

8. ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Objective 1: *To conserve and enhance the character of Exmoor's landscapes as living working landscapes that remain predominantly free from intrusive developments, maintain a sense of tranquillity and protect Exmoor's dark night skies.*

Objective 5: *To ensure that the built tradition, character, distinctiveness and historic character of Exmoor's settlements, buildings, farmsteads, landscapes, archaeological sites and monuments are conserved and enhanced and that the cultural heritage of Exmoor is protected through the careful management of development.*

Objective 14: *To achieve a strong, diverse, resilient and self-sufficient economy and encourage economic and employment opportunities which do not conflict with National Park purposes.*

Objective 15: *To achieve profitable farming, forestry and land management in ways that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park whilst producing food and other produce, and conserving distinctive local breeds.*

PURPOSE OF POLICIES

8.1. The policies in this section seek to encourage development which will help strengthen and diversify the Exmoor economy and sustain the high quality environment of the National Park. Although responsibility for economic development in the area lies with Somerset and Devon County Councils and West Somerset and North Devon District Councils, the National Park Authority, in addition to its duty under the Environment Act, plays an important role in drawing up an agreed vision for the area, including through the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and working with partners, not least its constituent local authorities, to facilitate actions to benefit the National Park and its communities.

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

8.2. The Environment Act 1995 gives National Park Authorities a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities in carrying out National Park purposes. The National Parks Circular recognises that conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and supporting vibrant, healthy and productive living and working communities need not be in conflict. The benefits of the environmental economy can be delivered through the statutory purposes whilst at the same time enhancing those purposes. It promotes an appropriate scale of development and investment including for their setting which are most likely to maximise the benefits of a high quality environment, and to broaden the economic base and bring higher value local employment opportunities. It recognises the importance of agriculture and land based activities in creating the intrinsic character of National Parks.

8.3. National guidance states that the planning system, in pursuing sustainable development, should ensure that sufficient suitable land is available in order to deliver the development needs of an area and to make it easier for jobs to be created in settlements whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and supporting thriving rural communities within it. Patterns of growth should ensure that the fullest possible use is made of public transport, walking and cycling. Significant development should be focused in sustainable locations³⁶³. Local Plans should set criteria or identify strategic sites; support existing, and, where possible, plan for new or emerging sectors. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, to allow for changes in economic circumstances and facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses³⁶⁴. National Planning Policy also seeks to encourage multiple benefits from the use of land, recognising that some open land can perform many functions such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production³⁶⁵.

8.4. The sustainable growth and expansion of businesses is supported both through the conversion of existing and new buildings. Sustainable rural tourism and leisure development is encouraged, including in appropriate locations, where identified needs are not met by existing

³⁶³ Paras 7,8,9, 17 National Planning Policy Framework – DCLG (2012)

³⁶⁴ Para 20 NPPF

³⁶⁵ Para 17 NPPF

facilities in local service centres, and where they respect the character of the countryside. The development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses is also promoted³⁶⁶.

CONTEXT

- 8.5. A thriving and sustainable Exmoor economy based on the area's environmental capital underpins the conservation and enjoyment of the National Park and its prosperity. Exmoor National Park is a major visitor destination and an important area for recreation. The high quality landscape, peace and quiet, biodiversity and cultural heritage that Exmoor provides are the major attractors for visitors, along with the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities. The National Park's status as an International Dark Sky Reserve provides opportunities for Exmoor to be a destination which people visit to enjoy the night sky. Surveys³⁶⁷ support the view that the area remains an important environmental asset for a wide range of people with a high level of repeat visits. Tourism is the largest employer in the National Park and visitor spend helps to support a range of local shops³⁶⁸. The links between the quality of the environment and Exmoor's economy are essential.
- 8.6. Traditional farming and woodland management helped shape the landscape of Exmoor, and agriculture and forestry continue to play an important role in the area's economy and support a range of other businesses and employment in the area. Public services make up a significant proportion of the economy through public administration, health and social care and education services³⁶⁹. Business which falls within the planning 'B' use class of offices and light industry is small compared to other areas and generally of micro scale, employing 5 people or fewer. The local economy is therefore dominated by non-B* class uses and a diverse range of small scale activities. Other services and some manufacturing provide the remaining local employment.
- 8.7. Two-thirds of working age people within the National Park are economically active³⁷⁰ - lower than the North Devon, regional and national averages but slightly higher than the figure for West Somerset³⁷¹; whereas 68% of economically inactive persons are retired³⁷² higher than the figures for the region and England³⁷³. There are generally low levels of unemployment³⁷⁴ despite the low levels of economic activity as a result of the large retired population and the fact that much work is seasonal. There is a high proportion of self employment.³⁷⁵ In 2009-10, the average household income for the National Park was £28,668 compared to £33,651 for the South West.³⁷⁶
- 8.8. The rate of new 'B' Class employment development has been relatively limited and evidence suggests that this trend is likely to continue. The sectors offering the greatest opportunities for employment³⁷⁷ are likely to be in hotel and catering (tourism), reflecting the increasing importance and role of tourism within the Exmoor economy, and in health and social care, resulting from the continued growth in the proportion of the elderly population³⁷⁸. Evidence indicates that there are increasing opportunities arising from adaptation to climate change. For example supply of wood fuel but also development, supply and fitting of associated technology.

³⁶⁶ Para 28 NPPF

³⁶⁷ Cite reference

³⁶⁸ 2011 ONS Census Data 15.6% of people in employment are in accommodation and food services occupations, plus 14.2% in retail trade.

³⁶⁹ Exmoor National Park: Economic profile Table 1.1 Employment by Industry Source Labour Force Survey 2005, 2008 ONS from Defra Rural Statistics Unit, July 2010 and ENP ELR para 2.43 "public administration health and social care and education sectors account for 20% of local employment" (Nov 2009). 2011 ONS Census data 17.3% within public administration health and social care and education sectors.

³⁷⁰ 66.6% of people of working age in 2011 (aged 16-74)

³⁷¹ 2011 ONS Census data (People of working age who are economically active – England 69.9%, South West 70.2%, North Devon 69.8%, West Somerset 64.8%)

³⁷² 2011 Census data (Almost 60% - Nathaniel Lichfield ENP Employment Land Review 2009 from 2001 census)

³⁷³ 2011 Census data (45.5% of inactive persons are retired in England and 53% in the South West)

³⁷⁴ April 2010, 1.5% of the total working age population compared to 3.5% for the rest of the south west (and 1.9% in the rural areas of the south west region) Source: ONS/Defra's Rural Statistics Unit. 2011 ONS Census data 2.2% unemployed

³⁷⁵ In 2011 26.2% of economically active people on Exmoor were self employed (2011 ONS census data) compared with 9.8% nationally.

³⁷⁶ CACI Paycheck data, mid-year estimates 2009-10. Figures relate to average (mean) annual gross household income

³⁷⁷ 95%³⁷⁷ of all job growth is likely to be in hotel and catering and health and social care. Nathaniel Lichfield: ENP Employment Land Review, 2009.

³⁷⁸ Cite figures for social care

- 8.9. Employment units within the National Park include small purpose built units at Barnsclose in Dulverton, at Cutcombe Market in Wheddon Cross, workshops at Lynmouth and several in what were existing industrial buildings in Porlock. The rural nature of the National Park and small size of Exmoor's settlements means that, necessarily, some services are located in larger centres outside the National Park such as in Barnstaple, South Molton, Tiverton, and Minehead. This includes some businesses whose impacts may be incompatible with National Park purposes due to their type and level of activity. As well as sites in nearby market towns, there are a number of existing purpose built employment sites and buildings close to, but outside, the National Park boundary including at Bratton Fleming, Combe Martin, between Brushford and Dulverton and Exebridge. The National Park Authority works with neighbouring authorities so that there is a consistent approach to planning for local employment across administrative boundaries to ensure there are appropriate opportunities within and close to the National Park to help meet the needs of local communities who live or work both within and outside the National Park.
- 8.10. The Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan supports strong elements of the existing economy, such as tourism and farming, whilst encouraging new business opportunities where they can benefit and contribute to the special environment of the National Park³⁷⁹. Encouraging employment opportunities for young people remains a high priority³⁸⁰.
- 8.11. The policies within this Plan set out a framework to guide the use and development of land to encourage a diverse and strong Exmoor economy and create employment. They seek to sustain and encourage sustainable development that is consistent with National Park purposes and which, wherever possible, benefits from and contributes to the care and appreciation of Exmoor's nationally important and distinctive environment.
- 8.12. This section of the Plan covers some of the key issues for the area and includes both strategic and development management policies to guide business and agricultural and forestry development. Flexible, criteria based policies will be responsive to changing circumstances. Policies encourage a range of business opportunities through the reuse of previously developed (or brownfield) land and by providing scope for new sites and buildings within the settlements identified in Policy GP4 as Local Service Centres and Villages. Consolidating employment and services in these settlements will help to meet the needs of the National Park's communities by diversifying the economy, creating jobs and helping retain and enhance key services and facilities.
- 8.13. There are also opportunities for economic development outside settlements on farmsteads and in hamlets, particularly through the extension of existing employment sites or buildings and the re-use of traditional buildings. In recognition of the importance of farming and forestry to the area, policy provides for agricultural and forestry development as well as opportunities for the diversification of farms and other land based businesses. Supplementing farm incomes helps to contribute to management of the landscape. Ancillary retail and leisure development is encouraged where it is principally for the sale of goods produced at the premises. This is addressed in Policy HC-D16 in Section 7 of this Plan.
- 8.14. Home working and self employment make an important contribution to Exmoor's economy and policies seek to encourage home based business where it can be accommodated as part of a residential use and it is compatible with the area and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Communications infrastructure, including broadband, which is so important to business, is covered by Section 10 'Achieving Access for All'.
- 8.15. Policy also safeguards Exmoor's existing employment sites and buildings as an important resource giving scope for appropriate redevelopment in certain circumstances where a site cannot be made viable in the longer term (SE-D2).
- 8.16. The importance of visitors to the local economy is recognised and policies enabling the development of visitor accommodation, camping site and visitor facilities are included in Section 9 of the Plan 'Achieving Enjoyment for All'. Policies for housing, including for key workers, and for shops and other local commercial and community services and facilities which also contribute to local employment are to be found in Section 7 'Achieving a Thriving Community'.

³⁷⁹ Para 4.9 ENP Partnership Plan

³⁸⁰ Para 4.8, Partnership Plan

A SUSTAINABLE EXMOOR ECONOMY

- 8.17. Policy SE-S1 ‘A Sustainable Exmoor Economy’ applies to all proposals for business development in the National Park, Policy SE-S2 is for business development in Local Service Centres and Villages while SE-S3 applies to business development in the open countryside. Agriculture and forestry development is covered by SE-S4.
- 8.18. Policy SE-S1, ‘A Sustainable Exmoor Economy’, encourages appropriate business and employment development and seeks to avoid negative impacts on the area so the economic benefits of Exmoor’s high quality environment can continue consistent with statutory National Park purposes. This approach to encouraging the sustainable economic growth of the area is consistent with the area’s designation as a National Park, the National Park Authority duty in the Environment Act and GP1 National Park purposes and Sustainable Development. The Plan therefore seeks to encourage a range of appropriate new business and employment development to address the needs of the National Park’s local communities.
- 8.19. The rural nature of the National Park and small size of its settlements mean that Exmoor’s communities necessarily rely, for some services, facilities and employment, on larger centres outside the National Park. This includes some businesses, whose impacts may be incompatible with National Park purposes.
- 8.20. An important feature of recent economic development has been that the vitality of the local economy has been sustained without the need for high levels of new development as much that has occurred has been through changes of use or conversions of existing buildings. The National Park Authority encourages this approach in principle, as the re-use of existing buildings minimises greenfield development and is therefore a more sustainable approach in a National Park, given the limited supply of suitable greenfield land. The change of use to employment can, if carried out sympathetically, also help secure the retention of a building’s character which can be difficult to achieve in conversions to residential use, whilst also supporting the local economy. The reuse or alteration of traditional buildings should therefore be carried out in accordance with Policy CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment.
- 8.21. The policies within this section provide a basis for the flexible release of appropriate sites and buildings for business development in response to emerging needs rather than to allocate land for employment use. This is because it is not considered that there is any need to allocate land or buildings for employment use given the character of the local area, the nature of the economy, the scale of past trends and forecasts of future employment growth. It is also not possible to ascertain which sites or buildings are most likely to be developed or reused and so the allocation of sites that are likely to come forward for employment purposes cannot be achieved with any acceptable degree of accuracy.
- 8.22. To conserve and enhance the character of the National Park, and in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in GP4, new employment sites and buildings will be focused in existing settlements and be of a type, scale and design appropriate to the local and National Park context (SE-S2). In the open countryside, Policy SE-S3 provides opportunities for employment development through the extension of existing employment sites or buildings and the reuse of existing buildings in farmsteads or hamlets, particularly traditional buildings of historic or vernacular merit. All proposals should respond to opportunities for enhancement and details should be included as part of a planning application. The National Park Authority encourages early discussions and will provide guidance on proposals including enhancement measures.
- 8.23. Climate change is expected to impact on all aspects of the National Park including the economy, the special qualities that attract visitors which will in turn have an impact on tourism – which itself underpins the local economy. On Exmoor, one of the main sources of emissions and greenhouse gases derives from land management (including agricultural activity, land use change and forestry). Consistent with Partnership Plan and Local Plan Objective 19 and the Partnership Plan commitment to make progress in becoming a carbon neutral National Park³⁸¹, all proposals should take into account the need to mitigate the effects of, and adapt to climate change in accordance with Policy CC-S1: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. In terms of flood risk, proposals should accord with Policy CC-D1.

³⁸¹ Paras 4.2 and 4.3 Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 Priority C4

- 8.24. Some businesses may grow and intensify their activity as a result of the scale of operation required, to a degree where they have a detrimental and significant impact on the appearance and character of landscape and other special qualities of the National Park and may no longer therefore be compatible with their location. Although the National Park Authority seeks to enable successful businesses to expand appropriately, there may be occasions where the scale of the business and the intensity of its activities are such, in terms of numbers of employees and traffic, for example that it should consider moving to a more appropriate location in a town or village. Within the National Park, such proposals will be dealt with under SE-S1 below, SE-S2 (business development in settlements) and SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside.
- 8.25. It is important that employment needs in the National Park are met in a way that is consistent with National Park objectives, and the creation of new large scale employment opportunities such as major industry would be inappropriate and in direct conflict with statutory National Park purposes. The impacts resulting from, for example, the large buildings required, traffic generation, parking and loading operations associated with such uses are likely to make a significant impact on the landscape and other purposes of the National Park as well as on the amenity of local communities, and are therefore considered to be inappropriate. Some kinds of business development will therefore be more appropriate in larger towns outside the National Park.
- 8.26. The National Park Authority recognises the increasing expansion and improvements in telecommunications and IT technology, and the increased potential for working from home that this has enabled. Local consultations have highlighted strong support for homeworking. The National Park Authority wishes to enable this trend to continue through encouraging appropriate improvements in communications technology, policies for which are set out in Section 10 of this Plan 'Achieving Access for All'. Policy SE-S1 makes provision for home based employment where it is at an appropriate scale. Consistent with national guidance, this enables residential and employment uses to be integrated in a way appropriate to Exmoor's needs and to build on the high proportion of home workers and self employment. Where planning permission is required, in addition to Policy SE-S1, proposals for home based employment should also accord with SE-D1 Home Based Businesses. Checks should be made to ensure that there will be no impacts on wildlife such as bats or nesting birds and should be in accordance with Policy CE-S2: Biodiversity, and should conserve or enhance the historic character of existing buildings in accordance with Policy CE-S4: Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment. Proposals for 'live- work units will be judged using policies in Section 7 of this Plan.
- 8.27. Policy SE-S1 also seeks to ensure the continued protection of existing employment land and buildings as an important resource. This should ensure that a supply of land is available for prospective businesses and minimises the need for, and avoids the cost and complication of, developing new sites of which there is a limited supply. It provides scope for appropriate changes of use in certain circumstances including where employment sites or buildings cannot be made viable in the longer term. Proposals for the change of use of employment land and buildings must, in addition to the requirements of SE-S1, accord with SE-D2 'Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Buildings'.

SE-S1 A SUSTAINABLE EXMOOR ECONOMY

1. **Proposals for business and employment development will be encouraged to strengthen, enhance and diversify the Exmoor economy where they are consistent with the following principles:**
 - a) **They are in or adjacent to the named settlements in accordance with SE-S2. In the open countryside, they are through the extension of existing business sites or buildings or the reuse of existing buildings in accordance with SE-S3. In all cases, full consideration should first be given to the re-use of existing traditional buildings in accordance with Policy CE-S5.**
 - b) **Proposals for extensions and/or the growth and intensification of existing businesses will be carefully considered and will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact including in terms of their operations, activity, scale and on amenity, the appearance and character of landscape, sensitive habitats and wildlife species.**
 - c) **Proposals for intrusive or environmentally damaging business or warehouse development or which would otherwise conflict with National Park purposes will not be permitted.**
 - d) **They are home based employment, and they accord with SE-D1: Home Based Businesses.**
 - e) **The National Park Authority will safeguard existing employment land and buildings. Proposals which would result in the loss of employment land and buildings must accord with SE-D2 and in such cases, opportunities to provide affordable housing or community uses will be sought.**

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL SERVICE CENTRES AND VILLAGES

- 8.28. Policy SE-S2 seeks to encourage a range of new 'B' and other sui generis uses, considered by the National Park Authority to be business development, in Local Service Centres and Villages. Consolidating employment and services by focusing new employment sites and buildings in settlements, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out in GP4, will help to meet the needs of the National Park's communities by diversifying the economy, creating jobs and helping retain and enhance key services and facilities. Town and village locations are more likely to be accessible to workers and allow easy access to services and facilities.
- 8.29. The policy encourages the reuse of buildings seeking first the reuse of traditional buildings but, where suitable buildings do not exist, other non traditional buildings or their replacement where opportunities are taken to achieve enhancement. Proposals should accord with Policy CE-S4: Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment, Policy CE-S5: Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Traditional Buildings and Policy CE-S6 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Non-Traditional Buildings.
- 8.30. There is scope for new sites and buildings for business in settlements. A special quality of the National Park is the lack of intrusive features in the landscape and suitable greenfield sites are few and may, over the longer term be required for a range of uses including affordable housing. It is therefore important to ensure that the best use is made of previously developed (brownfield) sites/ buildings and sites/buildings with planning permission, and these should be considered before greenfield land.
- 8.31. Where new B1 uses with a floorspace of 150 square metres or less are granted planning consent, permitted development rights may be withdrawn in respect of temporary changes of use to A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 of the use Classes Order³⁸². This is because this measure was introduced nationally to contribute to the viability and vitality of town centres. It could however result in the loss of B1 employment buildings in the National Park which are in short supply and which the Development Plan seeks to safeguard. The national change does

³⁸² Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 1101 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013. Part 4 of Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order grants planning permission in respect of certain temporary buildings and uses.

not therefore fully reflect the role of employment buildings within the sparse rural area of Exmoor National Park, where their retention is essential to local socio-economic well-being.

SE-S2 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL SERVICE CENTRES AND VILLAGES

1. In the Local Service Centres and Villages named in Policy GP4, proposals for business development will be permitted where they are within, or if no suitable buildings/sites exist, well related to existing buildings and they conserve or enhance the character of the settlement pattern, are appropriate to the scale and form of the settlement, accord with Policy SE-S1 (A Sustainable Exmoor Economy) and the following criteria:
 - a) wherever possible, proposals should reuse existing traditional buildings in a way that maintains and enhances their character and in accordance with CE-S5;
 - b) where no suitable buildings exist, the replacement of an existing non traditional building will be considered where the existing building harms the character or appearance of the area; and/or
 - c) the reuse of previously developed sites will be encouraged where proposals take up opportunities to achieve enhancement;
 - d) where it can be demonstrated that Clauses (a), (b) or (c) cannot be achieved then an extension to an existing site in business use, or a new site or building may be permitted where it accords with other Plan policies including CE-S7 (Design and Sustainable Construction Principles).
2. Proposals for extensions to sites or buildings in existing business use will be permitted where they will not result in any unacceptable adverse impacts and they accord with this and other Plan policies.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND FARM DIVERSIFICATION

- 8.32. Policy SE-S3 provides opportunities, and sets out the policy framework, for new business development in the open countryside, through the extension of existing business sites or buildings—and the reuse of existing buildings in farmsteads or hamlets. Ensuring that the best use is made of existing buildings, including those with the benefit of planning permission, will help to ensure that the National Park is conserved and enhanced. A further element of the policy (Clause 4) is particularly aimed at farms and land based businesses, including estates, and sets out the provision specific to proposals for farm diversification in recognition of the benefits that it can bring to sustaining a farm or other land based business responsible for land management.
- 8.33. The Policy takes forward an element of the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan which identifies significant potential to increase the value added locally to sustainable materials produced in the National Park. The Partnership Plan seeks greater usage of local sustainable materials, helping to create employment and new business opportunities where they do not adversely affect the National Park. This also has the potential to help sustain traditional building skills in the area which in turn contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the National Park³⁸³.
- 8.34. To date, diversification within the National Park has particularly centred on tourism and game shooting activity. However other avenues have included the processing of farm produce. Such businesses may not necessarily be related in type to the produce of the farm, activities could include the development of new agricultural opportunities or adding value to primary produce as highlighted by the Partnership Plan. Consultation³⁸⁴ has shown that the main reason for diversification is to generate additional income. The level of income resulting from these additional business activities appears to vary considerably: in some cases, the non-farming activities are very much ancillary to the main farm business, whilst for others they have represented the main source of income.

³⁸³ Cite para number

³⁸⁴ Nathaniel Lichfield: Employment Land Review

- 8.35. The main aim of a farm diversification proposal should be to supplement the core farm business and not to replace it and the National Park Authority will therefore resist proposals which may result in the piecemeal loss of assets from farms and thereby affect the overall viability of farm or land holdings. In order to ensure the long-term link between the primary farming or other land based business which formed the basis for the diversification, the National Park Authority will use planning obligations to ensure that the development cannot be disposed of separately from the main building group so that ownership and control of the development is retained and income will be returned to appropriate management of the landscape and traditional buildings of historic and vernacular merit. Such agreements may also be used to tie existing buildings, which have previously been granted a change of use under farm diversification, with the main building group.
- 8.36. In the open countryside, reuse of traditional buildings is strongly favoured. Policy CE-S5 therefore encourages the re-use of traditional agricultural buildings where the existing building is well related to existing (farm) buildings in a farmstead. The re-use of existing or construction of new isolated buildings for farm diversification will not be permitted. The re-use of such buildings as camping barns may be permitted where a proposal accords with Policy RT-D6. Proposals for home based businesses should accord with Policy SE-D1.
- 8.37. For land based businesses, Clause 4 of the Policy also gives scope for the re-use of a non-traditional (or modern) building. This will be acceptable only if it can be clearly demonstrated that the agricultural use has ceased. The re-use/change of use of purpose-built or pre-fabricated agricultural buildings to business use, e.g. prefabricated barns, or agricultural buildings that are subject to a planning condition requiring their removal on the cessation of the agricultural use, will not be considered for conversion and it is important therefore that the building is suitable for the proposed use as a change of use will only be acceptable where the building does not require significant reconstruction or alteration in accordance with Policy CE-S6.
- 8.38. Where permission is granted for proposals for the use of non traditional agricultural buildings for non-agricultural purposes, the National Park Authority will attach a condition removing permitted development rights granted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 in respect of the construction of new farm buildings. Where new B1 uses with a floorspace of 150 square metres or less are granted planning consent, permitted development rights may be withdrawn in respect of temporary changes of use to A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 of the use Classes Order³⁸⁵. This is because this measure was introduced nationally to contribute to the viability and vitality of town centres. It could however result in the loss of B1 employment buildings in the National Park which are in short supply and which the Development Plan seeks to safeguard. The national change does not therefore fully reflect the role of employment buildings within the sparse rural area of Exmoor National Park, where their retention is essential to local socio-economic well-being.
- 8.39. The location of new business activity in the open countryside could lead to increased travel movements and consequently emissions. Proposals should therefore accord with Policy AC-S1 to ensure that levels of traffic and emissions are acceptable.

³⁸⁵ Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 1101 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013. Part 4 of Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order grants planning permission in respect of certain temporary buildings and uses.

POLICY SE-S3 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

1. Proposals for business development outside the Local Service Centres and Villages named in Policy GP4 will only be permitted where the scale and appearance of the development are acceptable, they relate to the reuse of existing buildings and accord with SE-S1 and the following criteria:
 - a) the proposal is well related to an existing group of buildings where there is an existing dwelling for:
 - i) the small scale extension of an existing site or building in business use where they are consistent with Policy CE-S7. Proposals for extensions and the intensification of current diversified businesses will be in accordance with SE-S1; or
 - ii) the change of use/conversion of an existing traditional building in accordance with CE-S5.
2. Proposals will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) they will only generate a level of activity that would have an acceptable impact on the landscape, wildlife or historic environment of the National Park, will not conflict with neighbouring land uses or cause pollution or other unacceptable environmental impacts; and
 - b) satisfactory access and traffic requirements can be achieved consistent with National Park purposes;
3. The erection of new business premises or business use in buildings which stand alone or which do not relate well to existing buildings and are not part of a farm group or hamlet will not be permitted.
4. Additionally, proposals for the diversification of existing agricultural, or other primary businesses responsible for land management, through the re-use/change of use of an existing non-traditional building for business development may be permitted where the following will be achieved:
 - a) they comply with the requirements of Clauses 1, and 2. of this Policy, Policy CE-S6 and significant reconstruction or alteration are not required;
 - b) it can be demonstrated that the agricultural use of the existing building(s) to be reused is redundant;
 - c) the proposed business development supports an existing agricultural or other primary business responsible for land management and the diversification proposal does not conflict with the existing farming or land management activity;
 - d) planning obligations will be used to ensure that ownership and control of the development is retained by the primary land based business by not disposing of the development separately from the main building group to ensure that income will be returned to appropriate management of the landscape; and
 - e) proposals to change the use of an existing building from agricultural to a business use (use classes B1, B2, B8 or sui generis), a condition may be attached to the permission to enable the building to be used for the purposes of agriculture or the permitted business use.

HOME BASED BUSINESSES

- 8.40. The National Park Authority wishes to encourage home working including through allowing home based business of an appropriate scale and activity. Not all home-based businesses require planning permission if they are ancillary to domestic use. However, for those that require planning permission, the effect on the properties in question as well as the amenity of neighbours and other potential impacts needs to be taken into account.
- 8.41. This policy provides for the use of a residential property, a small extension to homes, the conversion of existing outbuildings within the domestic curtilage or, where there are no existing buildings, new small scale buildings for home based businesses within the domestic curtilage where their scale and activity is such that they will not adversely affect the National Park or the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Occasionally, the use of existing buildings close to the dwelling house but not strictly within the curtilage may be acceptable

where their siting is closer to the main dwelling house than any existing buildings within it and their reuse would result in a more acceptable scheme in terms of the impact on the area. Proposals for residential extensions to accommodate a home based business will need to accord with Policy HC-D13 on residential extensions. An important consideration will be to ensure that the home based business does not change the residential character of the property.

- 8.42. Impacts on the amenity of the area or on occupiers of neighbouring properties include consideration of the scale, size and type of the business: potential additional traffic generation, access, noise or disturbance caused by visitors or business operations. Any proposals for home working should include energy efficiency measures to reduce emissions and should therefore be in accordance with Policy CE-S7: Design and Sustainable Construction Principles.
- 8.43. Where it considers it necessary, the National Park Authority will seek to attach conditions to any granting of planning permission. This will include to control the impact on local amenity, the scale of the business use and its hours of working, for example. Where necessary, the site may be tied to the main dwelling or the occupier and if, the use were to cease, for example on selling, would revert back to purposes incidental to the main building. Permitted development rights may be withdrawn to control storage of materials and equipment and the erection of further buildings and/or structures. In certain cases, permission may be granted for a temporary period to allow the impact of the business to be assessed.

SE-D1 HOME BASED BUSINESSES

1. **The use of part of a residential property, a small scale extension, the use of ancillary buildings where they are well related to existing buildings or, where no suitable buildings exist new outbuildings within the domestic curtilage, for a small scale home based business will be permitted where:**
 - a) **there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape or the amenity of the area or on the occupiers of neighbouring properties; and**
 - b) **where an extension is proposed the development accords with Policy HC-D13: residential extensions.**
2. **Where necessary, conditions will be attached to any granting of planning permission including to:**
 - a) **control the use to avoid or minimise any potential adverse impacts;**
 - b) **remove permitted development rights to protect the character and appearance of the building;**
 - c) **ensure any new development may only be occupied in association with the dwelling and cannot be let or disposed of separately from that dwelling; and**
 - d) **allow, where appropriate, the business use to cease and revert to an ancillary domestic use without the need for further planning permission.**

SAFEGUARDING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND AND BUILDINGS

- 8.44. Given the finite supply of employment land in the National Park, and the limited supply of greenfield land for development, the presumption is that existing employment sites and premises will be safeguarded for economic uses. They make an important contribution towards the local economy, sustainability and self containment of Exmoor's communities.
- 8.45. Where the loss of employment land is proposed due to the site or building being considered unviable, the owner/applicant will be required to provide detailed evidence to justify their proposals and to demonstrate that they have made reasonable attempts at marketing the sites or buildings for an employment use for a minimum of twelve months. In some circumstances, a longer period may be required, for example, when the property market is less buoyant. As evidence of marketing, the National Park Authority will require:

- a) advertisement on site, in local newspapers, estate/property agents and, where appropriate, the District Council's sites and premises registers or otherwise as requested by the National Park Authority;
 - b) the owner/applicant to advertise the premises for a minimum period of twelve months (as above) and to re-advertise at three month intervals if they fail to provide a willing buyer/occupier in the first three months of marketing;
 - c) the owner or applicant to supply the National Park Authority with the advertisement details including sales particulars with a guide price to reflect the market value of the site/building(s); and
 - d) the owner/applicant to have provided the National Park Authority with written evidence of all enquiries received and the reasons why potential buyers/occupiers found the site/buildings to be unsuitable.
- 8.46. If the Authority is satisfied that the site and/or buildings are no longer viable in employment use, the owner/applicant will be required to maintain an enhanced level of employment generating uses on the remaining part of the site/in the building (i.e. at the same level as on the whole site but on/in a smaller area) or alternative provision will need to be provided on another suitable site(s) / building(s) under the control of the Applicant. If it can be demonstrated that these are not possible, within or adjoining the named settlements in GP4, redevelopment of the site for community uses, or if this is not appropriate, the provision of affordable housing to meet a local need in a named settlement will be favoured.

SE-D2 SAFEGUARDING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND AND BUILDINGS

1. Development proposals that would involve the loss of employment land and/or buildings will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the site and/or buildings cannot be continued or made viable in the longer term. Applicants will be required to provide detailed evidence to justify their proposals and demonstrate that:
 - a) all available opportunities of grant funding and financial support to help retain the employment use(s) have been fully explored and none are viable; and
 - b) reasonable marketing of the site and/or building(s) for employment uses for a minimum period of 12 consecutive months has occurred.
2. If the Authority is satisfied that the site and/or buildings are no longer viable in employment use, the following will be required:
 - a) in the first instance, employment-generating uses will be maintained on the remaining part of the site/in the building, or
 - b) alternative provision will be provided on another suitable site(s)/building(s) under the control of the Applicant and in the locality or where it can be demonstrated that this is not possible, elsewhere in the National Park.
 - c) If it can be demonstrated that (a) or (b) are not possible, the reuse/redevelopment of the site for community uses, or if this is not appropriate, the provision of affordable housing to meet a local need in a named settlement in accordance with policies GP4 and HC-S1, will be favoured.
3. In respect of 2b) above, planning conditions or obligations will be used to ensure that the alternative provision is secured at an appropriate time in relation to the redevelopment of the site/building.

AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT

Agriculture

- 8.47. Traditional farming and woodland management has helped create Exmoor's distinctive landscape. Sustainable agriculture and forestry are essential for maintaining the characteristic landscapes of the National Park, can play an important role in helping to manage and enhance Exmoor's wildlife and the environment and are major contributors to the local economy.
- 8.48. Farming, both on Exmoor and nationally, has faced a number of challenges which have particularly affected smaller farms in upland areas. The consequence on Exmoor has been a decline in traditional forms of farming with a decline in medium sized farms and an increase in the number of smaller (residential) holdings. As a result, a number of large farms managed by a relatively small number of operators are responsible for the management of a very large proportion of Exmoor's agricultural land. Evidence indicates there is a relatively lower dependency upon agriculture as a source of income³⁸⁶. Employment levels have fallen, a trend that is expected to continue, and the average age of farmers on Exmoor is now more than 55³⁸⁷. These changes have implications for Exmoor's local economy.

Woodland and Forestry

- 8.49. Although employment figures for the Woodland and Forestry sector are included within the broader category of agriculture, locally it is an important sector in its own right contributing to environmental management and the conservation of the landscape and habitat diversity. Exmoor has a number of forestry plantations which are among the highest yielding and extensive in the South West and softwood production will continue to be an important part of the economy on Exmoor. The woodland and forestry sector also makes a contribution to outdoor leisure and recreation activities. Timber from Exmoor's forestry is used for a range of purposes including wood fuel and manufacturing. As with farming, the opportunity exists to achieve a greater return from woodland from the development of processing activities. It will be important to ensure that the scale and type of any processing is appropriate to the local and National Park context.
- 8.50. Changes in the farming and forestry sectors are likely as demand for food, timber, and other products grows. The Government has made a commitment to identify means of increasing food production in ways that also improve the environment³⁸⁸. Other changes include—a trend for farm houses to be sold off, holdings split up, and an increase in the number of part-time and 'hobby farms'.
- 8.51. The Partnership Plan recognises that truly sustainable farming and land management can continue to provide high quality food, timber and other products while maintaining a healthy environment that also provides a wide range of other benefits – the 'ecosystem services'. These include clean water, managed flood risk, and provide opportunities for recreation, enjoyment and inspiration. Careful management will be needed as a result of increasing demands for timber, particularly as fuel for e.g. wood heating, to ensure that economic and employment opportunities are balanced with landscape, nature conservation and cultural heritage interests.
- 8.52. Many agricultural or other land management activities are not controlled by the planning system. However, planning policy has a role to play, for example, in how the farming community can contribute to other areas of the economy through diversification whilst conserving and enhancing the National Park for future generations to enjoy. Policy SE-S3 earlier in this section of this plan seeks to encourage farm diversification which is appropriate in the context of a National Park.
- 8.53. In line with Government policy, the Authority recognises the importance of enabling farm businesses to become more competitive, comply with changing legislation and associated

³⁸⁶ The State of Farming on Exmoor, University of Exeter, 2004

³⁸⁷ The State of Farming on Exmoor, University of Exeter,

2004

³⁸⁸ the Natural Environment White Paper.

guidance, diversify into new agricultural opportunities and to adapt to changing markets. The best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3A of the Agricultural Land Classification) (Vale) will be safeguarded. Within the National Park there is a small amount of grade 3a land in Porlock Vale.

- 8.54. The use of land for the purposes of agriculture or forestry (including afforestation), and the use of existing buildings on the land for agricultural or forestry purposes do not constitute "development" and so do not require planning permission. The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations and the making of any material change in the use of buildings or land do however constitute "development". Certain agricultural and forestry developments have "permitted development rights" which means that a specific planning permission is not needed if a development falls within one of the categories set out in the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 1995 and meets all the conditions laid down in it. Developments that are not covered by these permitted development rights require planning permission in the usual way.
- 8.55. Under the GDPO, applications for a range of buildings/structures can be made through a system of notification, whereby the Authority is required to approve the details of a scheme relating to its siting, design and external appearance. In considering such applications the Authority must be satisfied that the proposal is designed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry in terms of its scale and location and will not have an adverse impact on the character of the wider landscape. Changes in requirements relating to, for example, protection of water quality from run-off through provision of covered storage for slurry may lead to proposals for buildings or structures. The investigation of functional need including, where necessary, independent expert advice or other aspects of the agricultural holding may be undertaken, for example, where a proposed building is of a substantial size, clarification may be sought over the intended use to ensure that the size is justified.
- 8.56. Applicants will need to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist for proposals for new buildings in isolated locations in the open countryside. These circumstances may be as a result of changes in requirements to comply with changing legislation or, for example, the siting of slurry stores, which through planning regulations must be sited away from certain farm buildings. Proposals for new buildings on recently subdivided holdings will be the subject of particular scrutiny to ensure that a need for the building can be justified. Proposals may require a landscaping scheme, which reduces the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape.
- 8.57. The National Park Authority encourages applicants to approach the Authority at an early stage for advice on siting and design of buildings, whether a proposal requires planning permission and the need for, and scope of, an Environmental Impact Assessment. In assessing proposals for agricultural and forestry development and operations, the main considerations must be impact on the landscape, wildlife, visual quality and historic character of the surrounding area, as well as possible environmental impacts and effects on neighbouring land uses, including residential.
- 8.58. Potential impacts upon the natural environment will need to be addressed. Amongst other environmental considerations, proposals that could have an adverse effect on sites for nature conservation, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest or the integrity of European sites would not be in accordance with the Development Plan and proposals should accord with Policy CE-S2 Biodiversity.
- 8.59. There are many important historic farmsteads in the National Park, and any proposals for agricultural or forestry development should not impact on the character and setting of these heritage assets. Similarly, care needs to be taken to ensure that impacts on the wider historic landscape and heritage assets such as archaeology are avoided. In assessing the impact on the historic environment, proposals should accord with Policy CE-S4: Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment.
- 8.60. In assessing proposals for agricultural and forestry development every effort should be made to minimise any impacts through the use of appropriate siting, design, layout, materials and surfacing. In the case of agricultural or forestry buildings or structures, dark grey fibre cement and timber cladding will be encouraged. A landscaping scheme which reduces the visual impact of the proposal on the wider landscape to an acceptable level may be required as part of the proposal. Measures should be taken to ensure that proposals for slurry stores avoid

causing pollution by the fitting of covers. The National Park Authority will expect that tracks should be as visually unobtrusive as possible by: following natural contours; not altering the natural topography; ensuring that the width is minimised; that water runoff is managed; that arrangements are in place to prevent soil or silty water running off including into watercourses; and avoiding the need to import materials from elsewhere. Surfacing should be with stone chippings or gravel and, in the case of a twin wheeled track, have grass in the middle to minimise its impact on the landscape.

- 8.61. Climate change and the increased risk of flooding are likely to result in changes to agriculture and forestry, such as an increase in biomass crops for renewable energy for example. Proposals for agricultural and forestry development will need to accord with Policies CC-S1: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Policy CC-D1: Flood Risk.
- 8.62. Agricultural and forestry development can often involve large machinery, which may adversely impact on existing transport infrastructure particularly historic bridges or fords. Proposals will therefore also need to take account of any increase in traffic and potential impacts on transport infrastructure and accord with Policy AC-S1: Sustainable Transport.
- 8.63. The Authority will consider attaching a condition to appropriate planning permissions requiring the removal of a building if it is no longer needed for agricultural purposes. Where new agricultural buildings with a floorspace of 500m² or less are granted planning consent, permitted development rights may be withdrawn in respect of changes of use³⁸⁹ of agricultural buildings and any land within its curtilage to uses A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1 and D2. This is consistent with the designation of the area as a National Park where development plan policies do not provide for new buildings in the open countryside unless they are justified by reasons of agricultural or forestry need.

³⁸⁹ Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 1101 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013. Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order grants planning permission in respect of certain temporary buildings and uses.

SE-S4 AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT

1. Permission will be granted for new or replacement buildings, tracks and structures or extensions required for agriculture or forestry purposes (including those submitted under the notification procedure) where:
 - a) it can be demonstrated there is a functional need for the extension, building, structure or track and its size and scale is commensurate with the demonstrated need;
 - b) the building, track or structure is designed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
 - c) in the case of new buildings, the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural necessity for a more isolated location;
 - d) they do not generate a level of activity or otherwise detrimentally affect:
 - i. the amenity of surrounding properties and occupiers including, through loss of daylight, overbearing appearance, or conflict with neighbouring land uses;
 - ii. the enjoyment of the National Park by the public;
 - e) appropriate measures are taken to ensure they do not, including through the level of activity, have an adverse impact on the locality, exacerbate flood risk or surface water run-off, (Policy CC-D1) cause pollution (Policy CC-S5) or other unacceptable environmental impacts;
 - f) they are of an appropriate siting, size, scale, massing, layout, external appearance, materials, and design that have an acceptable impact on the landscape character, wildlife and cultural heritage;
 - g) a landscaping scheme which reduces the visual impact of the proposal on the wider landscape to an acceptable level and which reinforces landscape character may be required as part of the proposal. Existing elements such as trees, hedges and stone walls should be retained;
 - h) the development incorporates measures which maintain, promote or restore biodiversity in accordance with Policy CE-S2: Biodiversity;
 - i) it can be demonstrated that opportunities have been taken for:
 - i. the integration of passive design and sustainable construction methods to improve energy efficiency, and
 - ii. the integration of appropriate renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with CC-S3;
 - j) the development has been future proofed against climate change impacts, including flood risk by incorporating measures such as sustainable drainage systems; and
 - k) waste and resource use are minimised through the reuse of materials and buildings, water efficiency and management of site waste.
2. The National Park Authority will consider attaching a condition to require the removal of agricultural or forestry buildings when they are no longer required and the reinstatement of the land and/or will consider tying the agricultural building(s) to the associated land holding to ensure there is a viable land holding related to the building(s) in the future.