conclude that, due to the specific nature of the enterprise and the farm systems used, there is an essential need for two people to be resident at the farm and a second dwelling was, therefore, justified for the proper functioning of the farm.

For clarity, the cattle side of the enterprise is based around the cattle being housed at Goosemoor Farm for the majority of the year, with cows calving indoors in the spring, then going out to pasture with calves at foot and young stock coming back in once weaned and then fattened indoors until they are c24 months. As such, there will be cattle of varying ages indoors throughout the year. From a health and safety perspective, the Authority's consultant considered that, especially with the cattle, it is safer for two people to be on hand both for the animal concerned and for themselves. The Authority's consultant considered that, although much of the work will be carried out during the normal working hours, agriculture by its very nature means that more often than not work will be done outside of these hours.

It is considered, therefore, the specific circumstances of the enterprise that give rise to the essential need for two or more people to be on site reinforce the need to put an agricultural occupancy condition on the existing house. The condition specifically acknowledges the justification for the application, with the existing dwelling required to meet the functional requirements of this farm holding, but also has regard to the particular circumstances of the applicants and their related involvement with local, longstanding diversified agricultural business activities, as well as the farm itself, and accords with the specific requirement of Policy HC-08 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan.

In addition, notwithstanding the agent's case against the condition, the approved development includes a new access to serve the new dwelling. This access would also provide a new, alternative, access to the existing dwelling and negate the need to pass through the existing farmyard and building complex to access that property. Although that access would also serve the new dwelling, the new access means that the existing dwelling could much more readily be sold off and separated from the existing farming enterprise. There is evidence of this occurring historically on other farms on Exmoor. Indeed, an example of this can be seen close by at Leigh Farm, where the original farmhouse and farm buildings, while being in close proximity (and in that case, sharing an access), are now held in separate ownership.

In terms of the condition meeting the test of reasonableness, the agent sets out the advice under the PPG, which states that "conditions which unreasonably impact on

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the deliverability of a development: conditions which place unjustifiable and disproportionate burdens on an applicant will fail the test of reasonableness."

The agent refers to advice from Savills dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019, who advise the applicants on valuation matters. Savills hold the opinion that the imposition of the occupancy condition on Goosemoor farmhouse would reduce its value by £300,000, which is an increase of £100,000 lost value when compared to the letter submitted by the applicant in relation to the 2018 application, if the permission were implemented. Savills also advise that the value of the farm managers dwelling, once completed, having regard to its agricultural occupancy condition, will be in the region of £250,000. Savills advice is, however, that after allowing for investment that is required to construct the dwelling there would be a net shortfall in value in the region of £340,000. The agent advises that this advice has caused the applicants' lender to not give consent for the planning permission to be implemented, because this would have a negative impact on the value of their loan security against wider investments within Shearwell Data.

Since submitting the application the applicant has submitted a further letter from the Financial and Commercial Manager at Shearwell Data. The purpose of the letter is to further explain the business model used at Shearwell and why the restrictive condition is causing the business concern. The letter states that:

*"The reason that this is not acceptable is that the businesses are structured in a way that facilitates the very significant capital investment that is required in research and development and product testing that is required to bring new products to the market. The farms, farming business assets and Shearwell Data shares are held in Webber Holdings (Exmoor) Ltd. When funding is made available from our bank to invest in asset purchase, research and development and working capital, there are financial covenants across the Group which are tested quarterly. One of the key financial covenants is the loan to value ratios (LTV). Any erosion of the value of capital assets within the Group has a direct impact on the LTV covenants and therefore also on the level of funding available. That is particularly important for research and development funding where the capital requirement can be very significant and where there is a long lead in time before there is any additional revenue generation."*

An example is then given through the development of a new Shearwell metal EID Cattle Tag. The development of the new tag is projected to provide an additional 10-15 full time employees in addition to the 95 currently on the payroll. Significant Investment has already taken place and the letter concludes by stating that:

*"For investment of this scale, the speed to market of new products is critical and requires careful management of all sources of finance available to the business and of our relationship with our bank. A devaluation of the combined Webber Holdings (Exmoor) Limited asset base arising from the imposition of an occupancy restriction on the existing dwelling at Goosemoor will therefore have a direct negative impact on*

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*the capacity of the Shearwell business to undertake similar future product development and to continue to grow the business.”*

The agent also refers to PPG advise that local planning authorities should be flexible wherever possible in applying policy requirements where the viability of a development is in question, and guidance that conditions which place unjustifiable and disproportionate financial burdens on an applicant will fail the test of reasonableness.

The agent advises that, in his opinion, the net shortfall in value that will arise as a result of the occupancy condition that would be imposed on the existing farmhouse is unduly onerous and unreasonable and results in the failure of the viability test.

The applicant has submitted viability information which suggests, as stated earlier in this report that the value of the property would be approximately £250,000. When this is compared to the projected build costs, this would show approximately an £40,000 deficit. With any assessment this deficit would need to be balanced against the profitability of the farm business, when reviewing the original agricultural appraisal it is clear that the farm business operates at a surplus which could cover the relatively small one off deficit. The details provided are limited in terms of evidence base and are not considered to be of such weight in the decision making process that could lead the Authority to justify not including an occupancy restriction on the existing farmhouse, which is otherwise required under Policy HC-D8 of the Local Plan. There is no compelling evidence to demonstrate that the approved development cannot be built on a viable basis with the imposition of the condition, nor that the condition brings unjustifiable and disproportionate financial burden to the development. It is your officer's opinion that in this case the weight of decision in this case is considered to lie with the Policy of the Local Plan.

The condition is necessary because there is an agricultural need for the existing house (as well as the approved second dwelling) to be used in connection with the farm. This would prevent a future application for another dwelling should the existing farmhouse be sold. The second dwelling has been argued to be required in connection with the proper functioning of the farm under the previous planning application, and the farming business has been argued to be financially sound, with a clear prospect of remaining so, and, therefore, with the ability to sustain the approved dwelling.

There is no detail to demonstrate that the occupancy restriction/condition brings an unjustifiable or disproportionate financial burden to the proposed development or farm business itself. The specific loan arrangements of the applicant, i.e. the personal circumstances, are afforded limited weight in the context of the Local Plan Policy and against the case that the existing dwelling has been demonstrated as being essential for the proper functioning of the farm.



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Having regard to the particular business needs of the holding and the requirements of the adopted Local Plan seeking to apply an encumbering condition to the existing farmhouse at Goosemoor Farm, it is necessary and reasonable because there is an agricultural need for the existing dwelling to be used in connection with the farm, notwithstanding the applicants personal circumstances. Without the occupancy condition on the existing dwelling, the farmhouse could be sold and this might generate the need in the future for a further dwelling to serve the needs of the farm, which have already been identified as requiring two dwellings and presenting the need and special circumstances for approving the second dwelling.

There is no convincing evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development is not viable with the imposition of the proposed occupancy condition, and there is considered to be justifiable planning reasons to impose the planning condition, in accordance with the requirements of HC-08 of the Local Plan.

As part of papers submitted in support of the application, the agent has provided an appeal decision relating to a property in Launceston and a proposal for a farm-workers dwelling. As part of the appeal the matter of the need to impose an occupancy condition on an existing farmhouse was discussed and, in allowing the appeal, the inspector determined that it was not necessary in the circumstances to apply such a condition. Officers have had regard to this matter. The appeal, however, dates to 2008 and the full circumstances behind the application, including the nature and scale of the farming enterprise concerned, are not clear. The proposal is also considered under a different development plan and policy criteria. The appeal is, therefore, afforded little weight in the consideration of matters in relation to this proposal.

For the reasons outlined above, it is recommended that permission be refused.

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### **Human Rights**

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The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

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### **Conclusion**

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The application seeks to remove condition 4 of planning permission 6/15/17/106. The applicant's case is that the imposition of the encumbering condition provides a fundamental barrier to accessing funding to help with the development of the applicant's wider business enterprise including Shearwell Data.

Planning permission 6/15/17/106 was approved for a Farm Managers dwelling and garage at Goosemoor Farm. At the time of determining this application the justification given, and accepted, was that there was a need for 2 full time people to

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be on the farm most of the times. Therefore, in accordance with Policy HC-D8 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan, a restrictive condition was imposed on the existing farmhouse at Goosemoor Farm to ensure that only the applicants or someone mainly or last working in agriculture or forestry occupy the farmhouse.

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states:

*“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*

Having carefully considered the applicants application your officers do not consider that the material considerations forwarded with the application should outweigh the conflict with the local plan and therefore the application is recommended for refusal.

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### **Recommendation**

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Refuse for the following reasons

1. Having regard to the particular business needs of the holding and the requirements of the adopted Policy HC-D8 of the Local Plan seeking to apply an encumbering condition to the existing farmhouse at Goosemoor Farm, it is necessary and reasonable to include an occupancy condition, because there is an agricultural need for the existing dwelling to be used in connection with the farm. Without the occupancy condition, the existing farmhouse could be sold and this might generate the need in the future for a further dwelling to serve the needs of the farm, which have already been identified as requiring two dwellings and presenting the need and special circumstances for approving the second dwelling.

There is no compelling evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development is not viable with the imposition of the proposed occupancy condition, and there is considered to be justifiable planning reasons to impose the planning condition, in accordance with Policy HC-08 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 -2031 (including minerals and waste policies).

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### **Informatives**

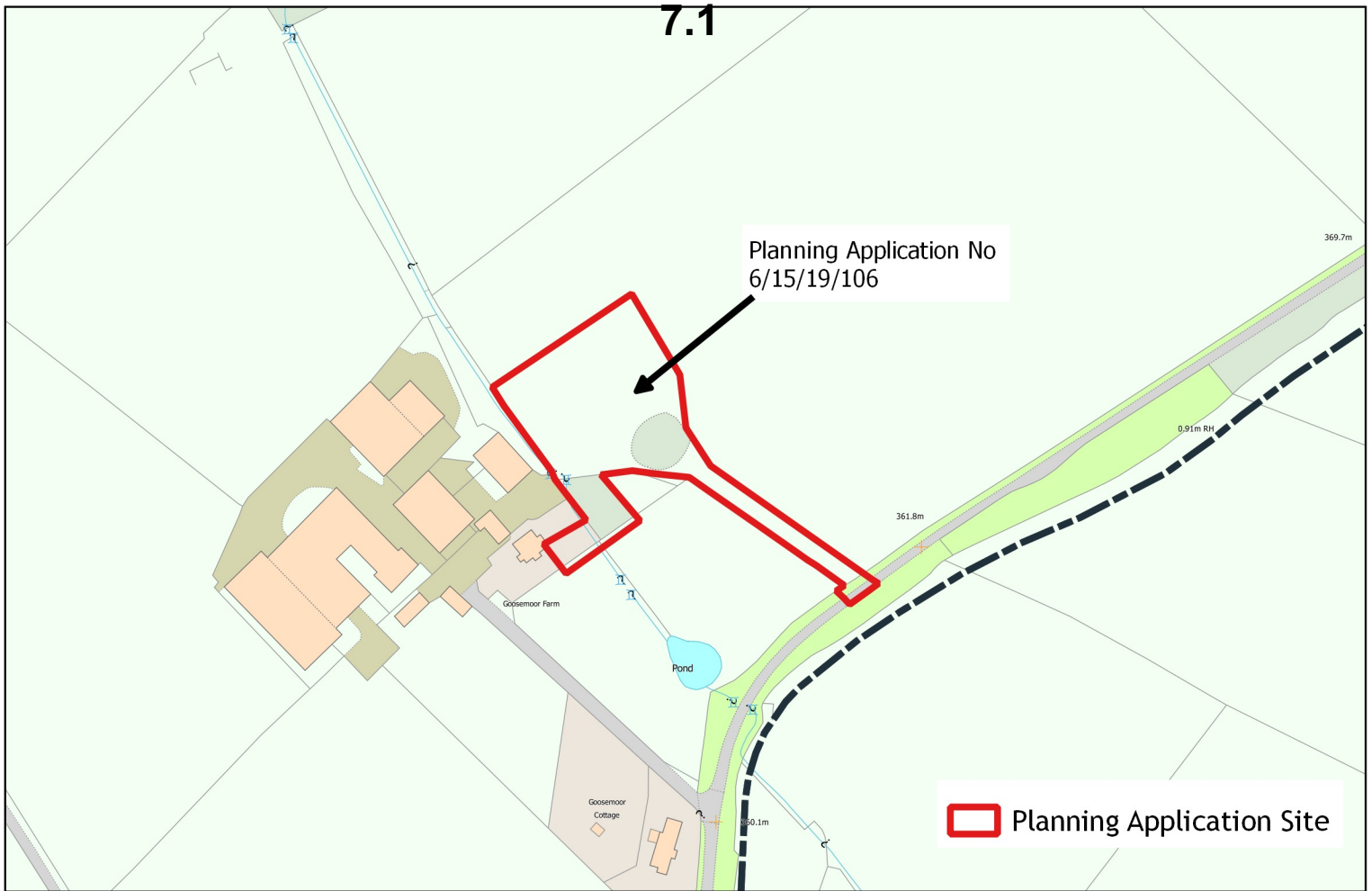
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#### PROACTIVE STATEMENT

In accordance with the requirements of Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order, 2010, as amended in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has worked positively and

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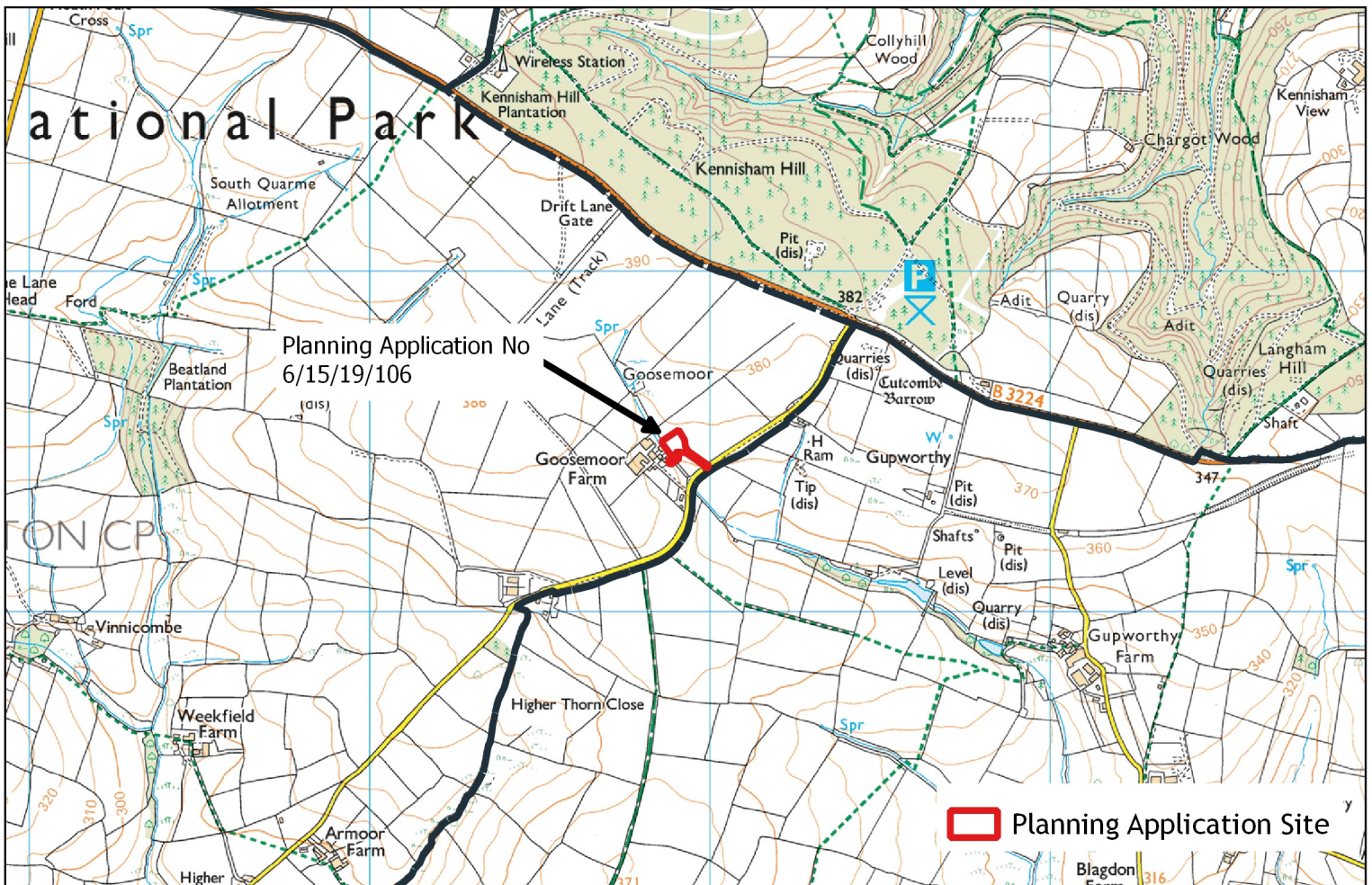
proactively with the agent to achieve a positive outcome. However, in this instance the planning application has been considered to fail the relevant policies with the Local Plan and no material considerations are considered to outweigh this policy objection and the application has therefore been refused.



Site Map

Scale 1:2,500

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Overview Map

Scale 1:20,000

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## 7.2



### Committee Report

Application Number:	62/50/19/015
Registration Date:	12-Nov-2019
Determination Date:	27-Dec-2019
Applicant	Mr D Austin, Parracombe Community Trust
Agent:	Mr W Bowden
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	Coronation Playing Fields, Parracombe, Devon
Proposal:	Proposed extension to pavilion to form community shop and café. (Amended description)
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Personal interest declared by National Park Authority Member

### Relevant History

62/50/75/011 – Erection of public conveniences – Approved on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1975

NI 19283 – Proposed public toilets – Approved on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1974

### Site Description & Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the extension of the existing pavilion building at the Coronation Playing Fields, Parracombe to form a community shop and café. The existing pavilion is a single storey building that is situated on the northern side of the recreational area. The exterior is finished in a mixture of natural slate and render, under a concrete tile roof. The building currently accommodates public conveniences and a kitchen and store that has been used to provide refreshments facilities associated with the use of the recreational area.

The site is within the Parracombe Conservation Area. There are no residential properties within the Coronation Playing Fields and the nearest to the application building are over 50 metres away to the west. The site also has playground facilities and a car park.

The extension would be attached to the southern elevation of the building and the orientation of the pitched roof would be changed as part of these works. The exterior of the extension would be finished in render under a natural slate roof across the extension and the existing building. Windows and doors would be constructed from

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timber. The public conveniences would be retained as part of the creation of the shop and café.

A timber clad lean-to store would be attached to the eastern elevation and its roof would also be clad in natural slate. Solar panels would be installed on the new roof on both roof slopes and they would be fitted flush with the surrounding roof tiles.

The proposed development also includes the extension of the car park to include disabled parking bays. A Devon hedgebank would be created to separate the car park from the rest of the recreational area, and a cinder cycle track would be constructed around the periphery of the remaining open green space.

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### Consultee Representations

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**North Devon Council** – In accordance with the agreed protocol, the District Council, as a consultee to the Exmoor National Park Authority, has no observations.

**Parracombe Parish Council** – The Council were in full agreement and supported the application because it was felt that this would enhance the village facilities and being community led and based would bring the villagers closer together with a lot of the parishioners being directly involved either through share offers or running and support the new venture.

The Parish Council also provided further comments on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 confirming that are happy with the amended description.

**Sport England** – The proposed development does not fall within either our statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Par. 003 Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306), therefore Sport England has not provided a detailed response in this case, but would wish to give the following advice to aid the assessment of this application.

General guidance and advice can however be found on our website:

[www.sportengland.org/planningapplications](http://www.sportengland.org/planningapplications)

If the proposal involves the loss of any sports facility then full consideration should be given to whether the proposal meets Par. 97 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), link below, is in accordance with local policies to protect social infrastructure and any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place.

If the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility, then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority may have in place. In addition, to ensure they are fit for purpose, such facilities should be

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designed in accordance with Sport England, or the relevant National Governing Body, design guidance notes:

<http://sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>

If the proposal involves the provision of additional housing (then it will generate additional demand for sport. If existing sports facilities do not have the capacity to absorb the additional demand, then new and/or improved sports facilities should be secured and delivered in accordance with any approved local policy for social infrastructure, and priorities set out in any Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place.

In line with the Government's NPPF (including Section 8) and PPG (Health and wellbeing section), consideration should also be given to how any new development, especially for new housing, will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lifestyles and create healthy communities. Sport England's Active Design guidance can be used to help with this when developing or assessing a proposal. Active Design provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity.

NPPF Section 8: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities>

PPG Health and wellbeing section: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

Sport England's Active Design Guidance: <https://www.sportengland.org/activedesign>

Please note: this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.

**NDC Environmental Health** – I have reviewed this application in relation to Environmental Protection matters on behalf of North Devon Council's Environmental Protection service and comment as follows:

### 1 Operating Hours

I could not find proposed opening hours. I note there are no plans to introduce external lighting which suggests day time only opening is proposed. Given the presence of nearby dwellings you may wish to check with the applicant what hours are proposed. Depending on the response, a formal restriction on opening hours such as from 08.00hrs to 18.00hrs may then be appropriate to safeguard residential amenity.



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### 2 Advisory Note: Asbestos

The existing building may be of an age where materials containing asbestos were used in its construction or subsequent modification. Buildings built after 1990 are much less likely to incorporate asbestos containing materials (ACMs) than those built prior to this date. If ACMs may be present, a survey should be undertaken by a competent person prior to works commencing. Where ACMs are present they must be dealt with and where relevant be disposed of in accordance with the relevant legislation and health and safety guidance.

**ENPA Wildlife Officer** – Orbis Ecology carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to inform the proposed works at Parracombe Playing Fields on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The results of the survey were as follows:

- There were no bats nor evidence of bats in the roof space of the pavilion. A close inspection of 3 potential roost features on the exterior did not reveal any bats or evidence of bats. Therefore the building was assessed as having negligible potential to support bats.
- There was no evidence of nesting birds in or on the pavilion.

### Recommendations

To comply with Local and national policy, wildlife legislation, and the requirements of the mitigation hierarchy and for biodiversity net gain, please attach the following conditions and informative to the planning permission if granted.

### Bats

Due to the opportunistic behaviour of some bats species, including pipistrelles, along with the site's location set within habitats that will support bats, please attach the following informative to any planning permission granted:

- The developers and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

### Biodiversity and protected species net gain

As enhancement and compensation measures, and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), please apply the following conditions to any planning permission granted.

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• The following will be incorporated into the site proposal with photographs of the installed features submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the completion of construction works:

- Installation of 2 X Kent bat box, purchased or built, on to a mature tree on site, facing south or west, at a height above 3m.
- Installation of 1 X standard bird boxes, purchased or built, on to a mature tree on site, facing east or north, at a height above 3m.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework; and ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure and the Authorities obligations for biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

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### Representations

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Two public representations have been received in relation to this application, one of which supports the proposed development as it is commented that “the village is devoid of any business, bar the pub and the pottery”.

The other public representation is from the owner of the former village shop. The comments received from this party raise concerns over the viability of the proposed shop and café and a query is raised regarding how the building would be used should the proposed business fail.

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### Policy Context

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#### **Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031**

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

GP3 – General Policy: Spatial Strategy

GP4 – General Policy: The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings

CE-S2 – Protecting Exmoor’s Dark Night Sky

CE-S3 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

CE-S4 – Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment

CE-D3 – Conserving Heritage Assets

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

CE-D4 – Extensions to Buildings

CC-S1 – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

CC-S5 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development

HC-S6 – Local Commercial Services and Community Facilities

HC-D19 – Safeguarding Local Commercial Services and Community Facilities

RT-S1 – Recreation and Tourism

RT-D10 – Recreational Development

AC-D2 – Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

## 7.2

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AC-S3 – Traffic Management and Parking  
AC-D3 – Parking Provision and Standards

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Parracombe Conservation Area Appraisal Document 2019 are also material planning considerations.

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### Planning Considerations

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The main material planning considerations in this case are the principle of development, the design, scale and materials, and the impact on the Conservation Area, neighbouring amenity, biodiversity and highway safety.

#### Principle of Development

The application building was erected in the 1970s following the granting of planning permission on 6th February 1975 for the erection of public toilets (reference 62/50/75/011).

It is clear that at some point since the building's construction the originally approved toilet facilities have been reduced to the western half of the building and a kitchen and store has been formed in the eastern half of the building. The hatch from the kitchen to the exterior of the building indicates that the eastern half of the building has been used to provide refreshments, potentially as part of historic sporting activities on the Coronation Playing Fields. The building is considered to have an existing mixed use as a refreshment facility and public conveniences.

The proposal to extend the building to form a larger refreshment facility in the form of a café, together with an additional use as a community shop and the retention of the public conveniences, means that the existing uses of the building would not be lost as a result of this application. Therefore, Policy HC-D19 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (the Local Plan), which seeks to safeguard existing local commercial services and community facilities, would not be applicable in respect of the loss of uses from within the building itself.

The proposed development (the extension of the application building and the existing car park) would lead to a loss of sections of the open green space of the Coronation Playing Fields. However, Sport England has confirmed that the proposed development does not fall within either their statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Par. 003 Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306).

While considering the wider use of the site, it is important to note that the Coronation Playing Fields is designated in the Local Plan as Important Recreational Open Space. However, as explained above, the proposed development would only lead to a loss of a small proportion of the open space. In addition, the new cinder cycle track around the perimeter of the open space would provide an enhancement of this existing community facility. It would allow more use of the field during winter months,

## 7.2

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particularly, when taking into account the boggy nature of the current grass surface during that time of the year. As such, the proposed development is not considered to compromise the designation as Important Recreational Open Space, and Policies HC-S6 and HC-D19 are considered to be satisfied.

Turning to the principle of the proposed extension and the proposed café and shop use in the building, Clause 2 of Policy HC-S6 states that the provision of new or extended local commercial services and community facilities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they:

- a) will benefit the local resident community and the needs of visitors; and
- b) are of a scale and location appropriate to the community they serve.

Clause 5 of the policy states that proposals enabling the enhancement of existing services and facilities, or the flexible use of new or existing buildings to allow a range of community services or facilities to take place on site will be encouraged – where this applies to an existing service the sharing of facilities should support the retention of the primary use.

Parracombe had a village shop in the centre of the village until it was closed in November 2017. The village does not have any such facility now and the community have formed the Parracombe Community Trust to deliver various local projects, including the provision of a replacement local shop and a place for villagers to meet up and socialise. It is considered the extension of the existing pavilion and its partial change of use to a shop and café will benefit the local resident community and the needs of visitors to the village by replacing the facility that was lost by the former shop closing. The new shop and café would be of a scale that is similar to the size of the former shop and would be commensurate with the size of the settlement.

As the proposed development would sustain core services and facilities within the community of this village, the application is considered to be compliant with the spatial strategy of the Local Plan set out under Policy GP3.

The application for a new community shop and café is considered to be acceptable and policy compliant in principle, subject to other material planning considerations being satisfied.

### **Design, Scale and Materials**

The existing building would be extended on the southern elevation and as part of this the orientation of the roof of the building would be changed from a dual pitched roof running from east to west, to a dual pitched roof running from north to south. No new openings would be installed within the existing fabric of the building. The windows and doors in the extension are considered to be well proportioned and would not be incongruent with the character of the existing building. The new southern gable end would be finished in glazing with timber detailing.

## 7.2

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The overall design of the extension and alterations to the existing building, and the detailing of the proposed works, are considered to be acceptable and accord with Policy CE-S6 of the Local Plan.

The extension would see a significant increase to the floorspace of the existing building but it is considered that the proposed works would complement the form and character of the existing building, and the new roof orientation would help to create a contiguous built form that would not appear out of place within its setting. The overall bulk and massing resulting from the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and would comply with Policy CE-D4.

The existing building is finished in a mixture of natural slate and render under a concrete tiled roof. The proposed extension would be finished in render and the new roof across the extension and existing building would be clad in natural slate. Following some negotiation with the applicant it has been agreed for the windows and doors to be constructed from timber. The materials of the proposed development are considered to be acceptable and compliant with requirements of Policy CE-S6.

The proposal also includes the erection of a lean-to store on the building. This is considered to be a subservient addition to the building and its material finish in natural timber under a natural slate roof is considered to reinforce the acceptability of erecting the lean-to store as an addition to the building.

The new roof would include the installation of solar panels. Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that “the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate”. The inclusion of the solar panels is considered to contribute to mitigation of climate change and is, therefore, an element of the proposed development that is encouraged under Policy CC-S1. The panels would be coloured matt black and they would be installed within the roof slopes so that they are flush with the surrounding natural slate tiles. This will help to assimilate them into the built form without them being overtly noticeable. The solar panels are considered to be compliant with Policy CC-S5.

The car park is proposed to be extended as part of this application. The existing stone surface of the car park would be retained across most of the extended car park. Delineated parking spaces would be created near to the building (including disabled spaces) and these would be surfaced in tarmac. The plans also suggest that the tarmac surface would extend to the building in the form of a path. A consolidated surface is suitable for disabled parking spaces in a public car park to allow safe and sufficient wheelchair access from the car park to the building. As such, the use of such a surface is considered to be acceptable in this particular case, subject to the tarmac being limited to the area shown on the plans and the attachment of a condition requiring details of surfacing to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the surfacing works taking place.

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A low traditionally constructed Devon bank would be constructed on the southern border of the extended car park. This would delineate the car park from the remaining green open space and would prevent vehicles driving on said open space. The introduction of a traditional border feature such as a Devon bank is considered to be acceptable as it would reflect the traditional banking in the local area. It would provide a more attractive boundary feature than a timber or metal fence.

The cinder cycle track around the edge of the remaining open space is also considered to be acceptable as it would not be overtly visible from the wider landscape and would not look out of place on a playing field. This is subject to the aforementioned condition requiring details of any surfacing to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to any surfacing works taking place.

### **Impact on the Parracombe Conservation Area**

The Coronation Playing Fields are within the Parracombe Conservation Area. The Parracombe Conservation Area Appraisal Document 2019 states that the Coronation Playing Field is the principal public space in the village and is one of the few areas of level ground within the Conservation Area.

The Coronation Playing Fields are located on the northern edge of the settlement with the open parkland of Heddon Hall further to the north. It is noted that the site and the application building are not easily read in the context of the other buildings of the Conservation Area.

Given that the site is located on the northern edge of the Conservation Area, and that it is not seen in the context of other built form, it is considered that there is not an existing vernacular to reference and take inspiration from. The existing building is a non-traditional building with limited aesthetics. The building, following the proposed development, would not lead to a traditional appearance and character, but it can be considered as an improvement when taking the existing building as a base line. The location of the building in an isolated setting away from traditional buildings of the Conservation Area allows a more contemporary appearance to be followed in this particular case, which the proposed development is considered to achieve.

Overall, it is considered that material harm would not be caused to the historic significance of the Conservation Area, particularly when taking into account its acceptable design and the traditional and naturally sustainable building materials that would be used to externally finish the extended building. It is therefore compliant with Policies CE-S4 and CE-D3 of the Local Plan. The ancillary works also proposed (the car park extension and the cinder track) are not considered to compromise the acceptability of the scheme due to their limited visibility from the wider public realm.

### **Impact on Neighbouring Amenity**

The nearest residential property to the application building is over 50 metres away to the west. It is considered that this degree of separation would prevent harm to neighbouring amenity from overbearing, overlooking or loss of light.

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Environmental Health have suggested that a restriction on opening hours, such as from 8am until 6pm, may be appropriate to safeguard residential amenity. Officers have taken this advice into consideration but it is felt that there is sufficient distance from nearby sensitive receptors to prevent issues arising from noise disturbance. It is considered that a restriction on opening times is not necessary in this particular case given that the proposed use as a shop and café is unlikely to be operating during anti-social hours.

### **Impact on Biodiversity**

The Authority's Wildlife Officer has advised that Orbis Ecology carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in May 2019 to inform the proposed works at Coronation Playing Fields. It is explained that the results of the survey were as follows:

- There were no bats nor evidence of bats in the roof space of the existing building. A close inspection of three potential roost features on the exterior did not reveal any bats or evidence of bats. Therefore, the building was assessed as having negligible potential to support bats.
- There was no evidence of nesting birds in or on the existing building.

The Wildlife Officer has recommended the attachment of an informative that draws the attention of the applicant and their contractors to the legal protection for bats and the recommended action to follow should a bat(s) be discovered when the approved works are being carried out.

As an enhancement and compensation measure, and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Wildlife Officer has recommended a condition requiring two Kent bat boxes and one standard bird box to be installed on mature trees within the application site.

Subject to the inclusion of the above recommended condition and informative, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan.

### **Impact on Highway Safety**

The proposed establishment of a community shop and café at the Coronation Playing Fields is considered to lead to an increase in traffic movements to and from the site. The existing use of the building and the wider site is considered to attract limited traffic movements and a shop and café of the size proposed is likely to result in more people using the car park within the application site.

The proposed extension to the car park would assist in ensuring that there is parking provision for the shop and café, whilst also satisfying the car park's existing use for parking vehicles associated with neighbouring residential properties. The layout shown on the submitted plans also indicate that there would be sufficient space to turn vehicles within the site, thereby allowing them to egress from the site in forward gear.

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In terms of the junction with the public highway, it is noted that the road is the main thoroughfare through the village and it carries a 20mph speed limit at the point in which it passes the site. The entrance to the site also benefits from wide and unobstructed visibility splays in both directions that allows significant distance of views up and down the road when egressing from the site. Even with an increase in traffic movements, it is considered that vehicles leaving the site would not cause a detriment to highway safety.

The proposed development is considered to comply with Policies AC-S3, AC-D2 and AC-D3 of the Local Plan in respect of its impact on highway safety.

### **Other Matters**

The owner of the former village shop has provided comments on the application. It has been queried whether it is permitted for a commercial premises to be provided on the community land when the current building does not have a “money making” use. It is also suggested that the proposed shop and café may not be a viable venture in the long term.

The planning policies of the Local Plan do not prevent the establishment of a shop and café at the Coronation Playing Fields through the extension of the existing pavilion, as detailed earlier in this report. Following the loss of the shop from the village, it is considered to be important to encourage the replacement of the facility somewhere in the village and the re-use and extension of this particular building would appear to be a sensible solution and supported by Policy GP4, whether the new use is commercial or non-commercial.

In terms of the viability of the proposed business, this is a matter for the applicant and the rest of the Parracombe Community Trust to consider and the planning process cannot be used to prevent business opportunities on the basis that may not be viable. If the proposed shop and café ceases, then a new application is likely to be required for another use of the building and such an application would be considered under the adopted planning policies at that time.

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### **Human Rights**

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

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### **Conclusion**

The provision of a new shop facility to replace the village shop closed in 2017 is considered to be a proposal that is supported under planning policy given that it would not compromise the use of the wider Coronation Playing Fields and it would help to sustain a core community service in the village. The additional use as a café is considered to help support the long-term viability of the community project and it would provide a meeting space for people who do not wish to use the village pub.



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In respect of other material planning considerations, the proposal is to create an in keeping extension that would utilise traditional construction materials and would not be of a scale that is unacceptable. This proposed extension is not considered to cause harm to the Conservation Area and the use of the building as a shop and café is not considered to cause harm to neighbouring amenity. Highway safety and biodiversity are also not considered to be compromised by the proposed development.

The extension of the building and the formation of a community shop and café, together with other ancillary works proposed through the application, are considered to be acceptable and compliant with local and national planning policy.

Officers recommend that the application be approved, subject to the attachment of appropriate planning conditions.

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### **Recommendation**

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Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with drawing number 1145/P/01, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 4th November 2019, and drawing numbers 1145/P/05A, 1145/P/12A and 1145/P/14, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 22nd January 2020, unless otherwise required by condition(s) below.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of amenity.

3. Prior to the carrying out of any surfacing works (including surfacing the car park and the construction of paths and the cinder track), details of such works shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The surfacing works shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To allow the Local Planning Authority to consider the acceptability of various proposed surfaces around the site prior to these works being carried out as such details have not been submitted with the application papers.

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4. The external walls of the extensions hereby approved shall only be finished in painted render and natural timber as shown on approved drawing number 1145/P/12A. The external walls of the extensions shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, and to ensure the use of traditional construction materials within the Parracombe Conservation Area.

5. The replacement roof hereby approved (including the roofs of the approved extensions and the existing building) shall only be clad in natural slate. In addition, all fascias, barge boards and soffits shall only be constructed from natural timber. The development shall be retained in accordance with the requirements of this condition thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, and to ensure the use of traditional construction materials within the Parracombe Conservation Area.

6. Any new or replacement windows and doors (including their frames), and the glazed gable end of the south elevation, shall only be constructed from natural timber, and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, and to ensure the use of traditional construction materials within the Parracombe Conservation Area.

7. The solar panels hereby approved (including their frames) shall only be coloured matt black. They shall be fitted so that their outer surface is flush with the outer surface of the surrounding roof tiles. The solar panels shall be retained in accordance with the requirements of this condition thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, and to ensure the use of traditional construction materials within the Parracombe Conservation Area.

8. The two gates shown on approved drawing number 1145/P/05A shall only be constructed from natural timber, and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, and to ensure the use of traditional construction materials within the Parracombe Conservation Area.

9. Prior to first use of the shop and cafe hereby approved, the following ecological enhancement measures shall be carried out:

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- Install 2 no. Kent bat box on to the application building, or a mature tree within the application site, facing south or west and at a height of more than three metres above adjacent ground level; and
  - Install 1 no. standard bird box on to the application building, or a mature tree within the application site, facing north or east and at a height of more than three metres above adjacent ground level.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in Paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework; and ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure) and the Authority's obligations for biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

10. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 and the Town & Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987, as amended, (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), the hereby approved shop and cafe section of the application building shall not be used other than for purposes falling within Classes A1 and A3 of the Use Classes Order, without the prior grant of planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the use remains compatible with surrounding land uses in the area.

11. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 and the Town & Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987, as amended, (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), the area of the application building labelled as "WC" on approved drawing number 1145/P/12A shall not be used other than as public toilets, without the prior grant of planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the existing public toilets are not lost as a community facility without formal consideration of their loss by the Local Planning Authority.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended, (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), the following development shall not be carried out without the prior grant of planning permission from the Local Planning Authority:

- The extension or enlargement of the application building;
- The creation of new window and door openings in the application building;
- The installation of flues and vents on the application building;
- The installation of awnings and canopies on the application building;

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- The erection of new fencing and gates within the area edged in red on approved drawing number 1145/P/01.

Reason: To allow the Local Planning Authority to consider external changes to the building in the interests of conserving its character and appearance, and to ensure that the open nature of the wider application site is not potentially compromised by the erection of new means of enclosure.

13. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), no external lighting shall be installed on the development hereby approved, or within the area edged in red on approved drawing number 1145/P/01, unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated fully in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of conserving and protecting wildlife interests, visual amenity and Exmoor's dark night sky.

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### **Informatives**

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#### **Positive and Proactive Statement**

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome.

#### **Monitoring of Development**

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email [plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

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### **Conditions and Informatives and the Submission of Further Details**

Please check all the conditions and informatives attached to this Decision Notice. If there are any conditions which require submission of details and/or samples prior to work commencing on site it is vital that these are submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before work starts. Given the High Court's interpretation of the Planning Acts and their lawful implementation it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority will be able to agree to a sample/details after the commencement of works if that sample/details should have been approved prior to commencement. If a sample/detail is not agreed as required prior to commencement and works have started then it is likely that this matter may only be able to be rectified by the submission of another application. To avoid delay, inconvenience and the need to submit a further application, please ensure that all appropriate details/samples are submitted and agreed at the specified time.

Please also note that due to other decisions of the High Court it is now not normally possible for the Local Planning Authority to agree to minor amendments to approved applications on an informal basis.

The Department of Communities and Local Government have introduced a process whereby it is now possible to apply for a non-material amendment to a permission. This can deal with changes to plans which do not fundamentally alter the form of permission but are a variation to the approval. The appropriate form is available by request at Exmoor House or by downloading from the National Park Authority web site. Applications can be made via the Planning Portal.

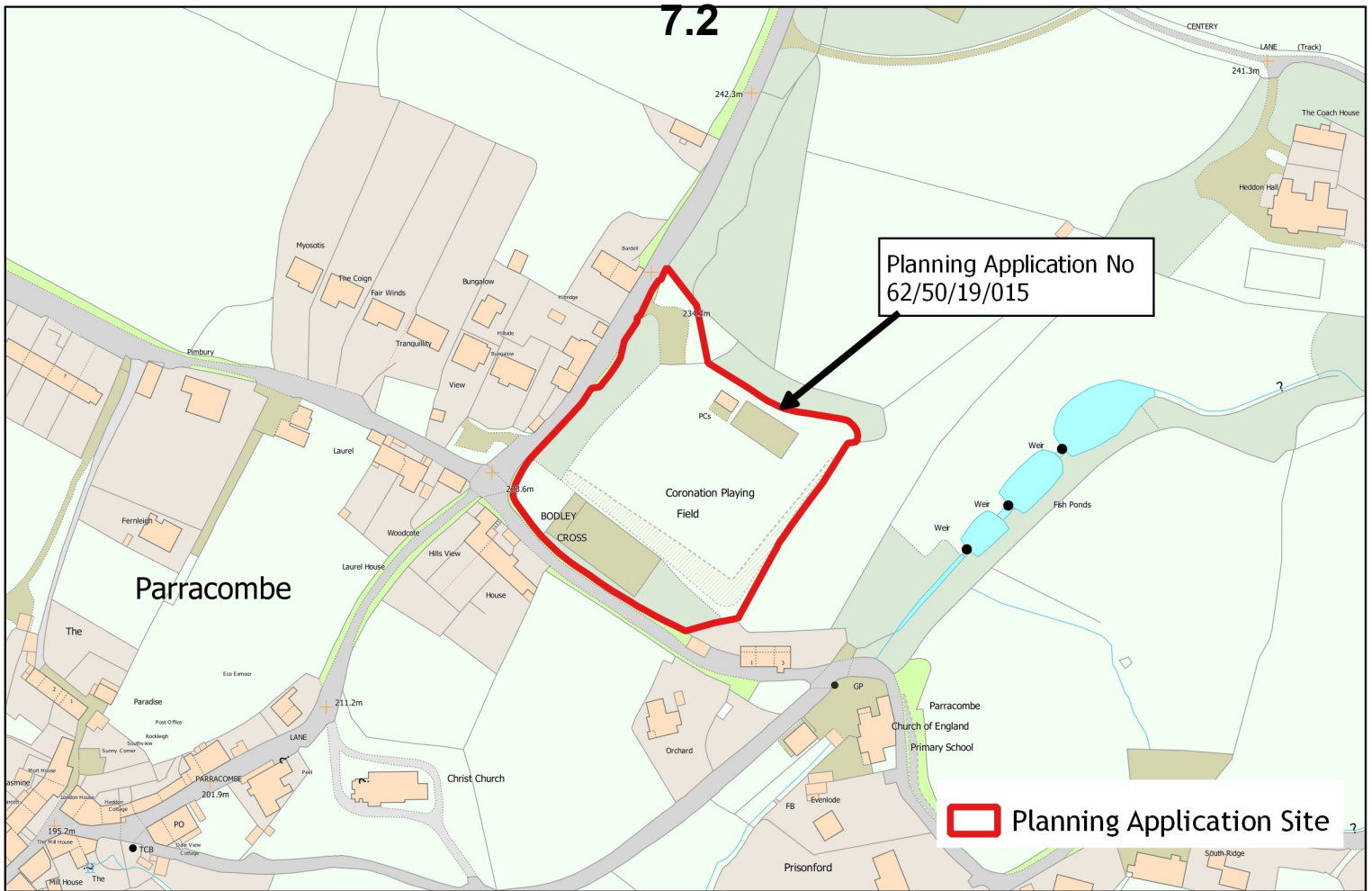
Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

### **Advisory Note - Bats**

The developers and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **Advisory Note - Asbestos**

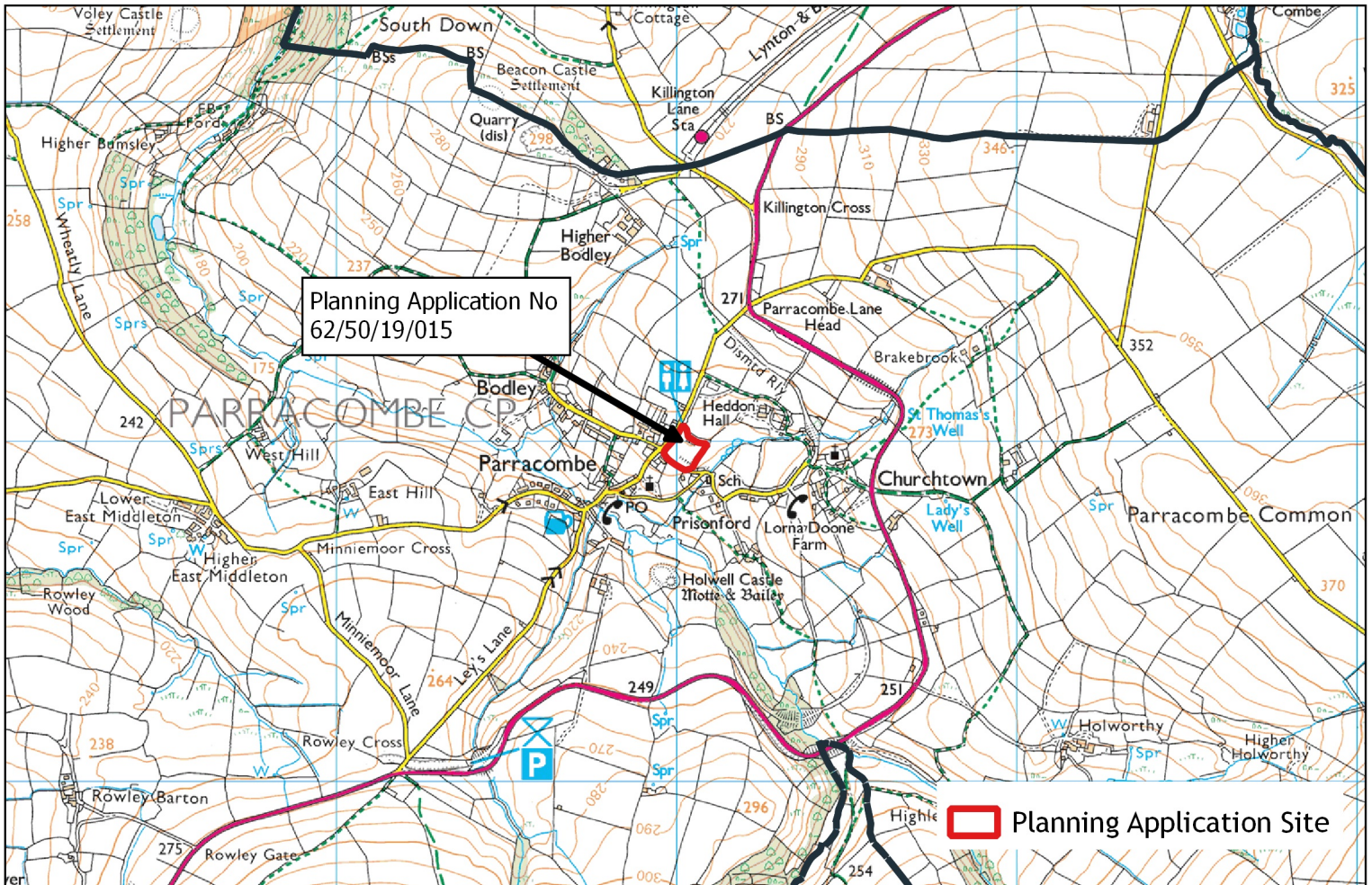
The existing building may be of an age where materials containing asbestos were used in its construction or subsequent modification. Buildings built after 1990 are much less likely to incorporate asbestos containing materials (ACMs) than those built prior to this date. If ACMs may be present, a survey should be undertaken by a competent person prior to works commencing. Where ACMs are present they must be dealt with and where relevant be disposed of in accordance with the relevant legislation and health and safety guidance.



Site Map

Scale 1:2,500

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Overview Map

Scale 1:20,000

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## 7.3



### Committee Report

Application Number:	WTCA 20/05
Registration Date:	08-Feb-2020
Determination Date:	21-Feb-2020
Applicant	Mr Jeremy Holtom
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Graeme McVittie
Site Address:	LITTLECLOSE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4QJ
Proposal:	Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Crown reduction of copper beech, limb removal of larch & Fell Thuja Plicatia
Recommendation:	Approve the proposal
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The Applicant is an Authority Member

#### Relevant History

VAL/20/012      Crown reduction of copper beech, limb removal of larch & Fell Thuja Plicatia

#### Site Description & Proposal

The trees are located in the garden of Littleclose which lies in the Parracombe Conservation Area, the proposal is a crown reduction of a copper beech, limb removal of larch & to fell a Thuja plicata (western red cedar)

#### Consultee Representations

North Devon District Council had No Observations

#### Representations

No other representations

#### Policy Context

The Conservation Area Appraisal states that fast growing garden conifers strike a discordant note and should be avoided and that measures could be taken to plant [suitable] young trees [when opportunities arise]. However replacement trees cannot be made a condition of removal of trees in a Conservation Area.



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### **Planning Considerations**

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The Conservation Area Appraisal for Parracombe adopted in 2019 does reference the value of trees associated with historic features and the layout of the settlement. The work proposed here includes the removal of one western red cedar (an exotic fast growing evergreen conifer), crown reduction to a copper beech and surgery to a larch none of which is not considered to impact on the historic context or layout of the Conservation area. Conditions cannot be placed on proposals to work on trees in Conservation Areas unless the impact is considered significant (which it isn't in this case) when the Authority could place a TPO on the trees in question.

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### **Human Rights**

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The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

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### **Recommendation**

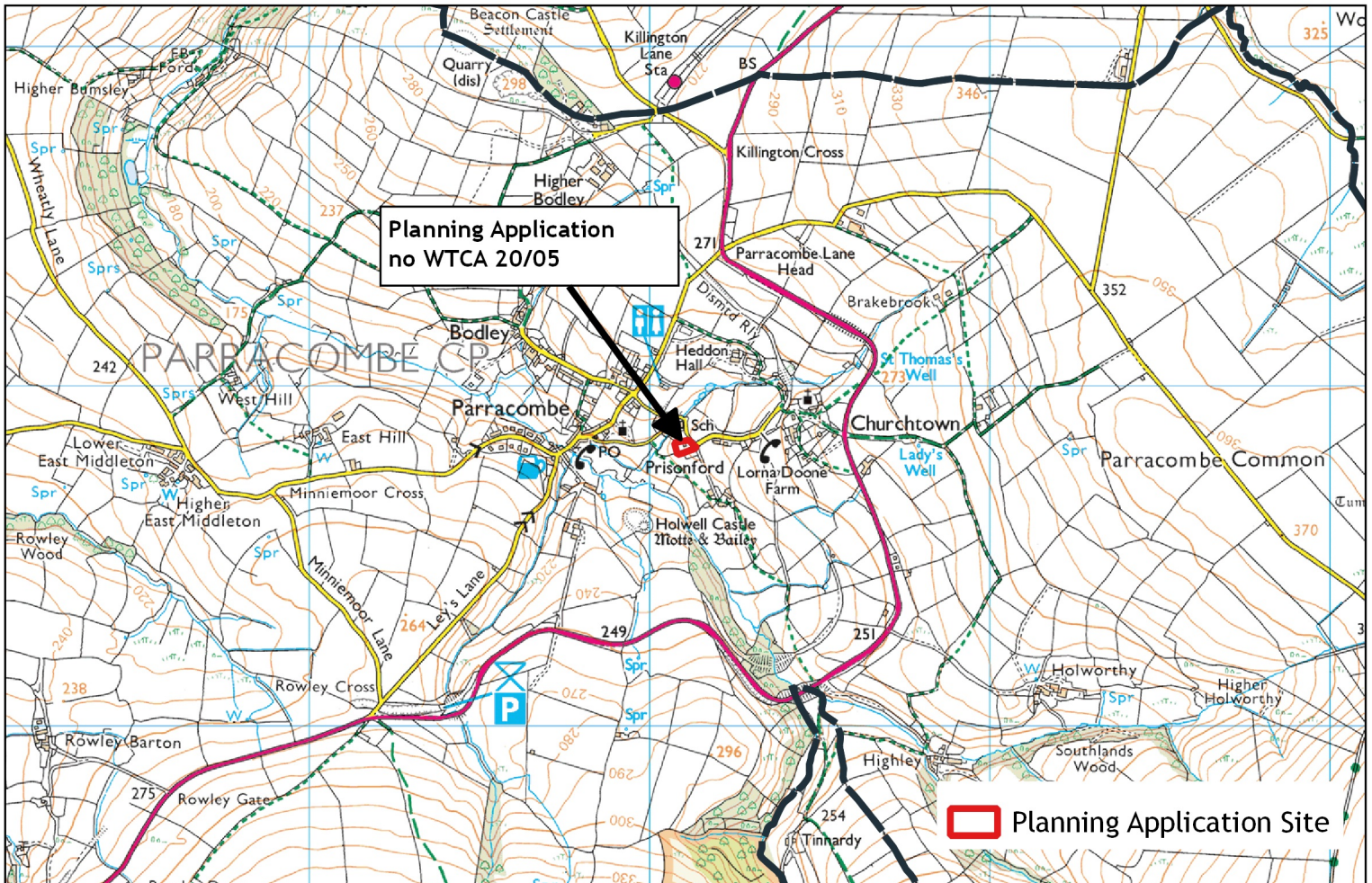
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It is recommended that the application is approved



**Site Map**  
**Scale 1:2,500**

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**Overview Map**  
**Scale 1:20,000**

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## 7.4



### Committee Report

Application Number:	WTCA 20/06
Registration Date:	12-Feb-2020
Determination Date:	09-Mar-2020
Applicant	Parracombe Community Trust Ltd
Agent:	Mr. K Denby, Parracombe Community Trust Ltd
Case Officer:	Graeme McVittie
Site Address:	Hedge between Village Hall and Sunnyside Bungalow, Church Lane, Parracombe, Devon
Proposal:	Cut and lay trees in hedge
Recommendation:	Approve
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	An Authority Member is also a member of the Parracombe Community Trust (The Applicant) and has declared an interest.

#### Relevant History

VAL/20/009      Cut and lay trees in hedge

#### Site Description & Proposal

The proposal related to an outgrown hedge which runs as a boundary between the Village Hall and Sunnyside Bungalow. The proposal is to cut and lay the hedge in the traditional manner which is considered wholly appropriate.

#### Consultee Representations

North Devon District Council had No Observations

#### Representations

The Occupier  
SOUTH RIDGE  
PARRACOMBE  
BARNSTAPLE  
EX31 4RJ

The Occupier of South Ridge had no objections to the proposal

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### **Policy Context**

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Policy in this context would be to support the traditional management of hedges and boundaries.

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### **Planning Considerations**

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Trees associated with historic features such as hedgebanks are considered a valuable contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. There are no mature significant trees included in this proposal and the traditional management of the hedge is considered the most appropriate measure.

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### **Human Rights**

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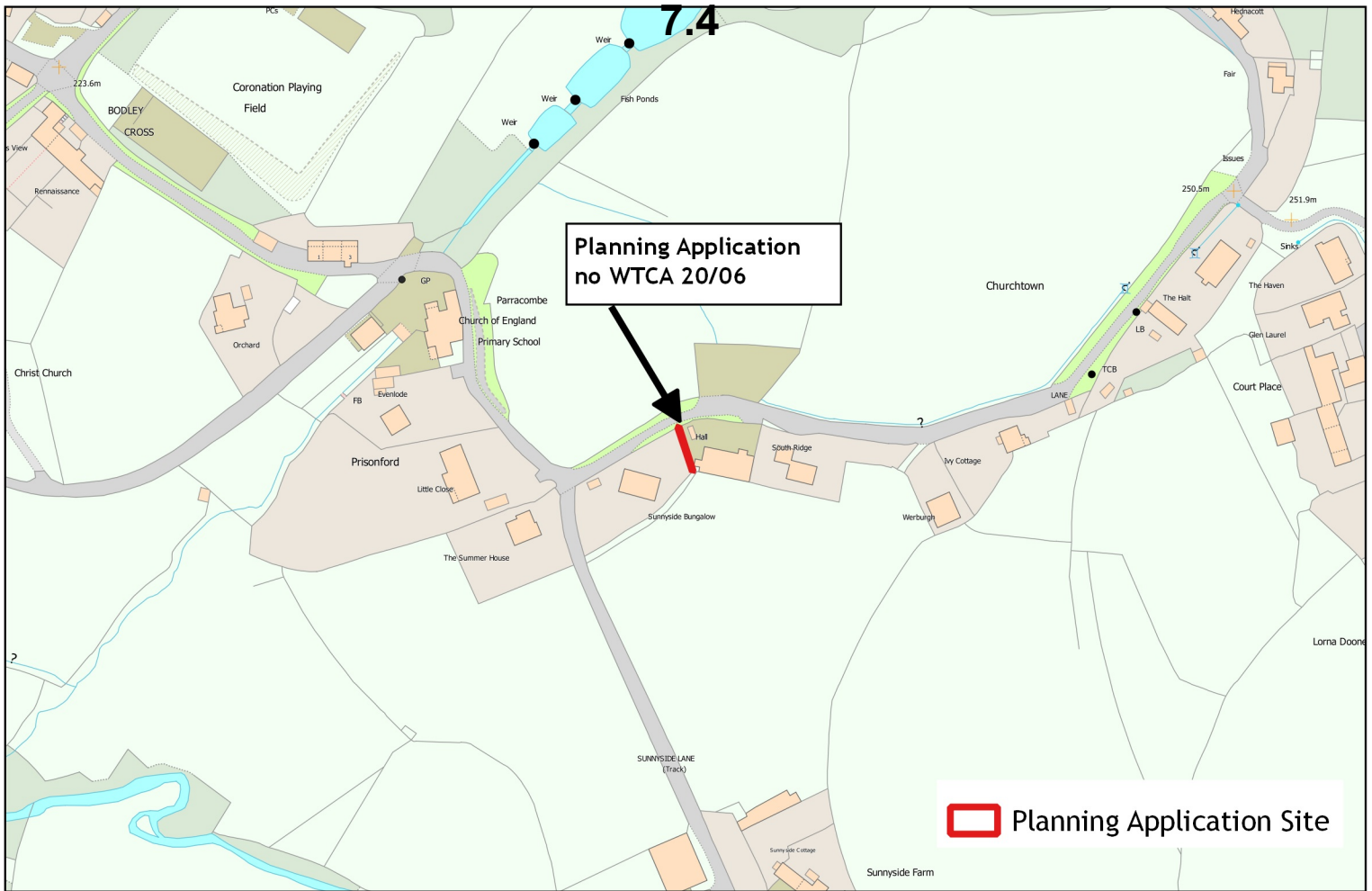
The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

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### **Recommendation**

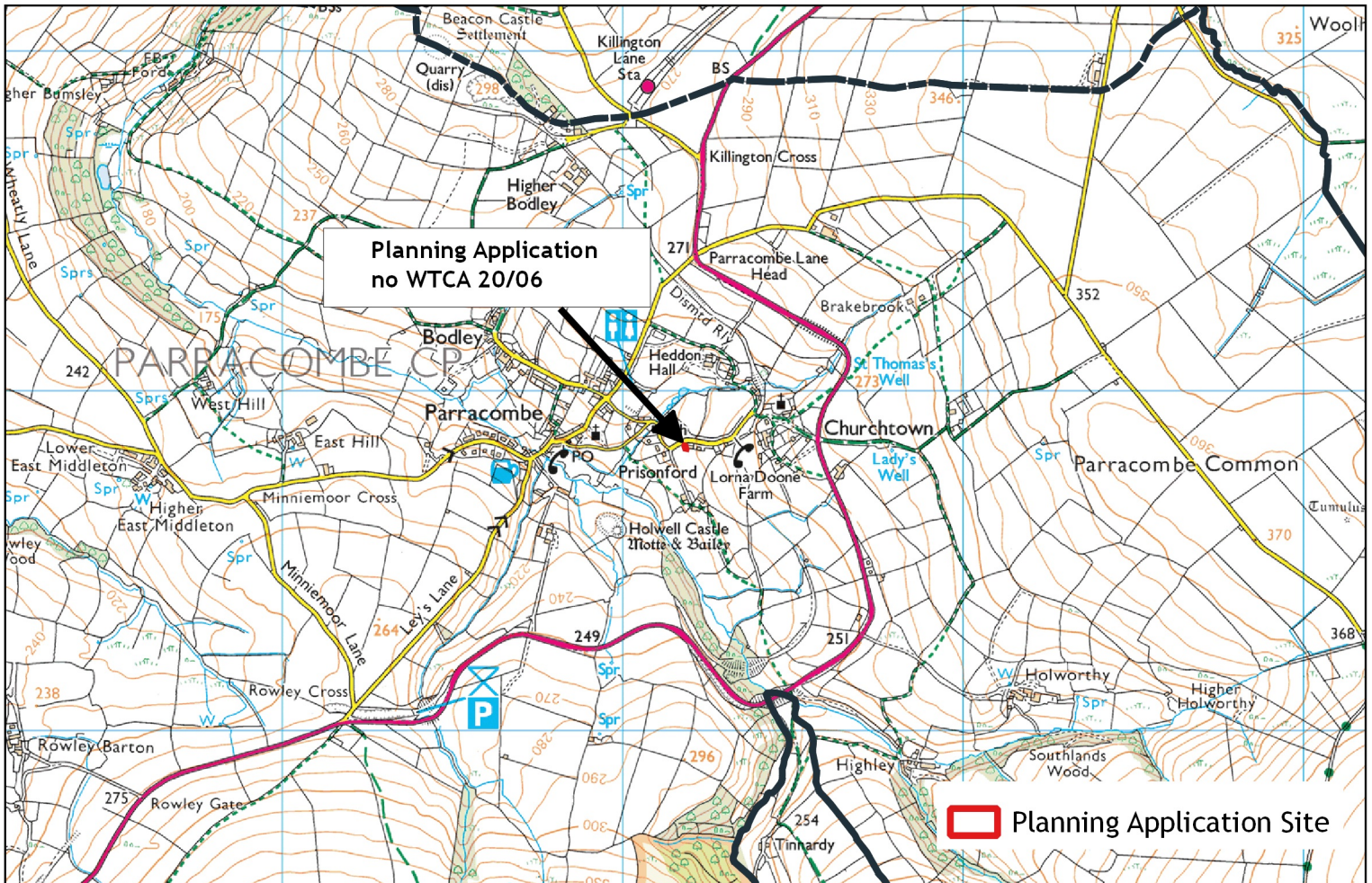
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It is recommended that the application is Approved



Site Map  
Scale 1:2,500

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Overview Map  
Scale 1:20,000

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**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
6/20/19/108	Mr & Mrs D Powell - Proposed single storey extension to provide disabled accommodation. (Householder ) - THE PADDOCKS, LUXBOROUGH, WATCHET, TA23 OSP	Approved with Conditions 20-Jan-2020
6/14/19/110	Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen - Proposed Variation of Condition 2 and 5 of approved application 6/14/19/103 to allow alternative materials to be used in the construction of windows and doors. (Alteration/Lift Condition ) - Honeymead, Simonsbath, Exmoor, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 7JX	Approved with Conditions 20-Jan-2020
WTPO 19/08	Mr N Rafferty - Works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Order: Selective thinning of Oak and Beech (Approx 100 trees). (WTPO ) - Land at Southclose Wood, Brendon, Devon	Approved 20-Jan-2020
GDO 19/17	Mr B Westcott - Prior notification for partial burying of water tank and sinking of borehole and pump chamber. (GDO - Excavation/Waste Material ) - Land adjacent to Gallon House, Simonsbath, Exmoor, Somerset	GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd 19-Dec-2019
GDO 19/16	Mr M Weatherlake - Prior notification for proposed Forestry building (23.3m x 15.7m). (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry ) - Land at Treborough Common Treborough Somerset	Refused 17-Dec-2019
GDO 19/15	Mr R Cowling - Prior notification for two proposed extensions to an existing building (27.5m x 24.4m and 18.1m x 9.2m). (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry ) - RUGLANDS FARM, BROMPTON REGIS, DULVERTON, TA22 9NZ	GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd 18-Dec-2019
WTPO 19/07	Mr. C Mcleod, Skyline Tree Surgery - Works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Order: To crown reduce group of 4-5 Ash and Sycamore on the Bracken Lea side of the trees by a maximum of 3m as indicated on the attached images (WTPO ) - Bracken Lea, Barbrook, Lynton, Devon	Approved 18-Dec-2019
WTPO 19/06	T Mr, T, Riley - Works to Trees subject to Preservation Order: To remove dying oak on steep bank (WTPO ) - Oaks Hotel, Porlock, Somerset	Approved 18-Dec-2019

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
WTCA 19/13	Mr. Hoyt - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Reduce Crown spread and height by 2.5m all round (WTCA ) - School House, Wootton Courtenay, Minehead, Somerset	Approved 18-Dec-2019
HRN 19/04	Mr. G Gibson, National Trust - Hedgerow Removal Notice for the removal of one section of 4m hedgerow (HRN ) - Two fields to the South West of Bossington	Approved 20-Dec-2019
GDO 19/14	EE Limited - Prior notification for the proposed erection of a 12m high telegraph pole together with associated equipment. (GDO - Telecomms ) - Torre Farm, Oldrey Lane, Winsford, Minehead, Somerset	Withdrawn 17-Dec-2019
62/50/19/014	Mr T Manfield - Proposed replacement garden room. Resubmission of withdrawn application 62/50/19/004. (Householder ) - Valley View, Church Lane, Parracombe, Devon	Approved with Conditions 18-Dec-2019
62/11/19/007	Dr I Kelham - Proposed removal of septic tank to be replaced with Klargester treatment system (Full ) - Jasmine Cottage, Bridge Ball, Lynton, Devon	Approved with Conditions 14-Jan-2020
6/9/19/127	St Austell Brewery Co Ltd - Proposed erection of 4 x advertisement signs. (Advert ) - The Bridge Inn, 20 Bridge Street, Dulverton, TA22 9HJ	Approved with Conditions 20-Dec-2019
6/43/19/107	Mr. Lang, Mr Lang - Proposed erection of replacement barn. (Full ) - Land to the North East of Appledore, Wootton Courtenay, Minehead, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 20-Jan-2020
6/41/19/104	Mr & Mrs Eggar - Proposed erection of steel portal frame building (6.8m x 9.1m) to replace existing shed. (Full ) - 2 Treborough Cottages, Treborough, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 14-Jan-2020
6/34/19/113	EE Limited - Proposed 15m monopole mast and associated equipment together with the creation of new access track. (Full ) - West Harwood Farm, Timberscombe, Minehead, Somerset	Withdrawn 15-Jan-2020
6/3/19/125	Mr. C Allen, Wimbleball Sailability - Proposed area of concrete, retractable awning together with replacement shed. Retrospective. (Full ) - Wimbleball	Approved with Conditions 20-Dec-2019



**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
	Sailing Club, Wimbleball Lake, Brompton Regis, Somerset	
6/29/19/110LB	Mr. G Gibson, National Trust - Listed Building Consent for the proposed replacement of kitchen and bathroom windows, enlargement of internal doorways to kitchen and alterations to understairs cupboard together with installation of secondary glazing. (Amended Description) As per additional information and amended plan. (Listed Building Consent ) - Selworthy Farm Cottage, Selworthy, Minehead.	Approved with Conditions 20-Jan-2020
6/26/19/118LB	Mr & Mrs, J, Booth - Listed building consent for various repairs, refurbishment and alteration works to principal bedroom ensuite areas. (Retrospective). (Listed Building Consent ) - Glasses Farm, Luxborough, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 18-Dec-2019
6/26/19/117LB	Mr & Mrs, J, Booth - Listed Building Consent for various repair, refurbishment and alteration works. Retrospective. (Listed Building Consent ) - Glasses Farm, Luxborough, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 18-Dec-2019
6/23/19/103	Mr M Westbury - Installation of oil tank, hardstanding and breeze block wall. (Householder ) - Merivale, High Street, Monksilver, Somerset.	Approved with Conditions 14-Jan-2020
6/20/19/107	EE Ltd - Proposed installation of 15m monopole mast and associated equipment (Full ) - West Slowley Farm, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset	Withdrawn 15-Jan-2020
6/20/19/105	Mr & Mrs, A, Maddock - Proposed single storey extension together with construction of timber framed terrace area (Householder ) - Misty View, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset.	Approved with Conditions 20-Dec-2019
6/20/19/104	Mr, C, Henson - Proposed outbuilding incorporating children's playroom/studio/office/home gym/wc (Householder ) - Slowley Farm Bungalow, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset.	Approved with Conditions 20-Dec-2019
6/19/19/101	Mr, D, Tucker - Proposed erection of agricultural building for storage or fodder, bedding and temporary housing of sheep and the removal of a section of	Approved with Conditions 24-Dec-2019

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
	hedge to create a new bank and hedge. As per amended and additional plans. (Full ) - Lucott Farm, Luccombe, Somerset	
6/14/19/109	Miss J Hornsby & Mr R Fletcher-Gaunt - Proposed erection of stable block and formation of associated yard, together with widening of existing vehicular access. (Amended description) (Full ) - 1 Westgate Cottages, Simonsbath, Minehead, TA24 7SN	Approved with Conditions 20-Dec-2019

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
62/41/20/005	Mrs Dehon - Proposed Lift. (Householder ) - Brackenrigg, Station Hill, Lynton, EX35 6LB	Withdrawn 14-Feb-2020
WTCA 20/02	Mr. R Manicom, National Trust - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Alder clump (tag number 3150) Fell clump of trees to ground. Several stems leaning towards and over the Forge, tree roots under cut by river and also causing river to divert towards opposite riverbank. As a result the opposite riverbank and retaining wall are collapsing into the river. The riverbank behind the building has revetment work planned for next year for which the trees need to be felled. Sycamore (tag number 3151) Fell sycamore tree to ground. Tree leaning towards building and causing river to diver towards building. Needs to be felled and removed to allow river to be diverted away from building and retaining wall. (WTCA ) - The Forge, Bossington Road, Selworthy, TA24 8HN	Approved 18-Feb-2020
WTCA 20/01	Mr. R Manicom, National Trust - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Sycamore (tag number 3129) Fell tree to ground for safety reasons due to close proximity to high usage area of the tea rooms. Tree has multiple stems with included bark resulting in potential weak branch unions. Ash (tag number 3144) Fell tree to ground for safety reasons due to location in tenanted garden and close proximity to the road. Major stem base decay and early signs of ash dieback indicate a high chance of tree failure. (WTCA ) - Periwinkle Cottage, Tea Rooms, Selworthy Green, Selworthy, Somerset, TA24 8TP	Approved 18-Feb-2020
GDO 20/01	Mr S Cowling - Prior notification for proposed agricultural building (46m x 38m). (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry ) - Land Adjacent To Combe Barn, Nettlecombe (Easting 305091, Northing 138161)	Invalid 11-Feb-2020
6/42/20/101	Mr T Howard - Proposed first floor rear extension and all associated works. (Full ) - The Village Shop, Withypool, Minehead, TA24 7QP	Approved with Conditions 14-Feb-2020
62/50/20/002	Ms K Bray - Proposed installation of 1200 litre LPG tank together with underground pipework in front	Approved with Conditions 14-Feb-2020

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
	garden of property. (Householder ) - 4 Ash Park, Parracombe, Barnstaple, EX31 4PR	
6/13/19/112	Mr R Howard - Proposed internal and external alterations to the first floor flat and ground floor shop, including the replacement of windows. (Amended description) (Full ) - Exmoor Stores, Exford, Minehead, TA24 7PP	Approved with Conditions 31-Jan-2020
6/8/19/106	Mrs G Langdon - Proposed formation of new access to field. (Full ) - Land West of Luckwell Bridge, Wheddon Cross, Minehead, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 22-Jan-2020
6/26/19/119LB	Mrs. H Sandwell - Listed Building Consent for the installation of support to part of the internal wall. Retrospective. (Listed Building Consent ) - LITTLE STAMBOROUGH, ROADWATER, WATCHET, TA23 0RW	Approved with Conditions 23-Jan-2020
62/43/19/006	Miss. Allsop, National Trust - Proposed replacement of existing timber pedestrian walkways. (Full ) - The Hunters Inn, Martinhoe	Approved with Conditions 29-Jan-2020
6/8/19/105	Mr I Nelder - Proposed single storey rear extension. (Amended description) (Householder ) - 3 Barnes Cottage, Lower Park Lane, Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross.	Approved with Conditions 24-Jan-2020
6/31/19/003	McKelvey - Proposed ground floor and first floor extensions together with new sunroom and rear entrance, new balcony and external terrace. (Householder ) - Springwater Farm, Maunsborough Lane, Elworthy, Taunton, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 29-Jan-2020
6/19/19/105	Mr. J Tucker, R W Tucker & Son - Proposed erection of an agricultural building for storage of machinery and fodder (30.5m x 13.7m). (Full ) - West Luccombe Farm, West Luccombe Road, Luccombe, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 13-Feb-2020
6/19/19/104LB	Mr. G Gibson, National Trust - Listed Building Consent for the proposed rebuild of balcony and repair access door together with repair of timber cladding and addition of insulation, replace MDF panelling, renew slate roofs, repair rainwater goods and re-paint chimneys. As per Additional Information. (Listed	Approved with Conditions 22-Jan-2020

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Ref and Grid Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
	Building Consent ) - Wychanger, Huntscott Road Luccombe, Minehead, Somerset	
6/19/19/103	Mr. G Gibson, National Trust - Proposed rebuild of balcony and repair access door together with repair of timber cladding and addition of insulation, replace MDF panelling, renew slate roofs, repair rainwater goods and re-paint chimneys. As per Additional Information. (Householder ) - Wychanger, Huntscott Road, Luccombe, Minehead, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 22-Jan-2020

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

3 March 2020

### MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 TO 2024/25 AND BUDGET 2020/21

#### Report of the Chief Finance Officer

**Purpose of Report:** To consider and approve a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2020/21 to 2024/25 and to adopt the revenue budget for 2020/21 within the level of funding being provided by way of National Park Grant (NPG) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and self generated income.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Authority is recommended to:

1. ADOPT the attached Medium Term Financial Plan at Appendix 1 and AGREE the financial strategy that underpins the MTFP and Budget as set out in Section 7;
2. APPROVE the Core and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets for 2020/21 as summarised in Appendices 2 and 3;
3. Approve the Capital Investment Strategy shown in Section 6; and
4. NOTE the position on reserves as detailed in Appendix 4.

**Authority Priority:** Getting best value from our resources and improving our performance – Finance and Performance - Financial Management.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Local Government Act 2003, Parts 1-3 (Capital Finance, Financial Administration and Grants), and Sections 1-39

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Part 2 (Financial Management and Internal Control).

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** The setting of a budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy are the key elements in the management of financial risk. Section 7 details in more detail the risks surrounding the current budget and our future financial health.

The recommended budget is in accordance with the *assumed* amount of National Park Grant being provided by DEFRA towards the net expenditure of the Authority for 2021/22. Budgetary control and financial management arrangements are in place to minimise any risk of overspending and to ensure that spending is kept in line with the approved budget. The budget will be reviewed at the half year stage and a progress report made to the November 2020 meeting of the Authority. The budget may have to be revisited before this point if significant adjustments need to be made.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At the time of drafting this report we have not been formally notified of the level of National Park Grant for 2020/21. The additional risks and complications that this introduces to the budget setting process are detailed in Section 7. All assumptions are clearly stated within the report.
- 1.2 Funding for ENPA from DEFRA peaked at £4,177,453 back in 2010/11. Since then the Authority has experienced reductions in grant and increases that are below the rate of inflation.
- 1.3 This report needs to be read in conjunction with the 2020/21 Corporate Plan. That report is based upon the same financial assumptions as this and if the assumptions prove to be inaccurate then targets within the Corporate Plan may also have to be revisited.

## **2. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

2.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is a key feature of the Authority's forward planning process and it is reviewed annually on a rolling five year basis. The MTFP is a key document for:

- outlining future resources, funding opportunities and cost pressures;
- highlighting key assumptions; and
- providing an overview of the future financial position of the Authority.

Appendix 1 details the overarching income and expenditure categories for the Authority for the next five financial years. It is the only Appendix that brings together the Core ongoing budget and investment in Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves.

### **MTFP - Income**

- 2.2 As mentioned, at the time of drafting the report we do not know what our National Park Grant for 2020/21 will be. For planning purposes, the MTFP assumes that funding in 2020/21 continues to increase at the same rate as the previous four years (1.7%). From 2021/22 the MTFP assumes a 2% increase, as per the assumed staff salary increases. These are important assumptions as this grant provides approximately 80% of our funding.
- 2.3 In addition to NPG the Authority receives:
  - income generated from fees, charges, rents, grants for joint works and from interest earned on the investment of funds held in reserves etc;
  - contributions from the County Councils towards the maintenance of the rights of way network; and
  - external funding for specific projects that either the Authority delivers in its own right or in partnership with others.
- 2.4 The income forecasts for the period of the MTFP are as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>National Park Grant</b>	3,266	3,331	3,398	3,466	3,535
<b>Self-Generated Income</b>	739	747	755	763	771
<b>Contributions from County Councils</b>	50	50	50	50	50
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>4,279</b>	<b>4,356</b>

- 2.5 We are therefore predicting a small overall increase in funding over the next five years. The figures in 2.4 assume that contributions from Somerset and Devon County Councils towards the management of Public Rights of Way will be maintained at their current rate. However, the continued impact of austerity on local government may well mean that these contributions will fall below the current level. In the last few years, a reduction in revenue support from the County Councils has been more than made up for by capital grants to maintain specific sections of the network.
- 2.6 Trading income from the National Park Centres and the Outdoor Education centre is forecast to continue to increase gradually. Rents and contributions from the corporate estate are also assumed to increase as rent reviews are undertaken.
- 2.7 We are looking to introduce new income streams related to car parking and planning. However, we continue to budget at existing levels until schemes have been established and approved by the Authority.

#### **MTFP - Expenditure**

- 2.8 Appendix 1 also anticipates future expenditure over the MTFP period. The single largest areas of expenditure for ENPA is staff salaries. The unions and bodies representing local government employers have yet to reach agreement over future years pay awards, however it seems likely that the agreed position will be approximately 2%. The budget is therefore prepared on this basis.
- 2.9 Future staff salary budgets will also be affected by the results of the recent pensions revaluation and ongoing impact of Job Evaluation. ENPA's employer contribution rate will increase from 14.8% to 18.5% in 2020/21. This is approximately a 25% increase and will cost the authority an additional £70,000 p.a. ongoing. There are no significant changes for the pensions deficit. Financial years 2021/22 to 2024/25 will also see the impact of Job Evaluation working its way through staffing costs. Decisions made by the Authority in November 2019 met the first two years costs of Job Evaluation but the other 4 years of cost increases are still to be met. The impact of JE is 1.5% p.a. so staffing budgets are assumed to increase by 3.5% a year (2% for pay award plus 1.5% for JE).
- 2.10 For other categories of cost to the Authority a small provision (1%) has been found for future years increases. If this proves insufficient then additional resources will have to be found in future years.



## **MTFP – Programmes, Partnerships & Contributions to Reserves**

- 2.11 The updated version of the plan in Appendix 1 summarises not only the income and expenditure projections across the period of the plan but also the proportions proposed for Core (the recurring costs and unavoidable commitments for essential services) and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets. Section 4 details the objectives of the Programmes & Partnerships budget area and planned use in 2020/21.
- 2.12 The MTFP set out in Appendix 1 envisages the following spending profile:

	<b>Core Budget £'000</b>	<b>Programmes, Partnership and Contributions to Reserves £'000</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	3,731	324
<b>2021/22</b>	3,838	289
<b>2022/23</b>	3,944	258
<b>2023/24</b>	4,054	225
<b>2024/25</b>	4,167	189

- 2.13 It is key to note that as the assumed funding falls behind cost pressures, the amount that the Authority has to meet Programmes and Partnerships falls quickly and to a level where we would not have sufficient uncommitted funds at the start of the budget setting process to meet obligations that will inevitably arise.

### **MTFP - Overview**

- 2.14 The MTFP presented is based upon a greater proportion of estimates and assumptions than in years gone by. It is therefore more likely to change than in previous years.
- 2.15 It starts with the assumption that the Authority will receive benign but basic NPG increases. However, the Authority's cost base is increasing at a faster rate than the assumed underlying funding and there are one-off and ongoing costs arising that need to be met. The Authority has historically monitored the proportion of National Park Grant that is needed to meet the costs of employing permanent staff. This is a proxy for the ability of the Authority to manage short term fluctuations in funding. Staff costs as a percentage of NPG are projected at 75% in 2020/21 and are anticipated to continue to increase further over the period of the MTFP unless alternative options are explored.
- 2.16 The medium-term financial aspirations of staff costs being only 70% of NPG and having £200,000 of uncommitted funds to meet one-off pressures (or a steep grant cut) is drifting further out of reach. We will not lose sight of these aspirations but at or near the bottom of the funding cycle and with significant new pressures arising, medium term aspirations are effectively becoming longer term. However, we continue to successfully, proactively manage resources and set balanced budgets.

2.17 The Authority must also not lose sight of one-off obligations and liabilities that are still to be met. Of particular relevance is further spend related to Ash Die-Back but also the review of the Local Plan and condition maintenance work on various properties. There will be the opportunity to revisit the allocation of reserves when the accounts for 2019/20 are closed.

### **3. CORE BUDGET FOR 2020/21**

3.1 The Authority is statutorily required to set a balanced budget in furtherance of the Purposes of its National Park designation. Appendix 1 shows the Authority's MTFP on an income and expenditure basis. Appendix 2 shows the budget for 2020/21 in a service structure. This has been reviewed and updated to reflect increments, cost pressures and other movements. The staffing structure has not changed in the course of setting the budget but does reflect the changes that were implemented from November 2019.

3.2 The Leadership Team has extensively reviewed the proposed budget and have given scrutiny to income generation and cost saving opportunities. The budget has also been discussed with the Finance and Performance Advisory Panel in January and with Authority members at the Business Planning day in December.

3.3 As mentioned in 2.9 above the major changes in service budgets in 2020/21 relate to an assumed staff pay award and the impact of the pension fund revaluation. This explains the bulk of the movement in service budgets.

3.4 Other areas to be drawn to the attention of members are as follows:

- Two posts within the core budget are currently vacant.
- The Pinkery Centre again starts the year without any Authority support towards its trading activities such as staff costs, activities and the running of the building.
- In Finance and IT the budget for the higher running costs of the new planning system have been offset by the lower anticipated contributions towards the web portal.
- Land and Property has increased income targets.
- There are more resources in Strategy and Performance for the new procurement advice service from DCC and reductions for Printing and Stationery.
- There is sufficient budget within Corporate Subscriptions for the current level of contributions towards NPUK and NPE. There is not sufficient budget to maintain those contributions and support NPP. ENPA is not contractually obliged to contribute towards any of them.

### **4. PROGRAMMES, PARTNERSHIPS & CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES**

4.1 The Programmes and Partnerships element of the budget is an important element in achieving National Park purposes and priorities through the engagement and influencing of partners and funding for initiatives aimed at achieving Partnership Plan priorities. We contribute to reserves on an ongoing basis to meet one-off costs that do not arise in a consistent or predictable manner or to put money aside to meet pressures that arise in-year.

- 4.2 Attached at Appendix 3 is the proposed Programmes, Partnerships & Contributions to Reserves Budget for 2020/21. This shows £230,000 contributed to reserves, £74,400 top sliced for fixed term programmes and £20,000 being made available for small grants.
- 4.3 It is lower than in previous years, primarily due to the increased cost of pension contributions. Changes from previous years are shown below:
- The Affordable Housing Coordinator is now externally funded and so ENPA contributions are no longer required.
  - The small grants scheme has been reduced from £50,000 to £20,000 and now includes Planning Fee reimbursement and Pony Grants.
- 4.4 Detail on the additions to reserves are listed below:
- Woodlands. This draft budget recommends £60k added to the reserve to meet the costs related to Ash- Die back. This is the second instalment of this amount.
  - Corporate Equipment Reserve. £50,000 is set aside annually to replace vehicles in the fleet and to meet the cost of significant items of plant and equipment.
  - Interns. £15,000 is set aside to support the cost of an intern for one year.
  - Research and Data Gathering. £10,000 will be made available to support the gathering of information to support the monitoring of the National Park and to invest in 'Exmoor's Ambition'.
  - Estates Reserve. £75,000 is requested to support a range of repairing and improvements works. This covers £40k to protect Adits and Mines, £10k for condition maintenance work at Driver Farm and £25k to support the Member request to improve the offer in the Pinkery Centre. The costs related to protecting Adits and Mines are not yet fully known so these could still change.
  - Environmental Resilience. This reserve was recently established to support the Authority's response to the climate emergency.
- 4.5 Detail on the fixed term discretionary programmes included in this budget that are £10,000 or above are shown below:
- Tourism (£20,000). This allocation provides support in relation to our 2nd purpose and includes support to the tourism sector to help promote Exmoor National Park as a special destination and to develop the Exmoor brand, providing advice and support to tourism businesses and those who provide services to visitors to improve their experience, in addition to seeking to grow the capacity of the industry. Work will be led by ENPA and partners such as Visit Exmoor.
  - Exmoor Hill Farming Network (£19,000). ENPA has provided financial contributions to the successful and well regarded Exmoor Hill Farming Network since its genesis, and on 31 January 2020 the Network took the significant step of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Company. Funding support during 2020/21 will provide essential funds in this crucial year.

- Though core budget to support the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning has now been withdrawn, it is considered prudent to set aside £15,000 in case it does not break even.

## 5. RESERVES

5.1 Appendix 4 shows the anticipated level of reserves as at the end of 2018/19 and reflects the additions to reserves described in Section 4 that are recommended as a part of this budget.

5.2 The following assumptions have been maintained as part of the review:

- The General Fund Reserve has been maintained at a level of approximately £300,000 as per the Medium Term Financial Plan. It is the view of the Chief Finance Officer that this is sufficient to manage in-year fluctuations.
- The recently established Contingency Fund is not anticipated to go below the level at which it will require topping up (£250,000).
- The Legal Support Reserve has been maintained at £100,000. This is established for the purpose of ensuring that funds are available to meet any large one-off legal costs such as related to a large planning inquiry.

5.3 We continue to estimate the drawdown on existing reserves over the coming three years. This is shown in Appendix 4 and summarised in the table below. Though in recent years there has been a fall in the overall level of reserves, the Authority's financial resilience has been maintained as we have established a contingency, met liabilities that have arisen and are actively seeking new areas of funding such as capital receipts to improve resilience.

	<b>Projected Balance 31/03/20 £'000</b>	<b>Net Movement 2020/21 to 2021/22 £'000</b>	<b>Projected Balance 31/03/22 £'000</b>
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>	1,284	(486)	798
<b>Programmes &amp; Partnership Fund Reserves</b>	452	(175)	277
<b>General Fund and Contingencies</b>	795	0	795
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,531</b>	<b>(661)</b>	<b>1,870</b>

## 6. CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

6.1 This is the second year that local public authorities are obliged to provide a Capital Strategy. This obligation has arisen as some authorities have become increasingly willing to invest significant amounts in commercial developments to generate returns that will offset some of the financial impact of austerity. This part of budget setting will ensure that decision makers are fully briefed on the risks attached to the local authority's Capital Investment Strategy.

- 6.2 Exmoor National Park Authority does not have a Capital Programme or ongoing need for significant investment in physical assets in the same way as local authorities whom have responsibility for highways or housing. Capital spend is commonly of a small scale nature such as related to vehicles or IT. For larger schemes such as White Rock Cottage or Weir Cleave stabilisation, Members will receive a specific report to support decision making. This will provide background, the reasons why the scheme is being recommended and sources of finance. In advance of the report being presented to the Authority the Finance and Performance Advisory Panel will have scrutinised the scheme.
- 6.3 No capital schemes are being recommended as part of this budget setting process. The schemes mentioned above are nearing completion and there are no current plans to request further sums on them.
- 6.4 The Authority historically has a low risk attitude towards capital investment. It has never internally or externally borrowed to fund capital schemes nor has it entered into other long-term liabilities such as Private Finance Initiatives and does not invest for commercial purposes. Capital investment decisions are made to support National Park purposes.
- 6.5 We seek external contributions towards supporting our capital spend wherever possible. Where capital receipts are available these will be used to finance spend. In the absence of both of these then revenue reserves are used.
- 6.6 Stewardship of our assets is delivered by a small Land and Property team and led by a qualified Chartered Surveyor. The portfolio is relatively large and diverse and the Authority is carrying out a review of the assets at time of writing. This involves assessing which ones deliver National Park Purposes, identifying liabilities and opportunities for prudent disposals. We have also recently updated the Authority's Acquisitions and Disposals policy.
- 6.7 Built assets are subject to regular condition assessment, with the majority on a 5 year cycle of external repair and redecoration. Rental income is optimised through regular rent reviews and other opportunities to generate income from property are maximised.
- 6.8 Please note our existing risks attached to property liabilities in the table in Section 7 also.

## 7. RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The budget and MTFP recommended contain within them a number of assumptions that may or may not prove accurate. In addition, events may occur that have the potential affect the Authority's underlying finances. The risk analysis is as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating Factors</b>
National Park Grant is not as high as anticipated	Medium	High	Level of Reserves held. Annual Review. Some notice will be provided of future funding reductions sufficient to enable a timely response.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating Factors</b>
Pay awards may be higher than anticipated.	Low	Medium	Annual review of MTFP Some variations containable.
Liabilities related to the Property Estate arise.	Medium	Medium	A Contingency fund has been established to meet one off costs that arise. Opportunities for developing a pot of capital receipts is being explored. Not all property related costs need to be met immediately.
The existing stabilisation scheme at Weir Cleave could overspend.	Medium	Medium	The Authority has committed specific sums to these schemes and any further requests for money must come back to the Authority.
The existing stabilisation scheme at White Rock Cottage could overspend or suffer 'mission creep'.	Low	Medium	The Authority has committed specific sums to these schemes and any further requests for money must come back to the Authority.
The UK's exit from the European Union impacts upon the Land and Property income stream.	Low	Low	The establishment of UK led Land Management schemes should become clearer over the next few years. Existing stewardship schemes end gradually in the period up to 2023.
Economic situation could deteriorate and impact on self generated income and costs. Areas of income generation in the budget prove unrealistic.	Low	Low	MTFP constructed on a five year time span with a review each year. Budgetary Control arrangements in place to monitor income and expenditure on a monthly basis. The Pinkery Centre will be looked at directly.
Contributions from County Councils and Public Rights of Way may continue to be reduced.	Medium	Medium	This is subject to an annual review. Reduction in income will be projected in the MTFP.

7.2 This year the level of risk we are exposed to as part of the budget setting process is significantly greater than in previous years. The two most important numbers, change to National Park Grant and staff pay award, we still do not know. Also, when we do get the formal notification, it will only relate to one financial year and we do not know what the direction of travel is for NPG. The aspirations contained within the Landscape Review necessitates a much greater level of funding, it suggests that current levels should be protected in real terms and refers to the importance of medium term settlements to aid financial planning. We may not obtain any of these and a cash reduction is a distinct possibility.

## **8. FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

8.1 In previous years the financial strategy of the Authority has been built around managing the impact in the 40% reduction in National Park Grant. This required the careful management of costs, the development of new funding streams and seeking external funding for one off projects. The notification from DEFRA that NPG between 2016/17 and 2019/20 would be protected in real terms changed the basis for financial planning and restored some funding stability. However, the annual increases in grant were never sufficient to meet the increases in the cost base or new obligations that arose. It is the additional external income that was brought in each year that allows the organisation to continue to deliver the existing priorities and implement the National Park Partnership Plan.

8.2 Over the last twelve months we have sought to manage the impact of the implementation of the new grading system, national living minimum wage and job evaluation by careful consideration of how responsibilities can be reallocated and by removing some posts. The results of the pension revaluation generate further financial pressure. These budget papers outline how we plan to respond to these financial challenges in the context of a benign future funding settlements.

8.3 With the funding assumptions stated we still need to generate approximately £50,000 of savings each year to meet the increased staff costs and regain some of the headroom described in Section 2.16. This will occur alongside exploring new income streams in car parking and planning.

8.4 However if we do not get the basic level of increase (1.7%) then certain schemes will need to be immediately withdrawn. These are shown below: £20,000 for Environmental Resilience

- £25,000 to improve the offer at the Outdoor Education Centre; and
- £10,000 for Research and Development

We will also need to generate savings in excess of the £50,000 described in 8.3 above to provide the necessary flexibility and financial capacity.

8.5 If NPG levels are cut then we will need to consider a formal revisit of budgets and priorities as the incremental approach to returning resources and costs to balance may no longer be sufficient. The Authority's level of reserves provide the capacity to manage this potential transition.

## **9. CONCLUSION AND FINANCIAL STANDING**

- 9.1 The Authority has experienced many years of decreasing financial support from central government. The Authority responded to these pressures with a co-ordinated response with the restructuring of the organisation, expenditure reviews and use of opportunities to generate increased income.
- 9.2 This Authority has an excellent record of managing its financial affairs within the resources that are made available and that it is able to generate. The Medium Term Financial Plan and 2020/21 Budget continue this effective stewardship.
- 9.3 The proposed MTFP, Core Budget and Programmes and Partnerships Budgets for 2020/21 are contained in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 which the Authority is requested to approve.
- 9.4 Careful management of the budgets and reserves transactions will be required as we progress through the current year. As we travel through this coming year all those estimates, projections and assumptions on which the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2020/21 budget is based. will be refined and updated and will feed into the update of the MTFP towards the final quarters of 2020/21.

**Gordon Bryant**  
**Chief Finance Officer**  
**February 2020**



**Exmoor National Park Authority**  
**Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25**

	2019/20 Original £'000	2020/21 Original £'000	2021/22 Projected £'000	2022/23 Projected £'000	2023/24 Projected £'000	2024/25 Projected £'000
<b>Income</b>						
<b>National Park Grant Income (Defra)</b>	<b>3,211</b>	<b>3,266</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>3,466</b>	<b>3,535</b>
- Fees - planning,	88	88	88	88	88	88
- Fees - car parks	60	60	60	60	60	60
- Interest earned	20	20	20	20	20	20
- Rents & Contributions	286	300	300	300	300	300
- National Park Centre Sales Income	92	93	96	99	102	105
- Grants	10	10	10	10	10	10
- Rights of Way Income	50	50	50	50	50	50
- Pinkery Trading Income	155	155	160	165	170	175
- Other	13	13	13	13	13	13
<b>Total:</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>821</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>4,279</b>	<b>4,356</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
<b>Core budget - Pay</b>						
Current Establishment (excluding Pinkery)	2,192	2,323	2,404	2,488	2,576	2,666
Pension Costs - Fixed Element	140	138	143	148	153	159
<b>Target Pay Budget</b>	<b>2,332</b>	<b>2,461</b>	<b>2,547</b>	<b>2,636</b>	<b>2,729</b>	<b>2,825</b>
<b>Core budget Non-Pay</b>						
Member costs	94	96	98	99	100	101
Premises costs	185	189	191	193	195	197
Insurance	46	48	46	46	46	46
Travel / vehicle costs	108	107	112	114	114	114
Equipment	61	61	61	61	61	61
Contracted work (e.g. audit fees, legal services)	245	248	250	252	254	256
Grants and contributions	11	11	11	11	12	13
Subscriptions	38	34	34	34	34	34
National Park Centre Cost of Goods Sold	56	57	59	61	63	65
Consumables	76	71	72	73	74	75
ICT Expenditure	63	67	68	69	70	71
Communications	36	34	36	36	37	38
Toilet & car park costs	93	92	93	94	95	96
Pinkery	155	155	160	165	170	175
<b>Total non-pay budget</b>	<b>1,267</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,291</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>1,342</b>
<b>Total Core Budget</b>	<b>3,599</b>	<b>3,731</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>3,944</b>	<b>4,054</b>	<b>4,167</b>
<b>Programmes, Partnerships &amp; Contributions to Reserves</b>						
Contributions to Reserves	188	230	195	169	136	100
Top Sliced Programmes	148	74	74	69	69	69
Partnership Fund - small grants scheme	50	20	20	20	20	20
<b>Total available Programmes &amp; Partnerships Budget</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>4,279</b>	<b>4,356</b>

Section	Budget Heading	2019/20 Original Budget £	2020/21 Expenditure £	2020/21 Income £	2020/21 Original Budget £	Variance between 19/20 Original and 20/21 Original
Support to Land Managers	Access & Recreation	129,000	166,700	-27,500	139,200	10,200
	Archaeology & Historic Environment	72,600	78,600	-1,200	77,400	4,800
	Field Services	257,800	299,300	-23,000	276,300	18,500
	Conservation Advice & Support	304,300	286,300	-4,000	282,300	-22,000
	Rangers	126,800	147,400	-18,000	129,400	2,600
<b>Support to Land Managers Total</b>		<b>890,500</b>	<b>978,300</b>	<b>-73,700</b>	<b>904,600</b>	<b>14,100</b>
Support services to the Community	Development Management	314,200	404,400	-88,000	316,400	2,200
	Sustainability & Economy	67,000	77,900	0	77,900	10,900
<b>Support services to the Community Total</b>		<b>381,200</b>	<b>482,300</b>	<b>-88,000</b>	<b>394,300</b>	<b>13,100</b>
Support to National Park Users	Education & Volunteers	57,700	64,800	-2,000	62,800	5,100
	National Park & Information Centres	130,100	289,800	-137,500	152,300	22,200
	Information & Interpretation Management	201,900	219,300	0	219,300	17,400
	Pinkery	0	155,000	-155,000	0	0
	Visitor Facilities	33,200	91,400	-60,000	31,400	-1,800
<b>Support to National Park Users Total</b>		<b>422,900</b>	<b>820,300</b>	<b>-354,500</b>	<b>465,800</b>	<b>42,900</b>
Strategy & Performance	Legal Support	65,000	65,000	0	65,000	0
	Strategy & Performance	303,700	327,800	0	327,800	24,100
Finance and ICT Services	Finance and ICT Services	348,800	387,900	-20,000	367,900	19,100
Land and Property Services	Land and Property Services	14,000	269,400	-252,000	17,400	3,400
<b>Support Services Total</b>		<b>731,500</b>	<b>1,050,100</b>	<b>-272,000</b>	<b>778,100</b>	<b>46,600</b>
Corporate Management	Corporate Management	128,800	133,500	0	133,500	4,700
	Historic Pensions Contributions	140,000	138,000	0	138,000	-2,000
	Corporate Subscriptions	36,000	32,000	0	32,000	-4,000
	Members	94,300	95,800	0	95,800	1,500
<b>Corporate Management Total</b>		<b>399,100</b>	<b>399,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>399,300</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Total Core Budget</b>		<b>2,825,200</b>	<b>3,730,300</b>	<b>-788,200</b>	<b>2,942,100</b>	<b>116,900</b>

## ITEM 12 - Appendix 3

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMES, PARTNERSHIPS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES

2020/21

ORIGINAL BUDGET	<u>324,400</u>
<b>LESS: Contributions to Reserves</b>	
Woodlands	60,000
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	50,000
Estates Reserve - Protection to Adits and Mines	40,000
Estates Reserve - Pinkery Improved Offer	25,000
Estates Reserve - Condition Maintenance work Driver Farm	10,000
Environmental Resilience	20,000
Internship and Trainee Fund	15,000
Research & Data Gathering	10,000
	<u>230,000</u>
<b>LESS: Top sliced Programmes</b>	
Tourism	20,000
Hill Farm Network	19,000
Potential Pinkery overspend	15,000
Naturally Active in Later Life	5,000
Website Development	5,000
SERC/DBRC Bio-records	5,000
STEAM	4,000
Joint committee	1,400
	<u>74,400</u>
<b>Partnership Fund - small grants scheme</b>	<b>20,000</b>
<b>2020/21 Programmes &amp; Partnership Fund</b>	<b><u>324,400</u></b>
<b>Not to be Funded if National Park Grant is not Increased</b>	
Estates Reserve - Pinkery 'Tooling up'	25,000
Environmental Resilience	20,000
Research & Data Gathering	10,000
	<u>55,000</u>

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
ANALYSIS OF RESERVES**

	Balance 31/03/19	2019/20 Original Budget Allocations	2019/20 In- Year Reserve Transfers	Transfers (from) Reserves 2019/20	Anticipated Balance 31/03/20	2020/21 Budget Allocations	Transfers (from) Reserves 2020/21	Transfers (from) Reserves 2021/22	Projected Balance 31/03/22
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>REVENUE EARMARKED RESERVES</b>									
<b>Support to Land Managers</b>									
Ashcombe Garden Restoration	10,253				10,253				10,253
Mire - Archaeology	29,758			-10,000	19,758		-10,000		9,758
Headwaters of the Exe	147,139		-30,000	-20,000	97,139				97,139
Headwaters of the Exe 20/21 - 25/26 (PR 19)	50,000				50,000				50,000
Heritage Projects	81,495			-20,000	61,495		-20,000	-20,000	21,495
Deer Monitoring Study	13,424				13,424				13,424
Woodland Mgt Reserve	25,784		30,000	-45,000	10,784	60,000	-60,000		10,784
External Funding Bids	23,274				23,274				23,274
Rights of Way	181,263			-50,000	131,263		-50,000	-50,000	31,263
Simonsbath Project Development	4,017				4,017				4,017
Simonsbath Project Delivery	190,084			-190,084	0				0
Landscape Conservation Grant Scheme	25,244			-25,244	(0)				(0)
<b>Support to National Park Users</b>									
Caremoor For Exmoor	11,611			-5,000	6,611				6,611
National Park Centres spend to save	7,336				7,336				7,336
Get Involved Programme	50,068	7,700	10,000	-30,000	37,768		-30,000		7,768
Toilet Upgrade Programme	15,000			-10,000	5,000				5,000
Health & Well-being	36,954		11,000	-25,000	22,954		-20,000		2,954
Support for New Audiences Fund	12,411			-5,000	7,411				7,411
<b>Support to the Community and Business</b>									
Development of Planning Service	54,794			-14,794	40,000		-20,000	-20,000	0
Conserv Area Appraisals & Neighbourhd Plan	22,283				22,283				22,283
Dunster Action Plan	21,189				21,189				21,189
<b>Strategy &amp; Performance</b>									
Environmental Resilience	0				0	20,000			20,000
IT and Web Development	87,175			-10,000	77,175		-25,000		52,175
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	112,425	50,000		-25,000	137,425	50,000	-50,000	-50,000	87,425
Planning Policy	127,910				127,910		-35,000	-35,000	57,910
Research & Development	42,049			-25,000	17,049	10,000	-15,000		12,049
Improving and Innovating/ Spend to Save	131,106			-30,000	101,106		-25,000	-20,000	56,106
Internship and Trainee Fund	44,813	15,000		-20,000	39,813	15,000	-18,000	-18,000	18,813
Authority Estate	126,751	115,000		-50,000	191,751	75,000	-75,000	-50,000	141,751
	1,685,608	187,700	21,000	-610,122	1,284,186	230,000	-453,000	-263,000	798,186
<b>PROGRAMMES &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>									
Programmes - fixed term	242,805	148,600	77,000	-180,000	288,405	74,400	-150,000		212,805
Partnership Fund/ small grants scheme	74,077	50,000		-50,000	74,077	20,000	-40,000	-50,000	4,077
Programmes & Partnership Earmarked - County	90,000				90,000		-30,000		60,000
	406,882	198,600	77,000	-230,000	452,482	94,400	-220,000	-50,000	276,882
<b>GENERAL FUND AND CONTINGENCIES</b>									
General Fund	336,337				336,337				336,337
Contingency Fund - General (pf uncommit)	456,193		-98,000		358,193				358,193
Contingency Fund - Legal	100,000				100,000				100,000
	892,530	0	-98,000	0	794,530	0	0	0	794,530
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>2,985,020</b>	<b>386,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-840,122</b>	<b>2,531,198</b>	<b>324,400</b>	<b>-673,000</b>	<b>-313,000</b>	<b>1,869,598</b>

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

3 March 2020

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2020/21

#### Report of the Head of Strategy and Performance

**Purpose of Report:** To present to Members the draft Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan for 2020/21

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) APPROVE the Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020/21.
- (2) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive and Chairman authority to agree minor amendments following member discussion, and production of the final Plan.

**Authority Priority:** The Corporate Plan outlines the priorities for the Authority for the period to end of March 2021.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to “*do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to:-*

- (a) *the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s. 65 (1) [National Park purposes]*
- (b) *the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.”*

**The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows:** There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s). Engagement through the outreach work within the plan is designed to have a positive impact on protected groups.

**Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows:** There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

**Financial and Risk implications:** No financial or risk implications have been identified. Performance management exerts a positive influence on financial and risk management.

**Climate Response:** The Corporate plan includes action to respond to the climate emergency.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 The 2020/21 Corporate Plan sets out the key priorities for the Authority for the next financial year. In preparing the Corporate Plan there was uncertainty over the funding settlement that the Authority would receive from Defra, in relation to National Park Grant. The Corporate Plan has been prepared on the assumption of

a 1.7% increase in National Park Grant. The Budget report also being presented to Members at the Authority meeting in March, sets out in more detail how the budget has been prepared, including the impact of job evaluation, staff pay awards, and increased pension costs. If the National Park Grant settlement from Defra is significantly different, then changes to the budget and subsequently the Corporate Plan will be needed, and Leadership Team will need to review the commitments in the Plan and report back to Members at a future meeting.

## **2. Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020-2021**

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan 2020-2021 updates the previous 2019-20 Plan. A number of actions have been rolled forward, some have been deleted (completed actions or those not being progressed), and a few new actions added.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan is closely aligned with the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023. This is a Statutory Plan for the National Park as a whole, for everyone who cares about Exmoor, the place, its communities and the benefits the National Park provides to the nation. The Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority will lead delivery of the Vision and Ambitions set out in the Partnership Plan, working with our partnership groups. It also closely follows the priorities set out by Defra in its *8-Point Plan for England's National Parks* and the Government's 25 year Environment Plan, to ensure the Authority helps to deliver these national objectives.
- 2.2 The Protected Landscapes Review final report (the Glover review) was issued in September 2019. This recognised the good work that National Parks are already undertaking and made a number of recommendations to expand and strengthen this work, underpinned by legislative and structural changes, and new ways of working, including a new financial model. We await the Government's response to these recommendations and are engaging positively with Defra on how they might be implemented. In the meantime, however, our funding settlement remains tight, and whilst we have indicated in the Plan how we will take forward the spirit of the Glover proposals, much will depend on the resources that are made available to deliver these actions.
- 2.3 Against this background of change and uncertainty we will need to continue to deliver effective and efficient services while taking forward a number of specific priorities in the year ahead. Our knowledgeable and dedicated staff team are a key resource in ensuring we deliver this Corporate Plan. We will continue to assess and review our operations to improve the service provided and ensure we work efficiently and effectively.
- 2.4 We will continue to work with partners on a range of innovative projects across the National Park. In particular we will be focusing on our response to the climate emergency: this is a cross-cutting theme which will be woven through much of what we do, including nature recovery, positive management of our own Estate, working with land managers and local communities, and using our outreach and engagement activities to encourage and influence positive action. Nature recovery will also be a major focus, working with landowners and partners on a joined up response across the National Park and beyond our boundaries. We will continue to

work with the Exmoor Hill Farming Network to help test and potentially pilot the New Environmental Land Management Scheme. We are taking a closer look at our own assets through a land visioning exercise, to see how we can use these more effectively to deliver National Park purposes. We are part way through a review of the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning, and we will incorporate the outcomes into our wider Education and Outreach service. In the light of the budget pressures we face, we will look to increase alternative sources of income, recognising that some of these will need to be carefully communicated with local communities and visitors. We will also continue to invest in our staff through training and organisational development, to ensure that we can be agile, flexible and responsive in how we work, and ensure an ongoing high level of service delivery.

### **3. Monitoring progress**

- 3.1 The Authority carries out a six month progress update (reported in December) and at the end of each financial year completes an annual performance review (reported in July). This provides information about the progress made in delivering the actions in the Corporate Plan, together with achievement against the Authority's set of performance indicators. In addition to these formal reporting processes, members have asked that we provide additional light touch updates of key achievements on a quarterly basis (e.g. in April and September).

**Clare Reid**

**Head of Strategy and Performance**

**March 2020**

**Appendix 1 Draft Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020-2021**



# Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020-2021





## Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020-21

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## **Welcome to the 2020-21 Exmoor Corporate Plan**

Our 2020 – 21 Corporate Plan sets out how we will support delivery of the Exmoor Partnership Plan while incorporating themes from the emerging Landscapes Review, often referred to as the “Glover Report”. The Glover Report recognises the good work that National Park Authorities are already undertaking and makes recommendations to expand and strengthen this work. We await the Government’s response to these recommendations and are working with Defra and others to explore how they might be implemented.

In the meantime, our funding settlement remains tight, and whilst we have indicated in the Plan how we will take forward the spirit of the Glover proposals, much will depend on the resources that are made available.

Our priorities for 2020-21 include:

- Continuing to deliver a high quality Rights of Way network
- Updating and improving our Planning service
- Considering how best to respond to the climate emergency - across all of our activities
- Working with partners on a strategic approach to nature recovery on Exmoor and beyond
- Completing the Tests and Trials work with Defra to help influence design of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme
- Refocusing our education and outreach service, including a re-vitalised Pinkery Centre
- Looking at how we can use our land and property more effectively to generate income and deliver NP purposes
- Seeking new sources of external funding to support our work
- Working with the people of Exmoor to understand and support the local community and to support the delivery of affordable housing
- Organisational development – in the light of budget pressures ensuring that our team is motivated and that we are agile, flexible and responsive as an organisation

**Sarah Bryan**  
**Chief Executive**

**Robin Milton**  
**Chair of the Authority**

## **The Role of Exmoor National Park Authority**

National Park Authorities fulfil two statutory purposes established within the Environment Act 1995:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public

In taking forward these two purposes, we have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

Our 22 Members have responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the Authority and ensuring we achieve our objectives through effective use of our resources:

- 12 are appointed by the County and District Councils with land within the National Park
- 5 are nominated by and elected from the Parish Councils within the National Park
- 5 are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Members meet monthly as an Authority to consider priorities and make decisions relating to our duties as a National Park Authority, including determining planning applications for development on Exmoor. These are public meetings that anyone can attend.

We employ a team of around 60 core staff but we additionally employ project and seasonal staff, deliver through partnerships and through shared services. Our knowledgeable and dedicated staff team are a key resource in ensuring we deliver this Corporate Plan. Working with partners and sharing services not only helps us make the best use of our resources but also benefits all parties through shared learning and understanding.

The Corporate Plan is closely aligned with the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023. This is a statutory Plan for the National Park as a whole: whilst led by the Authority, it is a Plan for everyone who cares about Exmoor, the place, it's communities and the benefits the National Park provides to the nation. The Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority will lead delivery of the Vision and Ambitions set out in the Partnership Plan, working with our partnership groups.

Much of what we do would simply not be possible without our partners, local communities, interest groups and volunteers. We are committed to working closely with others to deliver National Park purposes and protect the special qualities of Exmoor. We will continue to develop close working relationships with local businesses and communities alongside our regional and national partners, and provide opportunities for people to get involved in the delivery of our plans.

Regular meetings of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum provide a forum for consultation and discussion about matters affecting the National Park and an opportunity to promote understanding between the Authority, local communities and other bodies with an interest in the National Park. The Forum meets at different venues across the National Park and members of the public are welcome to attend.

## Monitoring progress

The Authority carries out a six month progress update and at the end of each financial year completes an annual performance review. This provides information about the progress made in delivering the actions in the Corporate Plan, together with achievement against the Authority's set of performance indicators.

<b>What We Do to Deliver National Park Purposes</b>	
<b>Conservation Projects and Programmes</b>	Developing projects to help conserve and enhance Exmoor's landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, working with farmers, woodland owners, game shoot managers, conservation organisations, the local community and the general public.
<b>Public Rights of Way and recreation</b>	Maintenance and improvement of the 986km of rights of way on Exmoor, picnic sites and access land and promotion of the diverse range of recreational activities and opportunities available
<b>Ranger Service</b>	Public access management and liaison with land managers and recreational users of the National Park to promote and conserve its special qualities and help to manage the impacts of public recreation on Exmoor's special qualities
<b>Public Facilities</b>	Maintenance and improvement of Authority owned picnic sites, toilets and car parks
<b>Education/Volunteers/Outreach</b>	Provision of formal and informal education, training, volunteer opportunities and greater involvement of non-traditional users, including health and wellbeing initiatives
<b>Information/Interpretation</b>	Information and interpretation of Exmoor's special qualities through publications, website, social media, display boards
<b>National Park Centres</b>	Centres in Lynmouth, Dulverton and Dunster providing information about Exmoor National Park, with informative displays, maps, publications and staff with specialist knowledge about the area
<b>Sustainable Economy</b>	Engagement with business sector and local communities and liaison with local authority economic development services to help sustain a thriving economy on Exmoor
<b>Development Management</b>	Ensuring that development is of the right scale, directed to appropriate locations and conserves and enhances the character and appearance of the National Park
<b>Planning Policy</b>	Support to communities, neighbourhood planning and policy guidance, including development and implementation of Local Plan policies
<b>Land Management</b>	Management of Authority land for landscape, wildlife and recreation benefits. Opportunities to demonstrate best practice and emerging land management techniques.

# Corporate Plan at a Glance

## PEOPLE



**Exmoor for All:**  
where everyone feels  
welcome

- The Exmoor Experience
- Well-managed Recreation and Access
- Thriving Tourism built on Sustainability

## PLACE



**Inspiring Landscapes:**  
diverse and beautiful,  
rich in wildlife and history

- Celebrated Landscapes
- Wildness and Tranquillity with Dark Night Skies, and Sensitive Development
  - Valued Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage
  - Rich in Wildlife

## PROSPERITY



**Working Landscapes:**  
thriving communities and a  
vibrant local economy

- Working Landscapes
- Strong Local Economy
- Thriving Communities
  - A Valued Asset



Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
<b>People: The Exmoor Experience</b>	
<p>1. Promote and support a wide range of volunteering opportunities that deliver national Park purposes through the Get Involved Programme and working with partners. Ensure that volunteering opportunities are available to a broad range of people. Explore and enable the benefits to people’s health and wellbeing that volunteering can provide.</p>	<p>We will respond to the Glover proposals for a stronger mission to connect all people with our National Park. Our established volunteering programme will explore new opportunities to broaden the range of people who Get Involved (Proposal 11).</p>
<p>2. Promote the health and well-being benefits that Exmoor provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver targeted programmes of nature-based interventions to enhance health and well-being of communities.</li> <li>• Trial introductory “welcome to Exmoor” days bringing new audiences to experience Exmoor National park in a supported and accessible way.</li> <li>• Co-host Health Conference with Public Health England on the health and wellbeing benefits of National Parks.</li> <li>• Deliver the Families United through Nature (FUN) Project.</li> </ul>	<p>We will build on our strong links with health practitioners to help improve people’s health and well-being, reaching out to those who would not otherwise experience the National Park (Proposal 10)</p> <p>Our Learning and Outreach service, including the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor learning provides transformative experiences for children and young people, including a night under the stars for children who come for a residential visit. We will engage inclusively with people from a broad range of backgrounds, including disadvantaged families through our FUN project, and outreach work (Proposals 8 and 9). Our Rangers are the ‘front line’ ambassadors for the National Park, and we plan a new initiative this year for ‘Young Rangers’ to get a taste of Exmoor (Proposal 13).</p>
<p>3. Deliver the Learning and Outreach Service (including Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning) engaging with young people and professional staff teams. Run our first “Young Rangers Week” at Pinkery giving young people the opportunity to better understand and engage with Exmoor National Park.</p>	<p>Our three National Park Centres provide a warm and helpful welcome for visitors, which we will seek to enhance this year and strengthen through improved links with Local Information Points (Proposal 12).</p>
<p>4. Deliver a range of public engagement events including: Big Adventures, Family Campouts), Dark Skies Festival (Oct/Nov 2020), and attend local shows. Continue to support the “Wildwatch” programme to engage people with Exmoor’s wildlife.</p>	
<p>5. Explore opportunities for connecting more people, from a wider range of backgrounds, with the National Park.</p>	
<p>6. Provide National Park Centres at Lynmouth, Dunster and Dulverton. Develop a proactive promotional campaign and review the commercial offer of National Park Centres. Review and</p>	

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
reinvigorate the Local Information Point scheme to ensure effective promotion of visitor / user information	
<b>People: Well Managed Recreation and Access</b>	
7. Maintain the Public Rights of Way network on Exmoor, ensuring that at least 95% are open and easy to use and that key permitted paths and access land are available. Ensure the network meets the modern needs of all users through a range of legal, practical and information-based activities. Carry out a range of major path repairs and projects.	<p>We are rightly proud of our first-class Rights of Way network. Our Field Services Team make all our distinctive wooden signposts using timber from sustainably managed woodland in the National Park, our Public Path waymarking is probably the most comprehensive in the UK and uses the national colour system to help people find their way. We have a programme of improvements planned for the network and information to help people get out and enjoy the National Park (Proposal 12).</p> <p>We will continue to work with Natural England and the South West Coast Path team to implement the England Coast Path and strengthen links with surrounding areas (Proposal 15).</p>
8. Assist Natural England with the implementation of the England Coast Path on Exmoor through surveys, landowner negotiation and ground works project implementation.	
9. Promote at least 10 short, accessible walks with clear, high quality information in order to assist new visitors with an introduction to Exmoor.	
10. Follow up results of feasibility study into the potential to create new family friendly cycle trails within or linking to the National Park. Take to planning permission stage if possible	
11. Complete Woodside Bridge. Continue fundraising and develop specifications and secure consents for 'Great Bradley Bridge'.	
12. Provide support, guidance and monitoring for large public recreational events to help ensure they do not unduly affect others enjoyment or normal economic activity.	
13. Continue ongoing management of our most popular locations including public liaison to ensure that they offer an enjoyable visitor experience without being damaged.	
<b>People: Thriving Tourism Built on Sustainability</b>	
14. Support partners (including visit Exmoor and the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership) to utilise the Exmoor brand to promote Exmoor as a leading visitor destination (with a focus on out of season visitors).	As one of the smaller, and less visited National Parks, we are working with local tourism providers, councils, and as part of National Park family initiatives to promote Exmoor and to sustainably

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
15. Participate in extension of the Discover England Funded National Park Experience Collection initiative, seeking opportunities to focus on domestic markets, alongside overseas targets.	extend the value that tourism brings to the local economy. This year, as part of our response to the climate emergency, we will increase our efforts to promote green tourism and local food (Proposals 14 and 17)
16. Develop and deliver new experiences for visitors including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two Exmoor Discovery Breaks aimed at a family market to support income generation at Pinkery.</li> <li>• 8-10 Ranger Experience Days, alongside exclusive and bespoke experiences to increase income</li> </ul>	
17. Deliver third phase of Eat Exmoor local food work including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out of Eat Exmoor retail support.</li> <li>• Host one trade training and networking event.</li> <li>• Support partners in promoting Exmoor Lamb as a value-added product.</li> <li>• Quarterly CareMoor dining events</li> </ul>	
18. Develop a revised programme of 'green tourism' training for local tourism providers. Hold a one-day workshop to explore visitor travel opportunities in the context of the climate emergency	
<b>Place: Celebrated landscapes</b>	
19. Continue to progress the restoration of Ashcombe Gardens working with the Ashcombe Garden Volunteers (AGVs). Carry out community consultation through a 'Spirit of Place' type event. Work with the Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust to transfer the responsibility for/operation of White Rock Cottage and Simonsbath Old School.	
<b>Place: Wildness and Tranquillity with dark Night skies and Sensitive Development</b>	
20. Promote and raise awareness of the Landscape Character Assessment to help guide development and land management change. Use this to evidence forces for change, threats and identify opportunities to conserve landscape quality.	
21. Continue to use Exmoor's Dark Skies Reserve status to educate and raise	



Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
<p>awareness, including through guidance and promotion of exemplar projects. Deliver a programme of Dark Sky tourism development activities using funding support from the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership including development of a Dark Skies Way, Discovery Hub, Dark Sky Friendly Business scheme and training opportunities.</p>	
<p>22. Support the Design Group to encourage high quality, locally distinctive design in the National Park which conserves and enhances the National Park. Take account of new national design guide and forthcoming national model design code</p>	
<b>Place: Valued Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage</b>	
<p>23. Undertake conservation works to monuments at risk via the Historic England part funded Monuments Management Scheme and undertake scheduled monuments at risk survey to inform future works.</p>	
<p>24. Progress designation of new Conservation Areas</p>	
<p>25. Continue to enhance and promote the Historic Environment Record (HER) in line with recommendations from the Historic England audit.</p>	
<p>26. Increase understanding of the historic environment, with a focus on the coast, and research through the Mires restoration programme.</p>	
<b>Place: Rich in Wildlife</b>	
<p>27. Lead nature recovery within the National Park developing and promoting a vision and programme of work for ecological recovery networks on a landscape scale, including moorland, woodland, farmland, coast</p>	<p>We will respond to the challenge to recover and enhance nature, working with our partners within the National Park, and connecting to surrounding areas. Our Partnership Plan Groups are already progressing proposals for nature recovery, and this is a priority for the Authority in responding to the climate emergency, and in taking forward the land visioning for our own Estate (Proposals 1, 3, and 5).</p>
<p>28. Implement the two-year Exmoor Non-native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project funded by the Water Environment Grant including trials of organic knotweed control methods, carrying out practical work with volunteers such as Himalayan balsam clearance, and signal crayfish control.</p>	

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
<b>Prosperity: Working Landscapes</b>	
29. Work with Defra to help develop the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) in partnership with Exmoor Hill Farming Network and woodland managers. This will include completing one of the national 'Tests & Trials' for Defra and will be an important mechanism for considering future priorities and management of natural capital assets including moorland, woodland, farmland, coast.	We are working closely with the Exmoor Hill Farming Network on Test and Trials for the new Environmental Land Management Scheme, testing natural capital approaches and how future public funding can deliver environmental benefits and sustainable livelihoods for the farming community (Proposal 5).
30. Work with game shoot managers and others to help ensure game shoots provide a positive overall impact on Exmoor's special qualities through a strategy of better information, encouraging good practice and improved communication	
31. Promote benefits of increased local sustainable timber production including products and markets, through development of Grown in Britain on Exmoor.	
32. Work with partners to investigate opportunities for integrated catchment management to ensure that Exmoor's rivers, streams and associated catchments are in good condition.	
33. Help promote and conserve the iconic Exmoor Pony breed through delivery of the Exmoor Pony genome project and management of the Authority's pony herds.	
34. Provide continued Countryside Stewardship advice to enable land managers to make informed applications that support delivery of National Park purposes.	
35. Monitor and report on annual swaling activity	
<b>Prosperity: Strong Local Economy</b>	
36. Develop a Rural Enterprise Exmoor strategy, building on the evidence and research undertaken in 2019/20, in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Authorities	We will focus this year on developing a new economic strategy for the National Park to steer future partnership work that will foster economic vitality and

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
37. Contribute to collective work with English National Parks to influence post-Brexit Rural Development funding opportunities in National Parks	vibrant communities. We will also continue to work as a National Park family on future funding opportunities (Proposal 17).
<b>Prosperity: Thriving Communities</b>	
38. Deliver a small grants programme via the Partnerships Fund supporting community efforts to further National Park Purposes.	Working with local partners we will continue to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing on Exmoor, and respond to any changes in national policy or delivery mechanisms (Proposal 18).
39. Provide support to communities including community planning, Exmoor Rural Housing Network and rural housing initiatives to secure community facilities and support delivery of affordable housing on Exmoor.	
40. Support implementation of the Local Plan, updating evidence, advising on policy and work with neighbouring authorities and partners to fulfil Duty to Co-operate requirements. Produce the Authority Monitoring Report and carry out a review of affordable housing provision (by end 2020). Review Statement of Community Involvement by November 2020.	
41. Work with the police and other agencies to combat rural crime particularly poaching, unauthorised off-road driving and fly-tipping.	
<b>Prosperity: A Valued Asset</b>	
42. Work with Defra and other Protected Landscapes to strengthen joint working and respond to the Glover Review recommendations	We will continue to work closely with the other National Parks, and will look to strengthen our connections with other Protected Landscapes including our neighbouring AONBs and Biosphere Reserve. We will begin our preparations for hosting two National Park family conferences and support the National Association of AONBs Conference being hosted by North Devon AONB. (New Ways of Working)
43. Commence preparations and planning for hosting the National Parks Conference in September 2021 and Society of National Park Staff (SNPS) Conference May 2021	
44. Work with Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Committee to contribute to and benefit from sub-regional economic work and the Great South West proposition	
<b>Monitoring and Research</b>	
45. Continue to monitor Exmoor's special qualities (through undertaking our own monitoring and gathering data from other sources), to feed into performance	We will continue to improve our evidence base and understanding of the National Park's special qualities and natural capital through

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
<p>monitoring and State of Park reporting. Review the State of Park Monitoring Framework in the light of updated evidence and lessons learnt from trialling natural capital accounts. Support monitoring and research to address gaps in information. This action includes information on the monitoring of deer and landscape</p>	<p>monitoring and research. (Proposal 2)</p>
<p>46. Complete biennial Visitor Survey to monitor trends and patterns in visitor behaviour and experiences</p>	
<p><b>Corporate Priorities: Manage Corporate finances and diversify income streams</b></p>	
<p>47. Undertake the necessary financial planning, audit and governance for efficient and effective running of the organisation.</p>	<p>We will manage the financial challenges facing the Authority, growing and diversifying our income base and ensuring the organisation runs efficiently and effectively. We will work positively with Government on any response to the Glover proposals for reformed governance and a new financial model (Proposals 26 and 27).</p>
<p>48. Increase income from the 'CareMoor for Exmoor' fundraising scheme, to support delivery of National Park purposes.</p>	
<p>49. Develop an external funding strategy and a live project log of potential projects suitable for external funding.</p>	
<p>50. Build on successful initiatives to grow our income base through our services, commercial partnerships and business ventures, delivering National Park purposes.</p>	
<p><b>Corporate Priorities: Work with communities, businesses and partners to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and statutory purposes</b></p>	
<p>51. Lead the implementation of the National Park Partnership Plan, working with the Partnership Groups, local communities, businesses and user groups. Work with groups to prepare a progress update on Partnership Plan delivery by the end of 2020/21</p>	
<p>52. Continue to support Exmoor Hill Farming Network and Exmoor Young Voices to engage with farming communities and young people.</p>	
<p><b>Corporate Priorities: Develop and maintain effective and efficient services</b></p>	
<p>53. Deliver the National Park Planning service, maintaining performance within national targets.</p>	

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
54. Develop and implement a new Organisational Development Strategy to support our staff team and enable the best use of our knowledge, skills and experience in delivering National Park purposes.	
55. Ensure the Authority's processes and staff continue to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations	
56. Provide opportunities for young people interested in a career with National Parks through short study/work placements, paid apprenticeships and internships	
57. Provide a comprehensive support service for Authority Members including administration of Authority Meetings, Member Training and Study Tours	
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b> Manage the Authority's Estate and operations to support delivery of National Park purposes	
58. Complete a review of the Authority's assets to inform future decisions on management, acquisitions and disposal.	
59. Complete the review of Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning. Develop and begin to implement an improvement plan for Pinkery that provides long term sustainability and improvement in learning and efficiency outcomes.	
60. Develop proposals for the ENPA Estate including enabling nature recovery and mitigating the impacts of climate change. This will involve completing the Land Visioning process and developing outline project proposals.	
61. Continue exemplary management of the ENPA Woodland Estate in line with the Vision and Objectives laid out in the 2017 – 2042 Woodland Strategy to ensure that Countryside Stewardship targets are met, partnerships with Plantlife and Butterfly Conservation deliver agreed outcomes and volume of timber produced is maintained or increased	
62. Continue with an ongoing maintenance programme for the Authority's estate,	

Corporate Plan Actions	How the Corporate Plan will take forward the spirit of the Protected Landscapes Review proposals
implement priority maintenance projects and complete planned major works.	
63. Work to secure plastic free status for Exmoor National Park	
64. Agree and start implementing an action plan to move ENPA to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Contribute to development of the climate action plans for Devon and Somerset	

DRAFT

## Use of our resources

The summary **Medium Term Financial Plan** set out below provides a projection of Authority income and expenditure **2020/21 to 2024/25**.

Following a four year funding settlement period to 2019/20, we have moved back to an annual grant allocation from Defra. We do not know what funding we will receive after this point but our Medium Term Financial Plan assumes that the grant will continue to grow at a similar rate (1.7-2%). Whatever funding is provided, the Authority will work hard to use the resources available to implement the Partnership Plan and work with Defra to deliver their priorities for England's National Parks.

	2019/20 Original £'000	2020/21 Original £'000	2021/22 Projected £'000	2022/23 Projected £'000	2023/24 Projected £'000	2024/25 Projected £'000
<b>Income</b>						
<b>National Park Grant Income (Defra)</b>	<b>3,211</b>	<b>3,266</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>3,466</b>	<b>3,535</b>
- Fees - planning,	88	88	88	88	88	88
- Fees - car parks	60	60	60	60	60	60
- Interest earned	20	20	20	20	20	20
- Rents & Contributions	286	300	300	300	300	300
- National Park Centre Sales Income	92	93	96	99	102	105
- Grants	10	10	10	10	10	10
- Rights of Way Income	50	50	50	50	50	50
- Pinkery Trading Income	155	155	160	165	170	175
- Other	13	13	13	13	13	13
<b>Total:</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>821</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>4,279</b>	<b>4,356</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
<b>Core budget - Pay</b>						
Current Establishment (excl. Pinkery)	2,192	2,323	2,404	2,488	2,576	2,666
Pension Costs - Fixed Element	140	138	143	148	153	159
<b>Target Pay Budget</b>	<b>2,332</b>	<b>2,461</b>	<b>2,547</b>	<b>2,636</b>	<b>2,729</b>	<b>2,825</b>

	2019/20 Original £'000	2020/21 Original £'000	2021/22 Projected £'000	2022/23 Projected £'000	2023/24 Projected £'000	2024/25 Projected £'000
<b>Core budget Non-Pay</b>						
Member costs	94	96	98	99	100	101
Premises costs	185	189	191	193	195	197
Insurance	46	48	46	46	46	46
Travel / vehicle costs	108	107	112	114	114	114
Equipment	61	61	61	61	61	61
Contracted work (e.g. audit fees, legal services)	245	248	250	252	254	256
Grants and contributions	11	11	11	11	12	13
Subscriptions	38	34	34	34	34	34
National Park Centre Cost of Goods Sold	56	57	59	61	63	65
Consumables	76	71	72	73	74	75
ICT Expenditure	63	67	68	69	70	71
Communications	36	34	36	36	37	38
Toilet & car park costs	93	92	93	94	95	96
Pinkery	155	155	160	165	170	175
<b>Total non-pay budget</b>	<b>1,267</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,291</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>1,342</b>
<b>Total Core Budget</b>	<b>3,599</b>	<b>3,731</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>3,944</b>	<b>4,054</b>	<b>4,167</b>
<b>Programmes, Partnerships &amp; Contributions to Reserves</b>						
Contributions to Reserves	188	220	185	159	126	90
Top Sliced Programmes	148	84	84	79	79	79
Partnership Fund - small grants scheme	50	20	20	20	20	20
<b>Total available Programmes &amp; Partnerships Budget</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>4,203</b>	<b>4,279</b>	<b>4,356</b>





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## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

3 March 2020

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS, AND DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

#### Report of the Head of Strategy and Performance

**Purpose of Report:** To seek approval for the Exmoor National Park Authority response to the strategic issues for co-operation during preparation of the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan, and to the issues and options consultation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) APPROVE the Exmoor National Park Authority response to the Issues and Options consultation for the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan (Appendix 1)
- (2) APPROVE the Exmoor National Park Authority response to the Duty to Co-operate issues for the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan (Appendix 2).
- (3) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chairperson (Planning) authority to agree any amendments following member discussion, and production of the final response.

**Authority Priority:** To work with communities, businesses and partners to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and statutory purposes. Work with neighbouring authorities and partners to fulfil Duty to Co-operate requirements.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** The Authority is required under planning legislation to co-operate with neighbouring planning authorities and other relevant bodies during the plan-making process, on cross-boundary and strategic issues

**The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows:** There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s)  
**Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows:** There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

**Financial and Risk implications:** No financial or risk implications have been identified. Performance management exerts a positive influence on financial and risk management.

**Climate Response:** The response to the climate emergency is a strategic priority which is shared by both Authorities.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council came into being on 1 April 2019, combining the two areas of West Somerset, and Taunton Deane. The new Council is preparing a new Local Plan to cover the whole of the District.

## **2. Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan 2040: Issues and Options**

- 2.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council are currently consulting on the [Issues and Options](#) for their new Local Plan. This document is the first consultation stage in the Local Plan process. It includes an overview about the area (Section 3) and draft Local Plan Objectives (Section 4). Section 5 sets out the key issues for the Local Plan and suggests Options for how the Council could address these.
- 2.2 The consultation also includes the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 2.3 The proposed ENPA response to the Issues and Options consultation is given in Appendix 1.

## **3. Strategic and cross-boundary issues for co-operation**

- 3.1 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, Somerset West and Taunton Council and Exmoor National Park Authority are required to co-operate over strategic and cross-boundary issues. An initial set of issues has been identified by Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 3.2 The proposed ENPA response to the strategic and cross-boundary issues for co-operation is given in Appendix 2.

**Clare Reid, Head of Strategy and Performance**  
**Ruth McArthur, Policy and Community Manager**  
**March 2020**

**Appendix 1 - Exmoor National Park Authority response to the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan 2040 Issues and Options consultation**

**Appendix 2 – Exmoor National Park Authority response to the strategic and cross-boundary issues for co-operation**

## **Exmoor National Park Authority response to the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan 2040 Issues and Options consultation**

As a neighbouring local planning authority and part of the Somerset and West and Taunton Council area for other functions, such as economic and housing authority functions, we welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Issues and Options consultation for the new district-wide Local Plan.

### **Page 3**

We welcome the inclusion of the map on page 3 which recognises that the area of Exmoor National Park (ENP) is covered by a different Local Plan prepared by the Exmoor National Park Authority (NPA) as the local planning authority for the area.

### **Page 4**

#### *Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment*

We recognise that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment have been prepared. We welcome acknowledgement in these documents of the designated sites within and close to the National Park boundary and that these have been considered as part of the assessments referred to on page 4 of the Issues and Options Consultation Document. The proximity of such sites is also referred to in the NPA's response to the Duty to Co-operate consultation.

### **Page 5**

We note the strategies referred to in the consultation document. We suggest that in preparing the Local Plan, account should also be taken of the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23. The five-year Partnership Plan establishes the Ambitions and strategies required to maintain the special qualities of the area. <https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/key-documents>

### **Page 10**

We suggest, in addition to the contents of the box in column 2, an important part of the quality of the landscape in this part of the district is the proximity and the setting of Exmoor National Park (ENP) and views to it from SW&T. Similarly, a number of wildlife sites and heritage assets are close to the boundary of ENP. The high quality of the environment in the area underpins the economy. There are also opportunities for active travel links into the National Park. These observations are highlighted in our consultation response on strategic issues. We wonder whether the reference to the poor road network could instead refer to poor transport links. It may be that poor accessibility may also have contributed to higher levels of self-containment in some cases.

### **Page 12**

We support the nine proposed objectives. There are a range of issues which require joint working including climate change, conserving and enhancing the National Park and its setting, protection and enhancement of landscape character, wildlife and the historic environment, the needs of local communities including for affordable housing and

strengthening the local economy. We wonder whether consideration could be given to including historic environment alongside landscapes, biodiversity and local character and a specific reference to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes and their setting in objective 7 and whether a reference to safeguarding and supporting local employment and local community services and facilities could be added to objective 8?

## **Pages 14-16: Carbon neutrality**

### *Achieving carbon reduction from new development*

We are not making specific comments on this option and we recognise that the approach will be evidence driven. However, we are working closely with other Somerset authorities, including SW&T, to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation measures having declared a climate emergency in 2019. We therefore welcome the focus on carbon reduction in this consultation document. We recognise that areas such as Exmoor may have a part to play in discussions and options on offsetting.

### *Delivering low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure*

The approach to be pursued is a matter for the local planning authority taking account of evidence and national policy. We recognise the importance of addressing climate change, including through low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure. Work to either identify suitable areas or allocate sites will need to take account of designations and potential impacts on them / their setting, including on views into and out of the National Park as highlighted in our response to the strategic issues. We would welcome discussion on this area from an early stage.

## **Page 16**

In terms of additional policy approaches to meet Objective 1, relevant factors include taking a landscape character approach, proximity to the National Park, scale and design details. We welcome reference to community decentralised renewable energy schemes and micro-generation (policy approach 1c/4) as micro scale would be likely to reduce adverse impacts, mitigation to avoid detrimental impacts (1c/5) delivery of ecosystem services (1c/6 - which links with a focus on ecosystem services within the National Park) and to enable communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change ((1c/2, 1c/3 and 1c/7). Retrofitting / improved energy efficiency have additional benefits in terms of addressing fuel poverty given the high proportion of older properties in the area.

## **Pages 17 -22 Sustainable locations**

### *The Settlement Tiers, The Distribution of Housing, Site Selection*

The NPA is not commenting specifically on the approach to be taken to the settlement strategy, distribution of housing or site selection as these are matters for SW&T to decide. However, in our response to the strategic issues consultation we have highlighted the need for a consistent and coherent approach to the settlement strategy to take account of those communities where the National Park/SW&T boundary splits parishes and villages – and to consider the approach in the ENP Adopted Local Plan (2017). Additionally, communities living on Exmoor, which is entirely rural, rely on larger settlements outside the National Park for many services. We suggest that environmental factors, including landscape character/capacity and potential impacts on designations should, in addition to the reference to development constraints on page 18, be factors to be considered in deciding where development should be directed and the level of development that can be

accommodated. We therefore support policy approach 9a/4 under the “wellbeing of our residents”. New development has the potential to cause adverse impacts on the National Park and its setting particularly if high current / future development levels may be proposed e.g. around Minehead and particularly if it is concluded that new strategic allocations may be necessary. It would be helpful to include constraints / potential impacts on designations, including protected landscapes such as the National Park and AONBs and capacity as a consideration in determining the distribution of development. This is something that a SA/SEA process should address. In addition to Minehead, other settlements / communities/parishes near or split by the National Park boundary include Carhampton, Battleton, Dunster, Monksilver, Old Cleeve and Withycombe. We note reference to the fact that the position of settlements in the lower tiers (4-7) may change following further work on the role and function of settlements including development constraints. We would welcome engagement on this as work progresses and as referred to in our response to the strategic issues consultation.

### **Pages 23-26 New and affordable homes**

Providing the right number of new homes, Providing pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, Providing accessible and lifetime homes, Providing custom self-build plots

It has been acknowledged that, in planning for a housing requirement figure, any new technical evidence on housing will need to be considered. We welcome recognition on page 23 of the potential need to address any unmet need. We are keen to ensure there is close working and joint discussions on this through duty to cooperate.

The Council is the housing authority for the Somerset area of the National Park. There are also a number of parishes/communities split by the boundary between the National Park and SW&T planning authority boundary. We have therefore highlighted the need for a coherent approach to the settlement strategy and to ensure the needs of local communities within and outside the National Park are considered.

Both authorities are working proactively and positively to address the local need for affordable housing, particularly for social rented housing and also the local need for self/custom build. As part of the housing authority role, account should be taken of both the SW&T and ENP self/custom build registers. It is important to continue to explore where there may be opportunities to address housing need outside the National Park particularly for communities in the National Park living close to the boundary as there may not always be suitable sites to meet the need arising within the National Park. In the National Park the approach is to follow a needs-led Rural Exceptions approach to ensure housing meets a local need in perpetuity - policies require that such housing is genuinely affordable to local people.

It may be appropriate to consider evidence of levels of affordable housing need and capacity / constraints in coming to a view on where a rural exceptions approach should apply in / adjoining rural settlements - thresholds do not apply.

It is also important to consider the need for accessible and adaptable homes particularly given the ageing population in the former West Somerset area and Exmoor National Park.

### **Pages 27-29 A prosperous economy**

*Setting a strategic economic growth target, Making better use of employment sites, Improving the vitality of our town centres*

Our comments relate to the needs of local communities, in line with the National Park Authority duty, in meeting National Park purposes, to further the economic and social wellbeing of local communities, and as highlighted in our response to the strategic issues consultation. In particular it will be important to ensure there are appropriate policies in place, where evidence indicates a need for employment provision. These may include flexible criteria based policies for new business development which could help to support the economic needs of National Park communities - particularly those close to the ENP boundary with the SW&T planning authority area because communities also rely on provision outside the National Park. There may also be a case for considering approaches which encourage home based working and micro businesses since the former West Somerset area has a higher than average home working and also policies to safeguard rural employment sites and buildings as once lost these are difficult to replace. To be sustainable, settlements and communities need a range of uses such as employment, facilities and services as well as housing. We therefore support policy approach 9a/4 under "Wellbeing of Residents" later in the document.

### **Pages 30-31 Infrastructure**

#### *Deciding on our priorities for developer contributions*

We are not making specific comments on this issue / approaches as this is a matter for SW&T to decide. However, we would welcome consideration of whether there is potential to consider opportunities for developer contributions for appropriate infrastructure in the National Park, for example in terms of green infrastructure provision or active recreation/links into the National Park.

### **Pages 32-33 Connecting People**

#### *Achieving a major change in travel behaviour, Digital connectivity*

In line with our response to the strategic issues consultation and in addition to our comments above, we would welcome consideration and an approach which, working jointly, enables opportunities to be taken to provide appropriate improved links and opportunities for active recreation e.g. rights of way into the National Park – this would help further one of the National Park's statutory purposes for enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities. We would also welcome consideration of ways to support sustainable travel into the National Park. Improved bus services and routes within SW&T would benefit rural communities and those within the National Park – especially those living close to the boundary such as at Dunster, Dulverton and Old Cleeve. For example, those accessing education or health facilities in the Somerset West and Taunton council area. We therefore support policy approach 9a/3 under wellbeing of residents which seeks to improve accessibility. Improved digital connectivity benefits residents and visitors – and benefits for the local economy and we support efforts to improve this for residents where this can also be achieved sympathetically.

### **Pages 34-36 The natural and historic environment**

#### *Achieving a net gain in biodiversity, Minimising flood risk, Protecting our valued landscapes*

#### *Sustaining and enhancing the significance of our built heritage*

We support policy identification of these issues and proposed approaches to address them. These are in line with National Park purposes to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. We welcome recognition on page 34 that

the Local Plan area adjoins Exmoor National Park so that the impact of development on the setting of the national park is important. We suggest that a specific policy approach should include reference to National Park purposes and the setting of the National Park as well as AONBs (in line with the duty of relevant authorities to have regard to National Park purposes –more information on this is provided in our response to the strategic issues consultation). We also suggest that reference is made to conserving and enhancing landscape character and local distinctiveness including through good and appropriate design. We welcome reference to ecological networks, protecting and enhancing heritage assets and their settings as there may be development close to the national park which has the potential to affect heritage assets such as listed buildings and conservation areas or areas of importance for archaeology. The National Park has an important role to play in provision of ecosystem services which provide benefits including carbon sequestration and flood mitigation and attenuation

### **Pages 37-38 Thriving coastal and rural communities**

#### *Managing development in rural settlements*

This issue is for SW&T to decide in planning for the area. We make the following observations in considering the National Park's setting and the needs of local communities. The first relates to ensure the location and level of new development is such that the National Park and its setting are conserved and enhanced. The second is to ensure that new development can be accommodated sympathetically to avoid 'unnatural' hard edges to settlements and whether development limits help achieve this or exacerbate it – we therefore support policy approach 9a/2 which seeks to require high quality design which reflects the site and its context. The third relates to the need to maximise the delivery of local need affordable housing and the role of the settlement strategy and development limits in achieving this. For example, where a rural exceptions site approach applies adjoining and within a settlement, development limits may not be necessary. However, development limits provide more certainty where a rural exception approach would only apply to land adjoining a settlement.

### **Pages 39-40 Wellbeing of our residents**

#### *Achieving high quality design to reduce inequalities, Encouraging healthy lifestyles*

We support the additional policy approaches to meet objective 9, in particular:

- 9a/2 regarding high quality design including reflecting existing topography, landscape features and the historic environment and potentially requiring character appraisals The NPA would welcome involvement in any design principles/design codes for any key development sites which have the potential to affect the National Park.
- 9a/3 regarding flexibility in design to achieve high quality design that maximises accessibility by those who are less mobile and prioritises accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport,
- 9a/4 which aims to strengthen the self-containment of settlements through the protection of community uses (e.g. pubs, sports facilities, recreational open space, community and leisure facilities, allotments), and support for uses that improve the balance of land uses and create mixed communities.

### **Pages 46-47 Policies for our Places: The Coastal Strip**

We support the policy approaches for the Coastal Strip and Minehead as a gateway to Exmoor National Park. Alongside Minehead's role as a tourism destination, it is also important in providing services and facilities for its residents and those in the surrounding rural area.





## APPENDIX 2

### Exmoor National Park Authority response to the strategic and cross-boundary issues for co-operation

#### Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan to 2040

#### Duty to Cooperate

#### Section 33A of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 and Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

<b>Organisation:</b>	Exmoor National Park Authority
<b>Name</b>	Ruth McArthur
<b>Position</b>	Policy and Community Manager
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	February 2020

In order to help both of our organisations fulfil the Localism Act's duty to co-operate and to help Somerset West and Taunton Council positively prepare an effective Local Plan for its local planning authority area, please indicate below whether you / your organisation agree(s) with:

1. the summary of cross-boundary strategic issues affecting the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan area set out in the attached letter, and;
2. the way in which the letter suggests that they should be addressed.

If you do not agree with part or all of the above, could you please briefly set out why your view differs and provide your own summary of cross-boundary strategic issues affecting Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan area and the way in which you consider they should be addressed.

It is the intention that this is part of a continuing conversation between partners rather than a one-off exercise and that the current DtC Statements are combined and updated to reflect existing consultation and co-operation processes.

**Response** (please continue over or on additional sheets as necessary).

## Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan to 2040

### Duty to Cooperate

Response from: Ruth McArthur, Planning Policy, Exmoor National Park Authority

#### Suggested cross-boundary 'strategic' issues to be addressed:

Our records underpinning adopted Local Plans indicate that there are relatively few strategic issues which require a collaborative cross-boundary approach and partnership working.

From a position of adopted Local Plan coverage (see <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>) our records recognise the valuable co-operative working and partnership activity that has already taken place between the DtC bodies (and many other parties) over a number of years.

Overall, we agree with the summary of the cross boundary strategic issues. We have provided observations under the headings as they relate to Exmoor National Park.

- **The impact of the Hinkley Point C new nuclear project.**

We support the inclusion of this strategic issue.

- **Mitigation of and adaptation to the climate emergency.**

We support the identification of this strategic issue. Exmoor National Park declared a climate emergency in 2019 and this is a cross cutting issue which requires co-operation and joint action. As such, some of the issues are referred to under others e.g. consideration to ensure provisions related to climate change such as renewable energy infrastructure, will not adversely affect the setting of the National Park and that opportunities to reduce use of petrol/diesel vehicles and encourage active travel such as walking and cycling links to the National Park are encouraged.

- **Flood risk and coastal management, biodiversity and ecological networks, protected landscapes, heritage.**

We support the identification of this as a strategic issue. Flood risk requires a partnership approach. As well as fluvial / surface water flooding, West Somerset Streams, the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority and catchment management, there is a need to plan for coastal change which, in the National Park, includes at Porlock Weir and we would seek to be involved with joint working as appropriate. We are aware of the shoreline management plan review and the preparation of the marine plan by the Marine Management Organisation.

Biodiversity, ecological networks and heritage will continue to be key considerations within the National Park, and it will be important to ensure that there is a coherent approach to their conservation and enhancement including across the National Park boundary. Some habitats are split by the boundary and impacts outside/at a distance can cause adverse impacts on them. We envisage that we will therefore continue to work jointly on HRAs, SEAs and we welcome the inclusion in the SEA framework of objective 8 Landscape which assesses impact on the National Park.

We would welcome joint consideration of biodiversity net gain and natural capital as well as heritage assets. We suggest that green and blue infrastructure could be included as part of this strategic issue.

We strongly welcome inclusion of protected landscapes as part of this strategic issue. This recognises the importance of co-operation to ensure that the statutory purposes of National Parks are met, and we would therefore welcome joint discussions on this to ensure that the approach achieves this. The Statutory purposes are:

- to conserve or enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public.

In so doing the NPA has a duty to further the socio-economic wellbeing of its local communities. Legislation underpinning National Parks (S. 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and S. 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949), require that ‘in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land’ in National Parks, relevant authorities ‘shall have regard’ to their purposes. Defra guidance on “relevant authorities” is set out at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402204840/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/npaonb-duties-guide.pdf>. Natural England guidance on the ‘duty to have regard’ is: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605102658/http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/30037> The duty is important to the delivery of the statutory purposes and applies to all local planning authorities.

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations, and should be given great weight (paragraph 172)

The plan review will need to take account of the National Park designation and purposes and ensure there are provisions to protect the National Park setting. Considerations include: the need to protect views into and out of the National Park; strategic / allocated sites and the need for early assessment and joint working to avoid sites which may cause adverse impacts on the National Park; design and materials; and the need to protect the dark night sky and Exmoor’s International Dark Sky Reserve. There may also be a need to consider the potential for recreation / tourism impacts arising from development outside the National Park. We suggest that landscape character might also be referenced as part of this strategic issue.

- **Sustainable service centre provision - serving the Exmoor National Park communities and addressing possible unmet housing need.**

We support the inclusion of this strategic issue. The boundary between West Somerset and Taunton Council’s area and the National Park local planning authority areas splits parishes and some settlements such as Dunster and Monksilver. It is therefore important that the settlement strategy provides a consistent approach for communities either side of the LPA boundary to take account of both the needs of communities, landscape character and the setting of the National Park. The needs of communities will include housing and employment but also a consistent approach to safeguarding of community services and facilities and rural employment sites. As such we consider there is likely to be a need for active collaboration to ensure consistency of approach.

Given that Exmoor is a very rural area with small settlements, it will also be important that the strategy takes account of the role of different settlements across the boundary because rural communities rely on larger centres outside the National Park such as Minehead, Wiveliscombe and Taunton for many services including health and secondary/further education, retail and employment. There may also be residents living outside the National Park who rely on some facilities inside it.

As a result of the need for affordable housing, it will be important to consider the approach to planning for housing to maximise delivery of affordable housing to meet the needs of local communities. This will include the approach to the settlement strategy and development limits. We would welcome consideration of whether addressing unmet housing need might justify a separate strategic issue.

- **Housing Requirement.**

We agree with the identification of this as a strategic issue and welcome recognition that new housing evidence may lead to a requirement to address unmet need arising from within Exmoor National Park in line with para 11b) and footnote 6 of the NPPF (given constraints both from physical factors and Exmoor's status as a protected area). This issue arose during the preparation of now adopted local plans including the ENP Local Plan adopted in 2017. The Adopted North Devon and Torridge Local Plan includes the arising need from the North Devon area of the National Park in its overall housing requirement.

Going forward the preparation of a new plan for the Somerset West and Taunton area provides an opportunity to consider up to date evidence of the projected housing required for the Somerset West and Taunton district. Such evidence will assess household projections/tenures and is likely to consider housing for an ageing population and second homes. Aggregated district wide figures are likely to mask differences in demographics including the effect in the National Park of a more aging population and smaller household size. Evidence of housing need will provide the starting point for consideration of the options and approach to the objectively assessed need, including affordable need, in the area. We look forward to positive discussions and joint working on this issue including through statements of common ground.

- **Infrastructure provision (including digital, health and wellbeing),**

We support this strategic issue. There is a need to recognise the need for infrastructure provision outside the National Park including some employment and for education and health care. A key concern for National Park communities is digital connectivity. Given the transport strategic issue focuses on the M5/A38 corridor, we would include other transport considerations under this issue such as opportunities to improve green modes of transport, particularly in the light of the climate emergency, and active travel including walking and cycling links to the National Park.

- **Transportation along the M5 / A38 corridor (road and rail) and the Strategic Employment Site allocation at Junction 25 (Known as Nexus 25).**

We have no comments on this issue – observations on other transport issues are included in the strategic issue above.