

NORTH DEVON LOCAL PLAN 1995-2011 – LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY

GENERAL PAPER 2 : THE LOCAL PLAN SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this General Paper is to explain the settlement strategy of the Local Plan. In particular, the paper describes in detail the distribution of new development in the Local Plan, with a particular emphasis on housing.
- 1.2 The overall strategy of the Local Plan, including the broad distribution of development, is explained in Chapter 3. The broad distribution of housing throughout the District is set out in Chapter 7. The settlement Action Plans contained in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Plan identify specific land allocations for development based on the principles established in Chapters 3 and 7.
- 1.3 The strategy and distribution of housing as set out in the Local Plan is largely based on the Structure Plan First Review and Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10). However, where appropriate, this paper also explains the implications for the Local Plan Strategy resulting from the emerging alteration to the Structure Plan. The strategy and distribution of housing also applies the advice contained in national and regional guidance.
- 1.4 General Paper 2 complements General Paper 1 and is intended to help set the agenda for the round table discussions scheduled for the 17th June, 2004.

2. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

Planning Policy Guidance 3, Housing (2000)

- 2.1 Published in December 2000, PPG3 provides guidance on a range of issues relating to the provision of housing. PPG3 sets out a new policy direction for the delivery of housing through the planning system based upon '*plan, monitor and manage*'.
- 2.2 PPG3 recognises that the housing needs of all in the community should be recognised, including those in need of affordable or special housing in both urban and rural areas. It also recognises that in order to promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land, the focus for additional housing should be in existing towns and villages.
- 2.3 The most relevant extracts from PPG3 as they relate to this General Paper are highlighted at Appendix 1.

Planning Policy Guidance 7, Countryside (1997)

- 2.4 PPG7 provides guidance on land use planning in rural areas. It emphasises that sustainable development is the cornerstone of rural policies. This concept embraces the requirement to '*meet the economic and social needs of people who live and work in rural areas*' and to '*improve the viability of existing villages and market towns, reduce the need for increased car commuting to urban centres, and reverse the general decline in rural services, by promoting living communities, which have a reasonable mix of age, income and occupation and which offer a suitable scale of employment, affordable and market housing, community facilities and other opportunities*'. PPG7 emphasises the '*interdependence of urban and rural policies*' in providing for sustainable development (see paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4).

2.5 Additional relevant extracts from PPG7 are highlighted at Appendix 1.

Our Countryside: The Future : A Fair Deal for Rural England (2000)

2.6 The Rural White Paper (see CD100) published in November 2000 sets out the Government's vision of the countryside which is of: -

- ◆ a **living** countryside, with thriving rural communities and access to high quality public services;
- ◆ a **working** countryside, with a diverse economy giving high and stable levels of employment;
- ◆ a **protected** countryside in which the environment is sustained and enhanced, and which all can enjoy;
- ◆ a **vibrant** countryside which can shape its own future and with its voice heard by Government at all levels.

2.7 To achieve this vision, the Government is committed to building 'prosperous, sustainable and inclusive rural communities' (paragraph 1.10). As such, the White Paper places particular emphasis on the increased provision of affordable housing in order to sustain balanced communities in line with objectives 1 and 2 and as set out specifically in Chapter 5.

Draft Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2.8 The Draft PPS7 (see CD023) published in 2003 sets out the Government's policies in rural areas. Once adopted, it will replace PPG7. In carrying forward the vision of both the Rural White Paper and its proposals for creating sustainable communities, two of the Government's objectives set out in the draft PPS7 are: -

- i) **To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of:-**
 - ◆ thriving, inclusive and sustainable rural communities;
 - ◆ sustainable economic growth and diversification;
 - ◆ good quality, sustainable development that respects local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside; and
 - ◆ a high level of protection for our most valued landscapes and environmental resources.
- ii) **To promote more sustainable patterns of development and support an urban renaissance** – focusing most development in and around existing towns and villages; discouraging the development of 'greenfield' land, especially in the countryside; promoting a range of uses to maximise the potential benefits of the countryside fringe urban areas; and providing appropriate leisure opportunities to enable urban and rural dwellers to enjoy the wider countryside.

3. REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE SOUTH WEST (RPG10)

3.1 RPG10 was published in September 2001. The RPG provides a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans in the South West should be prepared up to the period 2016 and beyond.

3.2 The vision of RPG10 is expressed in Policy VIS1 which is to: -

- ◆ Promote a sustainable development pattern and set out a sequential approach to the location of development;
- ◆ Minimise the need to develop on greenfield sites and to travel;

- ◆ *Develop an integrated approach to urban and rural areas eg: policies to promote development on previously developed land will not only benefit urban areas, by easing pressures on rural development, they will also help to secure the future of the countryside;*
- ◆ *Concentrate growth at the Principal Urban Areas (PUAs) and other designated centres of growth;*
- ◆ *Recognise the different roles of appropriate development in market towns, and key villages in rural and coastal locations, as places where development will be favoured locally.*

3.3 The spatial strategy of RPG10, which incorporates the principles for future development, is based on the sequential approach set out in PPG3 (Housing), PPG6 (Retailing) and PPG13 (Transport) and is expressed in Policy VIS2. The most relevant elements of the spatial strategy in relation to this General Paper are set out below:-

Local Authorities in their development plans and other agencies in their plans, policies and programmes, should:-

- ◆ *Seek the development of suitable previously developed urban land (or buildings for re-use or conversion) and other appropriate sites in urban areas as a first priority for urban-related land uses; authorities and all agencies involved should examine critically the potential of the urban areas to accommodate new development;*
- ◆ *Seek a balance of land uses in urban localities:-*
 - *by promoting mixed-use development and, where sites are smaller, through complementary land allocations over a wider urban area;*
 - *including a mix of housing types, retail, business and commercial development, industry, education, social and cultural facilities, leisure, sport, recreation and open space uses;*
- ◆ *Ensure that land is used efficiently in both urban and rural locations, with well designed development taking place at as high a density as possible commensurate with a good living and working environment, and by carrying out a rigorous reappraisal of policies on development in order to achieve increasing density, ensure good design and reduce parking requirements;*
- ◆ *Make adequate provision for all land uses, including those with large space requirements, the development needs of new or expanding firms and those unable to be accommodated within urban areas;*
- ◆ *Meet the economic and social needs of rural communities.*

3.4 In recognition of the South West's diversity, RPG10 sub divides the region into four spatially based sub regions. North Devon falls within the Western Sub Region where *'there is a need for strong policies and actions to tackle long term and deep seated economic and social problems, which are particularly accentuated by its peripherality in relation to the South West region and the Country as a whole'* (see Policy SS1 – Regional Spatial Strategy). Additionally, paragraph 3.49 states that the priority on the sub region is to *'stimulate growth and increase prosperity. The momentum of growth must be sustained to underpin the services and facilities that are necessary to retain local people, and serve the needs of the surrounding area'*.

3.5 Both Policies SS2 (Regional Development Strategy) and SS3 (The Sub Regional Strategy) identify Barnstaple as a designated centre for *'sustainable and balanced' growth 'to maintain and enhance the range of employment, housing and other facilities'*. As such Barnstaple should provide a *'focus'* for *'major new employment, social and cultural investment'*.

- 3.6 In addition to 'centres of growth', paragraph 3.14 requires plans to *'include the appropriate level of development at market towns including those in coastal locations and in key villages with the aim of maintaining and reinforcing the economic and social vitality of rural and coastal areas'*. Specifically, Policy SS2 states that *'towns should be designated to act as local service centres for the wider rural areas of the region'* whilst *'other small towns and villages in rural areas should provide for local needs'*. Policy SS3 in relation to the Western Sub Region *'encourages appropriate housing employment, retail and social facilities in sustainable locations to reduce social exclusion and rural need'*.
- 3.7 Policy SS6 deals with 'other designated centres for growth'. The first part of this policy states that future development in the region outside the Principal Urban Areas (PUAs) (i.e. Exeter and Taunton) should *'generally avoid significant growth in the larger towns within easy commuting distance of the PUAs while maintaining and enhancing the range of employment, housing and other facilities in the area'*. In the context of this part of Policy SS6, it is considered that the Area Centre of South Molton is not *'within easy commuting distance'* of either Exeter or Taunton as it is approximately 72 kms (45 miles) and 63 kms (40 miles) from both settlements respectively (see also paragraphs 10.5 and 10.6 of this General Paper). The second part of Policy SS6 states that *'Development Plans should provide for balanced development and growth at identified centres designated to meet sub-regional growth needs outside the PUAs while maintaining and enhancing a range of employment, housing and other facilities in the area'*.
- 3.8 Policy SS7 provides guidance on planning for future development outside the PUAs and other designated centres for growth. It states that development plans should:-
- ◆ *Identify, where appropriate, towns to accommodate smaller scale development to serve local needs and make services available to the wider rural areas of the region;*
 - ◆ *Recognise that other small towns in rural areas should provide for local needs only.*

Policies should also resist the substantial expansion of residential development at small dormitory towns within easy commuting distance of the PUAs.

- 3.9 It is considered that the first bullet point of Policy SS7 relates to the Area Centres such as South Molton or Ilfracombe although the growth strategy for both these towns also needs to be considered against Policy SS19 (see paragraphs 3.10 and 3.11) which provides more specific guidance on development in market towns. The second bullet point of Policy SS7 could relate to the Local Centres identified in Policy STY3 of the Local Plan.
- 3.10 Policy SS19 (Rural Areas) provides specific guidance on rural development. This policy recognises the important role that market towns play in the *'economic and social development of the rural parts of the South West'* and that *'plans should provide for development to maintain and reinforce those roles. The scale of household and business/employment growth should generally be lower than that of the PUAs and other larger towns'* (Paragraph 3.64).
- 3.11 All well as promoting growth in market towns, Policy SS19 also supports development in other rural settlements. The most relevant elements of Policy SS19 are highlighted below:-

Market towns should be the focal points for development and service provision in the rural areas and this role should be supported and enhanced. Outside market towns, development should be small scale and take place primarily within or

adjacent to existing settlements, avoiding scattered forms of development. Local Authorities in their development plans should:-

- ◆ *locate development to support the rural areas primarily in market towns, identified and designated in development plans through a balanced mix of homes, jobs, services and facilities suitable to the scale and location of such settlements;*
- ◆ *adopt policies which support the restructuring of the rural economy and the provision of jobs to satisfy local needs;*
- ◆ *limit housing growth in market towns near larger urban areas where it would fuel commuting rather than meet local needs.*

3.12 In recognition of the need to support a living countryside, with a balanced mix of homes and jobs and to preserve family and other social relationships, Policy HO4 (Housing in Rural Areas) states that '*special provision should be made to ensure that local people have access to housing in these locations*' (Paragraph 7.17).

4. THE DEVON STRUCTURE PLAN

4.1 The most relevant policies in both the Structure Plan First Review 1995-2011 and the emerging Alteration to the Structure Plan 2001-2016 relating to this General Paper are set out in Appendix 2.

5. THE DEVON STRUCTURE PLAN FIRST REVIEW 1995-2011

5.1 The North Devon Local Plan has been prepared in the context of the Devon Structure Plan First Review which was adopted in February 1999. This Structure Plan was prepared in the context of the original Regional Planning Guidance for the South West which was published in 1994. However, this Structure Plan was guided by the same national planning guidance policy context as the currently adopted RPG10. It should be emphasised that this Structure Plan is subject to an Alteration rather than a full review indicating that the strategy contained in the first review is not fundamentally at variance with the new and updated RGP10.

5.2 A key role of the Structure Plan is to give broad guidance on the future level and distribution to be provided for in Devon over the period 1995-2011. In order to fulfil this role, the Structure Plan has established a Development Strategy that consists of four main elements which are summarised below:-

1. Strategic Development Objectives

The strategic aims identified in Chapter 4 of the Structure Plan reflect three key areas of concern for the future relating to the environment, the economy and the social wellbeing of Devon and its residents.

2. Broad Strategic Areas

Three broad strategic areas have been identified which provide the framework for the overall development strategy. These three areas can be described as:-

a) The Area of Economic Activity – for Northern Devon this area focuses on the Barnstaple/Bideford area where a significant proportion of economic activity and population is concentrated.

b) Rural Areas of Development Constraint – for North Devon this area is situated to the north of the Link Road (A361) and based around the coast and fringes of the Exmoor National Park. Given the vulnerability of its landscape, the strategy for this area is based on a greater degree of development constraint than in other rural parts of the District.

- c) Less Constrained Rural Areas Requiring Economic Diversification- for North Devon this covers an extensive inland area to the south of the link road. Within this area there is greater scope for economic diversification to be accommodated without harming areas of recognised special landscape value.

3. Devon's Settlements and Their Functions

This element of the strategy establishes the settlement hierarchy which has the most implications for the distribution of development. The settlement hierarchy as it relates to North Devon is summarised below: -

The Sub Regional Centre

The Sub Regional Centre of Barnstaple should act as a focal point for the provision of new development and major services and facilities within the northern part of the County in accordance with Policy S1a. In addition, Policy S1c requires that the bulk of new development should be accommodated in the Sub Regional Centre. These policies are broadly consistent with Policies SS2, SS3 and SS6 of RGP10.

Area Centres

Below Sub Regional Centres, the strategy identifies a key role for Area Centres as set out in Policy S1b. An integral element of the strategy is that the role of these centres is developed and supported. The Local Plan identifies Braunton, Ilfracombe and South Molton as Area Centres which is consistent with past policies set out in previous Development Plans. Policy S1B is broadly consistent with Policies SS6, SS7 and SS19 of RGP10.

Local Centres

Local Centres are defined as those smaller towns and larger villages which are well placed to provide more localised services and facilities and to act as a focal point for rural communities. In accordance with Policy S2 they should have the capacity to accommodate small scale development related to local needs, including residential and commercial development. In North Devon, Chulmleigh, Combe Martin, Fremington, Witheridge and Woolacombe are considered to function at this level of the settlement hierarchy. Policy S2 is broadly consistent with Policies SS7 and SS19 of RGP10.

Settlement Self Sufficiency

Policy S5 seeks to ensure that facilities within communities are maintained and enhanced so as to promote the greatest degree of self sufficiency. The range of facilities that can be supported will vary according to the role of a settlement in the hierarchy.

More specific guidance on the distribution of residential development in the context of the settlement hierarchy is contained at Policy H3. Essentially, this policy promotes new development in those settlements where the objectives of sustainability are most likely to be achieved. Consequently, the policy provides scope for residential development in '*smaller villages and hamlets*' below the level of a local centre, where it meets local social or economic needs.

Policy C10 recognises that there are certain settlements which have a particular need for recognition and revitalisation including those Area Centres

that are either suffering a decline in tourism or have experienced a relative decline in their general vitality and viability.

4. Strategic Infrastructure

The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that major strategic infrastructure is provided to support new development.

6. THE DEVON STRUCTURE PLAN 2001 TO 2016

6.1 The Structure Plan is currently subject to an '*Alteration*' rather than a full '*Review*'. This Alteration focuses on specific areas of concern particularly in the context of the revised Regional Planning Guidance for the South West issued in September 2001. To correspond with the Regional Planning Guidance, the Alteration to the Structure Plan covers the period 2001 to 2016. A deposit draft Structure Plan was published for consultation in July 2002. Following an Examination in Public in June/July 2003, the Report of the Panel was published in November 2003. The Structure Plan Authorities published Proposed Modifications in February 2004 following consideration of the report of the Panel.

6.2 The strategy contained in the emerging Structure Plan to 2016 largely reflects that contained in the Structure Plan First Review. However, it is acknowledged that there are slight variations in the strategy which are summarised below: -

Policy ST5 (Policy S1c revised) of the Proposed Modifications establishes the development priorities for the period 2001 to 2016 in the context of the settlement hierarchy as follows: -

- ◆ *The Sub Regional Centre of Barnstaple should be the focus for balanced development to meet sub regional needs;*
- ◆ *Area Centres should seek to achieve a balance of economic, housing and other development which will promote a high degree of self containment and vitality while helping to meet the needs of the wider rural community.*
- ◆ *In Local Centres development should be limited to that required to meet local needs and promote rural regeneration, where this can be accommodated without generating unnecessary travel.*

Policy ST9 (Policy S1a Revised) of the Proposed Modifications states that within northern Devon provision should be made for economic investment and additional housing to meet the needs of the area. The main focus should be Barnstaple, in order to maintain and develop its role as a Sub Regional Centre by providing for new development and an increased range of higher order services and facilities. Provision should also be made at Barnstaple for a strategic employment site to accommodate larger scale economic investment. The approach of Policy ST9 is consistent with Policies SS2, SS3 and SS6 of RPG10. The Proposed Modifications to Policy ST9 also indicate amendments to the explanatory text to: -

- a) clarify that '*at Barnstaple*' refers to the Sub Regional Centre as a whole and includes the wider built up area adjoining and in close proximity to Barnstaple;
- b) emphasise that the scale and phasing of new development at Barnstaple will be dependent on the delivery of major new transport and other infrastructure including the Western Bypass and Downstream Bridge.

Policy ST15 (Policy S1b Revised) of the Proposed Modifications emphasises the role of Area Centres in meeting primarily local and hinterland needs in addition to providing development to promote rural regeneration and economic restructuring. The approach of Policy ST15 is broadly consistent with Policies SS6, SS7 and SS19 of RPG10.

Policy ST16 (Policies S2 and S4 Revised) of the Proposed Modifications emphasises the role of Local Centres in complementing the role of Area Centres by acting as a focus for essential facilities within rural communities. The policy also deals with those rural settlements outside of the Local Centres where small scale development is promoted where it is required for rural regeneration. The approach of Policy ST16 is broadly consistent with Policies SS7, SS19 and HO4 of RGP10.

Policy ST21 (Policy C10 Revised) of the Proposed Modifications deal with regeneration priorities and includes those parts of the Sub Regional Centre which have suffered from social exclusion and economic deprivation. It also includes tourist resorts including Ilfracombe, which have experienced significant decline in economic vitality and viability. Finally, Policy ST21 also refers to those Area Centres and their associated hinterlands where a specific need for regeneration has been identified to address environmental, social or economic disadvantage, as in the case of South Molton.

The Main Strategic Areas

- 6.3 A notable alteration within the emerging structure is the deletion of the Main Strategic Areas as referred to at paragraph 5.2.2 of this paper, resulting from the recommendations of the EIP Panel and as reflected in the Proposed Modifications. The District Council recognise that the strategic areas of the Area of Economic Activity, the Priority Area of Rural Regeneration and the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint are inappropriate in the context of the Structure Plan. However, they are considered to be relevant in the context of North Devon, which can be broadly divided into the three economically and environmentally distinct areas. The terms relating to the Main Strategic Areas have been amended in the Revised Deposit Local Plan to reflect the Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan. These terms also better reflect their purpose. Dividing the District into three broad environmentally and economically distinct areas has helped shape and structure the overall strategy of the Local Plan and reflects the relative self containment and clear settlement hierarchy prevalent within North Devon.
- 6.4 It is considered that the Area of Economic Activity complements and strengthens the Sub-Regional role of Barnstaple. In addition, the Area of Economic Activity recognises the inter-relationship with Bideford which is the main administration centre for Torrridge District and therefore has an important role in ensuring that the strategies for both towns is complementary rather than competitive.
- 6.5 The Local Plan seeks to ensure the economic wellbeing of all rural areas within North Devon. However, it is considered that the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration (PARR) and the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint (ASLDC) are environmentally and economically distinct and therefore demand different planning approaches. The ASLDC exhibits strong pressures for development particularly along the coastline that threaten to diminish the more vulnerable character and quality of these areas. Because of the quality of the environment, much of this area is dependent on tourism. In contrast, the more inland part of North Devon which forms the PARR, is generally subject to less development pressures and constraints. This area has greater scope for economic diversification without harming the landscape. Much of this inland area is underpinned by agriculture, which has suffered problems in recent years through restructuring and epidemics such as the foot and mouth outbreak, which affected most of the PARR. Consequently, priority should be given to diversifying the economy of the inland area of North Devon to ensure that it is less dependent on agriculture in the future whilst applying a more protective approach to the more vulnerable and sensitive landscape along the coast and fringes of Exmoor National Park. It should be emphasised that unlike the Structure Plan, the Local Plan

clearly articulates the different strategic approaches applying to the three broad areas through a raft of policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan.

7. THE NORTH DEVON LOCAL PLAN SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

The Overall Spatial Strategy

7.1 The spatial strategy underpinning the distribution of development in the Local Plan carries forward the planning policy frameworks embodied at the National, Regional and County level. In particular, the Local Plan has cascaded the principle of urban containment down through the settlement hierarchy applying to North Devon. The spatial strategy for the distribution of development is summarised as follows:-

1. Most new development, including housing, is concentrated in Barnstaple as indicated in Policies STY1 (see Chapter 3) and HSG1A (see Chapter 7) and Proposals BAR1 (Residential Development on Previously Developed Sites), BAR2 (Residential Development on Greenfield Land), BAR3 (Roundswell Strategic Employment Site), BAR6 (Town Centre Expansion) and BAR14 (Seven Brethren). In total, these policies and proposals make provision for about 1400 new dwellings, about 25 hectares of new employment land and about 28,000 square metres of new retail floorspace. This level of anticipated growth reflects the Sub Regional role of the town and its location within the Area of Economic Activity in the context of Northern Devon.
2. Significant new development, including housing, is directed towards South Molton and Ilfracombe as indicated in Policies STY2 and HSG1A and the site specific proposals within each of their Action Plans. In South Molton, provision has been made for about 540 new dwellings and 18.5 hectares of employment land. For Ilfracombe, provision exists for about 420 new dwellings and 10 hectares of new employment land. The proposed growth for both South Molton and Ilfracombe is consistent with their Area Centre functions, the principles of settlement self-sufficiency and containment. In addition, the growth strategy for these Area Centres meets the objective of promoting the economic and social wellbeing of North Devon's coastal and rural communities, particularly in the context of the South West Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative.
3. A modest scale of development is directed to the larger villages within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration. In particular, new development is focused on the Local Centres of Chulmleigh and Witheridge to support and improve their role as a focus for local social and economic activity in accordance with Policy STY3 and as reflected in the site specific proposals contained in their Action Plans.
4. Development opportunities in the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint are generally restricted with a strong emphasis on meeting the economic and social needs of the local community to ensure thriving, inclusive and sustainable settlements. This restrictive approach applies to the Area Centre of Braunton, where provision has been made for about 180 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment land, and the Local Centres of Combe Martin and Woolacombe.
5. Limited development opportunities are provided in the smaller villages and rural settlements, particularly within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration, as indicated by Policies HSG3, HSG4, HSG8, ECN3 and COM4. The focus for new development in these rural settlements is to meet local social and economic needs with the aim creating thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities.

7.2 Whilst the spatial strategy provides the broad principles for distributing development across the District, more localised factors have also influenced the growth of particular settlements. The more localised factors that have influenced the amount of development, especially new housing, that is considered appropriate within a particular settlement include the following: -

- ◆ *The size and physical form of the settlement including the availability of previously developed sites for redevelopment and empty or underused buildings suitable for conversion;*
- ◆ *The degree to which a community is self sufficient or has the ability to become more self contained in terms of its employment opportunities in order to minimise commuting and the capacity of existing and potential physical and social infrastructure (such as schools, shops and healthcare facilities) to support additional growth;*
- ◆ *Any environmental or physical constraints including the risk of flooding;*
- ◆ *The availability, accessibility and frequency of public transport and the potential for improving such provision;*
- ◆ *The role of the settlement in relation to the surrounding area; and*
- ◆ *The amount of growth in recent years and the ability of a settlement to assimilate more development.*

8. THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEW HOUSING

- 8.1 The distribution of housing in the Local Plan is based on the spatial strategy and localised factors described in Section 7 above and will be determined by existing commitments in the form of unimplemented planning permissions and dwellings under construction, new housing allocations and windfall opportunities. Although there is some scope to review planning permissions should they be renewed in accordance with the advice at paragraph 40 of PPG3, the future distribution of new housing will be inevitably influenced to a degree by existing commitments. Consequently, the distribution of existing commitments has been balanced by the allocation of new housing sites to ensure that the future pattern of growth in North Devon is in line with the principles of the spatial strategy of the Local Plan in order to reflect National, Regional and County priorities.
- 8.2 Table 1 provides a broad breakdown of the land and building supply for each of the four main settlements in North Devon for the remaining period of the Local Plan. To reflect the National, Regional and County planning policy framework, Table 1 illustrates that the main focus for new housing will be within the Sub Regional Centre of Barnstaple (43%). Table 1 also illustrates that the distribution of housing to both South Molton (17%) and albeit to a lesser extent, Ilfracombe (13%), is significant. It is noted that the Examination in Public Panel at paragraph 3.22 of their report "*consider that the principle of urban concentration should apply to Sub-Regional and Area Centres and their hinterlands in a similar way as to the Principal Urban Areas*" (see CD030).
- 8.3 The distribution of housing outside the four main settlements accounts for about 21% of the total provision reflecting the extensive rural character of the area and the large number of settlements including 5 Local Centres, 14 large villages, 6 smaller villages and 19 identified rural settlements. However, as illustrated in Table 1, 73% of this provision is in the form of existing commitments including 200 dwellings under construction.
- 8.4 As illustrated in Table 1, the distribution of development in order to meet strategic requirements has provided for sustainable and balanced growth across the District in accordance with the Regional Spatial Strategy set out in the RGP10 and County Structure Plan Policies. As such, the strategy of the Local Plan has effectively cascaded the principle of urban concentration down through the settlement hierarchy. In the context of the EIP Panel's report at paragraph 3.22, 74% of the

total provision for North Devon is contained within the Sub-Regional Centre of Barnstaple and the Area Centres of Ilfracombe and South Molton reflecting the "urban concentration principle". It should be noted that the combined population of these settlements (44264) represents about 50% of the total population of the District (87508) further emphasising the urban concentration approach embodied within the Plan.

Table 1 : Housing Land and Building Supply in the Main Settlements

Settlement	Outstanding Planning Permissions ¹ (at 31.3.03)	Dwellings Under Construction (at 31.3.03)	Windfall Estimate	Housing Allocations ⁴		Total Provision Dwellings %
				Previously Developed ²	Greenfield ³	
Barnstaple ⁵	209	60	280	795	27	1371 (43%)
South Molton	78	47	15	50	351	541 (17%)
Ilfracombe	153	125	30	77	36	421 (13%)
Braunton ⁶	63	25	5	37	54	184 (6%)
Elsewhere	198	200	20	124	139	681 (21%)
TOTAL	701	475	350	1083	607	3198

Notes

- ¹ A 10% non-implementation rate has been applied to the outstanding planning permissions.
- ² A 25% non-implementation rate has been applied to the allocated previously developed sites.
- ³ A 10% non-implementation rate has been applied to the allocated greenfield sites.
- ⁴ Excludes sites with planning permission.
- ⁵ Includes Whiddon Valley, Roundswell and Fairacre, which are within the parishes of Landkey and Fremington.
- ⁶ Includes Wrafton, which is in the parish of Heanton Punchardon.

9. **BARNSTAPLE**

Context

- 9.1 Barnstaple's Sub Regional role as a centre for commercial, economic, cultural, health and social activities extends across Northern Devon into parts of West Devon, North Cornwall and West Somerset. To sustain its Sub Regional role and reflect the strategies contained in RPG10 and the Structure Plan, the Local Plan concentrates a significant amount of new development and infrastructural investment in Barnstaple.
- 9.2 Fundamental to the continued growth of the town is the construction of the Western Bypass and Downstream Bridge in conjunction with a package of sustainable travel and transport measures in order to overcome traffic congestion in the town. The Western Bypass is scheduled to be completed in the Spring 2007. The emerging Transport Strategy for Barnstaple currently being prepared by Devon County Council is set out at paragraphs 9.13 to 9.15.
- 9.3 In addition to the Transport Strategy, the Growth Strategy for Barnstaple has also been influenced by various environmental and geographic constraints including: -
 - ◆ *The town's landscape setting dominated by the Taw Estuary and the ridgelines to the north, east and south;*
 - ◆ *The problem of flooding especially in the Bradiford area; and*
 - ◆ *The need to prevent the physical coalescence of its peripheral villages including Bishops Tawton, Landkey, Fremington and Tawstock.*
- 9.4 In recognition of the constraints facing Barnstaple, the guiding principles in locating new development have focused on protecting its environmental assets particularly by containing urban sprawl, maximising the reuse of previously developed land and buildings identified in the Urban Capacity Study and supporting the emerging Transport Strategy including reducing the need to travel.

- 9.5 To reflect RPG10 and the existing and emerging Structure Plans, the Local Plan recognises Barnstaple as a major focus for *'Sustainable and Balanced Growth'* by making a significant level of provision for a range of developments including housing, employment and retailing. Although the Local Plan directs most development to Barnstaple, the level of growth has been balanced to ensure significant investment is also directed to South Molton and Ilfracombe in order to promote their regeneration and develop their roles as important Area Centres.

Housing Provision

- 9.6 As illustrated in Table 2, the Local Plan has identified a wide range of residential sites to reflect its Sub Regional role. The report by Chesterton (see Appendix 3 of General Paper 1) demonstrates that most of the proposed residential sites are economically viable and generally available or are likely to become so during the Plan period. Indeed, this report concludes that the only sites identified in Barnstaple where there are concerns over deliverability during the Plan period are Kirkham Tyres, Fairview (BAR1d) and Taw Garage and the Plumb Centre, Victoria Road (BAR1h). Together, these sites only account for a total of 60 dwellings from a potential capacity of 1330 dwellings on all previously developed sites allocated in Barnstaple. In addition, as indicated in Table 2, a number of sites have been subject to either detailed pre-application discussions or a formal planning application. As indicated in Table 2, if Anchorwood Bank (BAR1a), RGB, Rolle Street (BAR1e) and the South West Water Depot, Littabourne (BAR1k) are redeveloped in accordance with the current planning applications, these sites alone would provide around 675 dwellings. Assuming the non-implementation of Kirkham Tyres and the Taw Garage sites as concluded in the Chesterton Report, the remaining previously developed sites could provide a further 595 dwellings. In total, these sites would result in 1270 dwellings, which would exceed the anticipated level of provision contained in Table 1 by some 475 dwellings. This amount of housing will also mean that Barnstaple would provide well over 50% of the total level of provision for the District without relying on any greenfield land.
- 9.7 In view of the conclusions from the Chesterton Report and the extent of developer interest, especially in the largest of the sites, the 25% non-implementation rate that has been applied to previously developed sites to assess the anticipated level of provision in Barnstaple could be considered to be overly cautious. This concern has been raised by the Government Office for the South West in relation to their general comments on the Urban Capacity Study (see also paragraph 5.18 of General Paper 1).
- 9.8 The Local Plan has attempted to realistically assess the potential capacity of each of the allocated sites (see paragraphs 5.14 and 5.15 of General Paper 1). However, as illustrated in Table 2, it is evident that the actual capacities being proposed through pre-application discussions and formal planning applications exceed the estimates contained in the Local Plan.
- 9.9 Table 2 indicates an anticipated level of provision arising from the residential allocations in the Local Plan. However, it is considered that in reality the actual amount of new dwellings coming forward on these sites could be significantly higher by some 475 dwellings based on the evidence arising from the Chesterton Report, pre-application discussions and the submission of formal planning applications.

Table 2 : Proposed Residential Sites in Barnstaple

Site Name	Capacity as in Local Plan (Approx)	Actual Capacity from Planning Application	Actual Capacity from Pre-Application Discussion
Anchorwood Bank (BAR1a)	400	425?	
Mill Road (BAR1b)	100	-	100
Evans Transport (BAR1c)	120	-	120
Kirkham Tyres (BAR1d)	20	32?	-
RGB, Rolle Street (BAR1e)	90	149?	-
Telephone Repeater Station, Rackfield (BAR1f)	20	22?	-
British Telecom Depot, Old Station Road (BAR1g)	50	-	-
Taw Garage & Plumb Centre, Victoria Road (BAR1h)	40	-	45
Transco Site, Barbican Road (BAR1i)	40	-	-
South West Water Depot, Youings Drive (BAR1k)	80	102?	-
St Josephs Nursing Home (BAR1l)	40	45?	-
Queen Street/Bear Street (BAR6a)	80	-	-
St George's Road (BAR2c)	10	-	-
TOTAL PLAN PERIOD	1200		1330⁶

Notes ¹ Approved ² Refused ³ Withdrawn ⁴ Undetermined ⁵ Subject to Appeal

⁶ 1200 + 130 additional dwellings from actual planning applications and pre-application discussions.

9.10 In addition to the allocated sites, Table 3 identifies a schedule of sites within the urban area of Barnstaple which could be redeveloped for housing during the Plan period. Most of these sites are set out in Table 12 of the Local Plan. However, the sites at Ayres and Grimshaw and Clarks Factory, both situated along the Pottington Road, have also been added following their closures. Although there is no guarantee that any of these sites will be suitable, economically viable or become available for redevelopment during the Plan period, it does illustrate the potentially significant additional housing that could be built in Barnstaple during the Plan period. In addition to these potential 'windfalls', it is anticipated that other redevelopment opportunities, including those on small sites of less than 10 dwellings, will continue to come forward during the Plan period, as indicated in the Urban Capacity Study. It is for these reasons that a significant proportion of the overall windfall estimate is likely to arise in Barnstaple as illustrated in Table 1. However, in reality the actual windfall provision over the Plan period could be significantly higher as explained in General Paper 1 (see paragraphs 5.6 to 5.11).

Table 3 : Previously Developed Sites in Barnstaple with Potential for Residential Development

Site	Potential Capacity
Ayres and Grimshaw	40
Clarks Factory	30
Ace Motors, Abbey Road	10
Health Authority, Litchdon Street	10
Higher Maudlin Street Car Park and Health Centre	25
SWEB Depot, Eastern Avenue	35
Wessex Dairies and Gaydon Street Motors, Gaydon Street	20
Yeo Valley Primary School	55
TOTAL	225

Note All numbers rounded to the nearest five.

9.11 The anticipated housing provision for Barnstaple is also made up of current commitments (unimplemented planning permissions and dwellings under construction). As at the 31 March 2003, the level of commitments in Barnstaple amounted to 269 dwellings, following deductions for a 10% non-implementation rate for unimplemented planning permissions.

The Transport Strategy

9.12 The emerging Transport Strategy for Barnstaple is centred on the provision of the Western Bypass that in turn creates opportunities to make better use of the existing highway capacity within the town. The central objectives of the emerging strategy are:

- ◆ *To preserve the highway capacity within the town released by the Western Bypass and prioritise its use to the most efficient means of moving people and goods in and around the town;*
- ◆ *To support the economic regeneration of the town and North Devon as a whole by enabling and encouraging housing, retail and employment development in the most suitable and sustainable locations;*
- ◆ *To support the economic regeneration of Barnstaple and North Devon through the sensitive improvement of the streetscape and urban environment;*
- ◆ *To improve the quality of life for residents of the town by reducing the noise, visual and physical impacts of traffic;*
- ◆ *To reduce the level of transport barriers to minimise their impact on social exclusion and economic growth by, for example, improving access to employment.*

9.13 The concentration of development on previously developed sites within Barnstaple enables effective linkages to be created with the employment, retail, education and leisure facilities within the town in conjunction with the overall transport strategy. The urban focus and relatively high densities of development being promoted through the Plan are central to the premise of developing sustainable patterns of travel and transport with the aim of minimising the length of trips and proportion of journeys made by car. Furthermore, the location of the previously developed sites within the town will help reshape the generation of travel demand and aid in the support of more efficient travel patterns and movements. As indicated in the specific requirements for each proposal, the redevelopment of various sites in Barnstaple will enable the provision of new walking and cycling routes as well as improving the viability of the bus network.

9.14 The Transport Strategy is supported by key strategic development sites identified in the Local Plan. These include Anchorwood Bank (BAR1a), Mill Road (BAR1b), Evans Transport (BAR1c), RGB, Rolle Street (BAR1d), Queen Street/Bear Street and the former Cattle Market (BAR6) and Seven Brethren (BAR14). The importance of these sites in supporting the Transport Strategy for the town is illustrated in the development briefs prepared for each of these sites and which are available as core documents in the Local Plan Inquiry Library (see CD087, 088, 089 and 090).

9.15 The essential elements of the emerging Transport Strategy as they relate to the town are summarised below:

Central Area – The redevelopment of key sites in the central area, particularly for retailing, is driving the strategy in this area and complement the opportunities presented by the removal of much of the through traffic in and around the town centre.

- ◆ **Regeneration of the riverfront and linking it to the town centre** - the objective is to encourage visitors and tourists to the town in addition to retaining local custom with the aim of ensuring higher levels of leisure and retail spending. Traffic management proposals for the Strand will remove the physical barrier of traffic and enable improvements to the streetscape. Such management will in turn encourage the redevelopment and reuse of several of the underused buildings that are in poor repair, building on the progress that

has already been made. It will also be supported by the regeneration of Anchorwood (see Proposal BAR1a) on the opposite riverfront;

- ◆ **Upgrading and extending retail floor space within the town centre** – the proposed part or full redevelopment of the Cattle Market and Queen Street/Bear Street car parks (see Proposal BAR6) provides an opportunity to reassess the level, access to and quality of car parking provision at these sites in the context of the Western Bypass and other transport measures. The balance of car parking provision at these sites will need to be assessed in the context of the Western Bypass and other transport measures. The balance of car parking spaces in the town centre is being reviewed as part of the overall parking strategy for the town, taking into account the impacts different options have on the redevelopment potential of each site and the quality of the urban fabric in particular;
- ◆ **Improvement of the streetscape in the Mermaid Cross/North Walk area** - this area is an important gateway to the town centre and the reduction in traffic levels, combined with the redevelopment of the RGB site (see proposal BAR1e) should significantly improve the urban environment at this location. The redevelopment of the RGB site will also provide a key link in the walking, cycling and bus networks.

Pottington/Pilton – the redevelopment of a number of key industrial sites for residential use has significant implications for the transport strategy in the area. These sites include Mill Road (BAR1b), Evans Transport (BAR1c), Kirkham Tyres (BAR1d) and the potential windfall opportunities at the former Ayres and Grimshaw and Clarks factories and Ace Motors. All these sites provide an opportunity to improve access to and from the education and parking facilities in the area (particularly for walking and cycling), as well as providing high quality links to and from the sites themselves. The permeability of the different sites is critical to the effectiveness of the walking and cycling networks in the area and consequently the strategy as a whole.

Barbican - as with the Pottington and Pilton areas, a number of current industrial premises including the Transco Site (BARj) and BT Depot (BAR1g) provide opportunities to significantly improve walking and cycling networks in an area where several key links are missing. The redevelopment of these sites will again support the viability of the bus network.

Anchorwood and Seven Brethren – the redevelopment of Anchorwood (Proposal BAR1a) provides the opportunity to significantly improve the attractiveness of the walking and cycling networks in the area (including the National Cycle Network), particularly through the provision of a riverside route to Longbridge and beyond. The site's location close to the town centre and high level of housing provision will help to reduce the level of car trips. It will play an important role in the car parking strategy by reducing the need for short stay car trips across Longbridge and parking demand within the town centre. The gradual reconfiguration of land uses in Seven Brethren through Proposal BAR14 and as indicated in the development brief will allow better integration of the site with the rest of the transport network, as well as enhancing its role as an interchange point for the town centre and bus/rail network. The proposed new link road within Seven Brethren in the vicinity of the Brian Fords foodstore will play an important part in improving the junctions on the western approach to Longbridge for all road users;

Roundswell (Proposal BAR3) – the concentration of additional employment land at this location supports the continued development of the walking and cycling network in the area in addition to the viability of the bus network. The area is well placed to link with other parts of the town whilst minimising traffic generation within the town itself.

Employment

- 9.16 As well as providing most of the new housing for the District, Barnstaple is also the main focus for other development, most notably employment uses, to reflect its Sub Regional status. To meet the employment land requirements in the existing Structure Plan as well as reflecting the emerging Structure Plan, the Local Plan identifies land at Roundswell as a Strategic Employment Site. About 25 hectares of additional land have been identified for employment uses (B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order) at Roundswell between the Old Bideford Road and the A39, and to the east of the Old Torrington Road, adjacent to the crematorium.
- 9.17 In addition to the Strategic Employment Site at Roundswell, land between North Devon College and the Western Bypass at Herton has been identified for a high quality technology park (see Policy BAR3a). As the demand or land requirements for a technology park cannot be predicted with certainty, it is not considered appropriate to specifically identify a site. Nevertheless, given its strategic location in close proximity to the Western Bypass and North Devon College and the overall environmental quality of the area, it is considered that land at Herton provides an ideal opportunity to attract high value research, design and knowledge based businesses.
- 9.18 Other employment opportunities contained specifically within the Plan include the mixed use redevelopment schemes proposed at Anchorwood Bank (BAR1a), Evans Transport (BAR1c) and Seven Brethren (BAR14).

Retailing

- 9.19 To reflect its Sub Regional role and based on the recommendations of the North Devon Retail Study (see CD070), a significant amount of new retailing is proposed in Barnstaple. In order to maintain its competitive edge against the higher order centres of Exeter and Taunton, the Retail Study recommends that some 18,000 to 20,000 square metres gross of additional floorspace is required to serve the town centre including the provision of a modest foodstore and, subject to demand, a department store. Three redevelopment areas on the edge of the town centre to meet this need have been proposed in the Local Plan through Proposal BAR6. These sites are located at Queen Street/Bear Street, the former Cattle Market and land to the rear of Lower Boutport Street and Silver Street. Development briefs have been prepared for the two most significant sites at Queen Street/Bear Street and the former Cattle Market (see CD088 and CD089).
- 9.20 In addition to the need to extend the retail base of the town centre, the Retail Study has identified a requirement for bulky goods retail warehousing during the Plan period for about 10,000 square metres of gross floorspace. In view of its Sub Regional role, all of this provision has been focused on Barnstaple. In the absence of any suitable town centre sites and in applying the sequential approach set out in Planning Policy Guidance 6 'Town Centres' (see CD004) as reflected in Policy COM1 of the Local Plan bulky goods are directed to Anchorwood Bank (Proposal BAR1a) and Seven Brethren (Proposal BAR14).

Community Facilities

- 9.21 Consistent with the Sub Regional role of Barnstaple and its growth strategy, the Local Plan identifies a range of community facilities including sport and recreation (see Proposals BAR8, BAR9 and Policy BAR10) and education (see Proposals BAR11, BAR12 and BAR13).

10. SOUTH MOLTON

Context

- 10.1 The market town of South Molton is identified as an Area Centre and has a population of about 4,092, as measured in the 2001 Census. It provides a range of services and employment opportunities and acts as a focal point for an extensive rural area of about 14,000 people.
- 10.2 The town provides the main focus for the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration. South Molton has been selected as one of nine towns in Devon to take part in the South West Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative, which is a vehicle to promote economic and community based projects (see Appendix 3).
- 10.3 South Molton's proximity to the North Devon Link Road has brought improved accessibility to the M5, which is approximately 35km (22 miles) from the town. This enhanced accessibility has significantly improved its economic prospects as evidenced by the growth and continued demand for new businesses at Pathfields Business Park (see Appendix 4). Pathfields has recently been extended with investment from the European Union, South West RDA and the District Council amounting to approximately £1 million. In addition to those businesses seeking to relocate as indicated at Appendix 4, recent planning consents indicate a strong demand for local firms requiring new purpose built premises at Pathfields including Mole Valley Farmers and Adaptacar. As well as enabling local businesses to expand, Pathfields will provide a range of starter and small business units for new firms currently based in North Devon, such as Rawle, Gammon and Baker Builders Merchants. Pathfields has been designated by the South West Regional Development Agency as a satellite business start up site for the Caddesdown Business Park at Bideford. Consequently, it is intended that short term lease premises in the form of managed workspace will be provided at Pathfields along with business support to those firms that demonstrate they have the calibre to succeed.
- 10.4 Employment in South Molton is spread between various sectors, although over 40% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing, wholesale retail and the repair of vehicles. Manufacturing employment in South Molton is dominated by two large employers. Nexfor Manufacturing Flat Pack Furniture at Hill Village on the outskirts of the town, employs over 500 people. In recent years the company has invested heavily in added production and pollution control measures in order to remain competitive. FR High Temp is located at Pathfields Business Park and employs over 100 people. FR High Temp is a highly specialist business dealing with aircraft components. It has recently won a major contract with BOFORS resulting in expansion plans and an expected increase in jobs. Not surprisingly, given South Molton's economic buoyancy, unemployment is relatively low at 2.1% (compared with North Devon 2.0%, Devon 1.9% and UK 2.6%) (source: ONS October 2003).
- 10.5 South Molton has a relatively self contained labour market as confirmed by information from NOMIS, which reveals a jobs density of 0.8 as at May 2004 as compared to Ilfracombe which is 0.68. This density is defined as the number of jobs per person of working age resident in the area. The relative self containment of the town is also indicated by the "*employment by occupation*" profile set out in Appendix 5 which reveals that only 18.9% of the workforce are managers, senior officials and professionals (as compared to the national average of 25.1%). As managerial and professional workers tend to commute further distances than other sectors, the employment profile would suggest that commuting from South Molton is minimal, particularly over larger distances.

10.6 Statistical information on travel to work patterns deriving from the 2001 census, as attached at Appendix 6, confirm the relative self containment of South Molton's workforce. As indicated in Table 4, more people in South Molton work mainly at home (13%), walk or cycle to work (28%) and are less reliant on the car to travel to work than those living in Barnstaple. Although the average distance travelled to work for South Molton residents is slightly higher than for those living at Forches/Whiddon Valley and the Longbridge areas in Barnstaple, it is less than for those living in Bickington and Roundswell. In summation, it is concluded that the travel to work patterns deriving from the census reveal a more sustainable employment pattern than for those residents of working age in Barnstaple. It also confirms, along with other employment statistics including the jobs density and 'occupation' profile, the relative self containment of South Molton's labour market.

Table 4 : Travel to Work Patterns

AREA	ALL PEOPLE IN EMPLOYMENT	MODE OF TRAVEL			
		WORKING MAINLY AT HOME	DRIVE OR PASSENGER IN A CAR OR VAN	CYCLE OR WALK	AVERAGE DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO WORK (KM)
BARNSTAPLE					
Bickington & Roundswell	1975	161 (8%)	1402 (71%)	252 (13%)	12.72
Forches & Whiddon Valley	2025	115 (6%)	1270 (63%)	501 (25%)	9.32
Longbridge	1796	182 (10%)	1138 (63%)	377 (21%)	9.67
SOUTH MOLTON	1778	224 (13%)	987 (56%)	493 (28%)	10.6

10.7 As a consequence of the Market and Coastal Town Initiative, an emerging priority is to relocate the livestock market from the centre of the town. In view of the importance of the livestock market to both the economy and character of South Molton and its rural hinterland, a site has been identified at Pathfields through Proposal SMO3A in order to facilitate its relocation from the town centre should it prove financially feasible. The aim being to develop South Molton as an agricultural centre of excellence to reflect the town and surrounding area's strong links with this sector.

10.8 Relative to Barnstaple, Braunton and Ilfracombe, South Molton has fewer significant environmental or physical constraints to impede the growth of the town. In addition, South Molton is well connected to the Sub Regional Centre of Barnstaple by public transport. There are 24 buses a day connecting both towns. In addition, there are 6/7 buses a day to Tiverton and 5 buses to Taunton. National Express operate 4 services a day to London and 1 service per day to Bristol and Birmingham. Given that the town has no major development constraints and given its economic prospects and the need to support and enhance its role as an Area Centre for an extensive rural area, a reasonable amount of new development is directed towards South Molton.

Housing Provision

10.9 Based on existing commitments, windfall opportunities and new housing allocations, as indicated in Table 1, provision has been made for about 540 dwellings for the period 2003 to 2011. This level of provision represents about 17% of the total amount of housing planned for North Devon.

- 10.10 As illustrated in Table 5, the Local Plan has identified a range of housing sites for South Molton consistent with the growth strategy for the town. Most of the sites contained in Table 5 are identified in the Urban Capacity Study either in the form of previously developed land and buildings or, in the case of land at South Street and Raleigh Park (SMO1d) and between Gunswell Lane and West Street (SMO2a), are situated within the existing urban fabric of the town. Land west of Jury Park (SMO2c) provides an urban extension to the west of the town. This land is currently allocated in the Adopted North Devon Local Plan. Part of the site is being developed for eco-affordable housing whilst the remainder is subject to a resolution to approve outline planning permission for residential development on the site subject to the signing of a Section 106 Obligation.
- 10.11 Despite the growth strategy for the town, the only additional greenfield allocation not included in the Adopted Local Plan is land east of Parsonage Lane (SMO2d). Although the allocation measures approximately 7.8 hectares, it is only proposed for about 150 dwellings to ensure the provision of a significant amount of public open space and to protect the most environmentally sensitive parts of the site. This allocation was included in the draft of the current Adopted North Devon local Plan published in 1995. However, following the recommendation of the Planning Inspector who conducted the Local Plan Inquiry in 1997, the allocation was deleted from the Adopted Local Plan. As indicated in the extract from the Inspector's report attached at Appendix 7, the allocation was deleted on the grounds that it was not required to meet strategic housing requirements to 2001 and not on the basis that it was considered unsuitable for residential development.

Table 5 : Proposed Residential Sites in South Molton

Site Name	Capacity (Approx)
Quince Honey Farm, North Road (SMO1a)	30
Mole Valley Farmers/YMCA, Station Road (SMO1b)	25
Land between South Street and Raleigh ark (SMO1d)	100
Land between Gunswell Lane and West Street (SMO2a)	45
Land west of Jury Park (SMO2c)	115
Land east of Parsonage lane (SMO2d)	150
TOTAL	465

Employment

- 10.12 In order to support and develop its role as an Area Centre, the need to foster the economic growth and diversification of the rural hinterland and take advantage of the economic benefits arising from its proximity to the North Devon Link Road and the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative, 18.65 hectares of land has been allocated for employment purposes at Pathfields Business Park. However, as illustrated at Appendix 8, 11.93 hectares of land is committed meaning that in reality only 6.72 hectares of additional land remains for new employment development. Additionally, land has also been identified at Pathfields in order to facilitate the relocation of the Livestock Market from its current constrained site on the edge of the town centre. The identification of the additional employment land and site for a new Livestock Market has been guided by a Landscape Study and Ecological Assessment (see CD081A). The relocation or the readjustment of the Livestock Market within its current site will facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of an extensive area of land to enable the expansion of the town centre (see Proposal SMO6). A draft development brief for the expansion of the town centre is currently being prepared.
- 10.13 The Strategy for South Molton recognises the synergy between housing and employment provision to ensure balanced and sustainable growth and a degree of self containment. A simple and crude analysis based on assumptions contained in Background Paper 3 *Population Change and Development Needs for the Devon*

Structure Plan 2001 to 2016' (see CD031a), reveals that the strategy applying to South Molton promotes an appropriate mix of housing and employment development. It is assumed that 540 new dwellings will increase the population of the town by about 1134 based on an average household size of 2.28 persons. Based on the assumptions contained in Background Paper 3¹, it is predicted that the active workforce of South Molton will increase by about 36% of the population increase meaning that approximately 410 new jobs will be required. Assuming land based employment will account for about 35% of jobs and a relatively low density of around 40 employees to the hectare to reflect the comparatively high dependence of the local economy of land-hungry uses, such as agriculturally related businesses and distribution based activities, at least 3.6 hectares of employment will be required just to accommodate the anticipated 145 new jobs required in South Molton during the Plan period.

10.14 Allowing for an extra 25% for site choice and flexibility (see paragraph 2.7 of Background Paper 3), at least 4.5 hectares of additional land over and above existing commitments will be required to 2011 at Pathfields. It should be emphasised that this crude and simplistic assessment of employment land requirements does not take the following factors into consideration: -

- ◆ *the need to reduce current levels of unemployment and improve the jobs density from 0.8 to a figure nearer 1;*
- ◆ *the requirement to meet the demands of expanding and relocating businesses and firms as indicated at Appendix 4 and to take account of those employment sites and premises that will be redeveloped for alternative uses such as residential;*
- ◆ *the objective to enhance the Area Centre of South Molton particularly in the context of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and the need to diversify the rural economy of the PARR.*

10.15 In summation it is considered that the amount of employment land proposed for the town is consistent with the growth strategy of South Molton and will ensure it will develop in a balanced and sustainable manner. The amount of employment land being proposed is also consistent with the economic objectives as reflected in the North West Devon Economic Strategy.

Community Facilities and Retailing

10.16 To complement and support the growth strategy of the town, the Local Plan proposes a range of new community facilities. Specific proposals include the extension of the town centre for a range of uses including a new modest sized foodstore, a library, museum, medical centre and police station (see Proposal SMO6).

¹Paragraphs 2.1 and 2.3 of Background Paper 3 estimate that the overall Devon active workforce is likely to increase by about 25000 between 2001 and 2016 from a total population increase of 70000 for this period i.e about 36% of the population increase.

11. ILFRACOMBE

Context

- 11.1 Ilfracombe is the second largest settlement in North Devon with a population of around 11,000, as measured in the 2001 Census. The town is situated on the coast approximately 19 kilometres (12 miles) north of Barnstaple. It is identified as an Area Centre providing a range of services and local employment opportunities serving many of the coastal communities in the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint.
- 11.2 The town suffers from acute economic problems that have been compounded by its general decline as a major tourist resort through a lack of sustained investment. This lack of investment and poor economic growth has harmed the quality of the built environment, especially its extensive Victorian and Edwardian heritage with many buildings suffering from neglect. Due to its dependency on tourism, the medium per capita income is low. Government statistics indicate that the town is under provided for by 250 Full Time Equivalent jobs compared with the national average. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 for the country indicates that 2 of the 3 wards in the town (Ilfracombe Central and East) are in the bottom 20% in the UK. As a consequence of these economic problems, the town has been selected to take part in the South West Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and is the only rural town in the South West selected for the Government's Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme.
- 11.3 The growth strategy for Ilfracombe is intended to promote an '*urban renaissance*' for the town. It is based on encouraging economic growth and diversification and the regeneration of its urban environment, with long term and sustained investment directed towards improving its existing strengths which are considered to be its landscape setting and Victorian and Edwardian character particularly around the seafront and harbour.
- 11.4 Concentrating growth in the town will assist in restricting development in the surrounding rural settlements along the coast where pressures for new housing are generally strong. Promoting development in Ilfracombe as part of a process of regeneration whilst constraining development generally in other coastal areas is consistent with Policy C10 (Policy ST21) of the Structure Plan and the advice in PPG20, '*Coastal Planning*' which states:-
- ◆ '*The developed coast, may provide opportunities for restructuring and regenerating existing urban areas, thereby improving their appearance and the environment. This approach can be particularly beneficial in areas of significant architectural or historic interest*'. (Paragraph 2.11).
 - ◆ '*These plans are required to include policies and proposals for the improvement of the physical environment and for the conservation of natural beauty and amenity of the land. These policies and proposals may include action by the local planning authority, often in partnership with other agencies:-*
 - ◆ '*to regenerate rundown coastal towns and ports*'. (Paragraph 2.22).
 - ◆ '*Areas needing improvement are often in built up areas, such as seaside resorts and ports ...*'. (Paragraph 2.24).

Housing Provision

- 11.5 Based on existing commitments, windfall opportunities and new housing allocations, as indicated in Table 1, provision has been made for about 420 new dwellings for the period 2003 to 2011. It should be noted that existing

commitments are especially high amounting to about 278 dwellings, even taking into account a 10% non-implementation rate for outstanding planning permissions. The level of provision represents about 13% of the total amount of housing planned for North Devon. This amount of growth is in response to the challenges facing this tourist resort and is considered to be consistent with the twin objectives of developing its role as an Area Centre and regenerating both its economy and the environmental quality of its urban fabric.

- 11.6 As illustrated in Table 6, the Local Plan has identified a good range of housing sites in Ilfracombe consistent with the growth strategy for the town. The bulk of these sites are on previously developed land within the existing built up area. The only greenfield allocation is proposed at the Shields, Fernway for about 40 dwellings (Proposal ILF3). This greenfield site is well related to the urban fabric of the town and will provide an important link road connecting two existing residential areas, thereby improving traffic circulation in this part of Ilfracombe. It should be noted that following a review of the existing allocations in the Adopted Local Plan, the planned urban extension of the town at Killacleave has not been carried forward in the new Local Plan (see Policy IL21 of the Adopted Local Plan and paragraph 5.33 of the Urban Capacity Study) (CD032). The reasons for deleting this allocation, which was capable of providing about 225 new dwellings, was based on the potential capacity identified within the urban fabric of Ilfracombe and its relatively poor performance against the criteria set out at paragraph 31 of PPG3. In addition, the development boundary for the town has been defined much more tightly than in the Adopted Local Plan. The level of housing provision for Ilfracombe is therefore significantly less than the potential set out in the Adopted Local Plan.

Table 6 : Proposed Residential Sites in Ilfracombe

Site Name	Capacity (Approx)
Chambercombe Bakery (ILF1a)	20
Cliffe Hydro Hotel (ILF1b)	15
Ilfracombe Nurseries, Furze Hill Road (ILF1f)	15
Oak Tree Gardens, Highfield Road (ILF1g)	10
Wrought Iron Design, Greenclose Road (ILF1i)	8
Oxford Grove Car Park (ILF1j)	15
Bus Station, Ropery Road (ILF9)	15
Builders Centre, Hierns Lane (ILF9)	5
The Shields/Fernway (ILF3)	40
TOTAL	143

Employment

- 11.7 The town has relatively high unemployment (Ilfracombe Central 15.3%; Ilfracombe East 5.6%; and Ilfracombe West 4.2% (Source: ONS January 2004)) and low wage levels which are compounded by its gradual decline as a major tourist resort. The underlying aim is therefore to regenerate its economy by promoting economic growth and diversification.
- 11.8 The main employment site at Ilfracombe is at Mullacott Cross Industrial Estate. It is situated to the south of the A3123, approximately 2 kilometres (1 mile) south of Ilfracombe and outside the landscape designations surrounding the town. The Industrial Estate is not subject to a specific proposal in the Local Plan as the site has a committed planning permission with about 8 hectares of remaining vacant land. Additional employment sites are also available at Killacleave (Policy ILF4) and the Hele Industrial Estate.

12. **BRAUNTON**

Context

- 12.1 Braunton is identified as an Area Centre. It provides a range of services and employment opportunities and acts as a focal point for the surrounding rural areas particularly the parishes of Georgeham and Heanton Punchardon. Although Braunton is recognised as a village by the local community, it is the third largest settlement in North Devon with a population of about 7,500 as measured in the 2001 Census.
- 12.2 Braunton is situated on the northern side of the Taw Estuary. It has a compact settlement pattern centred around the junction of the A361 (Barnstaple to Ilfracombe) and the B3231 to Croyde via Saunton. The village is surrounded by hills to the north and east with Braunton Great Field, Braunton Marsh and Braunton Burrows situated to the south and west. Braunton Burrows has been identified as the UK's first generation UNESCO Biosphere Reserve which is an additional designation to its status as a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. This combination of environmental constraints has restricted the recent development of the village following a period of extensive growth during the 1950's through to the late 1980's.
- 12.3 Wrafton is situated immediately to the south of Braunton and historically has been separated by an important gap adjoining Knowl Water. The village includes the site of Wrafton Laboratories which is one of the largest employers within North Devon.
- 12.4 In view of its coastal estuarine situation, Braunton is located within the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint. The strategy for Braunton is therefore to protect its environmental quality whilst meeting the economic and social needs of the local community by restricting development to within the existing urban fabric. Limiting the growth of Braunton will also restrict potential commuting given that the Sub Regional Centre of Barnstaple is only 6 kilometres (4 miles) away.

Housing Provision

- 12.5 Based on existing commitments, windfall opportunities and new housing allocations, as indicated in Table 1, provision has been made for about 184 new dwellings for the period 2003 to 2011. This level of provision represents about 6% of the total amount of housing planned for North Devon. As illustrated in Table 7, the Local Plan has identified a reasonable range of housing sites in Braunton consistent with the spatial strategy and reflecting the environmental quality of the surrounding area.

Table 7 : Proposed Residential Sites in Braunton

Site Name	Capacity (Approx)
Candar Nurseries, Exeter Road/South Street (BRA2b)	15
Land to the rear of 27 North Street (BRA2d)	20
Edd's Fruit and Veg Depot (BRA2e)	5
Watts Depot, South Street BRA2f)	8
Arlington Terrace (BRA3a)	5
West of Beech Grove (BRA3b)	10
Wrafton Glebefield (BRA4)	45
TOTAL	108

13. OTHER SETTLEMENTS IN NORTH DEVON

Context

- 13.1 In carrying forward the Local Plan settlement strategy beyond the Sub Regional and Area Centres, a delicate balance has been struck between protecting the character and diversity of North Devon's natural environment and supporting and sustaining rural communities across a large geographical area. To achieve this balance, the rural settlements in the District have been broadly assessed to determine their capacity to accommodate additional growth based largely on the localised factors set out in paragraph 7.2. The achievement of this balance has also been helped by dividing the area into economically and environmentally distinct areas.
- 13.2 The framework for distributing development between settlements is provided by Local Plan Policies HSG2 (Larger Villages with Development Boundaries), HSG3 (Small Villages in the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration) and HSG4 (Rural Settlements). The hierarchical approach adopted by these policies will ensure that new growth will be related to the size, character and function of a settlement with a particular emphasis on the Local Centres in the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration. This approach embodies the principles of sustainability, will prevent sporadic development and ensure the high environmental quality of North Devon is maintained. Within rural settlements, particular emphasis is given to providing affordable housing schemes to meet local needs.

Large Villages in the Area of Economic Activity (AEA)

- 13.3 The villages of Fremington, Yelland and Instow are situated within the Area of Economic Activity. Together, Fremington and Yelland function as a Local Centre although growth opportunities are constrained by the visual quality and wildlife value of the Taw Estuary, localised flooding from the Fremington Stream and the need to retain their character and local distinctiveness. For these reasons, growth opportunities are generally restricted to previously developed land. However, a modest extension to the housing allocation at the scrapyard adjoining Sampsons Plantation is proposed on a greenfield site as it is considered to be well related to the urban fabric of the village (see Proposal FRE1). In addition, the Fremington Army Camp is identified for a mix of uses, including about 200 new dwellings. However, in view of the uncertainties regarding its availability during the Plan period, it should be noted that the potential number of dwellings arising from this site have not been included in either the overall land and building supply for the Local Plan nor the urban Capacity Study. Employment opportunities in the village could be provided by the redevelopment of Yelland Quay (see Proposal FRE4).
- 13.4 The village of Instow is surrounded by the Coastal Preservation Area. As a consequence of this constraint and localised flooding issues, a restrictive approach to new development has been applied to the village with no specific housing sites identified.

- 13.7 Growth in Bishops Tawton has been limited in view of its topographic, environmental, highway and flooding constraints. The amount of new development directed to Landkey has also been limited mainly because of the significant growth that has occurred in the village since 1995 which has amounted to approximately 150 new dwellings. In view of their very close proximity to Barnstaple, restricting the growth of both Bishops Nympton and Landkey will prevent unnecessary commuting into the Sub Regional Centre.
- 13.8 All the larger villages in the PARR are subject to development boundaries in order to control and regulate their growth. Particular policies applying to these villages include Housing Policy HSG2, Economic Policy ECN3 and Policy COM4 which deals with community facilities.

Table 10 : Development Potential of the Larger Villages in the PARR

Villages	Unimplemented Planning Permissions for New Dwellings ¹ (as at 31.3.03)	Dwellings Under Construction (as at 31.3.03)	Total Provision from Housing Allocation ² (approx)	Total Housing Provision ³	Additional Employment Allocation (Hectares)
Bishops Nympton	5	11	5	21	0
Bishops Tawton	2	3	5	10	0
Burrington	0	3	5	8	0
Chulmleigh	6	9	20	35	1
Landkey	33	30	16	79	0
Swimbridge	4	21	40	65	0
Witheridge	9	7	50	65	0
ALL VILLAGES	59	84	141	284	1

Notes

¹ A 10% non-implementation rate has been applied to all outstanding planning permissions.

² Figures do not include non-implementation rates.

³ Figures do not include a windfall allowance.

Small Villages and Rural Settlements in the PARR

- 13.9 In addition to the large villages, the PARR also contains 'small villages' and 'rural settlements' as identified at paragraph 3.22 and 3.29 respectively of the Local Plan. These settlements tend to have a more insular focus serving a fairly local hinterland. They do not have the range of services or status to support or warrant significant levels of development in the interests of sustainability. Nevertheless, as illustrated in Table 2 of the Local Plan, these settlements each contain or are easily accessible to a basic level of services and facilities including a primary school and shop. The strategy for the small villages is therefore to allow a limited amount of new growth in order to help sustain and support rural community life and assist in maintaining or enhancing existing services and facilities. The emphasis in these rural settlements is to generally restrict growth to meeting economic and social needs to ensure thriving, inclusive and sustainable rural communities.
- 13.10 There are no individual policies or proposals for each of the small villages and rural settlements. However, specific policies that will apply to all small villages and rural settlements include Policies HSG2, HSG3, HSG8, ECN3 and COM4. The application of these criterion based policies will ensure that the scale and location of new development is compatible with the size, character and function of these settlements.

Villages in the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint (ASLDC)

- 13.11 The Local Centres of Combe Martin and Woolacombe and the villages of Berrynarbor, Bratton Fleming, Croyde, Georgeham, Knowle, Mortehoe, North Molton and West Down are situated within the Area of Strategic Landscape and

Table 12 : Development Potential of the Villages within the ASLDC

Villages	Unimplemented Planning Permissions for New Dwellings ¹ (as at 31.3.03)	Dwellings Under Construction (as at 31.3.03)	Total Provision from Housing Allocation ² (approx)	Total Housing Provision ³	Additional Employment Allocation (Hectares)
Berrynarbor	2	6	5	13	-
Bratton Fleming	6	4	-	10	0.3
Combe Martin	16	9	45	70	-
Croyde	14	3	-	17	-
Georgeham	1	3	-	4	-
Knowle	1	0	8	9	-
Mortehoe	4	0	-	4	-
North Molton	8	9	55	72	-
West Down	1	7	-	8	-
Woolacombe	23	29	-	52	-
ALL VILLAGES	76	70	113	259	0.3

Notes

¹ A 10% non-implementation rate has been applied to all outstanding planning permissions.

² Figures do not include non-implementation rates.

³ Figures do not include a windfall allowance.

Hamlets and Small Groups of Houses in the Countryside

13.15 North Devon contains numerous hamlets and small groups of houses which are scattered throughout the District. These small rural settlements, which are not identified in the Local Plan, are largely the legacy of the historical importance of agricultural and other traditional rural based industries to the economic and social fabric of North Devon.

13.16 Allowing residential development in hamlets and small rural settlements would reinforce the dispersed settlement pattern of North Devon and conflict with the principles of sustainability. As these settlements are viewed as part of the countryside, it is not appropriate to have a specific policy relating to new residential development within them. Consequently, development proposals within these settlements will be treated as falling within the countryside where, for example, Policies ENV1, HSG9, ECN4 and ECN5 apply.

14. CONCLUSIONS

14.1 The spatial strategy, which underpins the distribution of development in the Local Plan, applies the planning policy framework as embodied at the National, Regional and County level. As such, the Local Plan has distributed development in accordance with the principles of sustainability by:-

1. Focusing of the new development in Barnstaple to reflect the Sub Regional role of the town and its location within the Area of Economic Activity.
2. Directing a significant level of new development to both South Molton and Ilfracombe in order to develop their roles as Area Centres and promote the economic and social wellbeing of North Devon's coastal and rural communities particularly in the context of the South West Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative.
3. Directing a modest amount of development to the larger villages within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration, with a particular focus on the Local Centres of Chulmleigh and Witheridge, to ensure thriving, inclusive and sustainable settlements.
4. Generally restricting development in the villages within the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint with a strong emphasis on meeting

the economic and social needs of the local community to ensure thriving, inclusive and sustainable settlements.

5. Providing limited opportunities in the smaller villages and settlements, particularly within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration with a focus on meeting local social and economic needs, again with the aim of creating thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities.

- 14.2 For the reasons set out in this General Paper, it is concluded that the settlement strategy of the Local Plan embodies the principles of sustainable development, recognising that North Devon is a predominantly rural area. The strategy of the Plan will therefore ensure that the development needs of North Devon are provided whilst minimising any adverse effects on the environment.

APPENDIX 1 – EXTRACTS FROM GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

1. PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE 3 – ‘HOUSING’

- ◆ Local planning authorities should: -
 - ◆ *Provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing than is currently available, and seek to create mixed communities;*
 - ◆ *Create more sustainable patterns of development by building in ways which exploit and deliver accessibility by public transport to jobs, education and health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services (Paragraph 2).*
- ◆ The Government is committed to promoting more sustainable patterns of development, by:-
 - ◆ *Concentrating most additional housing development within urban areas (Paragraph 21).*
- ◆ In deciding which sites to allocate for housing in local plans and UDPs, local planning authorities should assess their potential and suitability for development against each of the following criteria: -
 - ◆ *the **availability of previously-developed sites** and empty or under-used buildings and their suitability for housing use;*
 - ◆ *the **location and accessibility** of potential development sites to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility;*
 - ◆ *the **capacity of existing and potential infrastructure**, including public transport, water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals) to absorb further development and the cost of adding further infrastructure;*
 - ◆ *the **ability to build communities** to support new physical and social infrastructure and to provide sufficient demand to sustain appropriate local services and facilities; and*
 - ◆ *the **physical and environmental constraints on development of land**, including, for example, the level of contamination, stability and flood risk, taking into account that such risk may increase as a result of climate change (Paragraph 31).*
- ◆ Not all development can take place within urban areas. How much development should take place outside existing areas will depend on the overall need for housing land, the capacity of existing urban areas to accommodate additional housing and the efficiency with which land is developed (Paragraph 65).
- ◆ In terms of overall housing provision, only a limited amount of housing can be expected to be accommodated in expanded villages (Paragraph 69).
- ◆ Villages will only be suitable locations for accommodating significant additional housing where: -
 - ◆ *it can be demonstrated that additional housing will support location services, such as schools or shops, which could become unviable without some modest growth. This may particularly be the case where the village has been identified as a local service centre in the development plan;*
 - ◆ *additional houses are needed to meet local needs, such as affordable housing, which will help secure a mixed and balanced community (see Annex B); and*
 - ◆ *the development can be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the village using such techniques as village design statements (Paragraph 70).*

- ◆ The Government is concerned, however, that there should be adequate housing provision in rural areas to meet the needs of local people. Local planning authorities should therefore make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing villages to enable these local requirements to be met (Paragraph 71).

2. PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE 7 – THE COUNTRYSIDE – ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Village and Market Towns

- ◆ Development plans should help promote healthy rural communities where people can both live and work. The main focus of new development should be on existing towns and villages (including networks of small villages) and other areas allocated in development plans, where employment, housing (including affordable housing) and other facilities can be provided close together. This can help to promote sustainable development by strengthening villages and market towns, protecting the open countryside, sustaining local services and moving towards a better balance between employment and housing in rural communities, thereby reducing the need to travel (see PPG13 and PPG13: A Guide to Better Practice). Development plans should encourage employment opportunities suitable in scale to rural centres and should indicate the circumstances in which new development will be allowed within and adjacent to villages and country towns (Paragraph 2.10).

Housing

- ◆ The Government's policies for meeting new housing needs are based on the principles of focusing new development on existing towns and villages, making the best use of existing housing, making the best use of land which has already been developed (which may include sites in the countryside, such as former defence bases which are no longer needed), making cities more attractive places in which to live, and considering how best to accommodate the rising number of households (Paragraph 3.18).
- ◆ New housing will continue to be required in rural areas, to sustain healthy economic activity and the viability of village communities. Many villages can accommodate modest development without damage to their character or to the countryside. New housing can help to sustain villages by providing the basis for maintaining local services. Local planning authorities should have regard to the locational principles in paragraph 2.10, and the guidance in PPG3 and PPG13. New housing developments in the countryside should be designed and sited with particular care and sensitivity. They should respect the principles of good design, such as responding to local distinctiveness (including building traditions or materials, without ruling out equivalent materials that are not local, and traditional street patterns) (Paragraph 3.19).
- ◆ The pattern of new development should be determined through the development plan process, and should be well-related in scale and location to existing development. Expansion of villages and towns should avoid creating ribbon development or a fragmented pattern of development (Paragraph 3.20).
- ◆ New house building and other new development in the open countryside, away from established settlements or from areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled (Paragraph 3.21).
- ◆ In an increasing number of rural areas there are pressures on the limited housing stock from people outside the local community. Some will bring new businesses and skills to rural areas; others will include retired people and long-distance commuters. Many can afford to pay more for their housing than local people. The result can be a

serious shortage of affordable housing for those with modest incomes who already live and work in the area (Paragraph 3.22).

3. PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT (PPS7) – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Key Principles

Planning authorities should adhere to the following principles in their approach to planning and development control in rural areas: -

- i) Decisions on development proposals should be firmly based on sustainable development principles – ensuring an integrated approach to the consideration of social progress, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources, and maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- ii) Good quality, carefully-sited development within existing towns and villages should be allowed where it meets local economic and community needs (including affordable housing for identified local needs), maintains or enhances the local environment, and does not conflict with other planning policies.
- iii) Larger scale developments should be located in or near to towns or other service centres that are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.
- iv) New development away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; in particular, isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification.
- v) Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed (brownfield) sites in preference to the development of greenfield sites, except in cases where brownfield sites perform so poorly in terms of sustainability considerations (eg: remoteness from settlements and services) in comparison with greenfield sites.
- vi) All development in rural areas should be well designed in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness (Paragraph 1).

Sustainable Rural Communities, Rural Businesses and Services

Planning authorities should adopt positive policies in their development plans for sustainable development to revitalise and support country towns and villages (including the provision of affordable housing) and for strong, diverse, economic activity in rural areas, whilst maintaining a high quality environment. To ensure these policies are relevant and effective, local planning authorities should be aware of the circumstances, needs and priorities of the rural communities and businesses in their area. Where there is a lack of up to date, robust information, local authorities should commission surveys and assessments of rural economic and social conditions and needs, including local housing needs (Paragraph 2).

Location of Development

Outside urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres, where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide some potential for access by walking and cycling. These centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development (Paragraph 3).

Away from these centres, planning authorities should allow some limited development to meet local business, community and identified local housing needs, particularly in order to maintain the viability and vitality of smaller towns and villages. In particular, authorities should be supportive of small scale development of this nature where it provides the most sustainable option in villages that are remote from, and have poor public transport links with, service centres (Paragraph 4).

Local planning authorities should identify in their development plans the circumstances in which new development will be allowed within and adjacent to settlements that are not identified service centres, and, exceptionally, on any other rural sites (Paragraph 5).

The Government's planning objectives and policies for housing are set out in PPG3. The key aim is to offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home. The housing needs of all in the community should be recognised, including those in need of affordable or special housing in rural areas. It is essential that local planning authorities plan to meet housing requirements in rural areas, based on an up to date assessment of local need. To promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land, the focus for most additional housing should be on existing towns and cities. But it will also be necessary to provide for some new housing to meet identified local need in villages (Paragraph 9).

In planning for housing in their rural areas, local planning authorities should apply the policies in PPG3. They should:-

- i) have particular regard to PPG3 guidance on the provision of housing in villages and should make sufficient land available, either within or adjoining existing village, to meet the needs of local people;
- ii) strictly control new house building (including single dwellings) in the countryside, away from established settlements or from areas allocated for housing in development plans (Paragraph 10).