



## Dartmoor's Statutory Development Plan and Neighbourhood Planning

### What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood Development Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood planning give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. An agreed (Made) Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory development plan.

### What is a strategic policy and why is it important to a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans must meet a number of tests or basic conditions which are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. One of these conditions is that the Neighbourhood Plan must show that it is in **general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Statutory Development Plan**. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) contain guidance on what is meant by strategic policies. When reaching a view on whether a policy is strategic it is useful to consider the following:

- whether the policy sets out an overarching direction or objective
- whether the policy seeks to shape the broad characteristics of development
- the scale at which the policy is intended to operate
- whether the policy sets a framework for decisions on how competing priorities should be balanced
- whether the policy sets a standard or other requirement that is essential to achieving the wider vision and aspirations in the Local Plan
- in the case of site allocations, whether bringing the site forward is central to achieving the vision and aspirations of the Local Plan
- whether the Local Plan identifies the policy as being strategic

Strategic policies are those which deliver strategic priorities and key objectives for the Local Plan area such as those that deliver homes and jobs, conserve environmental resources and heritage assets or seek to shape the broad characteristics of land use and development.

### What is the Statutory Development Plan?

The Statutory Development Plan, can include more than one document and is often referred to as the 'Local Plan'. Since the Localism Act, it can now also include Neighbourhood Plans prepared by neighbourhood planning groups.

The Statutory Development Plan contains the planning policies and proposals that guide the development and use of land for the area. Planning applications are determined in the light of these policies and national planning policy guidance as contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.



### **What is the relationship between a Neighbourhood Plan and the Statutory Development Plan or 'Local Plan'?**

The ambition of any neighbourhood plan should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. It should reflect the strategic context of the Local Plan and should plan positively, it should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

As a basic condition, a Neighbourhood Plan must show that it is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and cannot be used to block development. Where policies in the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Local Plan cover the same topic, the last plan that became part of the Development Plan is likely to take precedence.

### **What is the Statutory Development Plan or 'Local Plan' for Dartmoor?**

The adopted Statutory Development Plan for Dartmoor currently includes the following documents:

- Core Strategy DPD – adopted June 2008
- Development Management Document DPD – adopted July 2013

The DNPA has started the review of the current adopted Local Plan in 2016. This will provide opportunities for communities to get directly involved and influence the shape of the emerging development plan for Dartmoor. Once adopted, it will form the statutory development plan for Dartmoor, replacing some or all previous plans and policies. Until that time the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management Document provide the strategic policy context for neighbourhood plans on Dartmoor.

While neighbourhood plan policies are not examined against emerging strategic policies, good practice is likely to encourage a collaborative approach between plan makers to ensure that emerging neighbourhood plan policy continues to support strategic policy objectives. Indeed by plan makers working together, the need for an overly prescriptive approach to the interpretation of strategic policy can be avoided. This will allow the scope and scale of proposed neighbourhood plan policies to be taken into account, ensuring that they conform with strategic aims while delivering local aspirations.