

**West Somerset Local Plan Examination****Matter 6****Written Statement by Exmoor National Park Authority (Representor No. 5)****Matter 6: Other sites in the event that the Council needs to bring forward additional development sites for soundness**

**Please note: some of these sites have been suggested as alternatives to those proposed in the Plan. That is not the test for the inclusion of such a site. Additional sites would only need to be recommended if insufficient land was proposed to meet the identified need and/or proposed sites were found not to be deliverable either in whole or in part or at the rate of delivery assumed. Participants as listed following the site.**

- 1. Land to the east of Williton (Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd)**
- 2. Land at Liddymore Farm (WAT4) and Doniford Road (WAT6) (Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd)**
- 3. Land at Dunster Marsh (The Crown Estate)**
- 4. Land north of Bratton Lane, Minehead (MIN15) (Mr C Shapland)**
- 5. Land east of Watchet (South West Strategic Developments)**
- 6. Land east of Porlock Road, Minehead (Acorn Rural Property Consultants (for Miss E Thorne, Mr R Thorne and Mrs S Doggrell))**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) has submitted written representations to Matter 6 but does not feel it is necessary to attend this hearing session.
- 1.2. ENPA notes that two of the sites are close to or adjacent to the National Park:
  - Land north of Bratton Lane, Minehead (MIN15) (Mr C Shapland)
  - Land east of Porlock Road, Minehead (Acorn Rural Property Consultants (for Miss E Thorne, Mr R Thorne and Mrs S Doggrell))
- 1.3. A desktop assessment was carried out by the ENPA Landscape Officer regarding the potential impact of these sites on the landscape character and visual amenity of the National Park and its setting.

## 2. Land north of Bratton Lane, Minehead (MIN15)

SITE REF	Description and discussion.	Effects on Exmoor National Park Landscape.
<b>MIN15</b> Land north of Bratton Lane, Minehead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land west of Woodcombe</li> <li>• Outside Exmoor National Park by some distance.</li> <li>• Concern that the site is likely to be highly visible from wide areas of Exmoor National Park and seen in the context of the setting ENP. The site is sloping and development is likely to be difficult to screen.</li> <li>• Concern that proposed development is likely to result in high density at the settlement edge – this is out of character – development at the edge of settlements should peter out – see 2015 inspectors report for housing in Alcombe.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Effects on landscape character - moderate adverse.</b></p> <p><b>Effect on Visual amenity - moderate adverse.</b></p>

2.1. ENPA objects to the proposal for **MIN15** (Land north of Bratton Lane, Minehead) due to its impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity of the National Park (see map in Appendix 1).

## 3. Land east of Porlock Road, Minehead

3.1. The ENPA Landscape Officer made an assessment of the proposal to develop the field immediately to the south of MIN30 & 41 (see map in Appendix 1). The proposal site slopes with higher land at the southern end forming a small hillock – the area is called the “Mount”. The direction of slope means that the land is particularly prominent in the landscape when viewed from the well-used open access land on North Hill – see Figure 1 below that shows a typical view from North Hill with the site outlined in red.

<sup>1</sup> The Planning Inspectorate (24 July 2015) Appeal Ref: APP/H3320/W/15/3005652



**Figure 1: Photo of the Mount (Land east of Porlock Road) from North Hill**

- 3.2. The assessment of this site has relevance to the effect on character of the Minehead's development edge in relationship to the character of Exmoor National Park, particularly as the setting of Minehead within the context of the National Park landscape is highly visible from North Hill.
- 3.3. In terms of how Minehead fits into the Exmoor Landscape, it is considered that an abrupt, hard edge of high density housing abutting open country is less satisfactory than a broken edge where housing is interspersed with fields or strong belts of vegetation. It is preferable therefore that large continuous blocks of housing be avoided.
- 3.4. We consider that a broken edge character can be achieved by:
- developing only small areas of housing and interspersing these with woodland planting and or open space; or
  - by developing at a low density, in which case the properties have large garden capable of supporting trees and shrubs within the gardens which links with the woodland blocks on the sides of Grabbist.
- 3.5. We are unclear, however how it would be proposed to develop the site. Our assessment of the likely effects on Exmoor National Park would depend on the proposed density of development and whether it was proposed to develop the whole site area.

3.6. The possible development of land to the north of this site, MIN30 & 41, along with this site would have cumulative effects and would make the development of this site undesirable. A low density development proposal may be considered to create the desired broken edge character and as a consequence the development of the site may be possible without having adverse effect on the character of the edge