

Appendices

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Appendix 1: Constraints to Housing Development in the National Park

A.1.1 Physical constraints such as topography, flood risk, heritage assets, wildlife and wildlife site designations, heritage coast as well as the sensitivity of Exmoor's landscape affect the capacity of Exmoor's settlements to absorb more housing development:

- i. Topography and flood risk. As many of Exmoor Settlements are within steep confined valleys and this means there are very few level potential housing sites. It also significantly influences flood risk as many of the National Park's watercourses flow through these valleys and, after rainfall, water levels and the speed of flow rise rapidly. Settlements are also, therefore, often at risk of flooding.
- ii. The built environment consists of a range of dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and villages as well as the slightly larger settlements of Dulverton, Lynton and Lynmouth and Porlock (all of which have a parish population of less than 1,500). Its settlements, sites and features are of particular cultural and historic interest with a high number of listed buildings while the preservation of archaeological sites and historic features and the diverse nature of the historic resource are of unusually high quality. These resources are also fragile, vulnerable to insensitive change and, ultimately irreplaceable.
- iii. Many important rare species and habitats. Around 28% of the National Park is designated as internationally or nationally important habitat - Special Areas of Conservation and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Additional areas are identified as locally important for wildlife or are Section 3 land.
- iv. A significant 45 km long stretch of undeveloped coast.²⁹
- v. A limited capacity for new housing on greenfield sites within the National Park without detriment to landscape character demonstrated by an assessment of the landscape sensitivity of the National Park settlements to housing development.³⁰ The finite existing stock of suitable land and buildings is therefore an important component of future supply, to minimise the level of greenfield housing development within the National Park and ensure that, in the longer term beyond the plan period, there will still be some suitable housing sites in settlements to help meet the needs of National Park communities.

²⁹ Land use Consultants (July 2006) Review and Evaluation of Heritage Coasts in England, The Countryside Agency. Cheltenham

³⁰ Bryan, P (2013) Exmoor National Park Landscape Sensitivity Study, Dulverton: ENPA – updated in 2015 to account for Porlock Weir (capacity for 326 units on greenfield sites in settlements).