



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

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23 September 2026

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

To: The Members of the PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Exmoor National Park Authority

A meeting of the Planning Committee will be held at 1.30pm on Tuesday, 6 October 2026 in the **Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton** on **Tuesday, 6 October 2026 at 1.30pm.**

The meeting will be open to the press and public subject to the passing of any resolution under s.100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

There is Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairperson will allow members of the public two minutes each to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition relating to any item on the Agenda. Anyone wishing to ask questions should notify the Democratic Support Officer as soon as possible, or at the latest by 4pm on the working day before the meeting of the agenda item on which they wish to speak, indicating a brief summary of the matter or matters to be raised (contact Committees@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

The meeting will be **recorded**. By entering the Authority's Committee Room and speaking during Public Speaking you are consenting to being recorded. We will make the recording available via our website for members of the public to listen to and/or view, within 72 hours of the meeting taking place.

Members of the public may use forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairperson so that those present may be made aware.

(The agenda and papers for this meeting can be downloaded from the National Park Authority's website www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive

As set out above, the Authority welcomes public engagement with its work and believes that everyone attending a meeting of Exmoor National Park Authority or one of its Committees has the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe at all times, including before, during and after the meeting they attend.

The Authority understands that some situations can be difficult and lead to frustration; however, the Authority is committed to promoting an environment where everyone feels listened to and respected and is not subjected to unacceptable behaviour. Further guidance is provided in our Customer Notice, available on our [website](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying of Members/Unaccompanied Site Visits

Members are asked to declare:-

- (1) any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting;
- (2) any lobbying by anyone concerned with a planning application and any unaccompanied site visits where contact has been made with any person concerned with a planning application.

3. Minutes

- (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 1 September 2026 ([Item 3](#))
- (2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

4. Business of Urgency: To introduce any business which by reason of special circumstances the Chairperson, after consultation with the Chief Executive, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency and to resolve when such business should be ordered on the Agenda.

5. Public Speaking: The Chairperson will allow members of the public to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition on any matter on the Agenda for this meeting or in relation to any item relevant to the business of the Planning Committee. Any questions specific to an agenda item can be posed when that item is considered subject to the discretion of the person presiding at the meeting.

6. Appeal Decisions

6.1 To note the decision of the Secretary of State in relation to the appeal relating to Marshwood, Exton, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9LD- ref. APP/F9498/X/25/3360778 ([Item 6.1](#))

7. Development Management: To consider the report of the Head of Climate, Nature & Communities on the following:-

Agenda Item	Application No.	Description	Page Nos.
7.1	EXM/26/135/FULL	Proposed change of use and conversion of part of ancillary building to B&B accommodation – Ridgewood Cottage, Wootton Courtenay, Minehead, TA24 8RF	1 - 11
7.2	EXM/26/084/FULL	Proposed rural worker's dwelling and associated works – Land at Knappy Piece, Luckwell Bridge, Wheddon Cross	1- 21

- 8. Schedule of Section 106 Agreements:** To note the Schedule of Section 106 Agreements being undertaken by Devon County Council on behalf of Exmoor National Park Authority (Item 8).
- 9. Application Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:** To note the applications determined by the Chief Executive under delegated powers (Item 9).
- 10. Site Visits:** To arrange any site visits agreed by the Committee (the next reserve date being Friday, 30 October 2026 (am))

Further information on any of the reports can be obtained by contacting the National Park Authority at the address and telephone numbers at the top of the agenda. Details of the decisions taken at this meeting will be set out in the formal Minutes which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions can be obtained by emailing Committees@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Exmoor National Park Authority
Planning Committee

6 October 2026

Agenda Item 3

**Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 1 September 2026
at 1.30 pm in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton**

Present

Mr S J Pugsley (Chairperson)

Dr M Kelly (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr M Ellicott (substitute for Mr A Bray)

Mr M Kravis (substitute for Mr T Butt-Philip)

Mr W Geen

Mrs F Nicholson

Mr J Holtom

Mr J Patrinos

Mr R Hopley

Miss L Williams

23. Apologies for absence

Mr T Butt-Philip, Mr A Bray and Mrs F Smith.

24. Declarations of interest / Lobbying of Members / Unaccompanied site visits

Members had received a general briefing from Officers in relation to Item 7.2; however, this was not specific to the application.

25. Minutes

Confirmation: The [Minutes](#) of the Authority's meeting on 7 July 2026 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Matters arising: None.

26. Business of urgency

There was none.

27. Public Speaking

See Minutes 29 and 30.

28. Appeal Decisions

The Committee noted the [decisions](#) of the Secretary of State for:

- The Appeal at Orchard View, Rodhuish, Minehead, TA24 6QZ.
- The Appeal at Archer House, The Steep, Dunster, Minehead, TA24 6FD.

Development Management

29. **Application No:** EXM/26/140/FULL

Location: Simonsbath Sawmill, Simonsbath, Minehead, TA24 7SL

Proposal: Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed installation of Ecoflo Treatment Plant and Borehole

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Climate, Nature and Communities

Public Speaking:

1. Mr F Schott – Exmoor Parish Council

The Committee's consideration

The application had been submitted by Exmoor National Park Authority.

Officers gave a verbal update to Members, including a report of Exmoor Parish Council who had discussed the application and provided comments made after the Officer report was drafted. Officers also reported that since the Officer report was drafted, a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been published. However, the parts of the NPPF most relevant to this application had not been significantly amended and this did not alter the Officer recommendation before Committee.

Members were reassured by Officers that the environmental aspects were assessed by the Environment Agency. Furthermore, safeguards would be in place in the event of a flood, and it was noted that the scheme may need an environmental permit.

Resolved:

1. To GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.

30. **Application No:** EXM/26/049/FULL

Location: Driver Farm, Simonsbath, Minehead, TA24 7LH

Proposal: Application Under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the re-roofing of the west barn, the installation of new windows and doors within existing openings, and the conversion and alteration of existing barn to provide toilet and shower facilities ancillary to the management of the landholding (amended description, amended plans)

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Climate, Nature and Communities

Public Speaking:

1. Mr F Schott – Exmoor Parish Council

The Committee's consideration

The application was submitted by Exmoor National Park Authority and Officer recommendation was contrary to the view of Exmoor Parish Council.

Since the application was submitted, it had undergone several amendments during its consideration which included revisions within the description and scope of the scheme. Moreover, an increase in construction traffic would only be for a temporary period and concerns had been discussed with the Local Highway Authority. It was confirmed they were satisfied with the scheme from a highway safety perspective.

Officers advised that since the Planning report was published, a new National Planning Policy Framework was in place from 17 August 2026. The most relevant parts had not been significantly amended, and so did not alter the Officer recommendation of the application.

Members noted that multiple site visits had taken place in recent years, so they were familiar with the site entrance and exit and road associated with it.

Members welcomed that the Parish Council supported the principles of the regeneration at Driver.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding concerns for the entrance/exit point to the site onto a fast straight of highway. In particular, regarding the expected increase in traffic relating to construction and works and movements into the site, and the potential need for a traffic management plan that could mitigate impacts. A proposal to include this in the application was put forward by Mrs F Nicholson and seconded by Mr R Hopley.

Ultimately, Members were split on their voting decision to approve the application and a proposal of a condition to add a Construction Traffic Management Plan. The latter was subsequently voted against with the Chair using his casting vote; therefore, going with Officer recommendation to approve the application with existing conditions. Safety concerns were acknowledged by Officers which would be thoroughly addressed.

Resolved:

1. To GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.

31. Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

The Planning Committee noted the [decisions](#) of the Chief Executive determined under delegated powers.

32. Site Visits

There were no Site Visits to arrange.

The meeting closed at 2.37 pm



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2026

by Paul Dignan MSc PhD

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/X/25/3360778

Marshwood, Exton, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9LD

- The appeal is made under section 195 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant a certificate of lawful use or development (LDC).
- The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Ross and Charlotte Norman against the decision of Exmoor National Park Authority.
- The application ref 6/15/24/002, dated 26 June 2024, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2024.
- The application was made under section 191(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- The development for which a certificate of lawful use or development is sought is a dwelling (Use Class C3) that is free from the encumbrance of the planning conditions attached to planning permission reference 6/15/08/102 (the planning permission).

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. A planning application was made in May 2008 for "Erection of mobile log home adjacent to existing agricultural farmstead. To be erected on an area of waste land beside buildings. Home to provide accommodation for agricultural worker on site for the farm business." The application was apparently accompanied by a site and location plan, farm map, elevation drawings, floor plan, site levels cross section drawing, photographs of the site, photographs of a log cabin and an agricultural appraisal.
3. The type of building shown on the drawings was an interlocking logs kit building to be erected on foundations or a base, so clearly not mobile. Prior to the application being made the site had been cleared, and in December 2008, while the application was under consideration by the National Park Authority (NPA), works commenced for the erection of a kit-based log cabin of a different design to that shown on the application plans. Kits for the log cabin and a garage of similar construction were delivered to the site and both were erected and apparently substantially completed by April 2010. Some timber decking was added in early 2011. The kit for the dwelling was a different design to that shown on the application plans.
4. Planning permission was subsequently granted on the May 2008 application in July 2011¹. The approved development was described as "New agricultural workers dwelling (log home adjacent to existing agricultural farmstead). Amplified by letter 10.9.08. Amended by email dated 23.9.08. (Full)". The permission was subject to 14 conditions. Among these were condition 5 which stated: "*The*

¹ Council Ref. 6/15/08/102

occupation of the unit of accommodation hereby permitted shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture (as defined in Section 336 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), or in forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.” The May 2008 application did not include a garage, but in July 2012 permission² was granted for “Proposed wood cabin style garage. Retrospective. Amended by blue line plan received on 8 July 2012 and amplified by email dated 5 July 2012.”

5. Planning conditions attached to the July 2011 permission, requiring approval of details of timber staining, eaves details, landscaping, hard surfacing materials and roofing materials, were subsequently discharged, and a section 106 agreement, binding the dwelling to the land, was executed, though this was discharged by the NPA in September 2015.
6. There are, however, differences between what is shown on the approved plans and what was actually built. The appellant’s case is that the “as built” development was constructed so materially different to what was approved that it was not in fact implementation of the 2011 permission. Consequently, it is argued, that the dwellinghouse had been built without planning permission but became lawful through immunity from enforcement action four years after it was substantially completed in 2010. It is argued that since it is not an implementation of the 2011 planning permission, any conditions imposed on that permission, most importantly condition 5, the agricultural occupancy condition, do not bite.
7. They rely upon the judgement in *Handoll*,³ which confirmed that if a development has been carried out other than in accordance with the planning permission granted, it is unauthorised, and on the judgement in *Sage*,⁴ which established that if a building operation is not carried out in accordance with the permission, the whole operation is unlawful. They do acknowledge, however, that if a landowner alters development in an immaterial way, it does not necessarily follow that the development must be treated as unauthorised⁵. It is also well established, however, that it is necessary to consider not only the differences between the works and the plans, but also the significance of the differences. Similarities and the degree of compliance with the plans, and with the planning permission read as a whole, are also relevant.
8. Among the differences pointed out by the appellant is the alignment of the access road and the eastern boundary. It has emerged from overlay of the application plans and Ordnance Survey that a portion of the access and the eastern boundary fall outside of the red line shown on the application plan. I consider the mis-alignment to be so minimal as to be entirely immaterial. That it was not evident from the NPAs initial map overlay exercise is informative, and there are no planning consequences whatsoever. Furthermore, it seems to me that the topography meant that it would have been impractical to construct the entire access within the application red line, the site of the dwelling being well below the level of the public highway with a relatively steep incline between, such that the misalignment was no more than a response to the physical constraints of the site rather than a conscious decision to breach the site envelope. With greater care in the preparation of the hand drawn site plan this, and indeed the boundary

² Council Ref. 6/15/12/103

³ *Handoll and Suddick v Warner & Goodman & Street & East Lindsay DC* [1994] EWCA Civ 42

⁴ *Sage v Maidstone BC* [2003] UKHL 22; [2003]

⁵ *Hillside Parks Ltd v Snowdonia National Park Authority* [2022] UKSC 30

alignment, would likely have been avoided, but they are entirely immaterial in planning terms.

9. There is also a shift in the siting of the dwelling itself by comparison to the application plan. This has been established by professional survey aligned to the national grid, with a high degree of consistency with geo-tagged aerial photography. There is a very minor change in orientation, but it seems that the shift in the position of the dwelling is of the order of about 6.6m measured diagonally between the southwestern corners of the approved drawing and the as-built survey, which I estimate to be a shift of the siting of about 4m to the north-east and 4.9m to the southeast. The proposed and as-built siting overlap by just under 27%. In many circumstances these discrepancies would be considered material, and indeed lesser deviations from approved plans have been found to be so in appeal decisions that I have been referred to. However, in the context of the site and its surroundings, I consider the shift to be immaterial. It is further away from the farmyard and buildings to the west, but still sits within the, admittedly misaligned, plot in a manner broadly similar to that shown on the approved plan. Again, I consider that there are no consequences of any importance in planning terms, and the departure from the approved plans would have been difficult to perceive without resort to accurate survey.
10. The as-built dwelling is also larger than that indicated in the application plans, no doubt because a different model of cabin was chosen, but I consider that the dimensional differences would not be noticeable to even an experienced observer without recourse to measurement, and the accommodation provided is almost identical, an important consideration when considering applications for dwellings for agricultural workers. Minor window and door differences are also immaterial in planning terms, particularly so given the very limited, if any, visibility from the public realm.
11. The building is on a block and masonry base that it is claimed raises the building higher than indicated on the plans. It is possible that goes no further than a breach of condition 4, which states: *The unit of accommodation hereby permitted shall be constructed form (sic) the levels shown on the submitted plans unless agreed otherwise in writing by the local Planning Authority.* But having said that, the application plans labelled “Existing Site Levels”, “Proposed Site Levels” and the referable “Proposed Site and Location Plan”, to which the condition presumably refers, do not in fact show any datum, and appear to be no more than approximate land section sketches, albeit to scale so far as the building is concerned. Beyond a photograph of the base of the dwelling during construction, nothing has been provided to demonstrate that the condition has in fact been breached. In any case, the position of the dwelling in a low-lying position in an undulating landscape means that there are no impacts in planning terms of the purported deviation from the application plans, if there is one, either in terms of character and appearance or amenity. Similarly the addition of a small glazed porch and decking does not alter the character of the building in any material way.
12. Overall, looking at the approved scheme as a whole, I consider that what has been built is so similar in spatial terms, in scale, design, appearance and overall character that I am satisfied, as a matter of fact and degree, that it accords with the 2011 permission, and is in fact the implementation of that permission. While there are departures from the approved plans, individually or cumulatively they have no significance in planning terms.

13. Much has been made of the garage building which it is claimed was built at the same time and therefore part of the same building operation. Since that garage was granted planning permission retrospectively, I consider the fact that it was erected in the same operation to be irrelevant. The ability to gain planning permission retrospectively is a means of regularising development that is unauthorised, which is exactly what had occurred.
14. As suggested by the NPA, had there been any notion on the part of the developer that what was being built was not authorised such that they would seek to rely upon the immunity provisions of section 171B of the Act, the discharge of conditions would have been strong grounds for a conclusion of deliberate deception. That in turn would have disapplied the section 171B immunity provisions. However, I have no doubt that the developer was proceeding, until recently at least, on the basis that the development was authorised, as indeed I consider it was.
15. I find therefore that the NPA decision to refuse to grant the LDC was well founded. The dwelling accords with the 2011 planning permission and remains subject to the occupancy condition. Accordingly, the appeal must fail and I will exercise the powers transferred to me in section 195(3) of the 1990 Act as amended.

Paul Dignan

INSPECTOR

Committee Report

Application Number:	EXM/26/135/FULL
Valid Date:	5 June 2026
Target Determination Date:	31 July 2026
Extension of Time:	4 September 2026
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs D and A Preston & Bamford
Agent:	Mrs Bella Stuart
Case Officer:	Joseph Rose
Site Address:	Ridgewood Cottage Wootton Courtenay Minehead TA24 8RF
Proposal:	Proposed change of use and conversion of part of ancillary building to B&B accommodation.
Recommendation:	Approved with Conditions
Reason for bringing before Planning Committee:	In accordance with the Authority's scheme of delegation due to the officer view being contrary to that of the parish council.
Pre-commencement conditions agreed:	N/A

Relevant History

6/43/23/016 - Proposed erection of two storey extension and use of outbuilding as home office, workshop, domestic storage and garage (Approved: 08 May 2024)

Site Description & Proposal

Ridgewood Cottage is located to the south of Wootton Courtenay and to the north of the hamlet of Burrow. It is accessed to the eastern side of Burrow Road. The site consists of a detached two-storey dwelling and various outbuildings including a single storey outbuilding used as a home office, workshop, domestic storage and garage permitted by application 6/43/23/016 in 2024, which is the subject of this application.

This application seeks permission for the change of use and conversion of part of the above ancillary building to B&B accommodation, with associated parking.

Consultee Representations

Wootton Courtenay Parish Council – Objection:

Wootton Courtenay Parish Councillors object to this planning application. This application does not comply with previous planning decision and would be in breach of planning clause from the previous planning application for this ancillary accommodation 6/43/23/016. It states in the decision, 'Within 30 days after the completion of the two storey extension hereby approved, the detached ancillary outbuilding shall cease to be used as living accommodation and shall only be used

for the purposes of a home office, workshop, domestic storage and garage ancillary to the dwelling at Ridgewood Cottage.' The councillors also don't think this looks like a genuine b&b as breakfast would have to be transported over from the main house. Councillors vote - 4 Objection, 1 Abstention (Mr Bray as he is on the ENPA Planning committee) Note: If the ENPA decide to give permission to allow the B&B then the facilities, such as a kitchen sink, should be removed, otherwise it would be easy to change it to self-catering accommodation. At present there are 10 other tourist accommodation facilities in Wootton Courtenay parish, which is sufficient for a parish of this size.

Somerset Highways Development Control – Standing advice:

Standing advice.

Representations

Total – Objections	Total – Support	Total – No Objections
1	0	0

Summary of comments:

One letter of objection has been received from a local resident on the grounds that the proposal could lead to the creation of a self-contained holiday accommodation unit and would be contrary to the requirements and restrictions imposed under previous planning permissions granted for the site.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (including minerals and waste policies):

- GP1 - Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development
- GP4 - The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings
- CE-S3 - Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- CE-S5 - Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings
- CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable construction principles
- HC-D16 – Outbuildings
- HC-D15 - Residential Extensions
- RT-D1 - Serviced Accommodation
- AC-D1 - Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development
- AC-D2 - Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations regarding these proposals are the principle of the development with regard to the change of use to Bed & Breakfast accommodation, impacts on neighbouring / local amenity and highways impacts.

General policy considerations:

Policy GP1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 outlines how the development plan seeks to achieve and adhere to the National Park Purposes and states that 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 their understanding and enjoyment by the public, and in so doing, foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

Policy GP4, then goes on to set the principles on the National Park for achieving the efficient use of land and buildings and states that development proposals will be encouraged which demonstrate the efficient use of land and buildings including through: the redevelopment of brownfield land located within the built extent of the named settlements that does not have a high ecological value; or the re-use of existing buildings within the built extent of the named settlements, or within or well related to hamlets and farmsteads. The policy then goes on to outline that development within or adjoining the named settlements should reflect the historic form and pattern of the settlement and make best use of land on the site in terms of the density of buildings and green infrastructure provision.

Principle of the Change of Use to Bed and Breakfast Accommodation:

Policy CE-S5 of the local plan sets out the principles for the conversion or structural alteration of existing buildings and states that, the conversion or structural alteration of any existing building will be permitted where the proposal; accords with the relevant policies in this Plan in terms of the intended use; clearly demonstrates that the building is capable of conversion without substantial reconstruction and is suitable for the existing building in terms of the intended use and the intensity of that use, in relation to its capacity, structure and character without substantial alteration. Clause 4 of the policy then states that; In addition to clause 1, proposals for the conversion or structural alteration of non-traditional buildings, will only be permitted if traditional buildings are demonstrated to be incompatible with the intended use or no such buildings are present, and where: the building is of permanent and substantial construction; and environmental and visual enhancement to the building and/or its setting are incorporated into the proposals where necessary to deliver an overall acceptable scheme.

Policy RT-D1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011–2031 outlines that proposals for the provision of new serviced accommodation through the appropriate change of use and conversion of existing traditional buildings will be permitted where a number of criteria are met. The policy requires that the traditional character, appearance and setting of the building or group of buildings is conserved or enhanced, and that the building is capable of conversion to serviced accommodation without the need for significant alteration or extension. It also outlines that the design and layout of access and parking should be compatible with landscape character and built heritage, that the intensity of use should not compromise local amenity,

and that traffic generation can be accommodated by the local road network without adversely affecting highway safety or capacity. The policy further provides support for small-scale extensions subordinate to existing serviced accommodation where these would improve the quality or capacity of the accommodation in accordance with relevant design policies. In addition, where proposals involve a change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to serviced accommodation (Use Class C1), a condition will be attached to ensure that the property can be used flexibly as either C1 or C3 accommodation.

Based on the submitted plans and supporting information, the building currently comprises an ancillary outbuilding of permanent and substantial construction. Officers note that no external alterations or extensions are proposed, with any works required to facilitate the proposed use appearing to relate solely to internal alterations that would be unlikely to affect the building's structural soundness. On that basis, and from the information presently available, officers have no reason to conclude that the building would not be capable of conversion in accordance with the requirements of Policy CE-S5, or that the change of use would significantly alter the appearance of the existing building in accordance with Policy RT-D1.

A key issue in policy terms therefore appears to be whether the building would reasonably be regarded as a "traditional building" for the purposes of RT-D1, which supports the conversion of traditional buildings to serviced accommodation in appropriate circumstances. In that respect, officers note that the supporting information correctly references the Local Plan definition of traditional buildings, which states that these are: "Mostly older buildings of solid wall construction built of natural and often local materials (e.g. stone, cob, brick, lime mortar and render). On Exmoor, these usually predate World War II." Officers also agree with the agent in this case that this definition is descriptive rather than expressly restrictive.

Further to this point, paragraph 4.119 of the Local Plan states that traditional buildings are important assets contributing to the cultural heritage of the National Park and that the term may include buildings of historic interest, or buildings where the use of certain materials and design detailing are long established within the National Park. It further confirms that it is ultimately for the National Park Authority to determine whether a building is considered "traditional", having regard to its historic and/or vernacular merit and its contribution to the National Park.

In this instance, whilst officers acknowledge that the building is relatively modern in terms of its date of construction, it nevertheless incorporates a number of traditional and vernacular characteristics, including solid wall construction, brick and render finishes, a pitched natural slate roof and some timber detailing. As such, officers consider that the building reasonably reflects the form and appearance of traditional rural buildings within the National Park, notwithstanding its more modern origins.

On balance, therefore, officers acknowledge that the building may not strictly be regarded as "traditional". However, it exhibits the form and character of a traditional rural building and, importantly, is an existing building to which no external alterations are proposed. In these circumstances, officers consider that the resulting conflict with Policy RT-D1 should be afforded only limited weight in the overall planning balance.

In addition, officers also note that the proposal would deliver public benefits through the provision of a small-scale bed and breakfast business, supporting the local rural economy and visitor offer, to which officers afford moderate weight.

In light of the above, the identified conflict is not considered sufficiently significant to cause any degree of harm that would outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

Accordingly, officers consider that the proposal is, in principle, likely to be acceptable having regard to Policies CE-S5 and RT-D1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011–2031, albeit with some minor conflict with Policy RT-D1, subject to the acceptability of all other material considerations, including (but not limited to) impacts upon neighbouring amenity and highway safety, as considered below.

Policy HC-D15 of the Local Plan outlines the requirements for residential extensions specifically within the National Park. As such, it is important to emphasise that whilst the principle of residential extensions is supported, this is subject to set criteria.

Clause 1 of the Policy states that proposals for residential extensions will be permitted where, they firstly accord with the design principles set out in Policy CE-S6 (of which are considered further into the report), where they ensure that there is sufficient space within the existing curtilage to accommodate the extension without resulting in the overdevelopment of the site or adversely impacting on residential amenity space. Clause 1 also requires residential extensions to be proportionate to the original dwelling and specifies that in any case, any proposed extension will not exceed 35% of the original dwelling (considering any previous extensions including those carried out under permitted development rights).

It is important to note as per paragraph 6.173 of the Local Plan, for the purposes of implementing the Policy, floorspace shall be measured externally and shall include enclosed porches and conservatories. The 'original dwelling' is the dwelling as it existed on 1 April 1974 or as constructed if this was a date after 1 April 1974 (this being the date when the discharge of planning responsibilities was transferred to the National Park Committee of Somerset County Council).

Officers note that planning permission 6/43/23/016 permitted the use of the outbuilding in question as a home office, workshop, domestic storage and garage, subject to a condition requiring the cessation of its use as living accommodation and restricting its use to purposes ancillary to the dwelling at Ridgewood Cottage. The reason for imposing that condition was to ensure that the extensions and alterations remained appropriate in scale and design and did not result in the dwelling exceeding the 35% floorspace limitation set out in Policies HC-D15 of the Local Plan.

Therefore, for the reasons set out above, in these circumstances, officers consider it necessary to impose a condition on any permission granted restricting the use of the building to either the uses approved under permission 6/43/23/016 or as serviced accommodation only. The condition would prevent the formation of unrestricted ancillary residential accommodation associated with Ridgewood Cottage and thereby avoid conflict with Policy HC-D15 of the Local Plan.

Impacts on neighbouring / local amenity:

The nearest neighbouring property is located approximately 54 metres to the south-west of the building on the opposite side of the adjoining road (as the crow flies), with intervening hedgerows providing a degree of visual and acoustic separation between the sites. Officers also note that there are no other residential properties within the immediate vicinity of the building, other than Ridgewood Cottage itself.

The building already forms part of the established residential use on the site as an ancillary outbuilding and, as such, is inherently associated with a degree of day-to-day activity, including comings and goings connected to its lawful use.

Officers acknowledge that the proposed use as bed and breakfast accommodation would likely result in a greater intensity of activity than the building's existing ancillary use, including additional vehicular movements associated with guest arrivals and departures, together with more regular occupation of the building.

Nevertheless, having regard to the separation between neighbouring properties, together with the presence of existing hedgerows between them, officers do not consider that the proposal would be likely to give rise to an unacceptable degree of harm to neighbouring or local amenity over and above the site's existing lawful use in accordance with Criterion 1(g) of Policy CE S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011–2031.

Highways Impacts:

Turning to highways impacts, officers note that the proposed B&B unit would have an internal floor area of approximately 58sqm (based on officer measurements) and would contain only one bedroom. As such, the level of traffic generation associated with the use is likely to be relatively modest, with guest occupation likely to result in only a limited number of additional vehicle movements, typically associated with one or two guest vehicles being present at the site at any one time. Consequently, the proposal is not considered likely to result in unacceptable congestion on the local highway network.

The full application now confirms that dedicated parking provision for the B&B unit would be provided, and officers are satisfied that sufficient space exists within the site for vehicles to enter, turn and leave in a forward gear. The proposal would utilise the existing domestic access serving Ridgewood Cottage, and the submitted details demonstrate that the site is capable of accommodating an appropriate level of on site parking and manoeuvring space.

Officers therefore consider that the proposal would accord with the Somerset Highways Standing Advice, together with Policies AC D1 and AC D2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011–2031.

Other Matters:

Officers note that two objections have been received (one by a local resident and the other by the parish council) in respect of the application, raising concerns that the proposal would conflict with Condition 3 attached to planning permission 6/43/23/016 and could lead to the establishment of self-catering/non-serviced

holiday accommodation at Ridgewood Cottage. In considering these comments in detail, officers acknowledge that planning permission 6/43/23/016 restricted the use of the outbuilding to a home office, workshop, domestic storage and garage ancillary to the dwelling, following the completion of the approved extensions to the property.

However, the current application seeks separate planning permission for the use of part of the building as serviced accommodation and must therefore be considered on its own planning merits. Furthermore, should planning permission be granted, the use authorised by that permission would not constitute a breach of the condition attached to planning permission 6/43/23/016.

Officers have nevertheless had regard to the purpose of the condition, which was to prevent the outbuilding from being used as unrestricted residential accommodation associated with the host dwelling, having regard to the requirements of Policy HC-D15 of the Local Plan. For this reason, officers consider it necessary to impose a condition restricting the use of the building to either the uses authorised under planning permission 6/43/23/016 or as serviced accommodation only. This condition would ensure that any future proposal for self-catering holiday accommodation, unrestricted residential occupation, or any other materially different use would be subject to a separate planning application, at which time officers would be able to consider whether such a use would be acceptable.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the size of the accommodation and the retention of internal facilities, including a sink. Officers do not consider that the presence of such facilities, in itself, demonstrates that the accommodation would operate as self-catering accommodation. Subject to the recommended conditions, officers are satisfied that the proposal can be adequately controlled and that the concerns raised do not justify withholding planning permission.

With regard to ecology and biodiversity, Regulation 9(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 states that: "Without prejudice to the preceding provisions, a competent authority, in exercising any of its functions, must have regard to the requirements of the Directives so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions."

As such, the Local Planning Authority consults its internal ecologist where appropriate to ensure that any implications under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 are properly assessed and addressed as part of the decision-making process.

Furthermore, Policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan states that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest within the National Park will be given great weight and also that development likely to cause harm to legally protected species, or lead to the loss of or damage to their habitats, will not be permitted unless this can be mitigated or then offset so that local populations are at least maintained.

In this case, officers note that no objection has been received from the Authority's Ecologist and that the majority of the proposal relates solely to the change of use of the building. As such, the development is not considered likely to have a significant effect on ecology or biodiversity on site. The only physical external alteration

associated with the proposal is the creation of a single parking space measuring approximately 11.5 square metres. The submitted details indicate that this area currently comprises bare ground of little to no ecological value and would simply be surfaced with stone. Officers therefore consider it unlikely that the proposal would result in any adverse impacts in this regard.

Accordingly, the development is considered to accord with Policy CE-S3 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan and the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, provided that the works are carried out in strict accordance with the recommended conditions.

Human Right

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined within this report, and as set out within each subsection of the Officer Considerations section above, officers are satisfied that the proposal would, when considered as a whole, largely accord with the Development Plan.

The development is considered, when assessed in the round, to accord with Policies GP1, GP4, CE-S3, CE-S5, CE-S6, HC-D15, AC-D1 and AC-D2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011–2031. Whilst some minor conflict with Policy RT-D1 has been identified, by virtue of the age of the building and the fact that it may not therefore strictly be regarded as a ‘traditional’ building, officers consider that this conflict should be afforded only limited weight. The building is otherwise largely reflective of the form and character of a traditional rural building and, importantly, already exists, with no external alterations proposed as part of the development. Officers also note that the proposal would deliver some public benefits through the provision of a small-scale bed and breakfast business, supporting the local rural economy, which officers afford moderate weight in the overall planning balance. In light of the above, the identified conflict is not considered sufficiently significant to cause any degree of harm that would outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

Furthermore, no other material considerations have been identified that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan.

Officers therefore conclude that planning permission should be granted.

Recommendation

Approved with Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (as amended by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby approved shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the submitted site and location plans as well as drawings and plans numbered: ARPC1, ARPC2, ARPC3, ARPC4 & ARPC5, unless otherwise required by another condition attached to this consent.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the works accord with the approved details.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be used other than as:
(a) serviced holiday accommodation in association with the host dwelling provided that no individual occupant shall occupy the serviced holiday accommodation for a period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year; or
(b) a home office, workshop, domestic storage and garage ancillary to the host dwelling.

The building shall not be used as a separate dwelling, as self-catering holiday accommodation, or for any other purpose other than the uses set out in (a) and (b).

Reason: To ensure that any future alternative use of the building can be properly assessed by the Local Planning Authority and to ensure that the proposed extensions and alterations are appropriate in scale and design and do not exceed the 35% limit on increased floorspace, in line with Policies HC-D15 and HC-D16 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

4. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, the parking space shown on drawing number ARPC5 shall be laid out, surfaced and made available for use.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate parking facilities in the interests of highway safety and to accord with the Somerset Highways Standing Advice and Policies AC-D1 and AC-D2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

Informatives

1. POSITIVE & PROACTIVE STATEMENT:

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome.

2. MONITORING OF DEVELOPMENT:

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers

as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

3. CONDITIONS AND INFORMATIVES AND THE SUBMISSION OF FURTHER DETAILS:

Please check all the conditions and informatives attached to this Decision Notice. If there are any conditions which require submission of details and/or samples prior to work commencing on site it is vital that these are submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before work starts. Given the High Court's interpretation of the Planning Acts and their lawful implementation it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority will be able to agree to a sample/details after the commencement of works if that sample/details should have been approved prior to commencement. If a sample/detail is not agreed as required prior to commencement and works have started then it is likely that this matter may only be able to be rectified by the submission of another application. To avoid delay, inconvenience and the need to submit a further application, please ensure that all appropriate details/samples are submitted and agreed at the specified time. Please also note that due to other decisions of the High Court it is now not normally possible for the Local Planning Authority to agree to minor amendments to approved applications. It will be necessary to adopt a formal approach and that if changes to approved plans are proposed then it will be necessary to make a new planning application. Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN:

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless: (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Exmoor National Park Authority. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

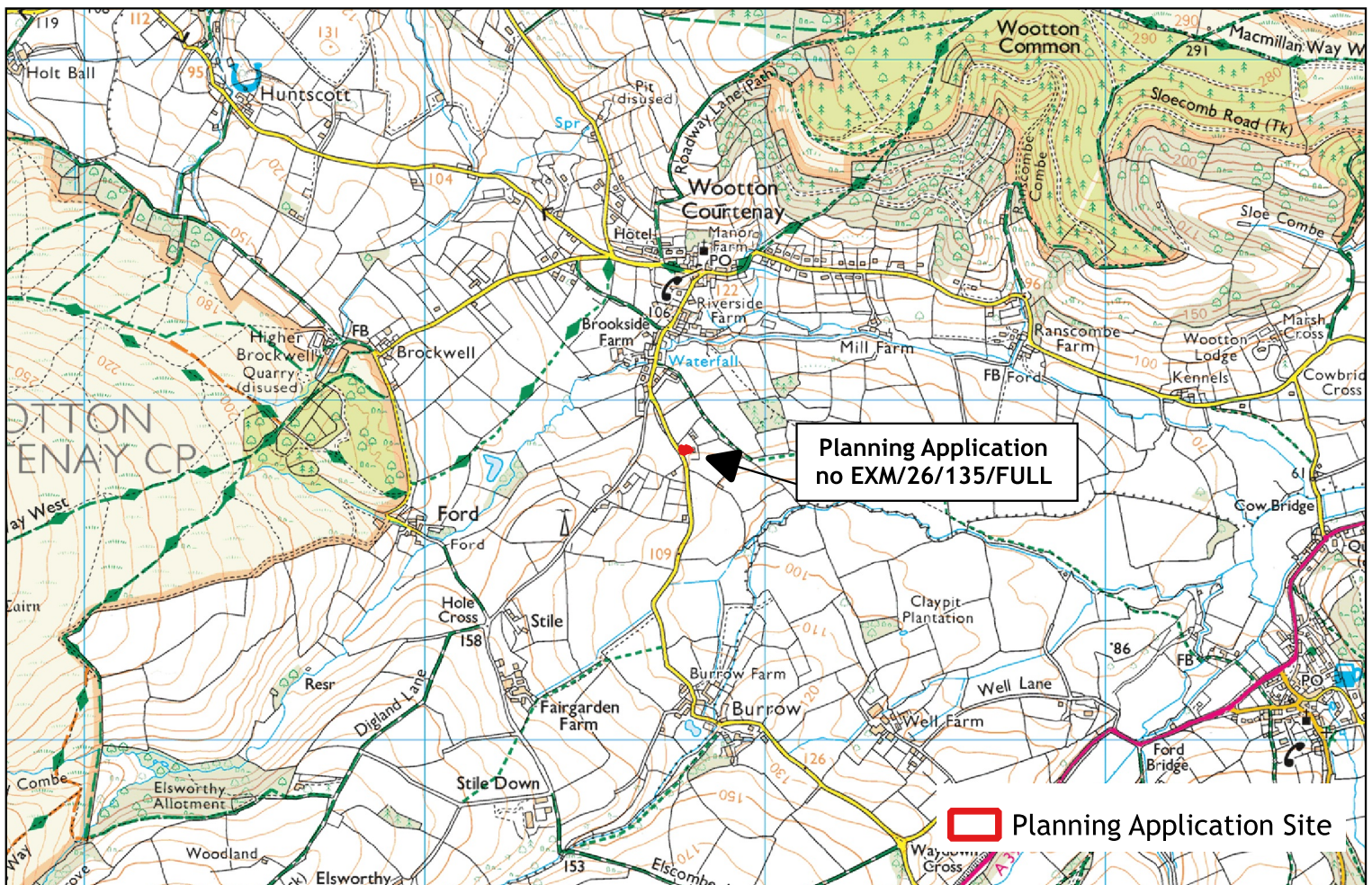
Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements in the list below is/are considered to apply.

BNG is not required for applications (of which were submitted prior to 6th August 2026) which impact less than 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat within the red line boundary or 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows.

Site Map

Scale

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Overview Map

Scale 1:20,000

Committee Report

Application Number:	EXM/26/084/FULL
Valid Date:	23 March 2026
Target Determination Date:	24 July 2026
Extension of Time:	09 October 2026
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs Lloyd & Gemma Parry
Agent:	Miss M Hunter
Case Officer:	Yvonne Dale
Site Address:	Land at Knappy Piece Luckwell Bridge Wheddon Cross
Proposal:	Proposed rural worker's dwelling and associated works.
Recommendation:	Refused
Reason for bringing before Planning Committee:	The Officer's recommendation is contrary to that of Cutcombe Parish Council who support the application. In line with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation the application is brought before Planning Committee for determination.
Pre-commencement conditions agreed:	N/A

Relevant History

6/8/96/104

Decision: Approved

Decision Date: 06/08/1996

Proposed replacement barn for sheep/associated storage, Knappy Piece, Luckwell Bridge, Wheddon Cross, as described in the plans and drawings submitted and amended plan received 16 July 1996

6/8/99/116

Decision: Approved

Decision Date: 02/08/1999

Proposed access trackway, Knappy Piece, Luckwell Bridge, Wheddon Cross, as described in the plans and drawings submitted

Site Description & Proposal

Land at Knappy Piece lies within open countryside near Luckwell Bridge, between Wheddon Cross and Exford, via the B3224. The site lies approximately 2km west of Wheddon Cross.

The land to the west of the access gateway is built up and is steeply sloping with the River Quarme to the north and rising ground beyond.

The planning history for the land shows an approved replacement building for sheep/associated storage and a new access track. From the Officer's site visit, the approved track and access are being used, and the replacement building is also on site. There are additional buildings including a small, timber shed and a

corrugated metal clad building sited to the east of the approved replacement building. A shipping container is sited in between (south of) the approved replacement building and the existing roadside hedge.

The planning application proposes the erection of a rural workers dwelling and associated works.

Consultee Representations

Initial Consultation 23/03/2026:

Somerset Highways Authority – 24/03/2026 – standing advice

Somerset Rural Housing Enabler – 31/03/2026 – The applicant seeks permission to create a 2-bedroom dwelling and, on the application form, has stated that this will be a ‘market’ dwelling. Within the planning statement they assert the need for an agricultural worker dwelling in accordance with Local Plan Policy HC-D8 and that the dwelling will be approximately 66.3 m², well within the expected limit of 93 m².

I believe it is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to the satisfaction of the Authority that the intended occupants meet the relevant criteria for an agricultural worker dwelling.

My observation is that should the applicant be unable to provide such evidence to the satisfaction of the planning authority, then such a dwelling would only normally be permitted within the Local Plan if it were provided as an Affordable dwelling for a qualifying person, leaving aside any other relevant policy considerations.

I am assuming that the applicant has ticked the ‘market’ box on the application form on the basis that, should it be permitted, the dwelling would pass to any future owner along with the business as a whole and that the relevant planning condition would pass with title.

I cannot see where Local Plan policy directly refers to the use of agricultural dwellings in the event that the business to which they are associated becomes uneconomic and/or the worker is no longer required, perhaps the Local Plan is silent on the matter. However, in that potential future scenario I would expect the dwelling to ‘convert’ to an affordable dwelling, possibly by the imposition of a permanent discount.

I hasten to add here that it may be that the intended occupants satisfy the local connection criteria that would otherwise apply for such a self-build dwelling and that permission could be considered on this basis, but as an Affordable dwelling with an appropriate s106 Agreement restricting to principal residence, enforcing a suitable discount on resale and capturing the local connection criteria in perpetuity.

There are no other material observations.

Environment Agency – 08/04/2026 – Object - Environment Agency position
In the absence of a flood risk assessment (FRA), we object to this application and recommend that planning permission is refused.

Reason(s)

The application site lies within Flood Zones 3 and 2, which is land defined by the planning practice guidance as having a high/medium probability of flooding. The NPPF (paragraph 181, footnote 63) and the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance (paragraphs 20 and 21) states that an FRA must be submitted when development is proposed in such locations.

An FRA is vital to making informed planning decisions. In its absence, the flood risks posed by the development are unknown. This is sufficient reason for refusing planning permission.

Overcoming our objection

To overcome our objection, the applicant should submit an FRA which demonstrates that the development is safe without increasing risk elsewhere. Where possible, it should reduce flood risk overall.

If this cannot be achieved, we are likely to maintain our objection.

Cutcombe Parish Council – 24/04/2026 – Support – Cutcombe Parish Council made the following comments - a traffic management plan of what is going to happen would be helpful as there was some concern around this, but it was felt the property is justified to be on site for the welfare of livestock. Cllr Roger Foxwell proposed the council support the application, Cllr Sarah Cook Seconded the proposal which was resolved unanimously.

ENPA – Ecologist – 19/05/2026 – Based on the proposal it is good to have received an ecology report: Ecological Impact Assessment (including a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment), ref: MAS:HB:0532, Acorn Rural Property Consultants, dated 5 December 2025. The ecology report details the findings of a desk study, field survey, and a UKHab/BNG survey. BNG documents have also been submitted including: Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Biodiversity Gain Statement and maps of the baseline and proposal. The methods, presentation of results and recommendations within the reports are satisfactory.

The survey identified the presence of the following habitats: gorse scrub (although this had already been removed), ruderals, native hedgerow with trees and an access track. The report identifies that the hedgerow provides suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats, use by dormice and nesting birds. The ruderal habitat was identified as suitable for common reptiles and the habitats present on site may be used by foraging badgers.

The proposal does not involve any negative impacts on the hedgerow, net gain will be achieved through enhancement; therefore, it is not expected that there will be any impacts to dormice or nesting birds that may be utilising the hedgerow. To

prevent any impacts on reptiles, the ruderal vegetation clearance should occur in two stages. The vegetation should be cut to around 100mm initially and then to ground level between 2-7 days after the first cut. The vegetation should then be maintained to a height of 50-100mm and cuttings removed.

Best practice measures should be followed to reduce entrapment risk to wildlife, including hedgehogs and badgers, as a precaution any open trenches or pits or large pipes (>200mm diameter) should be covered at night; and any open excavations should have a means of escape, for example by way of a sloped plank or sloped end to allow any animals to escape. Please secure by condition.

The ecology report recommends the installation of at least one bird box or cup. This should be installed 2-3m or 5m for swift, swallow and marten nests, above the ground on a building or tree facing between north and east. In addition to this, I would recommend the installation of a least one bat box. The bat box should be installed on a building or tree 3-5m above the ground facing between southwest and southeast.

It is stated in the Design and Access statement that there will be minimal external lighting. This should be downward facing and sensor controlled. Please could it be ensured that the bulbs used should be 2700 or less and 500 lumens or less.

Given the size of the site and the scale of the BNG works it is probable that the applicant will be able to achieve 10% BNG onsite.

In addition to the statutory biodiversity gain condition (for which an informative should be added to any decision notice) and the HMMP condition, I suggest conditions are applied to any permission granted to secure enhancements as detailed above and for the following for which I have provided some suggested wording below:

- The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with all ecological measures as set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment (Acorn, December 2025).
- Prior to the installation of any external lighting on site, a “lighting design strategy for bats” shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:
identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their resting places, foraging habitat and commuting routes; and
show how and where external lighting will be installed (for example through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their resting places.
All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy.

Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

ENPA – Future Landscapes Officer – 18/06/2026 - The proposed dwelling would require substantial excavation works in order to create a level development platform. Based on the submitted levels and sections, this is likely to generate a surplus of excavated material, which would either require redistribution elsewhere within the site or removal from the site. Although the dwelling has been sited towards the lower part of the slope, the resulting landform would include a relatively substantial rear bank, ranging from approximately 0.6 metres to 2.4 metres in height, with a gradient of around 1:3.

The submitted details indicate that the dwelling would be finished with timber cladding to the walls and steel pantiles to the roof. Steel pantiles are not a traditional roofing material commonly associated with permanent dwellings within Exmoor.

The planning statement indicates external lighting will be kept to a minimum. It is requested that, should permission be granted, an appropriately worded condition is imposed requiring any external lighting to be dark sky compliant, to protect the dark night sky.

Re-Consultation – 22/04/2026 – Environment Agency Only

Environment Agency – 11/05/2026 – Object - Environment Agency position
In the absence of a flood risk assessment (FRA), we object to this application and recommend that planning permission is refused.

Reason(s)

The application site lies partially within Flood Zone 2, which is land defined by the planning practice guidance as having a medium probability of flooding. The NPPF (paragraph 181, footnote 63) and the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance (paragraphs 20 and 21) states that an FRA must be submitted when development is proposed in such locations.

An FRA is vital to making informed planning decisions. In its absence, the flood risks posed by the development are unknown. This is sufficient reason for refusing planning permission.

We note that the application proposes land raising for the site. It is important for the applicant to clarify the existing and proposed site levels alongside the flood levels (including climate change).

Overcoming our objection

To overcome our objection, the applicant should submit an FRA which demonstrates that the development is safe without increasing risk elsewhere. Where possible, it should reduce flood risk overall.

If this cannot be achieved, we are likely to maintain our objection.

Re-Consultation – 05/08/2026**Somerset Highways Authority – 11/08/2026 – standing advice****Environment Agency – 24/08/2026 – Conditional Support**

Environment Agency position

Having reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, we are now satisfied with the proposal and withdraw our previous objection subject to the inclusion of the following flood risk-related planning condition.

Condition – Secure Implementation of the FRA

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (ref Flood Risk Assessment, Acorn Rural Property Consultants LLP, 20th June 2026) and plans (Proposed Plans, ARPC4, 5th December 2025; Proposed Site Plans, ARPC3, Rev A, 5th December 2025), and the following mitigation measures they detail:

- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 236.551 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD)
- Any changes to the land levels for the positioning of the platform/dwelling shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans

These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason

To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants

Representations

Total – Objections	Total – Support	Total – No Objections
1	9	3

Summary of comments:

Summary of comments:

Thirteen public letters of representation have been received from 11 different properties, consisting of nine letters of support, one letter of objection and three letters of no objection.

The letters of support raise matters in relation to:

- Support for the principle of development
Several comments describe the proposal as well-considered, appropriate, and in keeping with the setting of Exmoor National Park.
- Landscape, visual and environmental impact

Respondents argue that the development would not harm the character, natural beauty, visual amenity, or wider environment, particularly because it is proposed on/near an existing yard with agricultural buildings.

- **Community benefit and local need**
A strong theme is that the proposal would support local people who are already embedded in the community, helping sustain the population and meet community needs.
- **Personal circumstances and welfare benefits**
Many comments emphasise the practical benefits of the applicants living next to their place of work, including better use of time, reduced travel, and improved ability to respond to livestock or animal welfare needs.
- **Agricultural and livestock-related justification**
Commenters highlight the importance of being on site 24/7 for livestock care and emergency response.
- **Exmoor ponies and cultural/landscape value**
The applicants' role as breeders and supporters of Exmoor ponies is presented as important to the special character and heritage of the area.
- **Positive reputation of the applicants**
Several comments focus on the applicant's longstanding contribution to the local community, describing them as supportive neighbours and valued residents.
- **Traffic and sustainability**
One recurring point is that the dwelling may reduce travel to and from the site and is unlikely to cause significant traffic impacts.

The letter of objection raises concerns in relation to:

- The impact on the landscape
- The increase in traffic onto the main road
- The loss of grazing land
- A non-essential dwelling

Planning Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 (inclusive of minerals and waste policies):

GP1 Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

GP3 Spatial Strategy

GP4 The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings

CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S2 Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky

CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

CE-S6 Design & Sustainable Construction Principles

CC-D1 Flood Risk

CC-D5 Sewerage Capacity and Sewage Disposal

CC-S6 Waste Management

CC-S7 Pollution

HC-S1 Housing

HC-S2 A Balanced Local Housing Stock

HC-D8 New Build Dwellings in the Open Countryside

HC-D9 Rural Workers

AC-S1 Sustainable Transport

AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

AC-S3 Traffic Management and Parking

AC-D3 Parking Provision and Standards

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material planning material consideration for all applications.

Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations in this case are whether the proposed development would meet a proven need for a rural worker to reside at the site taking account of the housing strategy of the Local Plan, whether the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the locality, flood risk, highway safety and on protected species and habitats.

NEED TO RESIDE AT THE SITE AND THE LOCAL PLAN HOUSING STRATEGY

Policy GP3 of the Local Plan states that the spatial strategy aims to ensure that communities across the National Park continue to thrive so that they are economically resilient, environmentally sustainable, socially mixed and inclusive. To facilitate sustainable development across the National Park, development proposals should accord with the spatial strategy. For the purposes of this Policy, the application site lies within Open Countryside (Clause 4 of GP3).

It is recognised that for the proper functioning of rural enterprises individual dwellings are sometimes required in the open countryside. This is identified within the housing strategy of the Local Plan. Policy HC-D8 of the Local Plan advises that, amongst other things, new dwellings in the open countryside will only be permitted where:

- a) The accommodation is designed to meet a proven need for a rural worker in accordance with HC-D9 that cannot be met:
 - i) Within the existing housing stock; or
 - ii) Through the provision of a temporary residential caravan; or
 - iii) The conversion of an existing building.

In addition, the Policy requires that the new dwelling is well related to existing buildings on the holding and that the design, layout and size should be appropriate.

Policy HC-D9 of the Local Plan relates to rural workers and advises, among other things, that new housing to meet the needs of rural workers will be permitted where it is justified by a proven essential functional need for a full time worker and that the business is proven to be financially viable in the long term.

Policy HO11 of the NPPF says that development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where one or more of the circumstances prescribed apply, including where there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

The application proposes the erection of a new rural worker's dwelling and associated works. The documents submitted alongside the application explain that the dwelling would be for the applicants.

Annex 2 of the Local Plan relates to Rural Land Based Worker Dwellings and sets out an appropriate way to approach 'the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside'. This includes functional and financial tests for new dwellings in the open countryside, and rural worker appraisals.

The submitted planning statement sets out that the property currently comprises a steel frame building, a yard area, and approximately 30 acres of grassland. It explains that the applicants operate an enterprise, called Sweetworthy Stud, that breeds pedigree registered Exmoor ponies. The applicants have been members of the Exmoor Pony Society since 2003, and the Sweetworthy Herd includes some rare bloodlines. The Exmoor pony breed is on the Rare Breed Survival Trust 2025 2026 watchlist as a priority (red list) breed.

The enterprise currently keeps approximately 38 ponies, comprising 14 youngsters (1-4yo), 7 geldings, 1 stallion and 16 mares. The submitted planning statement advises that around six mares are foaled per year which takes place in April and May. Progeny is reared to show at events within the south west, and to provide conservation grazing for appropriate sites when required. Progeny that is surplus to requirements is sold or gifted/loaned to other owners. Conservation grazing is carried out for the Somerset Wildlife Trust and butterfly conservation, as well as for private landowners. Ponies have also been sold to conservation groups including Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and to Hampshire County Council.

Submitted alongside the application is a standard man-hour labour units calculation based on the 38 ponies. The calculation sets out that the enterprise has a total full-time equivalent labour requirement of 4.4 persons.

The planning statement also advises the applicants travel around the south west competing at shows and usually attend around 20 shows per year. It advises that the enterprise owns a range of farm machinery and equipment that allows all yard tasks and field operations to be carried out by the applicants.

The enterprise is operated on a not-for-profit basis which is supported financially by the applicants from their outside earnings and from the legacy that was provided to them by the former owner of the Tawbitts Herd. The enterprise also generates some income from sales of progeny from time to time.

The submitted planning statement also advises that, given the scale of the enterprise together with the necessary management and supervision of the ponies, which includes management and supervision of foaling and progeny, unforeseen emergencies, and the provision for the general welfare and security of ponies, there is an essential need for a full-time worker to be on site. The planning agent contends that the proposal would therefore meet a proven functional need.

The applicants have also provided a supporting letter from their veterinary surgeon.

The Authority commissioned an independent appraisal (appraisal) of the supporting information submitted. This was carried out by Bateman Hosegood. The appraisal advises that the Standard Labour Requirement Assessment for the business demonstrates that there is a total equivalent labour requirement of 4.4 people. The applicants have used the ABC Equine Business Guide 8th Edition to provide these figures.

The appraisal Author, whilst they did not feel it was necessary to disagree with the labour requirement calculation, pointed out that the labour equivalence in hours per head per year contained within the Equine Business Guide relates to all types of equine animals. In their professional opinion, a thoroughbred brood mare will require significantly more labour input than a native Exmoor Pony brood mare.

The appraisal notes that there are between 4 and 6 foaling's per year, conducted over a relatively short period and the appraisal Author considers that, with a herd of native Exmoor Ponies foaling outside, there is not a functional need to live on-site all year round.

The appraisal further notes that the applicants were able to demonstrate that they work with the ponies on a full-time basis, however, a significant amount of their time over the year is associated with the preparation and showing of animals throughout the southwest attending around 20 shows per year and the management of the conservation grazing ponies.

The appraisal concludes that *'it has not clearly been demonstrated that there is a significant functional need for a full-time rural worker to be living on-site'*.

The appraisal also advises that:

'A definition of financial viability is a business project or investment that has the capacity to generate enough revenue to cover its operating costs, pay its debts and produce a sufficient profit to justify its continued existence, or initial investment. The business enterprise as it is, does not generate enough revenue to cover its operational costs and is instead relying on investment income generated through a financial legacy which was bequeathed to it.'

If the Planning Authority were minded to consider investment income as revenue, then they would be setting a precedent whereby any application that benefited from a non-related cash sum, would meet the relevant

criteria, which in my mind does not comply with the spirit or the principles of the financial test’.

The appraisal further advises that *‘The business does not satisfy the financial test as set out in the above policy’.*

The appraisal concludes that *‘Having assessed all the information provided regarding this application and after thoroughly reviewing the applicant’s business in detail, it is my opinion that the business does not meet the relevant criteria as set out in policies HC-D8 & HC-D9 of the local plan or the relevant policies of the NPPF’.*

Further to the independent appraisal, the agent has submitted additional information in support of the proposal including justification for a full time worker to reside onsite and the financial viability of the business.

The agent iterates that the *‘labour assessment [used] is based on the ABC Equine Business Guide (8th Edition), an established and widely recognised industry standard for assessing labour requirements within equine enterprises’.* It says that *‘In the absence of any evidence-based justification for departing from the published methodology, there is no sound basis for applying alternative labour coefficients. The accepted industry standard should therefore be afforded significant weight, particularly as the resulting labour requirement of 4.4 full-time workers has not itself been challenged’.* It also says that *‘Taken together, the accepted labour requirement of 4.4 full-time workers, the continuous management demands of the enterprise, the unpredictable nature of welfare emergencies, and the professional opinion of White Lodge Vets clearly demonstrate an essential functional need for a full-time worker to reside on the holding. The proposal therefore satisfies Policy HC-D9’.*

The agent further iterates that in relation to financial viability, *‘neither the Exmoor Local Plan nor the wording of Policies HC-D8 and HC-D9 requires viability to be assessed solely by reference to income generated directly from trading activities. There is therefore no policy basis for excluding legitimately available income streams from consideration and the relevant question is whether adequate and reliable financial resources are available to sustain the enterprise in the long term.*

In this case, the financial legacy that has been left for the applicants represents a secure and established source of funding that is available to support the ongoing operation of the enterprise. That funding enables the continued management of land that delivers significant public benefits, including habitat management, biodiversity enhancement and conservation grazing within the National Park.

Accordingly, the evidence demonstrates that the proposal satisfies both the functional and financial tests contained within Policies HC-D8 and HC-D9’.

Officers asked Mr Bateman for his comments in relation to the further information submitted by the agent. Mr Bateman sets out in relation to:

1. Proven essential functional need for a full time rural worker: that in his experience as someone who has owned Exmoor Ponies which are utilised for their grazing attributes, the standard book figures for brood mares are high and would relate to high value sports horses and racing stock rather than native ponies. He further iterates, through quotes from various publications including 'Federation of Equestrian Internationale' by Emma Wallace [2026], 'The Pure Bred Exmoor Pony' by Anothony Dent [1970] and publications from the 'Exmoor Pony Society' that Exmoor Ponies are a hardy, self-sufficient breed and need little intervention. This, together with his initial report, Mr Bateman sets out that when considering the essential functional need for a full-time worker to be living on site, that whilst the published book figures support the criteria of a full time worker, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the need for a full time worker to be living on site relates to the essential and functional needs of the enterprise.

2. Financial Viability of the Business: Mr Bateman states that he disagrees with the agents approach [that it is wrong to disregard income derived from a financial legacy when assessing business viability, that there is no policy basis for excluding legitimately available income streams from consideration and the relevant question is whether adequate and reliable financial resources are available to sustain the enterprise in the long term] in terms of setting a precedent whereby an applicant who is able to demonstrate adequate financial reserves in one form or another would be able to obtain planning consent irrespective of whether the business is planned on a sound financial basis.

Mr Bateman summarises that it is his opinion having regard to the agents further submissions that the application does not meet the planning criteria for a rural workers dwelling as set out in the Local Plan. Whilst the published book figures support the full time worker criteria, the activities associated with the enterprise do not require a full time workers to be living on site to meet the essential functional needs of the business. In terms of financial viability, the applicants have not demonstrated that the business is financially viable through its own activities relying on investment income derived from a financial legacy.

Whilst Officers are satisfied that there are no other dwellings locally that could fulfil a need to live at this holding, Officers are clear that a functional need for permanent on site accommodation is not demonstrated in this instance.

The rural land based enterprise is centred around 38 Exmoor Ponies. These animals, who prefer to reside outside, clearly need looking after, with particular attention needed at certain times of the year, such as during foaling.

About six mares are foaled a year and this is during April and May. During such times having a permanent residence on site would assist in caring for the animals that are accommodated at the land holding.

However, foaling does not take place all year round. There is no compelling evidence that animal welfare issues would arise that would justify a permanent and full-time year round presence on the site.

Whilst the applicant has advised that an on site presence would assist security at the site. Security concerns alone rarely justify a rural workers dwelling.

Moreover, having regard to the information available Officers are not satisfied that the rural business was shown to be financially sound.

On the basis of the above and the information submitted, it is not considered that it has been demonstrated that the proposed development is justified by a proven essential functional need for a full time worker or that the business is proven to be financially viable in the long term. Therefore, the proposed development does not accord with Policies HC-D8 or HC-D9 of the Local Plan.

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The landscape within the vicinity of the application site consists of a series of pasture fields with traditional hedges to the perimeters with the River Quarme running along the north/northeast boundary of the application site. The pattern of fields and scattered farmsteads combine to contribute to a prevailing sense of undeveloped character and scenic beauty.

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan advises that sustainable development for the National Park will conserve and enhance the National Park, its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and its special qualities, while promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of these qualities by the public and, in doing so, foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

Policies CE-S1, CE-D1 and CE-S6 of the Local Plan, amongst other things, require that development delivers high quality sustainable designs that conserve and enhance Exmoor's landscapes and the distinctiveness of Exmoor's built environment. Policy CE-S2 refers to Exmoor's dark night sky and advises that, amongst other things, the tranquillity and dark sky experience of Exmoor National Park Dark Sky Reserve and the National Park as a whole, will be maintained and improved.

Policy CE-S6 advises that development proposals should deliver high quality sustainable designs that conserve and enhance the local identity and distinctiveness of Exmoor's built and historic environment. Materials and design should complement the local context through the use of traditional and natural sustainable building materials.

Policy HC-D9 advises that the gross internal area of new rural worker dwellings will be 93sqm or less, unless it is demonstrated that a larger dwelling is required in which case, the size of the dwelling will be commensurate with the needs of the holding.

These policies are consistent with the NPPF and the protection of the National Park and have regard to the purposes of designated National Parks and their status.

Policy N4 of the NPPF says, amongst other things, that development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities

of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas, and to conserving and enhancing wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks and the Broads.

The application site comprises of agricultural land with an authorised agricultural building (application reference 6/8/96/104) and access track (6/8/99/1116). As noted above, there are other buildings on site to the immediate east and south of the approved replacement building.

The site has rising ground to the north beyond the River Quarme and the land to the immediate west of the access gateway is built up and is steeply sloping. Whilst there is a hedge boundary between the application site and the public road, the proposed development would be seen from the road and the existing entrance. The house would be set back from the road but would be clearly visible from it, whereas the existing buildings are more discreet.

The proposal requires a substantial amount of excavation in order to create a level development platform. The submitted details set out that the development would require the excavation of approximately 113 cubic metres of material with the majority of the material being used on site and the remainder being moved and used elsewhere on the holding.

The Authority's Future Landscape Officer notes that although the dwelling has been sited towards the lower part of the slope, a relatively substantial rear bank would be created ranging from approximately 0.6 metres to 2.4 metres in height, with a gradient of around 1:3.

The local traditional building vernacular of the surrounding area is painted render houses under natural slate roofs, typically of two storeys. The proposed materials have been amended to include a clay tile roof and timber framed windows that better reflect the traditional, natural, sustainable building materials of the local surroundings.

Paragraph 20 of the submitted planning statement advises that the mobile home shown on the drawings included with this application is a representation of the type of dwelling that will be located on the site. Externally, dimensions will be approximately 11.3 metres in length and 6.1 metres wide. The height to the eaves will be approximately 2.8 metres above floor level and the ridge height will be approximately 4.1 metres above floor level.

Nevertheless, if planning permission is granted the plans submitted with the application would be conditioned and any variations would need to be approved afresh.

The floor area of the proposed dwelling is approximately 69m² and falls within the size limit set out in Policy HC-D9.

The local vernacular is characterised by traditionally proportioned dwellings and farmsteads that form coherent groups of buildings, typically incorporating painted

render walls and natural slate roofs. The proposed dwelling, by reason of its design, proportions and siting, would not reflect these characteristics and would appear as a visually separate and unrelated feature within the landscape.

Furthermore, its position detached from other established buildings would result in a development that would appear isolated and incongruous in the landscape, failing to reinforce local distinctiveness or integrate satisfactorily with its surroundings.

Consequently, the proposal would neither conserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the site or the wider landscape of Exmoor National Park and would conflict with Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1 and HC-D9 of the Local Plan, which seek development that respects local character, reinforces local distinctiveness and conserves and enhances the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the National Park.

FLOOD RISK

Policy CC-D1 of the Local Plan relates to flood risk and states, among other things, that development proposals will be permitted where they do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

The Environment Agency have commented on the application and stated that the 'application site lies within Flood Zones 3 and 2, which is land defined by the planning practice guidance as having a high/medium probability of flooding and in the absence of a flood risk assessment, we object to the application and recommend that planning permission is refused'.

The agent subsequently provided additional information including an overlay plan that demonstrated that the red line application boundary marginally intersected with Flood Zone 2. The agent further noted that whilst a small portion of the site boundary does touch Flood Zone 2, the proposed dwelling is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, and the access is also wholly within Flood Zone 1.

Nevertheless, a Flood Risk Assessment was submitted, and the red line boundary of the site was amended to ensure that no built development would take place in Flood Zones 2 or 3.

Officers are satisfied that it has been demonstrated that the development would be in Flood Zone 1 and therefore, not at a high risk of flooding. In addition, the Environment Agency are satisfied with the proposal and have removed their objection subject to the inclusion of a planning condition.

In relation to surface water run-off, the application indicates that all surface water run-off is proposed to discharge into the existing watercourse.

As such, subject to the imposition of a condition, the proposal is considered to accord with Local Plan policy CC-D1 (Flood Risk).

IMPACT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY

Policies AC-S1, AC-S2, AC-D2 and AC-D3 of the Local Plan relate to transport requirements, traffic levels and parking provision.

Policy AC-D2 of the Local Plan states that development, which will cause unacceptable levels of traffic in terms of the environmental or physical capacity of the local road network, or would prejudice road safety interests, will not be permitted.

Policy AC-D3 sets out minimum requirements for parking spaces and states that for a 1 or 2 bedroom house 2 car parking spaces are required and that development in more sustainable locations that are well served by public transport or have good walking and cycling links will be considered appropriate for lower levels of car parking provision.

The site currently consists of agricultural land, with agricultural buildings. The proposal seeks the installation of a new, 2-bedroom permanent rural workers dwelling.

The application form indicates that the proposed development would increase the parking provision on site through the provision of two vehicle spaces. However, the plans submitted don't show any parking provision.

Somerset Highways Authority have commented on the application and state that their standing advice applies. The Somerset Technical Advice Notes 26/22 - standing advice for planning applications v3 notes in paragraph 3.1.4 *'There may be occasions where the Highway Authority recommends that Standing Advice applies to an application, but that an alternate (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) visibility splay is more appropriate. Under these circumstances, the visibility splay requirements will be clearly defined with the initial consultation response'*. No such requirements in relation to visibility splays have been provided in this case.

The existing access would be used for the new dwelling and no changes are proposed. The site is accessed off the B3224 with the gate set back from the road edge. The nature of the road is such that traffic would likely be proceeding with a degree of caution, given they are approaching and exiting a bend in the road.

Policy TR6 of the NPPF relates to assessing transport impacts and paragraph 4 specifically states that development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts) or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

The associated traffic volume with the proposed use is likely to be modest taking into account the permanent residential use and the reduction in journeys from the applicant(s) to and from the site.

The development seeks to provide a 2 bed dwelling. Even though, as noted above, the submitted plans do not show any parking spaces, Officers are satisfied that the application site area includes land that is clearly capable of facilitating the provision of at least two parking spaces. On that basis, Officers consider that an appropriate condition requiring details of the parking spaces to be agreed and available for use prior to the first occupation of the dwelling could be added to any grant of planning permission.

Additionally, should planning permission be granted, standard conditions in relation to surfacing and drainage, a properly consolidated surface for at least the first six (6) metres from the adjoining carriageway and inward opening gates could be added.

It is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to produce unacceptable levels of traffic in terms of the environmental or physical capacity of the local road network. Given the visibility at the access and noting that the proposal relates to a single dwelling, the proposal would be unlikely to result in severe harm to the safe, convenient and efficient movement of highway users. In having regard to this, the proposal would not therefore prejudice road safety interests and would accord with Policies AC-S1, AC-S2, AC-D2 and AC-D3 of the Local Plan.

There would also be no conflict with Policy TR6 of the NPPF which states that development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts) or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

IMPACT ON PROTECTED SPECIES AND HABITATS

Policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan relates to biodiversity and green infrastructure and states that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest within the National Park will be given great weight. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) dated 5 December 2025 has been submitted alongside the application.

The EclA notes that the survey identified the presence of the following habitats: gorse scrub (although this had already been removed), ruderals, native hedgerow with trees and an access track. The report identifies that the hedgerow provides suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats, use by dormice and nesting birds. The ruderal habitat was identified as suitable for common reptiles and the habitats present on site may be used by foraging badgers.

This Authority's Ecologist has commented on the application and states *'the proposal does not involve any negative impacts on the hedgerow, net gain will be achieved through enhancement; therefore, it is not expected that there will be any impacts to dormice or nesting birds that may be utilising the hedgerow'*. They raise no objection to the proposed development subject to condition and informatics in relation to works being carried out in accordance with ecological measures set out in the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment.

The proposed development is subject to the provision of statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

The submitted Ecological Impact Assessment sets out the BNG calculation shows the proposed development creates a BNG that exceeds the 10% net gain required by the Environment Act 2021. The Authority's Ecologist notes that given the size of the site and the scale of the BNG works it is probable that the applicant will be able to achieve 10% BNG on site.

The proposed development, through the use of appropriate conditions, mitigation and enhancements, would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on protected species and habitats and the proposed development would therefore accord with Policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan and Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

OTHER MATTERS

The closest residential property lies approximately 220 metres south east of the proposed application site, and would be separated from the site by existing agricultural land, the River Quarme, mature trees and vegetation.

Given the above, it is considered that there would not be an unacceptable increase in overlooking, the development would cause no adverse effect on the neighbouring occupiers from overbearing, loss of light or other adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents, in accordance with Policies GP1 and CE-S6 of the Local Plan.

It is noted from the submitted public comments that the applicants are held in high regard however their standing within the community affords little weight with regards to the acceptability of the planning application.

The application submission indicates that the foul drainage would be connected to a new sewage treatment plant discharging to a drainage field. There is no public sewer nearby which could be connected to. The connection to a treatment plant would be in accordance with Policy CC-D5 Sewerage capacity and sewage disposal. Surface water would be disposed of via the existing water course.

Human Right

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Planning Balance & Conclusion

The starting point for any planning decision is Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policies HC-D8 and HC-D9 refer to new build dwellings in the open countryside and rural workers respectively. It is not considered that it has been demonstrated that the

proposed development is justified by a proven essential functional need for a full time worker or that the business is proven to be financially viable in the long term. Therefore, the proposed development does not accord with Policies HC-D8 or HC-D9 of the Local Plan. This conflict with Policy is afforded significant weight.

The Local Plan, amongst other things, seeks high quality in terms of design that respects and complements local character and the character and appearance of the National Park landscapes. The proposed dwelling would fail to respond appropriately to the established character of the area. The proposed dwelling, by reason of its design, proportions and siting, would not reflect the characteristics of the surrounding vernacular including traditionally proportioned dwellings, and would appear as a visually separate and unrelated feature within the landscape.

Furthermore, its position detached from other established buildings would result in a development that would appear isolated and incongruous in the landscape, failing to reinforce local distinctiveness or integrate satisfactorily with its surroundings.

Consequently, the proposal would neither conserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the site or the wider landscape of Exmoor National Park and would conflict with Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1 and HC-D9 of the Local Plan. This harm is afforded substantial weight.

Whilst the proposal would have an acceptable impact on highway safety and ecology, these are normal planning requirements. These, therefore, neither weigh for or against the proposed development.

The business provides employment and contributes to the conservation of a rare breed and wider conservation efforts. There would also be benefits during the construction and occupation of the proposed dwelling. However, these benefits would be moderate given the size of the enterprise and they don't outweigh the conflict with the Local Plan Policies identified, or the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

As such, for the reasons given above, the proposal is considered to conflict with the development plan and there is no material considerations identified, individually or cumulatively, which are of such weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Consequently, the application is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons:

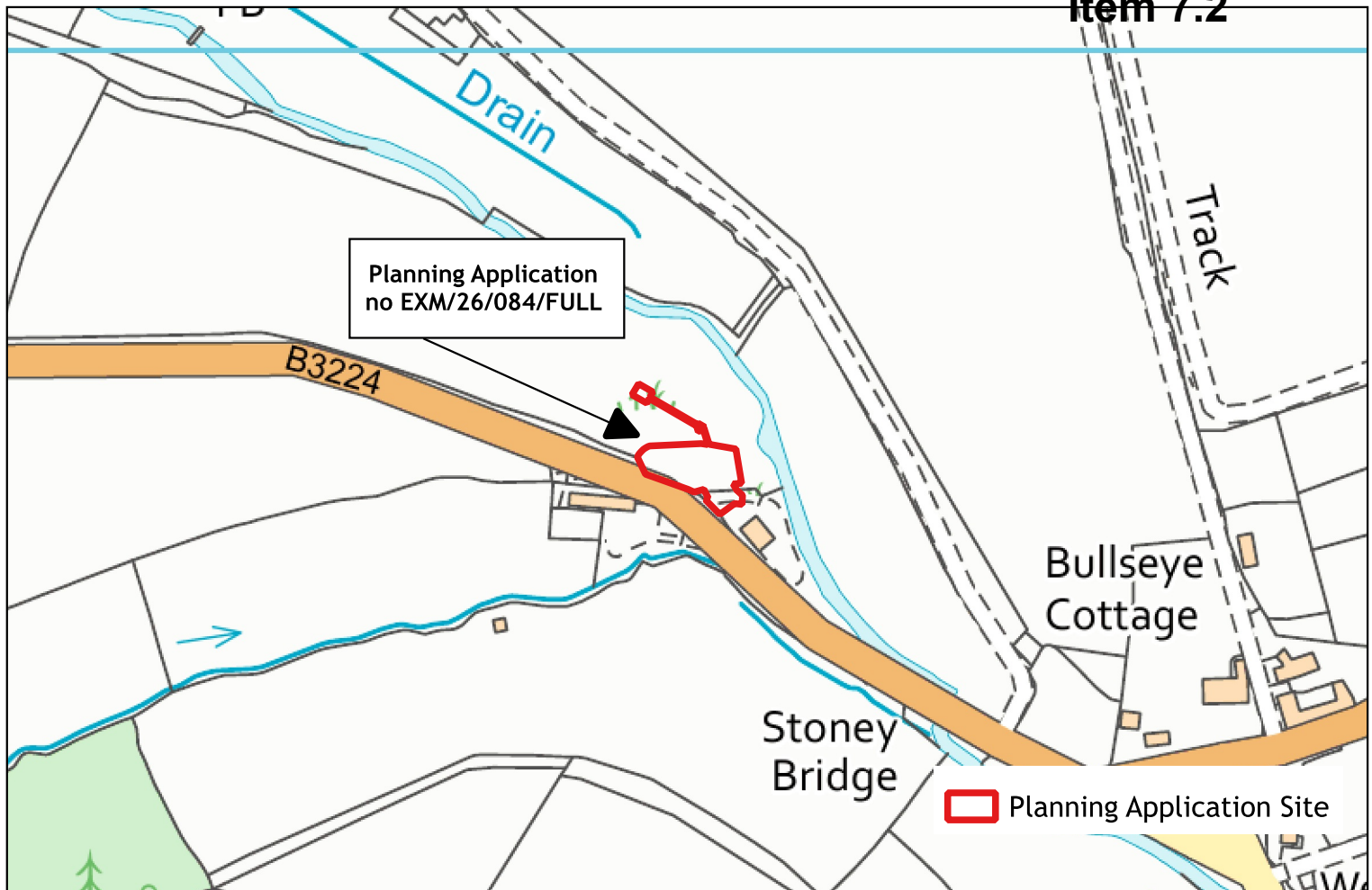
1. The proposed development has not been justified by a proven essential functional need for a full time worker and that the business is proven to be financially viable in the long term. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies HC-D8 and HC-D9 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.
2. The proposed dwelling, by reason of its design, scale, proportions and siting, would fail to reflect the established vernacular character of the area and would appear as an isolated and incongruous feature within the landscape. As a

result, the development would neither conserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the site or the wider landscape of Exmoor National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-S6 and HC-D9 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan, which seek high quality design that respects local distinctiveness and conserves and enhances the character and appearance of the National Park and its landscapes

Informatives

1. POSITIVE & PROACTIVE STATEMENT

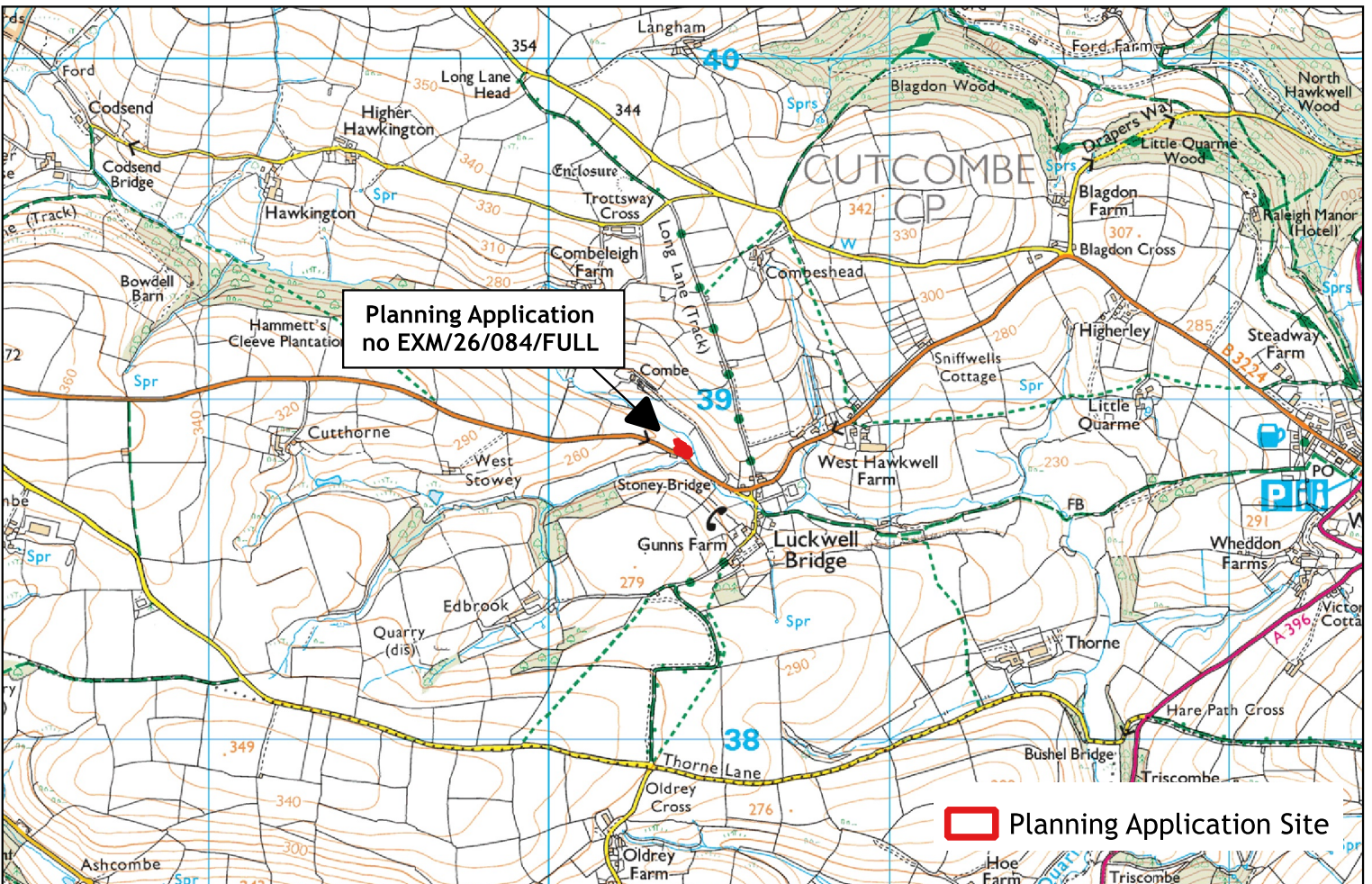
This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome. However, in this instance the relevant planning considerations have not been addressed and the application has therefore been refused.



Site Map

Scale

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Overview Map

Scale 1:20,000

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Item 8

SCHEDULE OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY 6 October 2026 (completed agreements not included)

KEY: AH = AFFORDABLE HOUSING

AT = AGRICULTURAL/RURAL WORKER

OA = OTHER AGREEMENT

APPLICATION REFERENCE	SITE	TYPE	Committee decision/Officer instruction	CURRENT POSITION	UPDATE COMMENTS	APP CASE OFFICER
6/8/22/106	Thorne Farm, Wheddon Cross	AH – x2 or holiday let	Officer instruction 14/07/23	Draft Agreement	Final draft sent for approval (18/09/26). Awaiting discharge of mortgagee charge and registration of new charge. Await payment of fees from applicant or a costs undertaking.	Y Dale
62/50/23/002	Land West of Parracombe Lane, Parracombe	AH – x6	Committee decision 03/10/23	Draft Agreement	DCC sent engrossment 106 Agreement to all parties on 20/06/26. Awaiting approval of landowner & payment of legal costs. Chased 18/09/26.	J White
6/27/22/115	Land West of Sparkhayes Lane, Porlock	AH – x1	Officer instruction 30/11/23	Draft Agreement	Final draft sent (18/09/26) to applicant for agreement before producing copies to be signed by the parties. ENPA to upload to portal once agreed by applicant.	Y Dale
62/62/22/005	Land at Lower Glebe House, Trentishoe	AH – x1	Officer instruction 01/03/24	Draft Agreement	DCC has prepared a draft 106 Agreement and sent to the applicant's solicitor for approval on 21/10/25. Title document rec'd. Updated costs undertaking also required. Requested on 21/10/25. Chased again 29/07/26.	Y Dale
6/3/25/001	The Duckhouse, Leigh Farm, Exton	AH – x1 or holiday let	Officer instruction 14/03/25	Draft Agreement	Draft 106 agreement sent to applicant on 10/11/25. Further discussion with applicant May 26 to progress.	J Rose
6/8/24/002	Land at Dunkery View Farm and North of Higher Park Lane	AH – x9 (& 7 PR dwellings)	Committee decision 06/01/26	Draft Agreement	Awaiting contact details for all parties to insert into notice clause of 106 Agreement. Requested 20.07.2026 and 18.09.26. Otherwise, the 106 Agreement is in agreed form.	J White
6/26/25/003	Roadwater Methodist Church, Roadwater	AH – x1	Committee decision	Draft Agreement	Request for details of solicitor acting to obtain undertaking in respect of legal	J Rose

			07/04/26		fees 15/05/26. Undertaking received 30/06/26.	
6/43/25/006	Site incorporates the garage to side of Grove Bank, Wootton Courtenay	AH – x1	Officer instruction 24/04/26	Draft Agreement	Planning agent provided details of solicitor acting on 18/05/26. Undertaking requested 20/05/26. Undertaking received 16/06/26. Dealing with solicitors queries.	J Rose
EXM/26/018/FULL	Butchers Farm, Luxborough	AH – x2	Officer instruction 13/05/2026	Draft Agreement	Emailed Planning Agent 15.5.26 to request solicitor's details. Received these 20.5.26 and emailed solicitor same day. Undertaking received 01.06.26	J Rose
62/49/25/003	Heasley Mill Methodist Chapel, Heasley Mill	AH – x1 and PR – x1	Committee Decision 07/07/26		Emailed solicitor 10.07.26 to request undertaking for legal fees.	Y Dale

Note: Section 106 Agreements resolved since 1 January 2024:

- Tarr Cottage, Castle Hill, Lynton – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (62/41/20/023)
- Barn at Malmsmead, Lynton – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (62/11/22/007)
- Keal Rise, Hawkcombe, Porlock – Deed of Variation in connection with amendments to conditions of previous permission (6/27/22/118)
- 24 Cross Street, Lynton – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (62/41/22/040)
- Land adjacent to Red Cross Farm, Brompton Regis – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (6/3/23/001)
- Old Workshop, Brompton Regis – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (6/3/21/118)
- Long Garden Plot, Ash Lane, Winsford – Deed of Variation in connection with amendments to conditions of previous permission

Since 1 January 2025:

- Roundhouse to the west of Bentwitchen House, South Molton – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (62/49/23/008)
- Lower Cleeve Barns, Cutcombe – x1 local needs affordable dwelling/holiday let (6/8/21/105)
- Paddock opposite Church of St John, Land at Ashwell Lane, Cutcombe – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (6/8/24/005)

Since 1 January 2026:

- Knowle Farm, Timberscombe – s106 re amended scheme for rural workers' dwelling (6/34/24/002)
- Sanctuary Lane, Brompton Regis – x1 local needs affordable dwelling (6/3/22/111)
- Beech Cottage, Liscombe, Dulverton – x1 local needs affordable dwelling/holiday let (6/9/25/007)
- Sycamore Cottage, Liscombe, Dulverton – x1 local needs affordable dwelling/holiday let (6/9/25/008)

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING MEETING

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/012/LBC Leyland 13 West Street Dunster Minehead TA24 6SN	Matthew Harrison	18 Sep 2026	Approved with Conditions

Listed building consent for the proposed replacement of windows, doors, fascias and rainwater goods, replacement of flat roof with mono-pitch tiled roof, installation of skylight, repair of 1no chimney and reinstatement of 1no chimney along with internal reconfiguration.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/050/PNA/CA Forest Field Yard Silverdown Hill Stogumber TA4 4JF	Mr M Waldock	11 Sep 2026	Prior Approval Approved

Prior approval for proposed erection of agricultural storage building (30m x 15m).

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/143/FULL Heather House, Brompton Regis, Dulverton, Watchet, Ta23 0LI	Karin Harwood	09 Sep 2026	Approved with Conditions

Proposed construction of a 20m x 40m outdoor riding arena.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/144/FULL Martinhoe Manor Woody Bay Barnstaple EX31 4QX	F Blunt	21 Aug 2026	Approved with Conditions

Change of use of existing lodge from holiday accommodation to residential accommodation ancillary to the main dwelling at Martinhoe Manor.

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Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/146/LBC 4 Gibraltar Cottages Porlock Weir Road Porlock Minehead TA24 8PE	Ms Rebecca Chambers	21 Aug 2026	Approved with Conditions

Proposed formation of a new door opening to the Northeast elevation and installation of a timber stable door.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/147/CLE Lower Tippacott Farm Lynton EX35 6PU	Mr & Mrs D&C Hernaman	21 Aug 2026	Certificate of Lawfulness Refused

Lawful development certificate for the existing use of the dwelling known as Lower Tippacott Farm which had been built without the benefit of planning permission.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/156/HH 2 Great Meadow Dulverton TA22 9DT	Mr Lazarus	21 Aug 2026	Approved with Conditions

Proposed extension to garage to create a store.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/159/LBC The Nook Parracombe Barnstaple EX31 4PE	Mr T Borrett	09 Sep 2026	Approved with Conditions

Listed Building Consent for the proposed replacement of front door and frame.

Item 9

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/160/LBC	Dulverton Town Hall c/o Mrs Dubery	02 Sep 2026	Approved with Conditions
Dulverton Town Hall, The Town Hall, 10 Fore Street, Dulverton, Ta22 9Ex			

Listed Building Consent for the retrospective repair of rendered gable wall together with the proposed installation of first-floor access hatch and small maintenance platform.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/164/HH	Mr & Mrs D Brown	07 Sep 2026	Refused
Bevins House Edbrooke Road Winsford Dulverton TA24 7JE			

Proposed widening of existing access to 3m, lowering of boundary wall to max height of 0.8m and formation of hard standing area in front garden.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/165/CLP	Miss Frances Shone	09 Sep 2026	Certificate Of Lawfulness Granted

Folly, Halse Lane, Winsford, Dulverton, Minehead, Ta24 7Jd

Lawful development certificate for the proposed installation of 16no roof mounted solar panels.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/168/HH	Mr Neil Evans	15 Sep 2026	Approved with Conditions
Evergreen 22 Jury Road Dulverton TA22 9DU			

Proposed extension and minor internal alterations to existing detached dwelling

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/169/LBC	Christine Ellis	15 Sep 2026	Approved with Conditions
Forge Cottage 3 Bridge Street Dulverton TA22 9HJ			

Listed building consent for the proposed removal of failing cementitious render to principal (north) elevation and its replacement in lime.

Item 9

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/171/NMA Middle Bodley Farm Parracombe Barnstaple EX31 4PR	Mr & Mrs Smith	21 Aug 2026	Approved

Non-material amendment – full – of approved application 62/50/25/003 to allow the addition of three side hung timber stable windows to the East elevation (rear elevation) and the double doors to hay store moved from North elevation to West elevation (front elevation).

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/176/PNA/CA Land Adjacent to Redcross Farm Storridge Lane Brompton Regis Dulverton TA22 9NH	Mrs Louise Bengtson	01 Sep 2026	Prior Approval Not Required

Prior notification for the proposed erection of agricultural barn (18m x 10m)

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/177/FULL D J Miles & Co Ltd, D J Miles And Co Ltd, Vale Yard, High Street, Porlock, Minehead, Ta24 8Pu	Mr Stanyon	16 Sep 2026	Withdrawn

Proposed change of use of existing buildings to community cafe, flexible booking space and hostel accommodation together with associated works.

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/189/DOC Great Nurcott Farm, Nurcott Lane, Winsford, Dulverton, Minehead, Ta24 7Hr	Mark Broadwith	17 Sep 2026	Approved

Discharge of Condition 5 (Bat Licence) of approved application EXM/26/043/FULL

Application	Applicant	Decision Date	Decision
EXM/26/192/DOC Great Nurcott Farm, Nurcott Lane, Winsford, Dulverton, Minehead, Ta24 7Hr	Mark Broadwith	17 Sep 2026	Approved

Discharge of Condition 4 (Bat Licence) of approved application EXM/26/044/LBC
