

Quick Guide: Rural Worker and Succession Farm Dwelling Guidance

Supplementary Planning Document



The **Rural Worker and Succession Farm Dwelling Guidance Supplementary Planning Document** is available to assist those working in farming and forestry in the Exmoor National Park, wanting to make a planning application to build, or convert a building to provide a rural worker or succession farm worker house. Adopted Local Plan policies require such development to meet certain functional and financial tests; size requirements and design criteria; and the guidance explains in more detail the sort of evidence that would be required.

The Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 contains policies for development in the National Park. Four Local Plan Policies are relevant to Rural Worker and Succession Farm houses:

HC-D7 Conversions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside; HC-D8 New Build Dwellings in the Open Countryside; HC-D9 Rural Workers; and HC-D10 Succession Farming - Second Dwellings on Established Farms. Local Plan policy provides that in the open countryside isolated homes should be avoided, unless a functional need and financial justification can be demonstrated to show a requirement for a home for a rural worker or a succession farm worker. If there are no existing houses available within the vicinity then such homes can be provided through an extension or subdivision of an existing home; conversion of an existing traditional building; or if none of these are applicable; a new home. The farm business will need to prove that it is financially viable in the long term, extensive in nature and contributes to the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty and wildlife of the National Park.

A RURAL WORKER

A rural worker works in agriculture, forestry or other land based rural business operating in the local area, and undertakes physical work managing the land. A functional need for a home can be demonstrated where 1+ full-time worker is required to be readily available to attend to the needs of the business day and night.

A SUCCESSION FARM WORKER

A succession farm worker is a person younger than the person currently responsible for management of the farm business who has or is intended to have majority control over the business and be the decision maker. The farm business has secure and legally binding arrangements in place to this effect and, to demonstrate that the farm business is jointly held. A functional need for a home can be demonstrated where 1.5+ full-time workers are required to be readily available to attend to the needs of the business day and night.

Financial Justification: A business appraisal will be required to demonstrate that the business is financially sound and can support a rural worker or succession farm worker. The business appraisal will need to include:

- A description of the current/proposed farm business including its extent, operations, infrastructure, labour force, and any proposed changes.
- How any proposed changes are to be funded and sustained.
- How the business is proposed to develop.
- Submission of accounts for 3 years showing a profit of at least 1 in 3.
- Where applicable, details on how the business is proposed to operate under a succession farming partnership to show that the business can continue to be sustained for at least 5 years from post completion of the proposed home, under the succession partnership.

Size Requirements: Local plan policies require that homes for rural workers or succession farm workers should have a maximum gross internal area of 93 m². In exceptional circumstances a larger house may be permitted. The guidance sets out one or two reasons when this may be justified:

- a) there may be a business need for a boot room, shower room, office and/or utility room; and/or
- b) exceptionally, additional residential space may be required beyond 93 m² such as an additional bedroom.

The guidance provides that for additional business space, a range of between 10-20 m² (gross internal area) may be considered reasonable. It will need to be demonstrated that the business space cannot be accommodated in any existing buildings, or (for example an office) shared with other house(s) on the farm. Additional habitable space will only be justified for a main/only home on a farmstead. In such instances a range of between 106-115 m² (gross internal area) may be considered. If both additional business and habitable space is required and this can be justified; then this could result in a house of up to a maximum of 135 m² (gross internal area). Only the income of the farm business will be considered. Personal circumstances are unlikely to be relevant.

Design: The guidance provides requirements for the location siting and design of a new home for a rural worker or succession farm worker. The proposed new home should:

- a) functionally relate to the farmstead;
- b) reflect the character of any existing houses or traditional buildings; and
- c) sit well within the surrounding landscape.

Where additional business space can be justified, it is recommended that a single storey addition be proposed as a side extension; a rear lean to extension; or a wraparound extension to the rear; all with a roof pitch and materials to match any existing house.

The guidance has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The guidance does not and cannot alter the Local Plan policies referred to in this Guide.