

# ITEM 8

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### PLANNING COMMITTEE

7 December 2010

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) - MEMBERS' UPDATE

#### Report of the Head of Planning and Community

<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To provide an update to members on progress on the LDF
--

**Management Plan Objectives and Targets:** The Exmoor National Park LDF development plan documents will contain policies which guide the use and development of land, consistent with National Park purposes.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Exmoor National Park Authority is required to produce and consult on a Local Development Framework (LDF) in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The LDF will form part of the development plan for the National Park, the first consideration in determining planning applications which legally should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** The LDF has been budgeted for.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the Committee NOTES the content of this report.

---

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Paper provides an update for members on progress on the LDF over the last 12 months.

##### **Your Future Exmoor Consultations**

- 21 'Your Future Exmoor' (YFE) events held between January and March 2010 – Staff and Authority members worked together to ensure they were a success and almost 1,000 people came along.
- From last autumn to February this year, the team worked with all 10 schools in the National Park as well as three colleges serving the area: Ilfracombe, Petrock in Barnstaple and West Somerset Community College. Feedback reports were sent to all of the schools and colleges.

- All information from the maps at the event has been plotted on GIS. Feedback reports summarizing all the information and findings from each event were publicised and made available to Exmoor's communities. You can find these on the National Park Authority website at [http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living\\_in/planning/your\\_future\\_exmoor.htm](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living_in/planning/your_future_exmoor.htm) along with a single summary report and the school reports.
- 139 responses were received to a visitor survey with a prize draw for entries. 34 responses were received to a residents' questionnaire included in the November edition of 'Park Life' with articles summarising key Local Plan policies, the community consultation events and the SHLAA call for affordable sites.
- In May a stakeholder event was held at Exmoor House with a feedback report on the NPA website as above. In early July a staff and member event was held also using the format of the community events. Detailed discussions on key issues have since been held in house with officers from Development Control, Historic Environment, natural Environment and the Sustainability and Economy Unit.
- We meet with parish and town councils as required including through attendance at the Exmoor Panel, the Lynton and Lynmouth Traffic Management Group, meeting with Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council to feed back on 'Your Future Exmoor' and attendance at some parish and consultative forums.
- All the consultations, research and evidence have given us a good understanding of community and stakeholder priorities. However, some areas have needed further discussion and debate. Topic meetings with stakeholders and members of the community have therefore been held during November on: climate change and renewable energy; tourism (particularly hotels and visitor accommodation); recreation (including equestrian development) and housing and settlements). The results of these will be reported and discussed with members at the LDF Working Group on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December. At this meeting the vision and objectives for the LDF will also be discussed so that the Policy and Community Team can start to draft policies in the New Year. All members will be welcome to come along to this meeting to help with considering visions and objectives for Exmoor's LDF.
- We still need to reach more young people in the National Park as few in the 18-30 age group came along to the community events. We are in the process of trying to set up meetings with Young Farmers and potentially reaching some groups of people through CLOWNS which runs a mobile play bus in West Somerset

## 2. EVIDENCE FOR THE LDF

LDFs are required to be based on up to date information to ensure that they are found sound by the independent inspector who will be appointed to consider them. The following is some of the work carried out during the year by the team:

**Housing Land Availability Assessment:** The Housing Land Availability Assessment for April 2009 to March 2010 was produced and is available on our website [http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living\\_in/planning/ldf/core\\_strategy\\_and\\_development\\_policies/ldf\\_evidence\\_base.htm](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living_in/planning/ldf/core_strategy_and_development_policies/ldf_evidence_base.htm)

The main findings included:

- 24 (Net) dwelling units completed. Figure is slightly below the average for completions in previous years (
- 58 residential units with permission were under construction or had not made a technical start.
- During 2009/10 11 local affordable homes were completed in Cutcombe and Exford parishes.

**Rural Housing Project:** Construction is well underway on the new homes at Cutcombe Market including 10 local needs affordable homes for rent and two self build (serviced) plots. A decision is awaited on funding for the 12 affordable houses for rent permitted at Barnes Close, Dulverton and the 14 local needs houses at Porlock. Work is continuing on meeting housing need within other parishes within the National Park and in the wider project area.

**House Price Survey:** The thirteenth Annual House Price Survey was carried out in July 2010 within Exmoor National Park. For the first time since 2007, there was an increase in house prices. The 2010 mean average house price on Exmoor was £391,987, compared to £333,398 last year with the median average house price being £399,750; a 33% increase in a year. According to Land Registry sale figures for April to June 2010 the average house price for England and Wales increased by 13.6% over the year. The mean average house price for Exmoor is now 76% higher than regional and nearly 70% higher than national averages: The survey can be seen at [http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living\\_in/planning/ldf/ldf\\_evidence\\_base.htm](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living_in/planning/ldf/ldf_evidence_base.htm). The current housing market is widely seen as volatile – with uncertainty over whether the increase in house prices has stabilised. The possibility has been raised of a downward trend in prices in future months.

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA):** This assessment, a Government requirement will culminate in a report of deliverable sites for housing in the National Park. The work is being carried out to an agreed process between a partnership of North Devon, Torridge, Exmoor NPA and West Somerset. A call for sites resulted in a number of sites being proposed by the public at the end of

last year. These, together with other possible sites are being analysed, will be visited and put, with an assessment of their suitability to a stakeholder panel convened by the partnership early next year.

**Viability Assessment:** In order to help with making the best use of Exmoor's existing buildings, a piece of work on viability and changes of use has been tendered.

**Work with North Devon and West Somerset:** Work with North Devon and West Somerset Councils including responses to their respective LDFs. Inputting into issues around affordable housing including the West Somerset Home Finder Review and the West Somerset Affordable Housing Group.

**Porlock Weir Pathfinder:** The Environment Agency recently completed a Shoreline Management Plan which proposes that in Porlock Weir, policies move from the current defences of 'Hold The Line' to 'No Active Intervention' for the short, medium and long term. This means that the current sea defence structures are unlikely to be replaced, upgraded or maintained through government expenditure. The likelihood of coastal flooding in Porlock Weir will therefore increase.

In response, Somerset County Council launched the 'Pathfinder Project' with DEFRA funding of £235,000 to fund community led projects in communities affected by coastal change, including Porlock Weir, to help them plan for, adapt to and manage climate change, to raise awareness of key issues around coastal change and to give advice on how to adapt to the changing environment. A series of consultation events are being held to produce community-led action plans with the next event at Porlock Weir on 6th December. The NPA have been working in partnership with both the Shoreline Management Plan and Somerset Coastal Change Pathfinders to aid the development of the projects. The project findings will feed into the LDF.

**Infrastructure Planning and the Open Space Strategy:** The Team is continuing work on an Infrastructure Plan and the Open Space Strategy which is a requirement. The Plan will set out the current situation and the need for new or improved infrastructure over the lifetime of the Plan. This can include anything from roads to allotments, children's centres to doctor's surgeries or village halls. An Infrastructure Delivery Schedule setting out that which is planned and an Infrastructure Requirements Schedule for that which is required or wished for will be produced. The Open Space Strategy looks at formal recreational spaces within the National Park such as playing fields and children's play areas - the need for improvements and additional recreational spaces and associated infrastructure

**Sustainability Appraisal:** A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is required and that for Exmoor's LDF is now out for consultation for six weeks finishing on 24<sup>th</sup> December. The report summarises the background and issues from policies and research for the LDF, and

sets out the sustainability appraisal objectives and criteria which will be used to assess the sustainability of the various LDF policy options. It also includes a Habitat Regulations Assessment Scoping Report. Once the Scoping Reports have been approved the options that have been developed, including those raised through the consultation process, will be assessed and will help to inform the options which will be put forward in the Preferred Strategy.

**A Sustainable Toolkit for Rural Communities:** This brings together information on facilities and services for each parish and will involve consulting with parish and town councils on what is available in their areas as what may be needed to help make Exmoor's communities more sustainable. The information gathered will inform policies and proposals in the LDF including work on a settlement hierarchy.

**Monitoring:** Over the year, the team has collated data required for the National Land Use Database on the proportion of development on brownfield land, and development control statistics (PS1 and PS2 quarterly statistics).

**Annual Monitoring Report:** The Annual Monitoring Report has been produced. A separate report is included and will be presented at the December Planning Committee.

### 3. NEXT STEPS

The next meeting of the LDF Advisory Group in December will consider progress on the LDF together with development of visions and objectives for the Core Strategy and Development Management policies. It is intended, in the New Year, that as well as continuing work on evidence for the LDF, the team will work in consultation with stakeholders, communities and with the LDF Advisory Group to draft policies for the new plan. A 'Preferred Strategy' will then be published later in 2011.

**Jo Symons and Ruth McArthur**  
**Policy and Community Manager (Job Share)**  
**26 November 2010**

**Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:-**

Exmoor National park Local Plan Adopted 2005

Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-2012