



7. ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

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.*

Business Development

Context

7.1 The National Parks' Circular recognises that conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and supporting vibrant, healthy and productive living and working communities need not be in conflict.³⁵³ The benefits of the environmental economy can be delivered in a way that benefits the National Park and reflects the statutory purposes ensuring an appropriate scale of development and investment most likely to maximise the benefits of a high quality environment, and bring higher value local employment opportunities.

7.2 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. National policy recommends that local plans should be flexible to accommodate unforeseen needs and changes in economic circumstances. They should set criteria or identify strategic sites.³⁵⁴

7.3 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. This includes through the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and working with partners, including its constituent local authorities and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, to facilitate actions to benefit the National Park and its communities.

7.4 Exmoor's economic activity illustrates that two thirds of working age people within the National Park are economically active. There are generally low levels of unemployment, despite the low level of economic activity as a result of the large retired population and the fact that much work is seasonal. Of those working age people that are economically inactive two thirds are retired.³⁵⁵ Compared to national and regional levels there is a high proportion of self-employment (26%)³⁵⁶ and working from/at home (37%)³⁵⁷ within the National Park, which is characteristic of sparse rural areas where people are twice as likely to be home-based or self-employed, as those in less sparse areas.³⁵⁸ Entrepreneurial activity in such sparse rural locations is generally higher than in urban areas; similar to levels observed in inner London.³⁵⁹

³⁵³ DEFRA (2010) English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular (Paragraph 64)

³⁵⁴ DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 21). DCLG

³⁵⁵ Office for National Statistics (2013) - 2011 Census, Key Statistics for National Parks in England and Wales

³⁵⁶ Office for National Statistics (2013) - 2011 Census, Key Statistics for National Parks in England and Wales

³⁵⁷ Office for National Statistics (2015) Table CT0418 Origin Destination Workplace – Method of travel to work (2001 specification) by distance travelled to work – published online at www.ons.gov.uk

³⁵⁸ Pateman, T. (2010) Rural and urban areas: comparing lives using rural/urban classifications – Regional Trends 43 2010/11, Office for National Statistics

³⁵⁹ Commission for Rural Communities (2010) State of the Countryside 2010

7.5 Tourism is the largest employer in the National Park and visitor spend helps to support a range of local shops and services that also provide a significant level of employment.³⁶⁰ The agriculture and forestry sector continues to have an important role in the area's economy and their traditional practices have helped shape the landscape of Exmoor. Public services also make up a significant proportion of the economy through public administration, health and social care, and education services.³⁶¹

7.6 The number of businesses which fall within the planning 'B' use class of offices and light industry is low 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. The rate of new 'B' Class employment development has been relatively limited and evidence suggests that this trend is likely to continue.

7.7 Employment units within the National Park include small purpose built units at Barns Close in Dulverton, Cutcombe Market in Wheddon Cross, and workshops at Lynmouth. There are also a number of existing purpose built employment sites and buildings close to, but outside, the National Park boundary including at Bratton Fleming, Combe Martin, Exebridge, and between Brushford and Dulverton. 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.

7.8 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. Sustainable rural tourism and leisure development is encouraged, including in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in local service centres, and where they respect the character of the countryside. Policies enabling the development of visitor accommodation, camping site and recreation facilities are included in Section 8 of the Plan 'Achieving Enjoyment for All'. Policies within Section 6 'Achieving a Thriving Community' address housing, including for key workers, and business development relating to shops and other local commercial and community services and facilities.

7.9 The sectors offering the greatest opportunities for employment 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 population.^{362,363} Evidence indicates that there are increasing opportunities arising from climate change mitigation (e.g. supply of wood fuel but also development, supply and fitting of environmental technology) and for knowledge-based and creative businesses.

³⁶⁰ Office for National Statistics (2013) - 2011 Census, Key Statistics for National Parks in England and Wales 15.6% of people in employment are in accommodation and food services occupations, plus 14.2% in retail trade.

³⁶¹ DEFRA (2010) ONS -Exmoor National Park: Economic profile Table 1.1 Employment by Industry Source Labour Force Survey 2005, 2008, The Stationery Office, London; Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2009) Exmoor National Park Employment Land Review para 2.43 "public administration health and social care and education sectors account for 20% of local employment"; Office for National Statistics (2011) Census 2011. The Stationery Office, London 17.3% within public administration health and social care and education sectors.

³⁶² Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2009) Exmoor National Park Employment Land Review. (95% of all job growth is likely to be in hotel and catering and health and social care).

³⁶³ Office for National Statistics (2013) - 2011 Census, Key Statistics for National Parks in England and Wales. (9.7% of residents in employment work in human health and social work activities).

7.10 It is important that employment needs in the National Park are met in a way that is consistent with National Park objectives, its rural nature and the small size of Exmoor's settlements. The creation of new large scale employment opportunities such as major industry (GP2 Major Development) would therefore 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 have a significant impact on the landscape and other purposes of the National Park as well as on the amenity of local communities. This type/scale of business development and certain employment opportunities will, due to their type and level of activity, be more appropriate in larger towns outside the National Park such as in Barnstaple, South Molton, Tiverton, and Minehead; where consistent with planning policies in those districts.

7.11 The policies within this section of the Plan set out a framework to guide the use and development of land to help achieve the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan priorities of supporting 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 Park; including employment opportunities for young people.³⁶⁴ Policies therefore encourage a diverse and strong Exmoor economy to create employment and 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.

7.12 Both strategic and development management policies will guide business and agricultural and forestry development. Criteria based policies will ensure there is flexibility to be responsive to changing circumstances.

7.13 A range of business opportunities are encouraged through the reuse of previously developed (or brownfield) land and by providing scope for new sites and buildings within the named settlements identified in policy GP3 Spatial Strategy. 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. There are also opportunities for economic development outside settlements on farmsteads and in hamlets, and for home working.

7.14 Recent economic development has shown that the vitality of the local economy has been sustained without the need for high levels of new build development as much has been delivered through the re-use 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 given the limited supply of suitable greenfield land within and adjoining the National Park's settlements (GP4 The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings). Changes of use to employment can, if carried out sympathetically, also help secure the retention of a building's character whilst supporting the local economy in accordance with Policy CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings.

7.15 The policies provide for the flexible release of appropriate sites and buildings for business development in response to emerging needs rather than by allocating land for employment use, given the rural 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.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ ENPA (2012) Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017, ENPA, Dulverton

³⁶⁵ Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2009) Exmoor National Park Employment Land Review

A Sustainable Exmoor Economy

7.16 Policy SE-S1 A Sustainable Exmoor Economy, applies to all proposals for business development in the National Park. Appropriate business and employment development are encouraged where they avoid negative impacts on the area so that the economic benefits of Exmoor's high quality environment can continue. This approach is consistent with the area's designation as a National Park. 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.

7.17 Some businesses may grow and intensify their activity to a degree where proposals for extended or new premises are likely to have a detrimental and significant impact on the appearance and character of landscape and other special qualities of the National Park (including sensitive habitats and wildlife), and they may no longer therefore be compatible with their location. Such proposals are likely to be considered under policy GP2 Major Development. The National Park Authority seeks to enable successful businesses to expand appropriately, however 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 and sustainable location.

7.18 Home working and self-employment make an important contribution to Exmoor's economy. The National Park Authority recognises that the provision

of, and improvements in, communications infrastructure, including broadband, are vitally important to many existing businesses, as well as a driver for enabling new businesses to prosper and provide high value home working opportunities. Policies for the appropriate improvement of communications technology, are set out in Section 9 of this Plan 'Achieving Accessibility for All'. Policies in this section of the Plan seek to encourage home based business where they can be accommodated as part of a residential use and they are compatible with the area and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Provision for home based employment of an appropriate scale should accord with SE-D1 Home Based Businesses.

7.19 Policy SE-S1 A Sustainable Exmoor Economy, also seeks to ensure the continued protection of existing employment land and buildings by safeguarding them 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. There is 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 A Sustainable Exmoor Economy, accord with SE-D2 Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Buildings.

SE-S1 A Sustainable Exmoor Economy

1. In order to strengthen, enhance and diversify the Exmoor economy, business and employment development will be encouraged.
2. Proposals for business development, including extensions and/or the growth and intensification of existing businesses, should demonstrate they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact including in terms of their operations, activity, and scale, on local amenity, landscape character, cultural heritage, sensitive habitats and wildlife.
3. Opportunities for home working and home based employment will be encouraged in accordance with policy SE-D1 Home Based Businesses.
4. Existing employment land and buildings will be safeguarded in accordance with policy SE-D2 Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Buildings.

Business Development in Settlements

7.20 In accordance with GP3 Spatial Strategy, new employment sites and buildings will be focused in the named settlements, and be of a type, scale and design appropriate to the settlement and National Park context. Policy SE-S2 Business Development in Settlements, seeks to encourage a range of new 'B' and other sui generis uses, considered by the National Park Authority to be business development. This includes the creation of rural enterprise hubs that can be used by home workers to overcome issues, such as isolation and lack of networking opportunities, and help support the viability and growth of their business activity. Focusing new employment sites and buildings in more accessible locations 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.

7.21 The policy encourages the reuse of buildings. It first seeks the reuse of traditional buildings but, where they are not available, non-traditional buildings or other previously developed sites should be re-used or the replacement of non-traditional buildings where opportunities are taken to achieve enhancement. Proposals should accord with policy CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment and policy CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings.

7.22 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 local affordable housing. It is therefore important to ensure that the best use is made of previously developed (brownfield) sites/buildings and those with planning permission, should be considered before greenfield land in accordance with policy GP4 The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings. All proposals should respond to opportunities for enhancement, where it will help to deliver an overall acceptable scheme in the context of the National Park designation, 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.

7.23 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, and A3 of the use Classes Order or a use as a state funded school or a registered nursery.³⁶⁶ Temporary changes of use were introduced nationally to contribute to the viability and vitality of town centres; however, it could result in the loss of B1 employment buildings in the National Park which are in short supply and which the 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.

7.24 Within Porlock Weir the re-use of existing buildings or extension of existing business premises is the preferred approach. Where new build employment buildings/sites are proposed these should be of a scale that is compatible with the character and form of the settlement and demonstrate they are directly related to existing industries in Porlock Weir. Proposals should also accord with policies CC-S2 Coastal Development and CC-S3 Porlock Weir Coastal Change Management Area.

³⁶⁶ HM Government (2015) Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The Stationery Office, London

SE-S2 Business Development in Settlements

1. In the named settlements proposals for business development or extensions to existing businesses should accord with policy SE-S1 and be located within the settlement or where no suitable buildings/sites are available, well-related to existing buildings.
2. Proposals will be permitted where:
 - a) they reuse existing traditional buildings wherever possible, in a way that maintains and/or enhances their character; or
 - b) where no suitable traditional buildings are available they reuse non-traditional buildings, or previously developed sites and enhancement of the built environment is incorporated into proposals where necessary to deliver an overall acceptable scheme; or
 - c) where this cannot be achieved a new site/building may be permitted.
3. In addition to clause 1, any proposals for new build development in Porlock Weir, other than extensions to existing premises, should be:
 - a) small-scale to reflect the form and character of the settlement; and
 - b) compatible with industries associated with the settlement.
4. Where permission is granted for new B1 uses a condition will be attached to remove permitted development rights in respect of temporary changes of use, use as a state funded school, or a registered nursery.

Business Development in the Open Countryside and Farm Diversification

7.25 Policy SE-S3 provides opportunities and sets out the policy framework for new business development in the open countryside, through the extension or redevelopment 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 (GP4 The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings). In recognition of the importance of farming and forestry to the area, policy SE-S4 provides for agricultural and forestry development.

7.26 Policies in the Local Plan provide flexibility to help ensure that traditional farming on Exmoor can continue to thrive over the longer term. Clause 3 is therefore aimed at farms and land based businesses, including estates, and sets out the provisions 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; and enabling alternative employment opportunities, including holiday-lets, to help support the primary farm business. Whilst succession farm dwellings (HC-D10 Succession Farming – Second Dwellings on Established Farms) enable farmers to transfer the business to subsequent generations.

7.27 Policy SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside, aims to provide diversification opportunities for rural land-based businesses which are businesses that manage the land in a way that conserves the National Park's special qualities. They can be defined as farming enterprises based on primary food production, rural estates, forestry, mixed enterprises (e.g. with equestrian activities and/or game shooting) and other businesses that manage the land

for conservation and/or recreation which have benefits for health and well-being. Rural land-based businesses must also be located in the open countryside due to the nature of their operations.

7.28 For diversification proposals e.g. for conversions to holiday lets (RT-D4 Non-serviced Accommodation), provision of alternative camping accommodation (RT-D9 Alternative Camping Accommodation), or the conversion of buildings for business development (which do not benefit from permitted development rights) a rural land-based business should provide at least full time employment for at least one member of staff. A small-holding that is a hobby farm as a lifestyle choice, which does not directly provide employment for one full-time equivalent person is unlikely to be considered for such diversification opportunities.

7.29 Where there may be difficulties in determining a proposal for diversification of a 'rural land-based business' the applicant will need to demonstrate that the land-based business is a viable concern that generates sufficient income to diversify, or provide a business plan to show how the land-based enterprise can continue to be viable through diversification proposals.

7.30 The Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 identifies significant potential to increase the value added locally to sustainable materials produced in the National Park and a greater use 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 Park.³⁶⁷

7.31 To date, farm diversification within the National Park has centred particularly on tourism and game shooting activities as ways to generate additional income to support farm businesses.³⁶⁸ Other avenues have included the processing of farm produce. Activities could include the development of new agricultural opportunities or adding value to primary produce. 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. The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) permits the change of use of agricultural buildings to a flexible use class for A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1 or D2 up to 150sqm where the National Park Authority is notified of the change, and buildings up to 500sqm will require prior approval in relation to transport/highways, noise, contamination risks and flood risk.³⁶⁹ Applicants are advised to check with National Park Authority officers whether planning permission is required for the change of use of agricultural buildings.

7.32 In the open countryside, reuse of traditional buildings (CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings) is strongly favoured where the existing building is well related to existing (farm) buildings in a farmstead or within a hamlet. Many traditional farm buildings are recorded on the Historic Environment Record as listed buildings or locally important heritage assets on historic farmsteads; proposals should therefore accord with policies relating to the historic environment (CE-S4 Replacement Development from Coastal Change Management Areas and CE-D3 Conserving Heritage Assets). Proposals for the re-use of existing or construction of new isolated buildings for farm diversification will not be permitted unless they accord with policy RT-D6 Camping Barns.

7.33 For land-based businesses, clause 3 of the policy also gives scope for the re-use of a non-traditional (modern) farm building. This will be acceptable if it can be clearly demonstrated that the agricultural use has ceased and the building is structurally suitable for the proposed use in accordance with policy CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings. 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.

³⁶⁷ ENPA (2012) Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

³⁶⁸ Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2009) Exmoor National Park Employment Land Review

³⁶⁹ HM Government (2015) Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The Stationery Office, London.

7.34 Where permission is granted for proposals for the change of use of non-traditional agricultural buildings to other business uses, the National Park Authority will attach a condition removing permitted development rights granted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 in respect of the construction of new farm buildings.

7.35 To help safeguard existing employment sites in the open countryside (not including agricultural or forestry land or buildings), sites may be redeveloped for new business uses (B use classes) where there are existing buildings on a site that have been directly utilised by employees as employment premises, and where the new buildings do not significantly increase the floorspace above that of the employment buildings to be replaced. New buildings should be sited on the footprint of existing

buildings unless other locations on the site would help provide enhancement to the setting or would benefit wildlife. Proposals should be of a high standard of design (policy CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles), and provide an enhancement of the site, where it will help to deliver an overall acceptable scheme in the context of the National Park designation, and consistent with landscape character. Traffic and road safety interests should also be addressed.

7.36 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-D1 Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development, to ensure that levels of traffic and emissions are acceptable.



Near Tarr Steps
Fiona Fyfe

SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside

1. Business development will be permitted for the change of use and conversion of an existing traditional building that is well-related to an existing group of buildings on a farmstead or in a hamlet where there is an existing dwelling, in accordance with policies SE-S1 and CE-S5.
2. Proposals for extensions to existing business sites or buildings that are well-related to an existing group of buildings on a farmstead or in a hamlet where there is an existing dwelling will be permitted in accordance with SE-S1 and where the scale and appearance of the development are compatible with local landscape character.
3. 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 are well-related to an existing group of buildings on the farmstead and accord with policy CE-S5;
 - b) the proposed business development supports an existing agricultural or other primary business responsible for land management and does not conflict with the existing farming or land management activity;
 - c) where proposals relate to the change of use of an existing building from an agricultural use to a business use (use classes B1, B2, B8 or sui generis), a condition will be attached to the permission to enable the building to be used for the purposes of agriculture or the permitted business use; and
 - d) a condition will be attached removing permitted development rights for the erection of new farm buildings on the holding.
4. The erection of new business premises in the open countryside will only be permitted for the redevelopment of existing employment sites, where existing buildings are replaced with no significant increase in size, and enhancement to the site and/or its setting is incorporated into the proposals where necessary to deliver an overall acceptable scheme, which is consistent with local landscape character.
5. 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.
6. Where permission is granted for new B1 uses a condition will be attached to remove permitted development rights in respect of temporary changes of use, use as a state funded school, or a registered nursery.

Home Based Businesses

7.37 The National Park Authority encourages opportunities for 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 residential property, as well as the amenity of neighbours and other potential impacts will be taken into account.

7.38 This policy provides for the use of a residential property, a small extension to a dwelling, the conversion of an existing outbuilding within the domestic curtilage or, where there are no existing buildings, a new small scale building for a home based business 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- D15 Residential Extensions. An important consideration will be to ensure that the home based business does not change the residential character of the property.

7.39 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-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles.

7.40 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 was to cease, for example on selling, would revert back to purposes incidental to the main dwelling. 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.

Live-Work Opportunities

7.41 Within Local Service Centres and Villages there is the potential for conversions and new build market housing to enable the delivery of affordable housing – this may provide opportunities for live-work arrangements for both affordable and market housing where such needs exist. In the open countryside the conversion of existing buildings enables the provision of Extended Family dwellings (on farmsteads) and local affordable homes (in hamlets and on farmsteads), whilst the conversion of additional buildings or the same building(s) to business space is also acceptable; such an approach would be conducive to a live-work arrangement. Similar schemes have already been provided in the National Park.

7.42 Primarily, live-work arrangements will only be suitable where the location is considered to be acceptable for housing development (see Section 6 Achieving a Thriving Community). In all cases live-work arrangements should be designed so that the work space can be used independently of the dwelling space – this offers some flexibility for future employment opportunities, so it is not necessarily restricted to the occupants of the associated dwelling.

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 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-D15 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.
3. Proposals for live-work units should be in accordance with the housing policies in this Plan and designed so the employment space can be used independently of the living accommodation.

Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Buildings

7.43 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 within named settlements and in the open countryside will be safeguarded for economic uses. They make an important contribution towards the local economy, sustainability and self-containment of Exmoor's communities.

7.44 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.

7.45 If it is demonstrated that the site and/or buildings are no longer viable in employment use, the owner/applicant will be required to maintain provision for 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. A planning condition or obligation will be used to ensure that the alternative provision is secured at an appropriate time in relation to the redevelopment of the site or building. If it can be demonstrated that these are not possible, within or adjoining the named settlements in GP3 Spatial Strategy redevelopment of the site for community uses will be favoured. Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of the site to residential uses will only be considered if other uses are demonstrated not to be viable and should be in accordance with the housing policies set out in Section 6 Achieving a Thriving Community.

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 it is demonstrated that the site and/or buildings are no longer viable in employment use, the following will be required:
 - a) in the first instance, provision for 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 will be favoured.
 - d) If it is demonstrated that the alternative uses in clauses (a) to (c) are not viable, proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with the relevant housing policies in the Plan.
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

7.46 Traditional farming and woodland management have 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.

7.47 Exmoor's agricultural land is dominated by mainly sheep and beef farming systems. Farming, both on Exmoor and nationally, has faced a number of challenges which have particularly affected smaller farms in upland areas. Within the National Park there is a continuing trend towards larger farms over 100ha, with numbers of smaller holdings declining. Diversification (on and off farm) continues to form part of the farm income, currently contributing over 16% of income on average, with suggestions that there will be an increase in the importance of diversification in the future. Evidence indicates that Exmoor's farms appear resilient with a good age structure amongst farmers and a range of farming strategies, with some signs of recovery in hill farm incomes and/or fortunes since 2005. However, low incomes from farming remain a widespread problem and therefore it appears that diversified incomes will become more important, as only a fifth of farm businesses on Exmoor provide all the household income.³⁷⁰ These changes have implications for Exmoor's local economy.

7.48 Although employment figures for the 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 development required for processing is appropriate to the local and National Park context.

7.49 Changes in the farming and forestry sectors are likely as demand for food, timber (including woodfuel products), and other products grows. The Government has made a commitment to identify the means of increasing food production in ways that also improve the environment.³⁷¹ Other changes include: a trend for farm houses to be sold off, holdings to be split up, and an increase in the number of part-time and 'hobby farms'.

7.50 The Partnership Plan 2012-2017 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 known as 'ecosystem services'. These include clean water, managed flood risk, and opportunities for recreation, enjoyment and inspiration. Careful management will be needed as a result of increasing demands for timber, particularly as biomass fuel for e.g. wood heating, to ensure that economic and employment opportunities are balanced with landscape, nature conservation and cultural heritage interests.

7.51 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 Business Development in the Open Countryside earlier in this section of this Plan seeks to encourage farm diversification which is appropriate in the context of a National Park.

7.52 In line with Government policy, the National Park Authority recognises the importance of enabling farm businesses to become more competitive, comply with changing legislation and associated guidance, diversify into new agricultural opportunities and to adapt to changing markets.

³⁷⁰ CCRI (2015) State of Farming on Exmoor 2015

³⁷¹ HM Government (2011) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature. The Stationery Office. London

7.53 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) 2015 and meets all the conditions laid down in it. Developments that are not covered by these permitted development rights require planning permission.³⁷²

7.54 Under the GPDO, applications for a range of buildings/structures can be made through a system of notification, whereby the National Park 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 may be undertaken, where necessary, through independent expert advice or investigation of other aspects of the agricultural holding. 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.



³⁷² HM Government (2015) Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The Stationery Office, London.

7.55 Applicants are encouraged to approach the National Park Authority at an early stage for advice on: the siting and design of buildings; whether a proposal requires planning permission; and the need for and scope of an Environmental Impact Assessment. New farm buildings tend to have a large, wide span with shallow pitched roofs comprising factory frame and panel components to allow for modern farm operational requirements. These include the need for efficient movement and access of machinery, and ventilation for larger numbers of stock. Such buildings can have an industrial appearance and scale, therefore in assessing proposals for agricultural and forestry development and operations, the main considerations must be siting and design to ensure the landscape, wildlife, visual quality and historic character of the surrounding area are conserved, as well as avoiding possible environmental impacts and effects on neighbouring land uses, including residential. It is generally preferable in functional terms and visually, for a new farm building to form part of an existing group. A landscaping scheme may also be required, which reduces the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape in accordance with CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character and CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes.

7.56 Exmoor's landscape is valued for its diverse scenery and freedom from intrusive developments, therefore rarely will it be acceptable to locate a new isolated building in the open countryside where it is not well related to an existing building group. Large isolated farm buildings tend to be visually intrusive due to their scale, form and materials; impacting on visual amenity and landscape character. They can also be a security risk and services and infrastructure may not always be present. Applicants will need to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist to justify the functional need for a building in this context.

7.57 Proposals for new buildings on recently subdivided holdings will be the subject of particular scrutiny to ensure that an overriding functional need for the building can be justified and that they do not simply replace buildings that have been subdivided away from the holding. Subdivision can result in fragmentation of the farm with separate isolated buildings on parcels of farmland subdivided away from farms when, for example, farms are sold. Policy

SE-S4 Agricultural and Forestry Development seeks to prevent the landowner selling farm buildings with only a proportion of the land and subsequently submitting proposals for a new isolated building on another part of the holding. Changes in farming practice are unlikely to be a sufficient justification for a new farm building in an isolated location or on a recently sub-divided holding. Changing practices which are more intensive and require additional feeding and indoor-housing of livestock can lead to the need for further agricultural buildings. This has little benefit for the management or appearance of Exmoor's landscape, which has been shaped by the extensive grazing practices of cattle and sheep breeds which are common to Exmoor and have influenced landscape character.

7.58 Where a building can be justified, careful siting and emphasis on building design will be essential to integrate with the landscape; avoiding skyline sites or sites prominent from public viewpoints. There may be circumstances which require higher standards of design; the type and colour of materials will be an important consideration and traditional materials, such as using local building stone to clad lower walls, may be required on sensitive sites to help ensure the building conserves landscape character.

7.59 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, should accord with Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure. Measures should be taken to ensure that proposals avoid causing pollution including the fitting of covers for slurry stores (CC-S7 Pollution). 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.

7.60 Climate change and the increased risk of flooding due to increased extreme weather events are likely to change the way agriculture and forestry operates in the future in terms of associated mitigation and adaptation measures. Proposals for agricultural and forestry development will also need to accord with Policies CC-S1 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Policy CC-D1 Flood Risk.

7.61 There are many important historic farmsteads in the National Park, and 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.³⁷³ In assessing the impact on the historic environment, proposals should accord with Policy CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment.

7.62 For agricultural and forestry development proposals, 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 (anthracite) fibre cement and timber cladding will be encouraged.

7.63 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-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development.

7.64 Where new agricultural buildings with a floorspace of 500sqm or less are granted planning consent, permitted development rights may be withdrawn in respect of changes of use of agricultural buildings and any land within the curtilage to alternative uses.³⁷⁴ Such conditions may be appropriate where buildings are situated in isolated locations away from the main farm holding to ensure that any impacts of buildings in the open countryside are minimised. This is consistent with the designation of the area as a National Park, where buildings in the open countryside are only permitted under exceptional circumstances and for agricultural or forestry needs as set out in Policy SE-S4 Agricultural and Forestry Development.



³⁷³ Historic farmsteads are listed on the Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record – www.exmoorher.co.uk

³⁷⁴ HM Government (2015) Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The Stationery Office, London. 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 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;
 - d) buildings, tracks or structures are sited appropriately in the context of local topography and of an appropriate design that responds to and reinforces landscape character in terms of size, scale, massing, layout, external appearance and materials – if a landscaping scheme is required it should be in accordance with policy CE-D1;
 - e) proposals do not generate a level of activity or otherwise detrimentally affect the amenity of surrounding properties and occupiers including through loss of daylight, overbearing appearance, or conflict with neighbouring land uses;
 - f) appropriate measures are taken to ensure proposals do not, including through the level of activity, have an adverse impact on biodiversity and cultural heritage (in accordance with CE-S3 and CE-S4) or cause other unacceptable environmental impacts; and
 - g) it can be demonstrated that opportunities have been taken for:
 - i) the integration of passive design and sustainable construction methods to improve energy efficiency;
 - ii) the integration of appropriate renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with CC-S5; and
 - iii) minimising surface water run-off to avoid impacts on water quality (CC-D1).
2. New isolated buildings will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances relating to an overriding functional need for a more isolated location, and where:
 - a) they do not replace existing agricultural buildings that have been subdivided away from the holding; and
 - b) the requirement for them does not result from a change of farming practices, such that could adversely affect the management of the traditional landscape character of the National Park.
3. Where new agricultural buildings with a floorspace of 500sqm or less are granted planning consent, permitted development rights may be withdrawn in respect of agricultural buildings and any land within its curtilage to alternative uses.