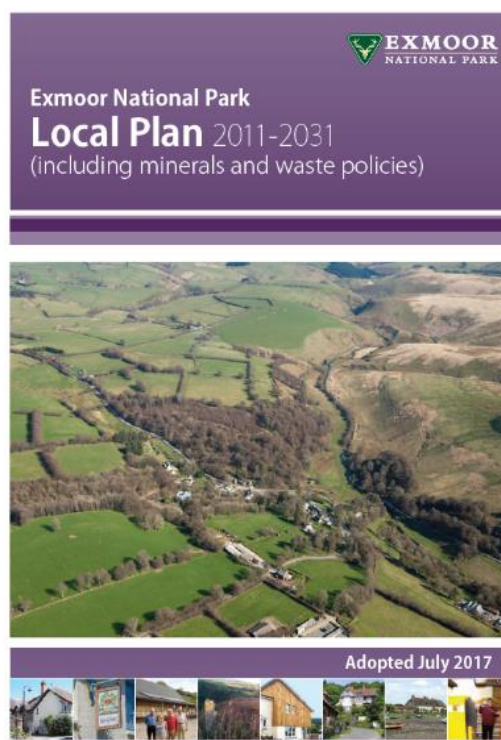


**Exmoor Panel - 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018**  
**Exmoor National Park Local Plan - Housing**

The Exmoor National Park Local Plan is now adopted. It guides development and the use of land on Exmoor until 2031 and indicates what will be permitted through planning applications. The housing policies are in Section 6 of the Local Plan (Achieving a Thriving Community).

Many local households experience challenges finding suitable housing for themselves and their families. The previous 2005 Plan led to nearly 100 affordable homes for local people being built in many communities across Exmoor. As a result, over 200 local people have been assisted - some living in homes they have built themselves, some by private developers or landlords and others by Housing Associations. More still needs to be done, and the new Local Plan has been shaped by extensive community engagement and aims to meet local housing needs. This is achieved by prioritising affordable housing for local people (including through self-build) and widening opportunities for local people to address their housing needs including for those needing accessible or adaptable homes.



**HOUSING STRATEGY:**

The over-arching policy for housing in the Local Plan sets out the key aim for housing: to address the housing needs of the National Park's local communities. New housing development will be permitted only where it meets an identified local housing need for:

- a) Affordable homes for local people who live and work in the area - the principal housing need on Exmoor.
- b) Homes for rural workers or succession farming.
- c) An Extended Family dwelling (local persons in perpetuity).

**Affordable Housing on Exmoor**

There is no provision for open market housing in the National Park and there is no target for it. Instead, sites within and adjoining settlements can only come forward where there is an identified need for local affordable homes (a 'needs led approach'). Where there is no proven need, permission will not be granted. Affordable housing, including for self builds, is possible because land and building values remain reasonable. A local housing need is generally indicated through parish housing need surveys, or a need can be established through individuals completing a survey form.

Local Plan policies allow for a **range of affordable** tenures depending on local needs. In this way, the homes that get planning permission should be tailored to the needs of the local community. Whether someone is in affordable need is largely determined by whether they can afford to meet their housing needs through the open market so it covers a range of circumstances and household incomes.

### Social Rented Housing

Social rented housing generally has the lowest rents – often around 60% of open market rents. They can only be let by a registered provider (housing association).



Allers View, Dulverton, 12 2 & 3 bed units



Westcott Mead, Exford. 9, 2 x hemcrete bungalows, 3 terraced houses & 4 x 2-bed flats

### Intermediate Housing

This includes some rented housing - intermediate rents are higher than social rents but below market rent levels. It also includes owner occupied affordable housing. There is a new policy encouraging **Custom/Self Build Housing** (a builder contracted to create a 'custom built' home or self-build where private individuals build their own home) and where this meets a local affordable housing need:

- within the named settlements and rural communities as a new build or conversion,
- in the open countryside as conversions of existing buildings.

Another option is **shared ownership** where the occupier pays a mix of rent / mortgage.



Porlock, Chadwyck Close, 15 dwellings (13 affordable rent, 2 shared ownership).



Exton, Self-build local affordable home under construction (2016)

The focus is on housing needed by our local communities / affordable housing. **This enables those in local housing need an opportunity to live on Exmoor.** Effectively, new housing is ring fenced as now and in the future, local need housing, whether rented or owner occupied, is required to be lived in by someone with a local housing need. If they were not they would be out of the reach of households who need to live locally and who have few other options. Rural worker housing has an occupancy tie. Nearly every other home on the moor is unrestricted so this approach does not prevent local people who can afford to buy existing open market homes from doing so or for people from elsewhere moving in to the area to live or work. The only exception is for market (Principal Residence) housing where it will help to deliver local affordable homes.

**LOCAL OCCUPANCY CRITERIA:** The new plan has introduced more flexible local occupancy criteria that new occupants must meet in order to live in new affordable housing. These are also included in a planning obligation or legal agreement on local affordable dwellings which are needed to ensure they are affordable to local people now and in the future. These occupancy criteria require that people meet three ‘tests’:

1. they are in housing need,
2. they cannot afford to access the housing they need on the open market locally and
3. they meet one or more of the definitions of having a local connection to where the home is located:
  - i. This is generally a 10-year local connection to the parish or adjoining parishes;
  - ii. For those who have moved away, it is a continuous 10-year period during the last 30 years; or
  - iii. It can include a person with a 10-year connection to the National Park as a whole who can demonstrate a strong connection to the parish; or
  - iv. An additional criterion is for those who need care and assistance because of age or medical reasons, where those who need care or those providing the care can demonstrate that they have a 10-year local connection; or
  - v. It can include those who need to live in the parish or adjoining parish to carry out paid work, which is of value to the National Park and its communities.

When there are no local people meeting the definition, a cascade approach would allow:

- i. People with 5 or more years residence in the parish/adjoining parish;
- ii. People meeting the criteria but living in the district council area of the Park; or
- iii. People meeting the criteria living in the National Park as a whole.
- iv. For privately owned housing, the occupancy cascade is up to the edge of the National Park.
- v. Housing owned / controlled by a registered provider (including housing associations) could go as far as the council area outside the National Park for people with strong local ties.

**PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE HOUSING:** A Principal Residence condition ensures that any market dwelling is a person’s sole or principal residence and not occupied as a holiday home or second home. This policy sets out the circumstances where Principal Residence market housing could be permitted– where it is proven that the increased value arising from the sale of Principal Residence market dwellings is needed to help fund the delivery of the local affordable homes in settlements that otherwise could not happen.

**Where is New Housing Allowed?**

Policies in the plan determine where new housing will be permitted. Nationally there is a longstanding approach that the open countryside (i.e. outside settlements) will be protected for its own sake and new housing should be built in settlements.

**HOUSING IN SETTLEMENTS**

<b>Named Settlements</b>		
<b>LOCAL SERVICE CENTRES</b>	Dulverton Lynton & Lynmouth	Porlock
<b>VILLAGES</b>	Barbrook Brendon Bridgetown and Exton Brompton Regis Challacombe Cutcombe and Wheddon Cross Dunster Exford Luxborough	Monksilver Parracombe Roadwater Simonsbath Timberscombe Winsford Withypool Wootton Courtenay
<b>PORLOCK WEIR</b>		

In the named settlements, policies allow for either the conversion of existing buildings or new build housing to meet local needs. There is a requirement that all new build housing is affordable housing to meet an identified local need – if there is no need then permission will not be granted.

However, for conversions or new build proposals of more than one home, some Principal Residence market housing may be considered within the scheme where it is essential to help deliver the affordable homes and it is the minimum number needed. These calculations will be set out in a viability assessment through an ‘open book’ process, Although cross subsidy can help deliver affordable housing, it uses sites up much quicker and so may resemble the Cutcombe Market scheme which was 50/50. Single new build dwellings or the conversion of a building to one dwelling must be affordable homes. There can be no cross subsidy in these situations.



CUTCOMBE Permission granted for 25 dwellings (13 open market 12 affordable) on the former Livestock Market site

### **HOUSING IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE**

**Conversions to Housing in the Open Countryside:** The change of use and conversion of buildings in the open countryside to housing may be permitted in the following circumstances:

- For local affordable housing through the conversion of an existing building on a farmstead, or in a hamlet.
- Provision of Extended Family dwellings through the conversion of an existing building on a farmstead.
- For rural worker or succession farm dwellings where the building closely relates to existing buildings on the farm holding.

**EXTENDED FAMILY DWELLINGS:** These are homes for close family through the conversion of existing buildings either on farmsteads (within a group of buildings where there is already a dwelling) or within the curtilage of existing dwellings in the named settlements. Either the occupants of the existing dwelling or those of the new Extended Family dwelling should have a 10-year local connection. This may help different generations of the same family to provide care and support for each other.

**REPLACEMENT OF HOLIDAY OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS AND EXTENDED FAMILY OCCUPANCY TIES:** is flexibility in the Plan to change the occupancy of some types of holiday lets and Extended Family dwellings. Properties that have a holiday let condition can change their occupancy to Extended Family dwellings or local needs affordable housing. There are also opportunities for Extended Family dwellings to change occupancy to local needs affordable housing or holiday lets. It will also be possible to revert to the original occupancy of the property.



Extended Family dwelling changed from a holiday let

### **New Build Dwellings in the Open Countryside**

#### **Rural Worker Dwellings and Succession Farm Dwellings**

National policy is clear that new homes in the open countryside are exceptional. New build homes must meet a proven essential need for rural workers in land-based businesses such as agriculture and forestry or for a second dwelling on established farms to make it easier for the farm to pass from one generation to the next. It should also be shown that the need for the dwelling cannot be met in any other way (e.g. through conversion of an existing building or purchasing a dwelling nearby).

The size of new dwellings in the open countryside should be 93sqm unless a larger dwelling is justified by the needs of the holding/farm and can be sustained by the business. Rural worker homes require a demonstration of the functional need for a full time worker on the holding and that the business can financially support the construction of a new dwelling.

Succession farm dwellings enables a second dwelling on a farm where there is a functional need for half of a full-time worker. This is a new policy approach that requires legally binding evidence to ensure succession to the next generation - for example, through a partnership agreement.

#### **Housing for an Ageing Population**

The Plan reflects the fact that Exmoor's population is ageing - the area has the highest average age in the country. All homes will be encouraged to meet a building regulations standard known as M4(2) for accessible and adaptable homes that meet the needs of households over their lifetime. In new build developments of 5 or more homes, a minimum of 20% will be required to meet this standard. There may sometimes be evidence identifying a need for accessible or adaptable housing for wheelchair users.

There are also opportunities for accessible and adaptable housing for older and more vulnerable people with a local connection to Exmoor. Such housing can only come

forward in the named settlements where it contributes to the delivery of affordable housing.

Additionally policies allow for the subdivision of existing larger houses to smaller homes – this could benefit those who wish to downsize but not move house or to provide opportunities for two or more households to be created from one enabling a family member or carer to live next door to provide support.

<b>SUMMARY OF HOUSING POLICIES BASED ON LOCATION AND TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>NEW BUILD</b>	<b>CONVERSION</b>
<b>Local Service Centres and Villages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New local affordable housing to meet the needs of Exmoor’s communities.</li> <li>• Principal Residence market housing only where it is required to enable the delivery of two or more affordable homes.</li> <li>• Accessible and adaptable homes for local older and more vulnerable people - permitted as part of any market housing required to deliver affordable housing.</li> <li>• Redevelopment of vacant buildings for Principal Residence housing only if it is unviable to deliver affordable housing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversions of buildings in the settlement permitted for local need affordable housing.</li> <li>• All housing should be local affordable homes, unless it is proven that Principal Residence housing is needed to create a viable scheme. Conversions to single dwellings must be local affordable homes.</li> <li>• Conversion of vacant buildings to Principal Residence housing only if there is no affordable housing provision due to reasons of viability.</li> <li>• Extended Family dwellings within the curtilage of an existing dwelling.</li> </ul>
<b>Porlock Weir</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% local affordable housing only to meet a need within the parish. No Principal Residence housing permitted to enable delivery.</li> <li>• Replacement of those dwellings lost to coastal change within the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) through relocation elsewhere in the settlement or in nearby settlements.</li> </ul>	<p>In the area outside the CCMA, the conversion of buildings in the settlement for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing to meet local needs.</li> <li>• Extended Family dwellings where the building is within the curtilage of an existing dwelling.</li> </ul>
<b>Open Countryside:</b> Farmsteads and small rural communities, including hamlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New build (or temporary residential structures) only permitted where there is a demonstrated essential need for a rural land-based worker or a need for a Succession Farm dwelling.</li> <li>• Custom/self build local affordable homes in rural communities with a shop, pub or community meeting place/hall.</li> </ul>	<p>Conversions of buildings within a group of buildings on a farmstead (with an existing dwelling) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rural worker dwelling,</li> <li>• Succession Farm dwelling,</li> <li>• Extended Family dwelling, or</li> <li>• a local affordable dwelling.</li> </ul> <p>Conversions of buildings in a hamlet or rural community to a local affordable dwelling.</p>
<b>Anywhere</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement dwellings.</li> <li>• Subdivision of existing dwellings</li> <li>• Conversion of a hotel to residential use – local need affordable housing unless, for viability reasons, Principal Residence market housing is required to enable delivery of affordable homes.</li> </ul>	