

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

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**Topic Paper No. 5**

**Landscape, Wildlife and Land Management**



## **Exmoor National Park Authority**

Exmoor House  
Dulverton  
Somerset  
TA22 9HL

Tel: (01398) 323665

Fax: (01398) 323150 310

Email: [LDF@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

Website: [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

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

This report is also accessible from our website located under:

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

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

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## **Issues**

1. Ensuring that the special qualities that make Exmoor a wild, tranquil, remote and emotionally uplifting are retained and enhanced while providing appropriately for the needs of local communities and visitors.
2. Planning for the restoration of wilder landscapes such as linking moorland and woodland areas and maintaining and enhancing moorland fringe and transitional areas.
3. Ensuring that Exmoor remains relatively free of types of elements which detract from landscape character such as major roads, derelict land and neglected buildings, electricity pylons/overhead wires, active quarries, caravan or large camp sites, holiday camps and theme parks. Identifying key views within and out of the National Park. The removal of intrusive man made structures.
4. Ensuring that farming, in particular livestock farming, and associated land management practices which have traditionally created and maintained Exmoor's landscape can continue.
5. Ensuring that changes in farming which are transforming Exmoor's landscape such as the subdivision of farms, the increase in commercial shooting and associated development, equestrian development, and farm diversification are managed to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of Exmoor National Park.
6. The incidental environmental impacts of road safety, traffic management and highway maintenance by Highway Authorities such as signage and can have a harmful effect on the character of the locality and cumulatively on the National Park as a whole.
7. Conserving and enhancing Exmoor's habitats and species. Extending/restoring/recreating semi-natural habitats including woodland, heathland, moorland and blanket bog and other habitats such as farmland.
8. Ensuring that development makes provision for protected and important species.
9. Planning for climate change – a continued northwards migration of species is predicted. The isolation of semi natural habitats is likely to lead to a loss of species at the southern limit of their range while species at or near the northernmost limit of their range are likely to increase. A key issue will be linking habitats to enable migration including for 'Atlantic' species which favour mild, wet conditions.

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

### Outcome for Exmoor's Landscape

By 2020 Exmoor's distinct and diverse landscape is in good condition and there is an increased awareness of its importance.

Objective A1: To conserve and enhance the distinctive characteristics, qualities and condition of Exmoor's landscapes.

Objective A2: To ensure that Exmoor's moorlands are open, remote and relatively wild in character and that strategically important areas of former moor and heath are managed in a way that restores their wilder landscape character.

Objective A3: To ensure that Exmoor remains a landscape relatively free from intrusive developments and activities, and take opportunities to redesign or enhance landscapes that have been affected by intrusive development or are in declining condition.

### Outcome for Exmoor's wildlife

By 2020 there is an increased extent of wildlife habitats in good condition and thriving populations of native plants and animals that are most valued nationally and locally.

Objective B1: To improve the diversity, extent and condition of Exmoor's most important and valued habitats and adopt a long-term, landscape scale approach to habitat conservation.

Objective B2: To maintain or increase the populations of native wildlife species on Exmoor that are most valued for their conservation status and local distinctiveness.

### **Key statistics**

- 19,300 ha (28%) is specially designated by UK and European law to protect its distinctive wildlife of which 12,600 is SAC.
- 88% of Exmoor's moor and heath is designated as SSSI (18 SSSIs in all), with 3 NNRs.
- Exmoor has 8,400 Ha of woodland cover 12% of the area of the national Park.
- 1,600 ancient trees recorded on Exmoor.
- Climate change models a 3 degree centigrade increase in air temperatures within a century and some predictions are for more rapid change.
- 40% of farm holdings in the National Park are less than 5 hectares.
- more than 70 commercial game shoots in the greater Exmoor area and approx 37% of the land area of the National Park is undertaken wholly or partly by shooting providers.
- 42 applications for manèges (horse riding arenas) in 25 years between 1970 and 1995; 68 applications in ten years between 1995 and 2005.
- over 30 telecommunication masts on Exmoor.
- Exmoor has an estimated 2,700 km of hedgerows including a large proportion that is predominantly beech
- Forestry Commission designation of Exmoor and the Exe Valley as one of only four Ancient Woodland Priority Areas in the South West.

## Appendix

### Policy and Strategy

#### National

PPS1: To deliver sustainable development. Spatial strategies conserve or enhance biodiversity. Recognition that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change and should be taken into account when selecting land for development.

PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas: The Government's aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife and its natural resources. National Parks have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside, wildlife and cultural heritage should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions. As well as reflecting these policies, Local Development Documents should support suitably located and designed development to facilitate the economic and social wellbeing of designated areas and their communities.

New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements should be strictly controlled and should respect and enhance local character. Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed (brownfield) in preference to greenfield sites.

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Plan policies and planning decisions should maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. Plans should take a strategic approach to biodiversity and geology indicating the location of designated sites and identifying areas for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats. Networks of natural habitats should be maintained by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats through plan policies. LDFs should promote opportunities for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological features within the design of development.

Other strategies

- CPRE tranquility map of England 2006

#### Regional

##### SW Regional Spatial Strategy

The quality, character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural and historic environment in the South West will be protected and enhanced, and

developments which support their positive management will be encouraged. Priority will be given to preserving and enhancing sites of international or national landscape, nature conservation, geological, archaeological or historic importance.

In Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of development proposals.

Local Authorities should use the Nature Map to help map local opportunities for biodiversity enhancement from harmful development. Proposals which provide opportunities for the protection and beneficial management of these sites and features should be supported, including linking habitats to create more functional units which are more resilient to climate change.

Coastal Local Authorities will define in their LDDs the coastal zone. Within the undeveloped coast there will be a presumption against development unless it does not detract from the unspoilt character and appearance of the coast.

Local Authorities and other bodies will ensure the environmental, social and economic value and character of the region's trees, woods and forests are protected and enhanced. Woodland areas, including ancient and semi-natural woodland and expanded. Where woodland is unavoidably lost through development it should be replaced with appropriate new woodland on at least the same scale.

POLICY SD3, POLICY G11 POLICY ENV1 POLICY ENV2 POLICY ENV3:  
POLICY ENV4, POLICY CO1, POLICY RE8

## **Local**

### Local Plan

There are a number of Local Plan policies which relate to wildlife and landscape. The following are key policies relevant to this topic:

- Development proposals in the National Park should be compatible with the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and public understanding of those qualities.
- A number of policies seek to control development which would adversely affect key landscape and wildlife assets of the National Park. These include Policies LNC3-20

POLICY LNC1, POLICY LNC2:

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

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