

8. ACHIEVING ENJOYMENT FOR ALL



Woody Bay Station

Objective 8: *To provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds and of all abilities, including young people and new audiences, to learn about and enjoy Exmoor National Park, leading to a greater understanding of Exmoor and its way of life.*

Objective 9: *To maintain and improve the recreational opportunities in the National Park particularly the rights of way network, access to open country, other quiet and active recreation based on Exmoor's special qualities; and ensure that opportunities for recreation can be enjoyed by people from all backgrounds and of all abilities*

Objective 13: *To improve the sustainability, resilience and self-sufficiency of the National Park's settlements by supporting the retention, provision of, and access to community services and facilities.*

Recreation and Tourism

Context

8.1 Recreation, tourism and environmental education developments provide opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of Exmoor National Park. Proposals for such developments will be supported where facilities and activities accord with the principles of sustainable tourism. The policies in this section will relate to all development proposals that help to increase the understanding and public enjoyment of Exmoor National Park and its special qualities; this reflects the second statutory purpose of National Parks.

8.2 In terms of sustainable recreation and tourism development, national policy clearly states that such developments should be supported where they would have environmental, social and economic benefits to the area including for environmental conservation, rural businesses, visitors, and local communities.³⁷⁵ Such development includes the expansion of existing businesses in appropriate locations, where this will not compromise the National Park's special qualities, and recognising that tourism and recreation development may meet identified needs that are not provided by existing facilities in settlements, and provide benefits for the education, health and well-being of local communities.

8.3 The National Parks' Circular recommends that National Park Authorities continue to create a positive environment for sustaining rural businesses and developing future businesses appropriate to the high quality environment of the National Park,

including those which capitalise on access, recreation and tourism where there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the National Park's special qualities and people's enjoyment of them.³⁷⁶

8.4 The National Park Authority will continue to support and work in partnership with others to help deliver the priorities for tourism identified through the National Parks' Circular. Tourism and associated recreation activities are recognised as the main contributors to the Exmoor economy, and the natural environment of the area is acknowledged as being central to the prosperity of the sector. The importance of tourism in Exmoor is expected to continue and increase in the long term; supported through tourism partnerships and appropriate policies.³⁷⁷ Achieving a year-round tourism economy increases visitor spend; helping to sustain essential local services and facilities, and the working age population. The significance of the tourism and recreation sector is recognised by local communities and it offers the potential to conserve and enhance Exmoor's special qualities, influence rural regeneration, and to retain and re-circulate money locally.

8.5 The high quality landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage, and experience of tranquillity that Exmoor provides are a major attraction for visitors and underpin the local tourism industry and recreation opportunities. In 2007 Exmoor National Park was awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.³⁷⁸ This award recognises National Parks which are managing relevant development and activities based on sustainable tourism principles.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework – DCLG

³⁷⁶ DEFRA (2010) English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular (Paragraph 77)

³⁷⁷ Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners (2009) Exmoor National Park Employment Land Review

³⁷⁸ Awarded by the Europarc Federation

³⁷⁹ Europarc Federation (2015) Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas – good for Parks, good for People

8.6 Sustainable tourism is defined by The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas as: *“any form of development, management or tourist activity which ensures the long term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working or staying in protected areas.”* Sustainable tourism is aligned with the achievement of National Park statutory purposes and, if managed correctly, brings positive experiences to visitors and benefits that will help to maintain Exmoor’s natural environment, cultural heritage and communities.

Recreation and Tourism Considerations

8.7 Policy RT-S1 Recreation and Tourism supports the provision of accessible and inclusive tourism and recreation developments on Exmoor which encourage the quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the National Park special qualities for all, whilst providing environmental, economic and social benefits. Tourism has a number of benefits for local communities including an improved range of services and facilities, and more jobs; whilst greater use of local products and services by tourism businesses can benefit the local economy and the distinctiveness of Exmoor.

8.8 Policy RT-S1 Recreation and Tourism and the associated development management policies (RT-D1 – RT-D9) provide scope to increase the diversity of visitor accommodation on Exmoor. This approach aims to build upon the tourism role of the settlements in the National Park and to provide farm diversification opportunities (SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside).

8.9 Tourism survey data indicates that the length of stay increased in the non-serviced sector as the number of visitor days rose but the number of visitors decreased; whereas the serviced accommodation sector experienced an increase in the number of short-breaks.³⁸⁰ There appears to be adequate capacity in terms of occupancy for both sectors; however, occupancy levels increase during the main summer season (July-September) to between 80-90% for non-serviced accommodation. Visitor numbers can lead to additional pressures on natural resources such as water, although there are currently no issues of over-abstraction. Nevertheless, water conservation and the requirements of policy CC-D2 Water Conservation should be taken account of in proposals.

8.10 The natural environment of Exmoor lends itself to certain outdoor recreation activities that rely on it and Exmoor is ideally suited to quiet recreation pursuits including walking, cycling, and horse-riding that utilise the road network, rights of way and open access land. Water-based recreation, including canoeing and fishing, is also popular in some areas of the National Park. The actual and potential recreational value of Exmoor National Park is important for the health and well-being of residents and for those who visit; and it has become a popular location for international and national outdoor events.

8.11 Policies RT-S1 Recreation and Tourism and RT-D10 to RT-S2 have a positive approach to recreation; ensuring that the use or intensity of sports and recreational activities will be compatible with Exmoor’s rights of way, natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage, tranquillity and the enjoyment of the special qualities in an area. Opportunities to enhance the access network and green infrastructure provision (CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure) through path improvements and new linkages, including across the National Park boundary, are encouraged. Opportunities will be particularly sought where development proposals can mitigate potential impacts on the access network (RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way).

³⁸⁰ STEAM reports are produced for the National Park Authority by Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd and provide a measurement of tourism at the local level from the supply side.

³⁸¹ Campaign to Protect Rural England (2006) Saving Tranquil Places

8.12 Tranquillity is one of Exmoor's special qualities; providing an experience of calm in an area protected for its high quality landscapes. It is important for people's health, well-being and improving quality of life; and is also significant for Exmoor's economy, as people come here to escape the noise disturbance and visual intrusion experienced in more urban areas.³⁸¹ This does not imply no noise generation at all, but there are some recreational pursuits such as motorised sporting activities and clay-pigeon shooting grounds that are considered to be inappropriate in the National Park. This is because they have the potential to have an adverse effect on the quiet enjoyment of others (including neighbouring properties and users of nearby public rights of way and access land) through exposure to unacceptable levels of noise disturbance that may be sustained for significant periods of the day throughout the year (see paragraph 5.151 and CC-S7 Pollution). Impacts on landscape character and tranquillity, through intensity of activity, noise, and overall scale will be key considerations in determining whether proposals for recreation and tourism developments are acceptable.³⁸²

8.13 Exmoor also provides opportunities for learning through a number of residential environmental education facilities used by schools across the country and managed by a number of public and private organisations. Most environmental education facilities have converted and changed the use of existing buildings and provide opportunities to reach a wide range of young people to encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of Exmoor National Park and the benefits of outdoor recreation. Proposals which aim to provide these opportunities through the conversion or change of use of existing buildings in accessible locations will be encouraged in accordance with policy HC-S7 Residential Institutions.

8.14 Sites for recreation and tourism development on Exmoor should be small-scale, in keeping with the pattern of development and conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage of the National Park.

8.15 Proposals should be able to demonstrate that developments can be accessed safely and do not generate traffic levels that would have implications for the capacity of the access road and safety of road users. During the peak summer months, traffic levels can rise considerably as many visitors to Exmoor choose to travel by car; this can lead to congestion in popular visitor destinations. Where possible, proposals should be accessible by more sustainable modes of travel – this will be expected to be demonstrated through a travel plan if significant traffic movements are likely to be generated (AC-S1 Sustainable Transport and AC-D1 Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development).

8.16 The majority of recreation and tourism developments granted permission in recent years has related to changes of use or conversions of existing buildings, and this approach will continue to be encouraged.

8.17 There are very few examples where the conversion of redundant non-traditional (modern) farm buildings to tourism, recreation or education uses has occurred. This is due to the fabrication and structural limitations of such buildings which are often not suitable for such uses. However, where traditional buildings are either not available or suitable, due to their historic or biodiversity interest, for the intended recreation or tourism use, the change of use of such non-traditional agricultural buildings may be permitted (Policy CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings and SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside).

8.18 New-build development for recreation or tourism facilities will be supported in principle, in sustainable and accessible locations consistent with the named settlements in policy GP3 Spatial Strategy, which provides the overarching development strategy across the National Park. Development management policies RT-D1 – RT-D12 set out specific criteria including location requirements, and appropriate measures relating to setting, scale and impacts. Tourism and recreation development should also have regard to policies CC-S1 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and CC-D1 Flood Risk in terms of their design, siting and location.

³⁸² National Parks England (2013) Policy Position Statement on Sustainable Tourism

RT-S1 Recreation and Tourism

1. Opportunities to provide a high quality, inclusive visitor experience on Exmoor through a diverse range of recreation and tourism facilities that actively enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities will be encouraged in accordance with the following principles:
 - a) They are compatible with the quiet enjoyment of the National Park.
 - b) There are no unacceptable adverse effects on the natural and historic environment either individually or cumulatively through levels of activity or use.
 - c) They contribute towards a sustainable future for Exmoor's local economy and communities.
 - d) They support the improved health and wellbeing of people living, working and visiting Exmoor through the benefits of recreation and experience of tranquillity.
 - e) They ensure appropriate and safe access by the road network and where possible by walking, cycling, horse-riding and public transport.
 - f) They safeguard the existing access network, including public rights of way, and access land; and provide enhancements where opportunities arise (RT-D12).
 - g) They respond to opportunities to improve the quality and viability of existing recreation and tourism businesses, through appropriate restoration, extension, expansion or diversification.
 - h) They are of a scale compatible with their location and setting, in accordance with the relevant development management policy considerations for tourism and recreation (policies RT-D1 to RT-D12).

Serviced Accommodation

8.19 Serviced accommodation more generally referred to as Bed & Breakfast (B&B) establishments, guesthouses and hotels which forms a considerable proportion of the visitor accommodation available in the National Park. The national Quality in Tourism rating and classification of accommodation for Visit England states that hotel accommodation has a minimum of five letting bedrooms, is licensed and offers dinner – all bedrooms are en-suite or have a private bathroom.³⁸³ The proprietor or staff should

be available during the day and evening (as a minimum) to receive guests and provide services.³⁸⁴ Guest house accommodation is generally smaller than hotels with a less structured service providing for more than six paying guests and run on a more commercial basis than a B&B – more services, such as dinner, are provided by staff as well as the owner. Where the primary use of the property is for guest accommodation, such as guesthouses and hotels, the use class is C1.

³⁸³ Quality in Tourism (2015) the assessment service provided for Visit England

³⁸⁴ VisitEngland (2011) Hotel Accommodation – Quality Standard

8.20 If the primary use of a building is a private dwelling house, the use class is C3 and B&B accommodation may be provided run by the owner with more of a family home feel and approach. As B&B accommodation is generally ancillary to the primary residential use of the dwelling, planning permission for a material change of use is only required if the essential residential nature of the property has changed – i.e. the guest accommodation ceases to be ancillary. Other factors, such as the suitability of parking provision and impact upon neighbours' amenity, are also likely to influence whether a material change of use is necessary.

8.21 Many hotels and guesthouses on Exmoor have historic provenance as they were built primarily for the purpose of providing guest accommodation. This is particularly relevant in locations such as Lynton & Lynmouth, that became popular as a visitor destination in the 19th century, when a number of hotels were established to meet demand. Other hotels and guesthouses across Exmoor capitalised on the popularity of the area for field sports.

8.22 Hotels and guesthouses continue to be established in the National Park and contribute towards providing a unique experience for visitors to Exmoor. Extensive consultation highlighted that hotels and guesthouses, provided through changing the use and converting existing buildings, was suitable in the National Park. Existing buildings provide an opportunity for new serviced accommodation without the need for new build premises, which are considered to be less appropriate given the National Park designation and the potential scale of such development. The occupancy evidence available does not appear to support a need for new-build accommodation, however small scale extensions to existing serviced accommodation premises may enable the improvement to the overall quality and/or capacity over the longer term. For some proprietors, owning and running a hotel or guesthouse is a lifestyle choice and, although they may operate at full business capacity during the peak season, they may not be at full occupancy, as the majority are micro-businesses employing no additional staff.³⁸⁵

8.23 Policy RT-D1 provides for new serviced accommodation through the change of use of existing buildings where it should not result in significant alteration or extension and should have regard to policies relating to cultural heritage (CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment, and CE-D3 Conserving Heritage Assets) and the conversion traditional buildings (CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings). Any extension to existing premises should be subservient to the existing building/complex and appropriate in terms of materials, scale and massing with the host building (CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles, and CE-D4 Extensions to Buildings). Extensions for staff accommodation should have regard to policy RT-D2 Staff Accommodation.

8.24 To enable new hotels and guesthouses to come forward, particularly those created from an existing residential use (use class C3), a condition will be attached to a subsequent permission to change the use to serviced accommodation under policy RT-D1 Recreation and Tourism and enable the use to revert back to a dwelling house in the future. In this particular situation, any extension to increase the floorspace of the hotel/guesthouse should not exceed 35% of the original floorspace of the property, in accordance with HC-D15 Residential Extensions – a condition will be attached in the granting of any permission to remove permitted development rights to prevent further extension when the use reverts to a dwelling house. If extensions to the hotel/guesthouse exceed the 35% proportion, then the property will not automatically be able to revert back to a dwelling house and proposals for change of use would need to meet the tests set out in RT-D3 Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation.

³⁸⁵ ENPA (2008) Exmoor National Park State of Tourism Report 2008 (page 10), ENPA, Dulverton

RT-D1 Serviced Accommodation

1. Proposals for the provision of new serviced accommodation through the appropriate change of use and conversion of existing traditional buildings will be permitted where all of the following are met:
 - a) the traditional character, appearance and setting of the building or building group is conserved or enhanced;
 - b) the building or building group is capable of conversion to serviced accommodation and any other ancillary requirements without significant alteration or extension (CE-S5);
 - c) the design layout of access and parking requirements are compatible with landscape character and built heritage;
 - d) the intensity of use does not compromise local amenity; and
 - e) traffic generation can be accommodated by the local road network without adversely affecting road safety and capacity.
2. Small scale extensions which are subordinate to existing serviced accommodation will be permitted in accordance with policies CE-S6 and CE-D4 to improve the quality or capacity of the accommodation.
3. In relation to proposals that seek a change of use from a residential dwelling (use class C3) to serviced accommodation (use class C1) a condition will be attached to a permission to enable the property to be used either as C1 Hotels or C3 Dwellings.

Staff Accommodation

8.25 Some serviced accommodation businesses including hostels, may require staff accommodation in certain situations e.g. where they need to meet or maintain a certain quality standard for 24-hour service, or where staff are not employed locally.

8.26 To support an application for staff accommodation, applicants should provide evidence to show that alternative accommodation cannot be found in the local area or be provided within the hotel premises. Where additional staff accommodation is shown to be needed, it should be achieved through the reuse of existing buildings on the premises (see policies CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment, and CE-S5 Principles for

the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings). Where this is not possible, a small-scale extension that is subordinate to the existing property may be provided (CE-D4 Extensions to Buildings). Independent, free-standing new build premises will not be permitted for such purposes. There will be no opportunities for successive conversions or extensions for the purposes of staff accommodation, although staff accommodation that is no longer required may be permitted to change to extended guest accommodation, a non-serviced holiday let accommodation unit, or a dwelling to meet local affordable housing need.

RT-D2 Staff Accommodation

1. Proposals for staff accommodation will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that such accommodation is not available in the locality or cannot be provided within the existing hotel, guesthouse or hostel. Where this need cannot be met, provision for staff accommodation will be permitted through:
 - a) the change of use and conversion of existing buildings that are within the curtilage in accordance with CE-S5; or
 - b) where this is not possible, a small-scale extension to the hotel or guesthouse as a self-contained annexe.
2. Staff accommodation will be tied through a condition or planning obligation to the existing premises, to ensure that it cannot be sold separately or occupied as a separate accommodation unit – other than for staff or owners.
3. Where there is evidence that the need for staff/owner accommodation is no longer required, the following uses will be considered:
 - a) a local occupancy tie to meet local affordable housing needs (HC-S1);
 - b) non-serviced holiday-let (RT-D4); or
 - c) extension of guest accommodation.
4. No further extension will be permitted for staff accommodation on premises where the previous staff accommodation has been lost to other uses.

Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation

8.27 Although some new hotels and guesthouses have been permitted through the change of use of existing buildings in recent years, a larger number have been lost to residential use, through demonstrating that the business could not be made viable in the longer term. It is important, wherever possible, that existing serviced accommodation is safeguarded over the long term as in many villages and in the open countryside, they not only provide an economic benefit, but also a social function, for example by having a public bar, function room or skittle alley. For the purposes of safeguarding serviced accommodation this policy will also apply to youth hostels. Where such a business is lost, it can have both economic and social implications for the local community. Furthermore, once lost, experience shows that they are unlikely to be replaced.

8.28 If permission is granted for a residential dwelling to change use to serviced accommodation in accordance with Policy RT-D1 Serviced

Accommodation, there are provisions to then enable the property to revert back to residential use with no requirement for planning permission (see paragraph 8.24). It is hoped that this policy approach will encourage new hotels and guesthouses to continue to come forward, avoiding the uncertainty of whether they will be able to revert back to residential in the future if the venture is unsuccessful.

8.29 Any material change of use from serviced accommodation should in the first instance be to another business/employment use within the existing building; this includes residential institutions such as nursing homes (policy HC-S7 Residential Institutions).

8.30 Where a change of use is sought from an existing hotel or guesthouse (C1 use) to residential (C3 use), a flexible approach may be possible whereby the hotel/guesthouse could revert to residential use as a principal residence home (HC-S4 Principal Residence Housing) without having to

demonstrate that the existing serviced accommodation is unviable. In such cases, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to provide clear evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of Policy RT-D3 Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation, clause 1.b) are met, which include:

- a) That the property was originally built as a single residential dwelling and can easily revert to a single residential dwelling providing a satisfactory living environment.
- b) Any alterations and/or extensions to the property since it became a commercial hotel/guesthouse have not exceeded the maximum floorspace requirement in clause 1c) of policy HC-D15 Residential Extensions.
- c) No community service or facility is provided by the premises – including public bar. The National Park Authority will require evidence of whether the current owner has closed such facilities prior to making an application for the change of use.

8.31 In the interests of ensuring flexibility and the needs of future tourism trends it is considered that those hotels/guesthouses that meet the tests to revert to a Principal Residence home, will have conditions attached to their planning permission to enable the use of their property to be a principal home (HC-S4 Principal Residence Housing) or serviced accommodation if the property remains as a single unit.

8.32 Where a change of use other than business/employment use is sought, or the property does not meet the tests outlined in paragraph 8.30 above (clause 1b of policy RT-D3 Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation), the National Park Authority will require the hotel or guesthouse to demonstrate that the business cannot be continued or made viable. Evidence will be required to support such proposals and will include details of business performance and professional management, evidence of attempts to save the business, and proof of marketing. Evidence of marketing required to support the proposal should include:

- a) the property has been marketed for sale at a reasonable value that is consistent with its recent trading performance (or hotel market value if trading has ceased) for a period not less than 12 months. The guide price should

reflect the potential earnings of the business and the cost of essential works;

- b) advertisement on site, in local newspapers, estate/property agents and, or otherwise as requested by the National Park Authority;
- c) re-advertising the premises (as above) at three month intervals if they fail to succeed in finding a willing buyer/occupier in the first three months of marketing;
- d) the owner/applicant supplies the National Park Authority with the advertisement details including sales particulars with a guide price to reflect the market value of the hotel/guesthouse;
- e) the owner/applicant has provided the National Park Authority with written evidence of all enquiries received and the reasons why potential buyers/occupiers found the hotel/guesthouse to be unsuitable; and
- f) impartial evidence regarding viability and marketing of the property - an independent valuation of the property will be required from the District Valuation Office to inform the decision-making process.

8.33 The most favourable approach would be to diversify the business through the partial change of use of the building to non-serviced accommodation apartments (RT-D4 Non-serviced Accommodation), another employment use, or a community service/facility. A complete change of use will be considered where the partial change of use would not be possible or feasible in terms of viability or other material planning considerations.

8.34 Additionally, there may be an opportunity to increase the range of accommodation on the site through provision of small scale alternative camping accommodation (see RT-D9 Alternative Camping Accommodation).

8.35 Where an applicant is seeking a change of use from serviced accommodation to residential, proposals should first demonstrate that they cannot achieve any other use specified in clause 3(a) of policy RT-D3. Where the principle of residential use is accepted, proposals should accord with the tests for the change of use of buildings to residential use in clause 2 of policy HC-D2 Conversions to Dwellings in Settlements.

RT-D3 Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation

1. Development proposals that would involve the loss of existing serviced accommodation will only be permitted where:
 - a) other employment uses are to be created in the existing building; or
 - b) the building is to become a Principal Residence dwelling (HC-S4) and evidence clearly demonstrates that:
 - i) the building was originally built as a single residential dwelling;
 - ii) there has been no excessive alteration or extension; and
 - iii) the existing use does not provide an additional community service or function; or
 - c) they accord with clauses 2 and 3 below.
2. Where clauses 1 a) and b) do not apply, proposals relating to the change of use of serviced accommodation should demonstrate that the current use of the building as serviced accommodation cannot be continued or made viable in the longer term and the property has been marketed as a going concern at a reasonable value for a minimum period of 12 months. An independent valuation of the building will be required.
3. Where it is demonstrated that the serviced accommodation is no longer viable (clause 2), proposals for change of use should be compatible with the cultural heritage of the existing building, local character, and amenity and in accordance with the following:
 - a) Changes that will be considered acceptable in principle include:
 - i) Change of use to self-catering apartments.
 - ii) Change of use to provide community services or facilities.
 - iii) A mixed use development, based on the uses listed above including employment use.
 - b) Proposals for the change of use to residential dwellings will only be considered where the requirements of this policy are met and clause 3(a) cannot be achieved. Proposals should accord with the tests set out in clause 2 of policy HC-D2.
 - c) In relation to 3 a) and b), opportunities for the partial change of use of the building or complex that supplements the existing serviced accommodation will be encouraged.

Non-Serviced Accommodation

8.36 Non-serviced or self-catering accommodation is a popular form of visitor accommodation that provides a wide choice of accommodation for visitors to the National Park including holiday cottages (for static caravan and chalet developments – see policy RT-D8 Static Caravan Sites). However, non-serviced accommodation has caused local issues where a high percentage of existing dwellings are used as holiday cottages – this has particularly affected some popular holiday destinations such as Lynton & Lynmouth and smaller settlements where the impact of a relatively small number of holiday cottages can significantly affect the vitality of the local community.

8.37 The local planning authority cannot directly control or influence the use of existing open market homes as holiday cottages, although it is recognised that some communities would support the ability to control the proportion of holiday let accommodation. Planning can only control the change of use and conversion of existing non-residential buildings to holiday accommodation or the development of new units. Given the area's designation as a National Park, the number of self-catering premises already available within the National Park, and the stock of existing non-residential buildings with capacity for change of use or conversion, it is considered that new build holiday-let accommodation is not appropriate.

8.38 There are circumstances where self-catering complexes (a property where there is more than one holiday let unit with a holiday occupancy condition) may be permitted to expand, through the converting existing buildings to create additional units and the small scale extension of existing units, to improve the capacity and/or quality of existing accommodation – where this will not detrimentally affect the character or historic interest of the building(s). Self-catering complexes may also have the capacity to diversify the type of accommodation they offer through provision of alternative forms of accommodation (see RT-D9 Alternative Camping Accommodation). Extension of existing holiday-let units or diversification can increase non-serviced accommodation capacity during the main tourist season when availability is at its lowest.³⁸⁶

8.39 The change of use and conversion of existing buildings to holiday let accommodation will be subject to policy CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings and will only be permitted where a proposal relates to:

- RT-D3 Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation, in terms of the partial/full change of use of a hotel that has demonstrated that it cannot be made viable or continued in the longer term;
- the re-use of redundant buildings within the curtilage of a hotel premises; or
- the diversification of a rural land-based business (also see SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside).

Proposals should also ensure that there is adequate utility provision close by, including suitable access, and that the capacity of the local road network is not compromised.

8.40 The conversion of traditional farm buildings to holiday lets is a popular form of diversification for rural land based businesses. These rural buildings have historic significance, interest and are sensitive to change; therefore, it is important that the whole farmstead complex of traditional buildings is not converted to ensure the retention of some of the original vernacular form and character of these traditional buildings – this will be decided on a case by case basis. This approach also enables space for ancillary storage, utilities, or continuing agricultural use, and thereby avoids the pressure for additional new build development in the future.

8.41 The evidence for occupancy levels is limited for this type of accommodation within the National Park. However, policies in this Local Plan enable flexibility regarding the ongoing use of such accommodation over the long term, not only through extension and diversification, but through change of use and variation of occupancy. Therefore, if a holiday-let is no longer needed or viable as a result of changing circumstances, the a change of use to a business or community use may be permitted where the requirements of the relevant policies are met. Holiday-lets fall within the same use class as a dwelling house, but the occupancy is controlled by condition so that they cannot be permanently

³⁸⁶ Global Tourism Solutions (2014) Exmoor National Park STEAM Draft Trend Report 2009-2013, ENPA, Dulverton

occupied by a single person or household. Permission to change the occupancy to housing that meets local affordable needs or for extended family members may be permitted where the requirements of policy HC-D13 Replacement of Holiday Occupancy Conditions and Extended Family Occupancy Ties are met. This would enable the unit to revert to holiday accommodation if required in the future. This flexibility will help to maximise the use of a unit over the long term to meet the needs of the local economy and local communities.

8.42 Some non-serviced accommodation units may be over 93sqm in size and in such cases, where there is a proposal to change the occupancy to housing that meets local affordable needs, a further condition will be attached to ensure that the property is not sold separately and remains as part of the wider

complex or building group. This supports the long term viability of the building and enables the occupancy to revert to a holiday let as part of the wider business at any time.

8.43 Conditions will be attached to any planning permission for holiday-let accommodation to limit the occupancy to short let holiday purposes only, so that the property may only be occupied by any person for a period not exceeding 28 days in any calendar year. This ensures that holiday lets are available all year round, rather than seasonally and helps to reduce the seasonality of demand on Exmoor. The conditions will also expect owners to maintain a register of occupants for each calendar year that may be inspected on request to ensure that such accommodation is not being permanently occupied as a dwelling house.



Foreland Point

RT-D4 Non-Serviced Accommodation

1. Proposals for the change of use and conversion of buildings to non-serviced accommodation will be permitted where they:
 - a) create additional unit(s) on an existing self-catering complex;
 - b) accord with RT-D3 Safeguarding Serviced Accommodation clause 3a);
 - c) reuse a redundant building associated with a hotel/guesthouse premises;
or
 - d) relate to the diversification of a rural land-based business, where the building is well-related to an existing grouping of buildings.
2. Proposals should also meet the following principles:
 - a) the character and appearance of the building and its setting is conserved, and where they accord with policies on landscape character, cultural heritage and design (CE-S1, CE-S4 and CE-S6);
 - b) where the proposal involves the change of use of traditional farm buildings, the conversion of all such buildings within a farmstead will not be permitted in order to protect the historic character and significance of the buildings collectively (CE-S5);
 - c) the design and layout of access and parking requirements are compatible with landscape character and built heritage, and the local road network has capacity to service the accommodation without adversely affecting road safety; and
 - d) there are no adverse impacts on tranquillity and local amenity.
3. Small scale extensions and alterations will be permitted to improve the quality and viability of existing non-serviced accommodation; where it would not adversely affect the historic character of the existing building. No new build units of holiday-let accommodation will be permitted.
4. Where a non-serviced accommodation unit is no longer needed or viable, a proposal to replace the holiday occupancy condition of the unit with an agreement limiting occupancy to meet a local affordable need for housing or housing for extended families will be considered in accordance with policy HC-D13. In respect of changes to business or community use, proposals should accord with the relevant policies in the plan.

Tented Camp Sites

8.44 Tented camp sites and camping barns offer more affordable forms of visitor accommodation in the National Park, providing wider opportunities for people to visit and experience Exmoor.

8.45 Camping on tented camp sites remains a popular form of visitor accommodation on Exmoor and is generally seen to be compatible with National Park purposes. There are a number of established small-scale camp sites across the National Park that range in type from backpacker campsites with few or no facilities to more established sites with a greater range of facilities such as toilet/shower blocks, laundry rooms, and play areas. Tented camp sites are, for the purposes of this policy (RT-D5), defined as sites where tents are brought on to the site and erected by people staying there; where there is no degree of permanence and no facilities within tented structures such as toilets, drainage, and water supply.

8.46 Site requirements for tented accommodation tend to have less visual impact than touring caravan sites, due to less rigid landscaping requirements and layouts for pitches for example. However, the location, siting, access and layout of such sites will require particular consideration including in terms of visual impact, compatibility with landscape character and wildlife interests, accessibility and local amenity.

8.47 In terms of the provision of facilities for campsites, preference will be given to the conversion and change of use of traditional buildings and

proposals must comply with policies CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment, and CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings (clauses 1 and 2). Where there are no traditional buildings present, or if they are unsuitable in terms of capacity or their wildlife/historic interest, then conversion of non-traditional buildings may be considered where the proposal complies with policy CE-S5 (clauses 1 and 3). In such cases, provision for sewage disposal should accord with policy CC-D5 Sewerage Capacity and Sewage Disposal, to ensure that water quality is safeguarded.

8.48 Conditions to ensure that the site is only occupied through the main holiday season will help to protect the local environment and allow a site to recover from any intensive camping use through the holiday season. Small scale extensions to existing campsites may be permitted to improve viability or, where appropriate, to diversify part of the site to alternative camping accommodation (see RT-D9). Environmental enhancement should be demonstrated as part of the proposal including biodiversity enhancements (CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure). This may also help vulnerable sites relocate out of sensitive areas including those at risk of flooding (CC-D1 Flood Risk). Where part of a site is relocated, the existing area should be reinstated to its former use or be included as part of a wider environmental enhancement scheme on the site.

RT-D5 Tented Camp Sites

1. Proposals for new small-scale tented campsites will be permitted where:
 - a) they are well related to a named settlement, hamlet or farmstead;
 - b) they are sensitively sited to ensure there are no adverse impacts on landscape character, visual amenity, or sensitive wildlife species and habitats;
 - c) there is existing road access, and sufficient road capacity to serve the development; and
 - d) they are not located within an area at risk of flooding.
2. Any facilities that may be required to service the campsite should be provided through the conversion of suitable existing traditional buildings. Where such buildings are not suitable or available then the following opportunities may be sought:
 - a) the conversion of structurally suitable non-traditional buildings that are functionally redundant; or
 - b) the extension of existing buildings in accordance with the relevant policies in this plan.
3. Opportunities for small extensions to existing campsite areas will be permitted where it does not conflict with principles listed above, and where environmental benefits are included as part of the scheme.

Camping Barns

8.49 Camping barns are also often referred to as bunkhouses, backpacker accommodation and hostels. They usually provide very basic accommodation and in more isolated locations very few facilities are provided apart from basic shelter; these are often referred to as 'stone tents'. There are very few camping barns on Exmoor, especially those which are available to the wider public – some remote hostels for example are owned by organisations or private charitable trusts. Camping barns include privately-run facilities, and establishments managed by the Youth Hostel Association. Opportunities exist for a network of this type of accommodation to be created, particularly close to existing long distance trails such as the South West Coast Path, Two Moors Way and the Coleridge Way.

8.50 Reusing redundant traditional farm buildings as camping barns can bring them back into use and

preserve the integrity and historic fabric of the building. Proposals should have regard to the use of traditional materials for the repair and reinstatement of these buildings (CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alterations of Existing Buildings). Where traditional barns are located in a farmstead or building group, it is relatively straightforward to access them and to provide services and utilities underground as these will normally be accessible close by; this may allow a broader range of facilities and an improved quality of accommodation (e.g. of a hostel type) subject to considerations to conserve the historic character of the building.

8.51 Isolated barns are important features in the landscape and their original fabric and setting should be retained as significant elements of their built form and their contribution to the wider landscape character; so that even when it has been adapted to a

new use the visual appearance remains as an isolated barn. To ensure that the conversion of isolated barns to camping barns does not detrimentally impact on their character, form and setting, no access tracks, parking areas or curtilage should be created. Maintenance of these facilities should be minimal;

therefore, utility services should only be provided on-site through sustainable measures, such as composting toilets, if they can be accommodated discreetly. To ensure isolated camping barns are accessible, they should be located close to the rights of way network or access land.

RT-D6 Camping Barns

1. Proposals for the change of use and necessary alteration of a traditional building to a camping barn or hostel accommodation will be permitted where it complements the historic character and appearance of the building, biodiversity interests, and its setting within the landscape.
2. Where the existing building is located:
 - a) in a farmstead or hamlet in close association with an existing dwelling, parking and access arrangements should be incorporated within the building group without detrimentally impacting on landscape character and visual amenity; or
 - b) in a named settlement, parking and access arrangements are consistent with policies AC-D1 and AC-S3.
3. The change of use and conversion of a traditional barn or building in an isolated location to provide basic shelter in a camping barn (stone tent) with limited facilities for walkers, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) the building can be managed effectively without new access provision;
 - b) the proposal does not involve alterations to the external fabric and surroundings of the building that would materially affect the character or appearance of the building and its setting;
 - c) the building is well related to the rights of way network or access land; and
 - d) any bat and barn owl roosts that may be present are maintained or replaced.



Certificated Caravan and Touring Caravan Sites

8.52 Certificated caravan sites are small sites that are reserved exclusively for members of certain caravan and camping organisations. Under planning law such organisations can issue a certificate for these sites to temporarily site up to five touring caravans or motor-homes, without requiring planning permission.³⁸⁷ They also inspect the sites to ensure that they meet basic requirements such as: a reasonably level site, safe highway access, drinking water, waste disposal and provision of disposal facilities for chemical closets.

8.53 Small certificated caravan sites will be encouraged where they are well integrated in the landscape, and avoid site improvements, such as hard-standing and utility hook-ups, which would require planning permission including changing the of use of the land. These smaller sites will help to ensure that Exmoor continues to offer a diverse range of holiday accommodation which provides farms and other rural enterprises with opportunities for diversification.

8.54 The National Park Authority is consulted before any certificate is issued to the landowner and will support proposals that are compatible with landscape and highway requirements and the wider

National Park objectives. Proposals should particularly avoid areas at risk of flooding (CC-D1 Flood Risk) and disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats including otter holts (CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure).

8.55 New commercial touring caravan sites are considered to be inappropriate within the National Park, due to the significant visual impact they can have on landscape character. This is as a consequence of the degree of landscaping required to meet modern requirements of touring caravan parks; including access, parking, level pitches with hard-standing and associated utility and drainage provision. The adverse landscape impact is therefore considerable with or without caravans or motorhomes on the site. Consequently, extensions to existing touring caravan sites or provision for outdoor caravan storage facilities are also considered to be inappropriate in the National Park. Additionally, Exmoor's road network has a high proportion of narrow, single track lanes that limit opportunities for such development, as they are generally unsuitable and impractical for towed caravans and large motor-homes to navigate safely.

RT-D7 Certificated Caravan and Touring Caravan Sites

1. New certificated caravan sites will be supported in the National Park where:
 - a) they are well sited and integrated in the landscape and closely related to farmsteads, hamlets or settlements, with appropriate landscape screening where necessary;
 - b) they are in a location where there are no adverse impacts on sensitive wildlife species and habitats;
 - c) access and parking requirements can be easily accommodated without adversely impacting on landscape character and the historic environment;
 - d) new permanent buildings, site excavation or other site improvements will not be required; and
 - e) they are not located in an area at risk of flooding.
2. Proposals for new touring caravan sites, outdoor caravan storage facilities, or extensions to existing touring caravan sites will not be permitted.

³⁸⁷ HM Government (1960) Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (First Schedule, paragraph 5). The Stationery Office, London.

Static Caravan Sites

8.56 There are very few static caravan sites in the National Park. Those that do exist are generally small scale and have operated for a number of years.

8.57 Due to their colour, materials, form, uniform layout and permanency, static caravan sites appear incongruous in the landscape, and can be detrimental to landscape and settlement character. Such forms of development are considered to be inappropriate within the National Park and will therefore be resisted. Opportunities to improve existing sites through reducing their overall visual and environmental impact by appropriate replacement accommodation units will therefore be encouraged. These sites should not be within an area with a high probability of flooding (flood zones 3a and 3b³⁸⁸ – see policy CC-D1 Flood Risk).

8.58 It is considered that static caravan sites could be replaced by appropriately designed holiday accommodation, such as single-storey timber chalets, camping pods, yurts, traditional Romany

caravans or similar structures which offer alternative forms of holiday accommodation (RT-D9 Alternative Camping Accommodation). Proposals should demonstrate an overall visual and environmental improvement in terms of form, layout, materials, colour and landscaping, in accordance with policies CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character and CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles. A reduction in the overall number of units/pitches will be expected where there are three or more static caravans on the site and the restoration of pitches should provide a benefit for wildlife. New chalet/log cabin holiday accommodation structures will only be permitted where they replace units on existing static caravan sites or chalet developments.

8.59 All forms of non-serviced/self-catering holiday accommodation will have a seasonal or holiday occupancy condition attached to any permission that may be granted to ensure that the unit(s) can only be occupied for holiday purposes.³⁸⁹



Walkers enjoying the open moorland

³⁸⁸ See Table 5.1 Flood Zone Definitions

³⁸⁹ DCLG (2014) Planning Practice Guidance – Use of Planning Conditions. Paragraph:003 Reference ID: 21a-003-20140306

RT-D8 Static Caravan Sites

1. Proposals for new static caravan sites and chalet developments for the purposes of holiday accommodation, or the conversion of existing touring caravan sites for such uses, will not be permitted.
2. Development proposals to improve the quality of existing static caravan sites and chalet developments through appropriate replacement forms of holiday accommodation may be permitted where:
 - a) replacement holiday accommodation is of high quality sustainable design and the materials, colour, form, siting and landscaping positively relate to landscape character (sites with three or more static caravans will be expected to reduce the overall number of units/pitches);
 - b) there is no intensification of use or activity, and the site is retained as a single business unit;
 - c) the existing site area is not extended;
 - d) the relocation of existing pitches to less sensitive areas to provide environmental enhancement is achieved and where the number of pitches is not increased;
 - e) there is no increase in facilities or services required for the site; and
 - f) the site is not located in an area with high probability of flooding (CC-D1).
3. New timber chalet or log cabin holiday accommodation will only be permitted where they replace units on existing static caravan sites or chalet developments.

Alternative Camping Accommodation

8.60 A diverse range of accommodation provision is supported in the National Park.³⁹⁰ Alternative forms of camping accommodation have become more popular, offering a range of different holiday experiences. Enabling the provision of such accommodation may lead to a wider range of visitors to the National Park directly benefitting the local tourism economy.

8.61 This form of accommodation, includes structures which are generally considered to be 'movable' or easily dismantled (usually considered under case/planning law as a caravan or tent). However, they tend to vary in terms of their materials and form and in some cases are likely to remain 'on site' permanently. Examples include timber camping pods, micro-lodges, traditional Romany caravans, shepherd huts, tree-houses, yurts, wigwams and

tepees – these structures provide a 'niche' form of low-impact visitor accommodation that have limited physical connection to the ground.

8.62 Visual appearance in the landscape is one of the most significant impacts that such proposals are likely to have in terms of their arrangement and uniform appearance. However, compared to static or touring caravans, alternative forms of accommodation can be more sympathetic in terms of form, colour and materials (e.g. timber). Proposals should ensure that: the overall number of structures remains low; they are well designed; and sensitively sited in terms of landscape, wildlife and historic environment considerations. Structures can be more effectively screened in the wider landscape, when set against or within mature woodland or well-treed areas. Opportunities for site enhancement through

³⁹⁰ ENPA (2010) Your Future Exmoor Tourism Topic Group discussion, ENPA, Dulverton

the design and management of the site and associated planting e.g. for screening, will be encouraged (CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure and CE-D2 Green Infrastructure Provision).

8.63 Concrete pads or bases for the floor area of these structures are not considered to be acceptable. Timber platforms or decking which can be easily removed from the site, if required, are more aesthetically pleasing and have less impact on the ground surface. Site works and areas of hard-standing to accommodate this type of accommodation should be minimised to complement the natural topography of the area. Extensive alterations to ground levels and engineering works would have a considerable landscape impact and should be avoided. Careful consideration should also be given to the design and use of materials for pathways leading to or between structures in terms of the colour and degree of permanence – light/contrasting colours and uniform paving should be avoided.

8.64 To avoid these temporary structures being considered as dwellings or mobile homes within the National Park (and therefore considered under more stringent policies of restraint in the open countryside), such structures should provide basic holiday accommodation similar to that described under 'tented' camp sites (policy RT-D5 Tented Camp Sites). These holiday accommodation units should have an internal floor space no larger than 25sqm and should only provide basic facilities for sleeping, seating and eating without installation of underground/overground pipework for foul drainage systems. This ensures that such structures do not generate a level of permanence that could increase the degree of landscape impact and site restoration should removal of structures be required. Additional facilities (if not already present) should be provided separately from the accommodation unit, as on camp sites, through the change of use and alteration of suitable existing buildings (CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings) or as an extension to existing facilities to service the need of additional visitors (i.e. where visitor numbers are increased on site by the proposal rather than maintained at a similar level).

8.65 The policy provides for 'small-scale' alternative camping proposals as a diversification opportunity for existing accommodation providers and land-based businesses. It is not considered to be appropriate to set a maximum figure for the number of such structures – small-scale proposals will be determined by the National Park Authority in relation to factors including the scale of the existing accommodation enterprise, landscape character and/or the relationship with existing buildings and structures.

8.66 Alternative forms of camping accommodation could replace existing static caravans on sites where associated facilities are already present and where it can be demonstrated that the landscaping, siting, design and materials of the proposed structures are appropriate (policy RT-D8 Static Caravan Sites). Alternative 'camping' experiences may also be permitted as diversification for land-based businesses or a diversification of accommodation offered by existing camping and caravan sites, hotels/guesthouses (C1 use) and self-catering complexes (where there is more than one holiday let unit with a holiday occupancy condition); with the intention of helping to strengthen and sustain rural tourism businesses. Bed & Breakfast businesses which operate within a residential dwelling (C3 use) will not be permitted to diversify in this way to avoid the proliferation of such structures within any residential curtilage. Proposals should be physically and functionally linked to an existing business, and not require the need for additional permanent residential accommodation, including staff accommodation. Sites with temporary structures used for holiday occupation should not be located in an area with a high probability of flooding, as they would be classified as 'more vulnerable' and be subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan. The sequential and exception tests should also be applied (policy CC-D1 Flood Risk).³⁹¹

8.67 The scale of the overall proposal should minimise the need for additional parking capacity through the extension of existing parking areas or the creation of new parking facilities – particularly on greenfield land. Other approaches, such as encouraging sustainable forms of transport (AC-S1 Sustainable Transport) or informal/temporary parking

³⁹¹ DCLG (2014) Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Zone and Flood Risk Tables, Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification Paragraph: 066 Reference ID: 7-066-20140306

arrangements (AC-D4 Temporary Parking), may provide an alternative to an increase in parking capacity. Where the need for additional parking provision can be demonstrated, the scale should be such that it only meets the minimum parking requirement for the additional visitor numbers generated and does not cause unacceptable harm to the National Park or its special qualities. A need for additional parking should not be generated where the proposed structures are replacing existing pitches for static caravans, chalets or touring caravans.

8.68 The design of extensions for existing parking areas should ensure that they are well integrated with their surroundings in terms of landscaping, surface treatments and layout. Proposals for new parking should be well-related to existing buildings and make best use of any existing hard-standing. The creation of separate parking bays adjacent to the accommodation structure is not acceptable due to the increase of likely landscaping works and impacts on visual amenity and landscape character. Where the use of greenfield areas is proposed, the design of parking arrangements should reflect and respond to landscape character; utilising locally sourced low-impact natural materials for surfacing. More permanent and impervious man-made surface treatments (e.g. tarmac or concrete) should be avoided.

8.69 Conditions will also be attached to any planning permission to ensure that:

- a) Occupation is limited to holiday use only so the structure will not be used as a permanent residence;
- b) Where structures become redundant, they are removed and the site is reinstated to its former use;
- c) Only the approved structures are placed on the application site and external finish and colour are maintained;
- d) No fences, buildings or ancillary structures are erected without a further granting of planning permission; and
- e) Any planting or landscaping schemes are in place prior to siting the structures, and existing landscape features retained. Alterations to the landscaping / planting scheme permitted would be subject to the written approval of the local planning authority.

RT-D9 Alternative Camping Accommodation

1. Small-scale, low impact alternative camping accommodation proposals will be permitted where:
 - a) they are only used for the purposes of holiday accommodation;
 - b) the overall development is small-scale in terms of area and number of units and will not require additional permanent residential accommodation to manage the site;
 - c) the net floor space of each unit is less than 25sqm and will not be connected to a foul drainage system;
 - d) they are of high quality sustainable design and demonstrate that the siting and landscaping strongly relate to the landscape and historic character of the area; and is appropriate to its setting (locations that are well screened by woodland or well-treed settings are preferred and should meet the tests in this policy);

...continued overleaf

- e) they have low environmental impact through limited physical connection with the ground by ensuring that any hard-standing and site works are minimal to complement the natural topography and landscape character of the area; avoiding extensive alteration to ground levels and fencing;
 - f) the need for additional facilities is clearly demonstrated and commensurate with the level of anticipated need, are provided within an existing building or as a modest extension to existing facilities; and
 - g) where the need for additional parking is demonstrated, provision should reflect the minimum level of need;
 - i) Small-scale extensions to existing parking areas should be well designed, landscaped and integrated with the site and its setting.
 - ii) New parking provision should be well related to existing buildings and make use of existing hard-standing where possible. On greenfield areas, parking should reflect landscape character, be informal in layout, and avoid permanent impermeable surface treatments.
 - iii) Separate parking bays adjacent to the proposed accommodation structures should be avoided.
- and
- h) there are no adverse impacts on sensitive habitats and wildlife.
2. The site is located outside areas with high probability of flooding, and:
 - a) where proposals meet the requirements of RT-D8 to replace existing units on static caravan sites; or
 - b) as part of a diversification proposal for land-based businesses, sited close to the farmstead and where additional site facilities can be provided through the change of use of existing buildings; or
 - c) as part of a diversification proposal for existing accommodation premises comprising hotels/guesthouses (C1 use), self-catering complexes, and camping and caravan sites; where there is capacity in terms of area, highway access, and existing facilities without impacting on local amenity.
 3. Conditions will be attached to any permission to ensure that the site will be occupied and managed in a manner that will not harm the local area. Opportunities should be taken to enhance the restoration of the site that will support biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Recreational Development

8.70 Exmoor is ideally suited to recreation pursuits that are based on its natural assets including walking, horse riding, cycling, watersports, coastering and interest in its natural beauty including wildlife watching and photography. Recreational development can benefit the health and well-being of local communities and visitors, and support the local economy, by providing employment including opportunities for apprenticeships and training. Exmoor has proven to be an excellent venue for local, national and international outdoor events which have included the Exmoor perambulation, Exmoor Explorer mountain bike ride, Exmoor Stagger run, Exmoor Golden Horseshoe endurance riding event, a stage of the national Tour of Britain cycle race and the International 'Ironman' triathlon. Some aspects of recreational activity, such as events that take place on a temporary basis (up to 28 days in a calendar year), do not require planning permission. In many cases, these can be accommodated without harm to the National Park or its users and can play a part in enriching the area. Applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals at a pre-application stage to determine whether planning permission is required.

8.71 There are a number of recreational pursuits which do not require physical activity and which are appropriate to the National Park, such as photography, painting and star gazing.³⁹² The re-use of existing buildings for indoor recreational pursuits may also be suitable in the Exmoor context, for example, to provide 'wet weather' recreational facilities.

8.72 Other outdoor pursuits include commercial game shooting which has expanded on Exmoor since the 1990s, brings valuable income to the local economy, and supports tourism businesses outside of the main season. Activities and associated development, such as rearing pens, game crops, and feeding equipment have the potential to individually and cumulatively adversely impact landscape and access to and enjoyment of it. The Greater Exmoor Shoots Association (GESA) is the membership organisation for local shoots based in and around Exmoor National Park. They are a lead partner in encouraging the good environmental management of Exmoor game bird

shoots and minimising visual impacts.³⁹³ Well managed shoots provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to the management of the landscape. Guidance on voluntary codes of conduct is available from Exmoor National Park Authority, to help ensure that shoot-related development and activity (including signage and safety) conserves the National Park's natural beauty, wildlife and habitats, and tranquillity, and have regard to public safety and access rights.^{394,395}

8.73 Certain activities relating to the shooting of game may need planning permission. Where birds are reared and shot for sporting purposes for more than 28 days in a calendar year it is likely that planning permission is required even if the activity takes place on existing agricultural land unless the shoot has a long established use in planning terms. The National Park Authority will provide advice on whether planning permission is required. Proposals for commercial game shooting in the Exmoor context should also demonstrate that they are part of a farm diversification scheme (SE-S4 Agricultural and Forestry Development).

8.74 As the leisure sector is fast-changing with patterns and popularity of uses changing over time, it is not appropriate to specify particular recreational activities within this policy or provide an area based approach. Proposals will be determined on a case-by-case basis using the principles set out in RT-D10 Recreational Development, to enable a flexible approach over the plan period. Appropriate facilities to enable recreational activities which promote the understanding and enjoyment of Exmoor's special qualities and contribute to the local economy and employment are encouraged.³⁹⁶

8.75 The scale, design and intensity of use or activity are important factors in determining whether a proposed development is compatible with the locality, historic environment, biodiversity, landscape character and visual amenity of the area. The cumulative impact of existing or proposed development will also be a material consideration in determining planning applications (CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes).

³⁹² Exmoor became an International Dark Sky reserve in 2011

³⁹³ ENPA (2012) Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017, ENPA, Dulverton

³⁹⁴ ENPA (2007) – The Exmoor Guidelines for the Management of Gamebirds within the National Park, ENPA, Dulverton

³⁹⁵ ENPA (2010) Your Future Exmoor (YFE) consultation events January – March 2010 (full feedback report), ENPA, Dulverton

³⁹⁶ ENPA (2010) Your Future Exmoor (YFE) consultation events January – March 2010 (full feedback report), ENPA, Dulverton

8.76 The majority of recreational activities and facilities on Exmoor that utilise the outdoor natural resource are small scale and dispersed and are most likely to be suitable in the Exmoor context. However, some recreational activities, particularly noisy pursuits, can conflict with the National Park's special qualities and enjoyment of them, particularly tranquillity (RT-S1 Recreation and Tourism).³⁹⁷ Other impacts on the National Park's special qualities such as on biodiversity should also be key considerations for proposals. Activities which will conflict with the National Park's special qualities including through visual intrusion, noise and causing erosion are not appropriate (CC-S7 Pollution). New recreational activities may also conflict with other recreational pursuits in the locality. To minimise impacts, a number of measures, some of which are outside the planning system, can be used such as voluntary codes of conduct, monitoring of illegal motor vehicle activity and use of temporary or permanent Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate. Although often viewed as a 'green' use of the countryside, golf courses are not considered to be compatible with the National Park's designation due to the impacts of formalisation and standardisation of the landscape that destroy the fabric and landscape character of an area and its biodiversity.

8.77 Development should be focussed in or adjoining named settlements (GP3 Spatial Strategy). Special justification will be required for recreation development proposals to be located in the open countryside; where they should be closely associated with existing recreational development or rural land-based diversification (SE-S3 Business Development in the Open Countryside). In certain circumstances, proposals may be capable of being accommodated in the open countryside away from existing development. In such cases, the development should enhance the understanding or enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park and applicants will be expected to clearly demonstrate that such a location is essential for the development and that it will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment.

8.78 Proposals should, in the first instance, make best use of existing buildings consistent with GP4 The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings. Proposals should also ensure that access arrangements are adequate, that the local road network has the capacity to service the development including during the peak season and that any necessary parking can be accommodated unobtrusively. Travel plans may be required where proposals are likely to result in significant traffic generation and opportunities for access by sustainable means will be encouraged (AC-S3 Traffic Management and Parking).

8.79 Where a building/structure for recreational development becomes redundant, it should be removed and the land restored to its former condition to minimise its impact on the natural environment and landscape of the National Park. Environmental enhancement will be encouraged as part of any restoration.

³⁹⁷ DEFRA (2010) English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular (Paragraph 26)

RT-D10 Recreational Development

1. Proposals for recreational development that support a sustainable local economy will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that, individually and cumulatively:
 - a) they reuse traditional buildings and where appropriate non-traditional buildings. Where the need for a new building is clearly demonstrated siting should be well related to existing buildings;
 - b) the location together with scale, and intensity of use or activity (including seasonal impacts) is appropriate in relation to the historic environment, wildlife sensitivity, landscape character, visual amenity and existing enjoyment of the area;
 - c) it is in or adjoining a named settlement (GP3);
 - d) where they cannot be accommodated in a named settlement, the development will enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park, and it can be clearly demonstrated that such a location is essential for development;
 - e) there is adequate access, including by sustainable modes of transport;
 - f) parking can be accommodated unobtrusively and the existing local road network has capacity to service the development (AC-S3); and
 - g) the development will be removed and land restored to its former condition when the building/structure becomes redundant unless planning permission is granted for an alternative use. Environmental enhancement will be encouraged when the land is restored.

Equestrian Development

8.80 Owning and riding horses are traditional and popular activities on Exmoor for residents and visitors alike, and horse related development can be compatible with National Park purposes.³⁹⁸ Managed well, visual intrusions or other potential impacts from associated buildings, enclosures, fences, increased traffic, light and noise pollution can be minimised to an acceptable level in the environment.

8.81 Landscape and wildlife impacts resulting from overgrazing can be minimised by ensuring there is an appropriate amount of land available for horse grazing. The British Horse Society recommends as a general guideline a ratio of two horses per hectare

on permanent grazing (1-1.5 acres per horse).³⁹⁹ This would be considered a minimum in the National Park because of the nature of the land.⁴⁰⁰ The type of field boundary and sub-division of fields can also affect landscape character. Sub-dividing fields with a variety of materials such as electric tape fencing often gives an impression of clutter, fragmentation and over intensive use of the land. When keeping horses in areas accessible to the public, horse keepers should ensure they do not detrimentally impact the access network or cause risk to the public including as a result of the sub-division of fields. Impacts can be managed by following best practice advice for example:

³⁹⁸ ENPA (2007) Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment, ENPA, Dulverton

³⁹⁹ British Horse Society et al (2010) Horses, the Landscape and You: Equestrian guide to keeping horses in protected landscapes

⁴⁰⁰ Kent Downs AONB (2011) Managing Land for Horses [as a guide 1 hectare per 500kg horse to provide year round turnout and all or most of its nutritional requirements from that land]

- a) Local or traditional approaches should be used e.g. hedgebanks and native hedging.
- b) Avoid or minimise sub-division of fields where possible. If sub-division is necessary mirror the lines of existing field boundaries and use low visibility/mute coloured materials.

8.82 Horse owners also have a 'duty of care' to ensure horse waste is stored and disposed of responsibly to protect amenity and avoid ground and water pollution (CC-S7 Pollution).

8.83 There is the potential for formalised facilities, such as manèges, livery yards and pony trekking centres, to have adverse landscape effects, such as the over-use of the surrounding access network, causing an environmental impact and affecting other users, such as walkers. Policy RT-D11 Equestrian Development, whilst supportive of equestrian activities because they are part of the history and culture of Exmoor, seeks to ensure the very best management of horses and pasture in the context of the National Park and its special qualities.

8.84 In some cases, planning permission may not be required e.g. the grazing of horses on agricultural land is regarded as agricultural use. However, in certain circumstances, planning permission will be needed for the change of use of land e.g. the sub-division of agricultural land into paddocks and shelters for horses is likely to be regarded as a change of use to recreational land. Usually, if the grazing is part of an activity, such as a livery, it will require planning permission for change of use of the land.

8.85 Policy RT-D11 applies to horse related development including stabling/loose-boxes, manèges/exercise arenas, livery yards, hay barns, feed stores, tack rooms, new gateways, tracks or access points onto highways, permanent jumps, lighting and any consequent engineering work, such as earth moving. Discussions are encouraged at an early stage to determine whether planning permission is needed. Horse owners are advised to check whether the land they use for any equestrian activity has planning permission.

8.86 To minimise adverse landscape effects on the National Park, horse related development (where horses are to be kept) should always be close to the property it is intended to serve. 'Where horses are to be kept' refers to the location where horses are to remain for the majority of the time; this may include

structures/buildings used as shelter for horses. Existing buildings should be reused in the first instance, where they are available and appropriate for the type of equestrian development proposed – consistent with policy CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings. New equestrian development will only be appropriate where it is well related to existing buildings. Where new buildings are required, they should achieve a high standard of design (SE-S4 Agricultural and Forestry Development). Consideration will need to be given to the siting, scale, design, materials, colour and landscaping of new development. Where artificial lighting is proposed, this should be consistent with CE-S2 Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky and CC-S7 Pollution. Proposals must also demonstrate they do not cause harm to the natural environment and the access network (RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way). Where development is likely to generate traffic movements, the proposal should have regard to policies AC-D1 Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development and AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development.

8.87 Conditions will be used where appropriate and may include provisions to ensure that:

- a) the development is limited to domestic use where the proposal is intended for this purpose;
- b) the development will not cause harm to equestrian routes, this can include through limiting the number of horses;
- c) the removal of the building/structure and restoration of the land to its former condition should the use cease to be operational unless planning permission is granted for an alternative use.

8.88 Some equestrian development can be incongruous in the landscape and its proliferation could therefore have an adverse effect on visual amenity and the landscape. The cumulative impacts of equestrian development will be a material consideration in determining planning applications (CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes). In some cases, a temporary consent may be considered in order to ascertain whether equestrian development will be acceptable in the longer term.

8.89 All applicants for equestrian development will be required to submit a land management plan as part of their planning application. The following factors should be considered when compiling a land management plan for equestrian development including:

- a) Managing grazing;
- b) Managing waste;
- c) Means of enclosure and boundary treatments;
- d) Tree and hedge protection/management;
- e) Buildings and Structures;
- f) Impacts on Public Rights of Way;
- g) Soil condition; and
- h) Managing invasive species e.g. ragwort

8.90 Preparation of a land management plan should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and the activity likely to be generated; larger-scale equestrian development including pony trekking and livery yards will therefore be required to provide detailed land management plans to explain fully how the factors listed above will be addressed.

8.91 Policy RT-D11 would, in principle, provide for proposals for stabling at visitor accommodation businesses, such as hotels, where they would support equine tourism by providing short-term shelter for horses.

RT-D11 Equestrian Development

1. Proposals for equestrian development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they:
 - a) do not adversely affect the natural environment, amenity of the surrounding area, or neighbouring properties either directly or indirectly including through pollution;
 - b) re-use existing traditional buildings or, where appropriate, non-traditional buildings in accordance with CE-S5. Where the need for a new building is clearly demonstrated, siting should be well related to existing buildings;
 - c) do not cause unacceptable levels of traffic in terms of the environmental or physical capacity of the road network, and do not prejudice road safety interests;
 - d) are sited sensitively in terms of visual impact and the landscape setting of the area, and in terms of the intensity of use or activity;
 - e) are of an appropriate scale, well designed and, unobtrusive in their form, in terms of their height, position and materials including by means of enclosure. Proposals should reflect the character and form of existing traditional development;
 - f) have adequate and suitable grazing land to support the development proposed;
 - g) are well related to suitable networks of equestrian routes which are capable of supporting the additional use in accordance with RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way. Where appropriate, horses will be regulated to a number which will not cause harm to equestrian routes, the landscape or nature conservation; and
 - h) ensure the site is managed in accordance with an agreed land management plan.
2. In the case of development proposals that involve the keeping of horses, the development shall be sited close to the dwelling it is intended to serve.

Access Land and Rights of Way

8.92 The access network is a means of sustainable transport and enables popular recreational activities that promote healthier living as advocated by national policy. Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access and local authorities are encouraged to seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, such as by linking existing rights of way networks.⁴⁰¹

8.93 Walking is a popular recreational activity on Exmoor, and is often cited as the main reason for visiting the National Park.⁴⁰² Cycling and horse-riding are also popular activities. They make use of the extensive access network, which in the context of the policy includes Public Rights of Way (PRoW), access land, statutory and permitted cycle routes, permissive paths and roads used for these purposes.⁴⁰³ By providing the means for such activities, the access network plays an integral role in promoting the enjoyment of the National Park both for visitors and local communities. As the access network has an important influence on the number of visitors to Exmoor, it makes a valuable contribution to the local economy of the area including for a significant number of local businesses. It can also provide important habitats and linkages for the biodiversity of the National Park, be identified as an element of the historic environment, and a valuable feature of the landscape character of Exmoor.

8.94 A high standard of maintenance, clear way-marking and the minimisation of any conflicts between path users and landowners are vital to the enjoyment of the access network. The legal responsibility for the maintenance of PRoW lies with Devon and Somerset County Councils, which has been delegated to Exmoor National Park Authority. The Authority will work with farmers, land owners and land managers to address any issues arising from PRoW across their land. A large proportion of the

network is available to walkers, cyclists and equestrian users. Users' interests encompass the physical use and the understanding, enjoyment and experience of the access network including views and tranquillity. Opportunities to enhance the network to improve the inclusiveness and enjoyment of it for users of all abilities will be sought and national guidelines followed, wherever possible, to safeguard different user groups' interests and find the best possible access option.

8.95 Climate change may result in a need for increased maintenance of the access network. The Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan includes measures to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the rights of way network as a special quality of the National Park.⁴⁰⁴ The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for Devon and Somerset also includes objectives and priorities for improving the PRoW network for the benefit of all users on Exmoor.⁴⁰⁵

8.96 Policy RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way seeks to ensure that the existing access network is not adversely affected by development proposals. In recognition of the network's important role, it will be protected from development that is likely to prejudice current or future use. Proposals that enhance the network and improve existing routes including the provision of linkages between routes will be encouraged (CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure, and CE-D2 Green Infrastructure Provision).

8.97 Where proposals are likely to result in an increase in the intensity of vehicular use on shared access routes, applicants will need to demonstrate that the condition of the route will be maintained, and that the safety, ease of use, and enjoyment of the access network by all users will not be adversely affected.

⁴⁰¹ DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework paras. 73 and 75 – DCLG

⁴⁰² ENPA (2010) Your Future Exmoor consultation events, ENPA, Dulverton

⁴⁰³ HM Government (2000) Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, The Stationery Office, London

⁴⁰⁴ ENPA (2012) Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017, ENPA, Dulverton

⁴⁰⁵ Devon County Council (2012) Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2; Devon County Council (2005) Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Somerset County Council (2015) Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 and Appendices

RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way

1. The access network will be safeguarded by ensuring that development proposals will not adversely affect:
 - a) the condition of the access network;
 - b) users' interests; and
 - c) character and appearance.
2. Where proposals will adversely affect the access network applicants will be required to demonstrate that:
 - a) the need for and benefit of the development clearly outweighs any harm to the current access network;
 - b) there is no appropriate alternative location;
 - c) any harm will be kept to a minimum;
 - d) the affected network will be improved and enhanced to protect users' interests;
 - e) opportunities have been sought to provide linkages between routes, and strengthen the green infrastructure network; and
 - f) an acceptable diversion and/or compensatory land of equal or better quality are provided where necessary.

Safeguarding Land Along Former Railways and Reinstatement of the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway

8.98 Former railways are important heritage assets which form a valuable component of the cultural heritage of Exmoor National Park. They can also: be re-used as part of the access network e.g. as walking or cycling routes; act as important wildlife corridors/links between habitats for species such as dormice and bats; become a part of the green infrastructure network; or may be reinstated as part of the transport network.

West Somerset Mineral Line

8.99 The 11.5 mile West Somerset Mineral Railway was constructed to carry iron ore from mines in the Brendon Hills to Watchet harbour for shipment to Newport in South Wales. The incline, completed in 1868, was a twin-track gravity operated railway with a gradient of 1 in 4. It was perhaps the most significant standard gauge incline in the country.

8.100 In 1883, when the mines closed and ore trains no longer ran, revenue from passenger and goods traffic was not enough to cover the cost of running services and maintaining the line, which closed in 1898.

8.101 In the early 1990s Exmoor National Park Authority purchased the railway's incline. It was scheduled as a monument and a grant was secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the conservation of the harbour at Watchet outside the National Park, as well as the railway and mine sites both within and outside the National Park.⁴⁰⁶

Lynton and Barnstaple Railway

8.102 The construction of the 19 mile long Lynton and Barnstaple Railway began in 1895 and it opened in 1898. It was built as a narrow gauge to lower the cost of construction and to follow the natural contours of the countryside. However, in the face of increasing competition from road transport, the line closed in 1935. Most of the buildings and some of the bridges survived. The former railway line lies partly within Exmoor National Park and partly outside the National Park in North Devon District.

⁴⁰⁶ Jones, M.H. (2011) The Brendon Hills Iron Mines and the West Somerset Mineral Line: A New Account. Lightmoor Press

8.103 In 1979 a group was formed to restore the railway which, in 1998, became the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway Trust.⁴⁰⁷ In 2004, it opened a one mile stretch of the original track (from Woody Bay to Killington Lane) to the public. The Trust has an aspiration to extend the line beyond the former railway station in Lynton to terminate at a new station closer to the settlement. The Lynton and Lynmouth Neighbourhood Plan was brought into force in December 2013, and includes a policy for the reinstatement of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway within the neighbourhood plan area, including the provision of a new Lynton station and an effective link for passengers from the station to the centre of Lynton.

Safeguarding Land Along Former Railways

8.104 Policy RT-D13 seeks to safeguard land along the line of the West Somerset Mineral Line and the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway as continuous linear

routes for their recreation and historic value, and their potential for sustainable modes of travel within Exmoor National Park. The safeguarded land is identified on the Policies Map. It excludes land within the footprint of residential dwellings in existence when this Plan was adopted. Partial deviation from the original route will only be considered in order to achieve a continuous linear route when this cannot be reasonably achieved on the original route. Proposals for a deviation of the route should reflect the character of the original route. Where a proposal for partial deviation of the safeguarded route is permitted and developed in relation to the reinstatement of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, the agreed alternative route will be safeguarded as a replacement of the original route it substituted. The National Park Authority will work with neighbouring authorities to ensure a consistent approach where lines cross administrative boundaries.

RT-D13 Safeguarding Land Along Former Railways

1. The land on the route of the former Lynton and Barnstaple Railway and the West Somerset Mineral Line as shown on the Policies Map will be safeguarded as important heritage assets and protected from development that would prevent the reuse of the former railways for the expansion of the access network (RT-D12) or the reinstatement of the former Lynton and Barnstaple Railway (RT-S2).
2. Partial deviation from the original railway route will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that a continuous linear route cannot be reasonably achieved, for the purposes of reinstating the railway, by using the original route. Where a partial deviation of the original route is permitted and developed, the agreed alternative route will be safeguarded as a replacement of the original route it substitutes.

Reinstatement of The Lynton and Barnstaple Railway

8.105 The former Lynton and Barnstaple Railway runs through open countryside within the National Park and is therefore an important heritage asset. Proposals for reinstatement should seek to replicate the original narrow gauge railway as far as possible, and in doing so, further National Park purposes.

8.106 To help protect the landscape character of the National Park and its setting, the National Park

Authority and North Devon Council have a coordinated policy approach, which favours the re-use of the original buildings associated with the former railway both within and outside the National Park. This principle ensures that any reinstatement is historically accurate and avoids or minimises the requirement for new buildings. Where it can be demonstrated this is not possible, existing buildings

⁴⁰⁷ Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust Ltd (2015) Lynton and Barnstaple Railway website: www.lynton-rail.co.uk/railway

in suitable proximity to the reinstatement may be considered (CE-S5 Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings). Consequently, any additional new development from the original historic former railway including diversions from the original route and any new buildings and infrastructure will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that there is no alternative solution which would meet the need for the development in any other way, and it is essential for the operation of the reinstated former railway or is a restoration of a historic feature that complements the character of the former railway. Proposals for new dwellings associated with the reinstatement of the railway should accord with housing policies in Section 6 'Achieving a Thriving Community'.

8.107 The design of all aspects of a proposal should therefore reflect the historic character and appearance of the original railway and ensure that the proposed development is integrated in terms of its landscape setting. Landscaping should be incorporated as part of the proposal to conserve and enhance the National Park. It should have regard to the site and landscape character of the area and also the traditional features of the former railway; this may include trees, hedges, walls, railings, fences and surface treatments (CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character, and CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles). Detailed evidence should be provided with any application to demonstrate the need for any deviations from the original historic former railway route consistent with policy RT-D13 Safeguarding Land Along Former Railways to ensure that the reinstated route will be safeguarded.

8.108 Sustainable construction methods are encouraged in the National Park, however, in the case of the reinstatement of a former railway, the priority will be the historical accuracy of the development. Sustainable construction methods should therefore be used, unless they would compromise the historical character and appearance of the reinstated railway and associated infrastructure (CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles).

8.109 The National Park Authority will work with Devon County Council as the Highway and Transport Authority and with transport providers to encourage sustainable transport for residents and visitors (AC-S1 Sustainable Transport). Any proposed development

will need to ensure appropriate and safe access to the road network and should not cause unacceptable levels of traffic in terms of the physical capacity of the network including road safety interests and the environmental impacts of accommodating such requirements. The National Park Authority will expect any proposal to incorporate measures to enable safe access by transport other than the private car, such as walking, cycling or public transport, to minimise traffic generation and the need for parking. A travel plan will therefore be required to ensure the proposal delivers sustainable travel outcomes. Where necessary, a transport assessment, transport statement and air quality assessment may be required (AC-D1 Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development, and AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development). Proposals should also accord with RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way, CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure and CE-D2 Green Infrastructure Provision.

8.110 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate to the National Park Authority's satisfaction that any highway infrastructure proposed as part of the development is essential to the proposal and that it will not lead to unacceptable impacts on road users or result in the severance of existing highway routes or public rights of way. In such cases, to ensure potential impacts would be acceptable in a National Park context, the proposed infrastructure (including crossings) should be of an appropriate scale and design, such as through the use of natural and traditional materials, to conserve and enhance the National Park (AC-S2 Transport Infrastructure).

8.111 There is a presumption against providing for permanent peak parking demand in the National Park due to the impact on the natural and built environment. Instead, there is a need to seek more sustainable solutions to the management of traffic (see paragraph 8.109) and the demand for parking. Car parking provision should therefore be consistent with policies AC-S3 Traffic Management and Parking and AC-D3 Parking Provision and Standards. To address higher levels of parking which may arise for limited periods during the peak season and scheduled 'railway events', temporary overflow measures may be permitted to accommodate peak parking demand if they do not adversely affect the environment or character of the area in accordance with AC-D4 Temporary Parking.

RT-S2 Reinstatement of The Lynton and Barnstaple Railway

1. Proposals for the reinstatement of the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway should be in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a) the proposal should seek to reinstate and replicate the former narrow gauge railway including the line of the original route and the siting, design, appearance, and materials of the associated structures or buildings;
 - b) any additional new development over and above the original historic former railway should provide demonstrable evidence that it is essential for the operation of the reinstated former railway or is a restoration of a historic feature and that there are no alternative solutions which would reasonably meet the need for the development in any other way;
 - c) reinstatement proposals should:
 - i) Seek to re-use the original buildings associated with the former railway.
 - ii) Where it can be demonstrated that the re-use of the original buildings cannot be achieved, existing buildings in suitable proximity to the reinstatement proposal may be considered.
 - iii) New buildings will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that there are no existing buildings suitable for re-use.
 - d) new infrastructure, buildings and structures should complement the character of the original railway;
 - e) the proposal should respond to landscape character and ensure landscaping is appropriate to the site and character of the area and having regard to traditional features of the former railway (CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character);
 - f) the proposal should safeguard wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest (CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure);
 - g) sustainable construction methods should be used, unless they compromise the historical accuracy and appearance of the former railway;
 - h) the proposal should accord with policy AC-D1 Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development, and provide a travel plan to incorporate measures to enable safe access by walking, cycling and public transport that will help to minimise traffic generation and the need for parking;
 - i) parking provision should be in accordance with policies AC-S3 Traffic Management and Parking, and AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development; and
 - j) provision of temporary overflow parking to help address peak parking demand should accord with policy AC-D3 Parking Provision and Standards.