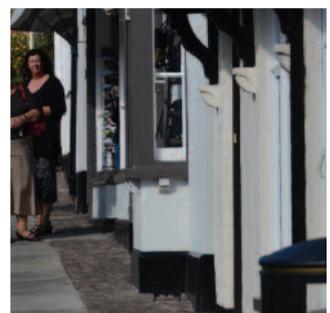
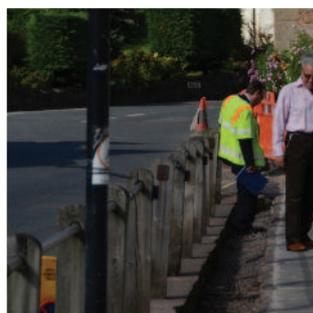
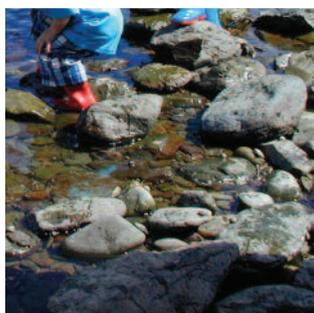
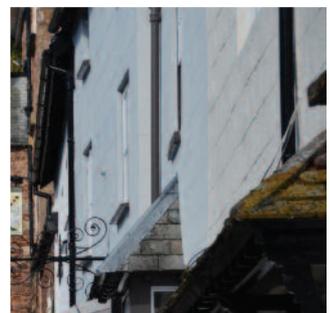
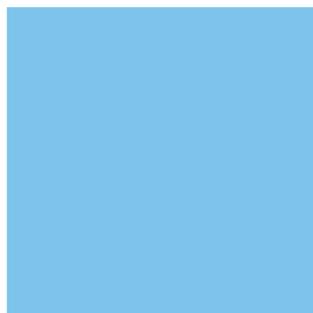
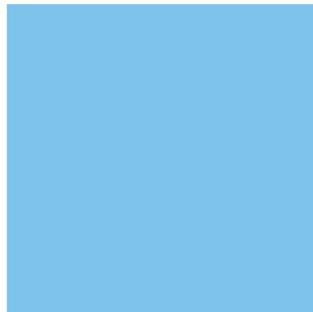


# Vision & Objectives Local Plan General Policies Consultation

November 2011



# VISION AND OBJECTIVES

## & LOCAL PLAN GENERAL POLICIES

### A New Local Plan for Exmoor National Park

The National Park Authority is preparing a new [Local Plan](#) that will guide future development and land use priorities in the National Park.

We are asking for your views on some key parts of the Local Plan including the draft Vision and Objectives and three draft General Policies. These will apply to all development requiring planning permission within the National Park.

### Vision and Objectives

The Vision and Objectives will be the same as the **Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17** which is also being consulted on.

### General Policies

These policies will apply to all development within Exmoor National Park Authority.

#### **General Policy 1: National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development**

This policy aims to ensure that any new development will help to achieve the National Park purposes and deliver sustainable development. A widely-used and accepted definition of sustainable development is: *“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.

#### **General Policy 2: Major Development**

General Policy 2 sets out the approach for major development within Exmoor National Park. The Government’s longstanding view has been that major development should not take place in National Parks except in exceptional circumstances. Exmoor National Park’s landscape is recognised as being relatively free from major structures or development. As a result, development that may be considered minor or small scale elsewhere may potentially have a significant and cumulative impact on the National Park’s natural beauty. As such, major development is not defined just in terms of its size but in terms of its impact on the National Park and its special qualities.

#### **General Policy 4: Securing Planning Benefits**

This policy sets out where planning benefits would be sought in the form of planning contributions or through a Community Infrastructure Levy (a new scheme introduced by Government to raise finance from development to pay for the necessary accompanying infrastructure). This could include roads, open spaces or parks, or other facilities such as health centres and so on. Whilst the scale of development on Exmoor is likely to be small, and therefore levels of funding are not likely to be significant, there is still the opportunity to

develop a Community Infrastructure Levy, which would determine how any money raised from development should be spent.

### **Sustainability testing**

The draft General Policies have been tested against a set of sustainability objectives. Recommended changes from the Sustainability Appraisal are shown in blue on the general policies. An assessment of the impacts on internationally important wildlife sites has also been carried out (as required under the Habitats Regulations). You can view these appraisals online at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/consultation). Please contact the National Park offices for a printed copy if you are not able to view the document online. Changes to the draft General Policies made in the light of the sustainability appraisal are highlighted in italics text.

### **Tell us what you think**

This consultation will run during December 2011 and January 2012. Please complete the separate questionnaire and return to us by **30 January 2012**, or answer the questions online via the website at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/consultation)

## Draft VISION

*'Keeping Exmoor special'* so that:

**Exmoor's distinct and diverse landscape is maintained and enhanced, with an increased awareness of its importance.**

In 2030, Exmoor's outstanding natural beauty with its mosaic of distinct and diverse landscapes and its dramatic coast has been safeguarded and enhanced. Exmoor is still recognised as providing a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity with landscapes predominantly free from and with no increase in intrusive structures and large scale development and renowned for its views of the night sky and lack of light pollution. The NPA and neighbouring authorities have worked together to ensure that the quality of the environment extends beyond the National Park boundary.

**There is an increased extent of wildlife habitats and linkages between them, more habitats are in good condition and populations of valued native plants and animals are thriving.**

Exmoor's habitats are maintained, restored, extended and linked effectively to other ecological networks including moorland, mire, coastal heath and native woodlands and, together with farmed landscapes, have thriving populations of native plants and animals. Consequently, wildlife populations are more resilient and, as a result, the number of species declining or lost from Exmoor as a result of climate change has been minimised.

**There is an enhanced knowledge of the historic environment of Exmoor; increased awareness of the value of its cultural heritage, and the most important historical sites, settlements, buildings and features are conserved and their historical character retained.**

The historic environment, cultural and community heritage of the people of Exmoor has been sustained. Archaeological sites, historic settlements, buildings, farmsteads and features are conserved and where appropriate enhanced and new development has been carefully managed to ensure that the diversity and traditional and historic character of Exmoor's settlements and buildings are conserved and enhanced for future generations. Communities and partners, including the NPA, have worked together to produce and deliver a vision and holistic plan for the enhancement of individual settlements and, together, these have been recognised for their contribution to Exmoor's distinctive cultural heritage and in strengthening its communities. The result has been high quality, sometimes contemporary, sustainable, design. This has successfully blended the new with the old and minimised its contribution to climate change by using natural and, where possible, local materials, being energy efficient, using sustainable construction techniques and appropriate renewable technologies. There are sources and supply chains for local building materials to serve the needs of Exmoor's communities including from small scale stone quarries and well managed woodlands and these both conserve and enhance the environment and support the local economy.

**Exmoor's natural resources are used sustainably and the full benefits of its ecosystems are understood and harnessed. Pollution is minimised, air and water are high quality, and soils are conserved and in good condition.**

Exmoor is valued for the range of ecosystem services its natural environment and agriculture provide, from clean water, and sustainable food to 'carbon sinks' to address climate change through increased woodland cover and mire. Exmoor's air and water are clean and of high quality. As climate change results in hotter, drier summers and wetter, stormier winters, measures are in place to conserve water, reduce runoff and avoid and reduce flooding and soil erosion in a way compatible with National Park purposes.

**We are closer to achieving a carbon-neutral National Park to help mitigate climate change, and have introduced measures to adapt to changes in climate that are already happening.**

The impacts of climate change on Exmoor's natural environment, its communities, businesses and the effect on its resources are better understood through monitoring and research. They are being planned for and actively addressed through mitigation and adaptation measures to help make Exmoor more resilient to changes without compromising the special qualities of the National Park. The coastal communities of Porlock Weir and Lynmouth, affected by sea level rise, are working with the NPA and other partners to plan for and adapt to changes. Sustainable development can be seen in action as everyone is inspired to play their part in working towards a carbon- neutral National Park and more sustainable lifestyles to help tackle climate change. Appropriate renewable energy technologies, are in place and these are located, designed and at a scale to conserve Exmoor National Park's landscape and wildlife with areas, including its skylines and open expanses, remaining free of them. Exmoor's communities have found ways of reducing, reusing and, recycling waste and have access to facilities. Together with sustainable agriculture, low carbon transport and travel, sustainable living is becoming the norm.

**There is increased public awareness and enjoyment of the National Park, a warm welcome and high quality experience for everyone seeking inspiration, tranquillity and active outdoor recreation, leading to greater understanding of Exmoor and its way of life and a wider appreciation of the contribution that National Parks make to quality of life.**

There is a warm welcome and high quality Exmoor experience for everyone who visits the National Park to discover its natural and historic environment, seek inspiration, enjoyment, tranquillity, wildness and to take part in active outdoor recreation and activities. These are linked to a viable and sustainable local economy (including the local area beyond the National Park) with a range of accommodation including that which enables young people and families to stay based on small scale, accessible educational, tourism and recreation facilities which benefit from and are in sympathy with Exmoor's environment and ways of life and which respond to the needs of visitors and local communities. As car travel has become more expensive, people are choosing to extend their visits, use alternative forms of transport and rely less on the private car.

**Exmoor's communities retain a continuity of connection with the land; and communities are taking the lead in shaping future development to meet their needs and aspirations including access to services, housing, communications and infrastructure.**

All communities on Exmoor are viable, healthy, prosperous and able to retain young and working age people. They take an active part in decisions and development in the National Park and are at the heart of decisions about their future. They work in partnership with the NPA and others to plan and achieve their aspirations while conserving Exmoor's environment. Everyone, including those without a private car, can access essential services and facilities including outside the National Park in Devon and Somerset. This has been achieved through the retention of and, where opportunities have allowed, the improvement and increased flexibility of community services, facilities, recreational and green space and this has helped meet the needs of Exmoor's communities and visitors and minimised the need to travel.

The development that has taken place in the National Park has addressed the socio-economic needs of the local community rather than external demand. New housing (or 'Homes for Exmoor') is small scale and sympathetically designed to provide for local and affordable housing needs for those with a strong connection through living or working in the National Park. These have been achieved through the best use of land, existing homes, and buildings. New housing and employment is located in and adjoining Exmoor's settlements and is compatible with the National Park's landscape. They may be rented or owner occupied and many are self build projects.

Existing homes have been adapted, subdivided or new development designed so as to be flexible to the changing needs of a household. Some homes may be live/work units or are designed to be part of a low impact, land based, sustainable lifestyle, linking with local resources, economy and services. As a result, local families, young and older people have been able to stay on Exmoor, and thereby contribute to vibrant, mixed working communities with strong support networks and a buoyant local economy. This together with the retention of services and facilities and local employment has benefited Exmoor's communities and visitors as its settlements become increasingly self-contained.

Public and community transport services have been retained and tailored to the needs of communities and visitors and opportunities for walking, cycling and horse-riding, have been increased by linking rights of way and access to open areas and green space including across the National Park boundary. The traditional and distinctive character of Exmoor's environment has been conserved and, together with the safety of all users, has been enhanced through innovative approaches to slow traffic in settlements and encourage more walking, cycling and horse-riding through appropriate highway design and infrastructure, minimising signs and street lighting. Essential utilities and infrastructure have been well designed to blend in with the landscape.

**There is a strong, diverse and resilient economy where farming, forestry, land management and rural enterprises are playing a lead role in conserving and enhancing Exmoor's special qualities, producing high quality food and other produce, and conserving local breeds. There is a sustainable tourism and recreation economy in harmony with local communities and the environment.**

Sustainable and viable low carbon farming, forestry, land management and rural enterprises based on Exmoor National Park's special qualities are playing a lead role in stewardship of the land, conservation and enhancement of Exmoor's landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage and in the production of a recognised Exmoor brand of high quality food, and an increase in the use of biomass such as wood fuel from Exmoor's woodlands serving a local market. Traditional breeds are thriving on Exmoor, and are adding value to the local economy as well as supporting traditional land management. Together, farming, forestry and land management help underpin a strong, diverse and sustainable local economy that benefits from and contributes to the care and appreciation of Exmoor National Park.

Small businesses and homeworking increasingly make an important contribution to Exmoor's employment and local economy and have been able to take advantage of high quality broadband for all and improved telecommunications. These are designed to ensure that the Exmoor's landscape is conserved by mimicking natural features and using existing structures.

***Note: the text above is the full version of the Vision, which will be included in the Local Plan. The Partnership Plan will include a shorter version of the Vision, just using the bold bulleted statements.***

## **Draft OBJECTIVES**

1. *To conserve and enhance Exmoor's landscapes as living working landscapes that remain predominately free from intrusive developments, maintain a sense of tranquillity and protect Exmoor's dark skies.*
2. *To ensure that Exmoor's moorlands remain open, remote and relatively wild in character; that views are preserved, and strategically important areas of former moor and heath are managed in a way that restores their wilder landscape character.*
3. *To protect and enhance Exmoor's wildlife and habitats and seek to improve the diversity, extent, condition and connectivity of Exmoor's important and valued habitats.*
4. *To maintain or increase the populations of native wildlife species on Exmoor that are valued for their conservation status and local distinctiveness, and control and eradicate non-native species.*
5. *To ensure that the built tradition, character, distinctiveness and historic character of Exmoor's settlements, buildings, farmsteads, landscapes, archaeological sites and monuments is conserved and enhanced and that the cultural heritage of Exmoor is protected through the careful management of development.*
6. *To encourage new development to use local materials, sustainable building design and methods, in ways that contributes to the distinctive character and cultural heritage of Exmoor.*
7. *To conserve and enhance Exmoor's natural resources and to improve air and water quality, conserve water resources, ensure soils are in good condition, maximise carbon storage, and minimise pollution.*
8. *To provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds and abilities, including young people and new audiences, to learn about and enjoy Exmoor National Park, leading to a greater understanding of Exmoor and its way of life.*
9. *To maintain and improve the recreational opportunities in the National Park particularly the rights of way network, access to open country, other quiet and active recreation based on Exmoor's special qualities; and ensure that opportunities for recreation can be enjoyed by people from all backgrounds and of all abilities.*
10. *To support, record and understand aspects of culture and traditions that are special to Exmoor.*
11. *To enable Exmoor's communities and partnerships to plan development in their neighbourhoods to help meet their needs and aspirations while conserving the special qualities of the National Park.*

12. *To address local and affordable housing needs, making the best use of existing developed land and buildings; ensuring a mix of housing and a housing stock which helps sustain local communities.*
13. *To improve the sustainability, resilience and self-sufficiency of the National Park's settlements by supporting the retention, provision of, and access to community services and facilities.*
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.*
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., C6 To support the tourism industry in providing a warm welcome and a range of sustainable accommodation, services and facilities, leading to a high quality Exmoor experience for visitors and local communities alike.*
16. *To achieve high quality telecommunications and essential utilities and infrastructure in ways commensurate with the conservation of the National Park's natural beauty, landscape wildlife, cultural heritage and special qualities.*
17. *To support sustainable transport for residents and visitors by improving public and community transport services and opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding including linkages across the National Park boundary.*
18. *To minimise the net emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and support measures which contribute to carbon neutrality in ways that both conserve and enhance the National Park.*
19. *To adapt to the anticipated effects of climate change on Exmoor's communities, businesses, landscape, wildlife and coast including flood risk, sea level rise, and unexpected weather events and so on.*
20. *To minimise waste and emissions and support opportunities for reuse and, recycling in ways compatible with Exmoor's National Park designation.*

## **GENERAL POLICY 1: ACHIEVING NATIONAL PARK PURPOSES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT &**

## **GENERAL POLICY 2: MAJOR DEVELOPMENT**

### **Draft written justification**

#### **Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development**

The National Park Circular 2010 states that the National Park Authorities' primary responsibility is to deliver their statutory purposes and in doing so, that they should ensure they are exemplars in achieving sustainable development, helping rural communities in particular to thrive.

The Circular sets out a joint vision to 2030 including that: *By 2030 English National Parks and the Broads will be places where 'there are thriving, living, working landscapes notable for their natural beauty and cultural heritage. They inspire visitors and local communities to live within environmental limits and to tackle climate change. The wide range of services they provide (from clean water to sustainable food) are in good condition and valued by society.*

*Sustainable development can be seen in action. The communities of the Parks take an active part in decisions about their future. They are known for having been pivotal in the transformation to a low carbon society and sustainable living. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, low carbon transport and travel and healthy, prosperous communities have long been the norm'.*

Policy GP1 reflects National Park purposes and, together with Policy GP2, defines sustainable development for Exmoor National Park. Policy GP3 sets out the tests for major development within the National Park. The three policies therefore fulfil the requirements of European Union Directives, the Environment Act 1995 and national planning policies. Policies GP1, GP2 and GP3 underpin the vision, objectives and all other policies in this Core Strategy and ensure that every decision is determined in line with National Park purposes and the socio-economic duty. This includes a requirement in Policy GP1 for schemes to not only conserve the National Park but also to encourage enhancement of the National Park as defined in this plan at Policy x and as required by legislation.

## **Purposes and duty of the National Park**

The purposes of National Park designation were established in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by the Environment Act 1995, to:

### ***National Park Authority Purposes***

- I. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage (of the National Parks); and**
- II. Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the National Parks) by the public.**

### ***National Park Authority Duty***

**In pursuing the statutory purposes, National Park Authorities have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities.**

Exmoor National Park will continue to seek early discussion on proposals and close working and co-operation with partners in order to find solutions and avoid potential conflicts. However, where there is irreconcilable conflict between the National Park purposes, the first purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage should prevail. This concept is known as the ‘Sandford Principle’<sup>1</sup>.

The achievement of National Park purposes relies on the active support and co-operation of Government and public bodies including local authorities and utility companies whose activities affect Exmoor. As ‘relevant authorities’ many have legal obligations under section 11A of the 1949 Act and section 17A of the 1988 Act which places a statutory duty on them to have regard to National Park purposes when making decisions or carrying out activities relating to or affecting land within the National Park. Section 62 (2) of the Environment Act 1995, places a duty on ‘public bodies and authorities to ‘have regard to’ the purposes of designation in carrying out their work. Authorities and public bodies must show they have fulfilled this duty. Where their activities outside National Parks might have an impact inside them, the Government says they should cooperate across National Park boundaries.

### **Sustainable Development**

A fundamental aim of the Core Strategy is to ensure that development in the National Park is sustainable. A widely-used and accepted definition of sustainable development is: “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>2</sup>.” The UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005, sets out five guiding principles for sustainable development which includes living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong, healthy and just society, achieving a sustainable economy, using sound science responsibly and promoting good governance.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 11a (2) of The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (inserted by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995

<sup>2</sup> Bruntland Commission “Our Common Future” (1987)

The Government sets out, in the new draft National Planning Framework that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. It states that development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay - a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision. The draft National Planning Framework sets out three components of what delivering sustainable development means for the planning system:

- **planning for prosperity (an economic role)** – use the planning system to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type, and in the right places, is available to allow growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure
- **planning for people (a social role)** – use the planning system to promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing an increased supply of housing to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a good quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and supports its health and well-being; and
- **planning for places (an environmental role)** – use the planning system to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic **environment**, to use natural resources prudently and to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low-carbon economy.

The Government states that these three components should be pursued in an integrated way, looking for solutions which deliver multiple goals.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

All development plan documents are now subject to Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations and Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under EU Directive 2001/42/EC. This is to determine to what extent the aims, objectives, policies or proposals provide for sustainable development and whether they will have any adverse effects on environmental interests. A set of sustainability objectives has been defined to assist with the SA assessment which seeks to define the principles of sustainable development for the policies of this document.

Some proposals may require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **Major Development**

The Government's longstanding view has been that major development should not take place in National Parks save in exceptional circumstances, as set out in national planning policy including PPS7, the draft National Planning Policy Framework and English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010. Such circumstances include the Silkin Test principles – that the development is absolutely necessary, in the national interest and that there is no practical alternative. Certain categories of development will also require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Exmoor National Park's landscape is recognised as being relatively free from major structures or development. In 2010/11 Exmoor National Park had 295 planning applications and the majority of these applications were for minor or other types of development. As a result, development that may be considered minor or small scale elsewhere may potentially have a significant and cumulative impact on the National Park's natural beauty. As such major development is not defined just in terms of its size but in terms of its impact on the National Park and its special qualities. Such development, depending on its scale and potential impact, could include: power stations, large scale renewable energy development, new transmission lines, large scale tourism and leisure schemes, oil and gas pipelines, waste management and mineral operations, sewage and water treatment works and road schemes.

### **Draft Policies**

#### **Policy GP1 Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development**

**Sustainable Development for Exmoor National Park will conserve and enhance the National Park; *its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage* and its special qualities; promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public; and, in so doing, foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.**

- **In achieving sustainable development, all proposals/development will demonstrate that:**
  - **It is consistent with the National Park's legal purposes and duty. Where there is irreconcilable conflict between the statutory purposes, the conservation and enhancement of the National Park will prevail consistent with the Sandford Principle;**
  - **Proposals to enhance the National Park are consistent with Policy x**
  - **It conserves and enhances the special qualities of Exmoor National Park;**
  - **It does not conflict with the vision and objectives of the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and Local Plan; and**
  - **It contributes to the sustainable development of the area in line with the sustainable development management principles set out below.**

**All new development, activities and land uses within Exmoor National Park will conserve and respond to opportunities to enhance the National Park. Opportunities must be taken to contribute to the sustainable development of the area including by demonstrating that development:**

- 1) is of a scale, and in terms of its siting, use, layout, form, design, materials and intensity of activity respects and has a favourable impact on the character, local distinctiveness, appearance and historic and cultural features of the site and buildings, settlement, landscape and setting
- 2) supports the function of individual settlements and their communities, by retaining and strengthening *their services and facilities, protecting their safe, attractive public places* and employment opportunities, providing for a size and type of housing which helps create a balanced community and addresses local affordable housing needs, and enables access to *local services and facilities, jobs* and technology
- 3) makes efficient use of land, buildings, services and infrastructure and is acceptable in terms of access and traffic levels and which, where appropriate, enables the use of sustainable transport
- 4) will conserve or enhance tranquillity including Exmoor's dark sky and the quiet enjoyment of the National Park
- 5) will not harm the amenities of visitors, local residents and occupiers of neighbouring properties
- 6) uses *traditional materials and, where available, local materials, sustainable construction principles and building materials*, and minimises energy use and waste including taking account of the embodied energy of materials and by appropriately re-using any materials from existing buildings or the site
- 7) conserves and enhances the natural environment, *networks of green infrastructure* and conditions for biodiversity and geodiversity
- 8) maintains the quality of natural resources including water and air and conserves soils, is acceptable in terms of ground conditions *and minimises pollution.*
- 9) Considers the needs of future generations, *sustainability and resilience to climate change and* adapts to and mitigates the impacts of climate change, particularly in respect of carbon emissions, energy and water demand and flood risk
- 10) supports the *health and* socio-economic wellbeing of local communities *and encourages community participation.*

## **Policy GP2 Major Development**

**In securing National Park purposes, *in responding to the National Park duty to foster the social and economic wellbeing of its communities* and in accordance with government guidance major development will not take place within Exmoor National Park except in exceptional circumstances following the most rigorous examination and where they can demonstrate that they are in the public interest and raise issues of national significance. *Where exceptionally a proposal for major development is of national significance and needs to be located in the National Park then every effort to mitigate potential localised harm and compensate for any residual harm to the area would be expected to be secured.***

**Proposals for major development will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the National Park Authority:**

- i) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy and local communities;**
- (ii) the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the National Park, or meeting the need for it in some other way;**
- (iii) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape, the National Park's special qualities and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated;**
- (iv) the cumulative impact of the development when viewed with other proposals and types of development;**
- (v) the scope for adequate restoration of the land once the use has ceased.**

*Note: Changes to the draft General Policies made in the light of the sustainability appraisal are highlighted in italics.*

## **General Policy 3 – settlement hierarchy**

This policy has not been drafted as there are options for the settlement hierarchy for consultation.

## **GENERAL POLICY 4 SECURING PLANNING BENEFITS – PLANNING OBLIGATIONS**

### **Draft Written Justification**

All development has some impact on land and facilities. Planning obligations, conditions and community levies can be used to ameliorate the effects of such impacts: planning conditions can be used to make acceptable development proposals which might otherwise be unacceptable through planning control, or, where this is not possible, planning obligations can be used to come to a mutual agreement with the applicant.

National policy provides that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the development; and
- fair and reasonably related in scale and kind of development.

In addition to planning conditions and obligations, the Government has recently introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy which can be used by Planning Authorities to secure a levy from development towards local community infrastructure. However, it is not obligatory. In Exmoor, a community infrastructure levy could currently be used for improvements and additions to, for example: sporting and recreational facilities, open spaces, schools and other educational facilities, medical centres, roads and other transport facilities and flood defences. Much of such infrastructure is owned and/or managed by town and parish councils, adjoining district councils and Devon and Somerset County Council. The need for a Community Infrastructure Levy is established through a live document known as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which sets out the existing infrastructure deficiencies and what is required for the future.

A community infrastructure levy is charged largely on development that is over 100sq metres. Exmoor National Park Authority has relatively limited development, particularly that of 100sq metres or above. However, it is recognised that such development still has an impact on local infrastructure and the needs of local sustainable communities. Given that government policy is evolving on this issue and, given the limited scale of development in Exmoor National Park and that much of the local infrastructure is owned and/or managed by other local authorities, Exmoor National Park Authority will need to work with partners and review its position on the community infrastructure levy periodically as appropriate

## **Draft Policy**

### **General Policy 4 Securing Planning Benefits – Planning Obligations**

**In order for development to take place without harm to and that conserves and enhances the National Park and its special qualities, within infrastructure capacity interests, or in accordance with policy, it may be required that development be accompanied by limitations or contributions that go beyond those that can be secured by planning conditions. These may be in the form of planning contributions or a community infrastructure levy if applied and considered appropriate. The need for a levy will be reviewed periodically through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.**