

# FAQ: Rural Worker and Succession Farm Dwellings Guidance

## Supplementary Planning Document



### 1. Who is it for?

The **Rural Worker and Succession Farm Dwellings Guidance Supplementary Planning Document** is to advise those working in farming and forestry in Exmoor National Park how to apply for planning permission to build or convert a building to provide a new home for a rural or succession farm worker.

### 2. What is it for?

It sets out in more detail what evidence is required to meet the functional and financial tests, size requirements and design criteria set out in the adopted Local Plan.

### 3. Which policies are relevant to the guidance?

The Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 contains policies for development in the National Park. Four Local Plan policies are relevant to Rural Worker and Succession Farm housing:

- HC-D7 Conversions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside;
- HC-D8 New Build Dwellings in the Open Countryside;
- HC-D9 Rural Workers;
- HC-D10 Succession Farming - Second Dwellings on Established Farms.

### 4. What do the policies say?

Local Plan policy requires that isolated homes in the open countryside should be avoided unless a functional need and financial justification for a home for a rural worker or a succession farm worker can be demonstrated. If the need cannot be met from existing houses then such homes can be provided through an extension or subdivision of an existing home, conversion of an existing traditional building, or (if none of these are applicable) a new build home. The farm business will need to prove it is financially viable in the long term, extensive in nature and contributes to the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty and wildlife of the National Park.

### 5. How do you qualify?

#### A Rural Worker

A rural worker works in agriculture, forestry or other land based rural business operating in the local area, and undertakes physical work managing the land. A functional need for a home can be demonstrated where 1+ full-time worker is required to be readily available to attend to the needs of the business day and night.

### **A Succession Farm Worker**

A succession farm worker is a person younger than the person currently responsible for management of the farm business who has or is intended to have majority control over the business and be the decision maker. The farm business has secure and legally binding arrangements in place to this effect and, to demonstrate that the farm business is jointly held. A functional need for a home can be demonstrated where 1.5+ full-time workers are required to be readily available to attend to the needs of the business day and night.

## **6. What information needs to be included in the planning application?**

**Financial Justification:** A business appraisal will be required to demonstrate that the business is financially sound and can support a rural worker or succession farm worker. The business appraisal will need to include:

- A description of the current/proposed farm business including its extent, operations, infrastructure, labour force, and any proposed changes.
- How any proposed changes are to be funded and sustained.
- How the business is proposed to develop.
- Submission of accounts for 3 years showing a profit of at least 1 in 3.
- Where applicable, details of how the business is proposed to operate under a succession farming partnership to show that the business can continue to be sustained for at least 5 years from post completion of the proposed home, under the succession partnership.

**Size Requirements:** Local plan policies require that homes for rural workers or succession farm workers should have a maximum gross internal area of of 93m<sup>2</sup>. In exceptional circumstances a larger house may be permitted. This guidance sets out when this may be justified:

- a) there may be a business need for a boot room, shower room, office and/or utility room; and/or
- b) exceptionally, additional residential space may be required beyond 93m<sup>2</sup> such as an additional bedroom.

In these circumstances, a range of between 10-20 m<sup>2</sup> (gross internal area) for each additional room may be considered reasonable. It will need to be demonstrated that the business space cannot be accommodated in any existing buildings, or (for example an office) shared with other house(s) on the farm.

Additional habitable space will only be justified for a main/only home on a farmstead. In such instances a range of between 106-115 m<sup>2</sup> (gross internal area) may be considered. If both additional business and habitable space is justified; then this could result in a house of up to a maximum of 135 m<sup>2</sup> (gross internal area). Incomes external to the farm business and personal circumstances are unlikely to be considered as they do not relate to the future sustainability of the farm business.

**Design:** The guidance provides requirements for the location siting and design of a new home for a rural worker or succession farm worker. The proposed new home should:

- a) functionally relate to the farmstead;
- b) reflect the character of any existing houses or traditional buildings; and
- c) sit well within the surrounding landscape.

Where additional business space can be justified, it is recommended that a single storey addition be proposed as a side extension; a rear lean to extension; or a wraparound extension to the rear; all with a roof pitch and materials to match any existing house.

## **7. How will the supplementary guidance be used?**

The guidance, has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The guidance does not and cannot alter the policies in the adopted Local Plan.