

# 16.0

Plan Mid Devon 2023 - 2043 Regulation 18 Issues Paper January 2022

## A SUSTAINABLE DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT ACROSS MID DEVON

16.1 The new Local Plan will need to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development across Mid Devon to meet our needs – including new homes, employment, retail, leisure, other commercial development, infrastructure for transport, telecommunications and other matters, community facilities (including health and education), and also for conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure. The strategy will be informed through technical evidence including housing need, job opportunities, the availability of suitable locations and sites for development, infrastructure requirements, viability, physical constraints, and environmental matters. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, including where development could increase flood risk elsewhere, will be avoided. It will also be guided by national planning policy and achieving sustainable development, and the top priorities that we have identified for preparing the new Local Plan including responding to the climate emergency and moving to a net-zero carbon future.



New development, Cullompton

16.2 To achieve sustainable development the spatial strategy of the current Local Plan identifies Cullompton as the strategic focus of new development, Tiverton and Crediton as secondary focus of new development, and more modest growth at villages. The current Local Plan sets out the amount (minimum dwellings) and distribution of development across the district as follows: Tiverton (2,358 (30%)), Cullompton (3,930 (50%)), Crediton (786 (10%)) and Rural (786 (10%)).

## Main towns

16.3 The three main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton are Mid Devon's most sustainable settlements due to their existing shops and services, facilities, employment opportunities, infrastructure and level of accessibility to the transport network. Additionally, they are where local housing need is greatest and where opportunities can exist to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car and instead walk, cycle or use public transport to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, other pollutants and traffic congestion. For these reasons the three main towns should continue to be where most new development is planned. However, each town is affected to a greater or lesser extent by physical constraints to future growth, including topography, areas at risk of flooding, protected landscapes and settings, and barriers such as roads or rivers. They may also have other constraints in terms of the current capacity of local schools, transport network and other infrastructure. The strategy for the pattern of development will also be informed through technical studies, including an assessment of land that is available, suitable in planning terms, is capable of being achieved in the period of the Local Plan and would be viable (where there may be requirements for the provision of infrastructure or affordable housing).

## Designated villages for limited development

16.4 The current local plan designates 22 rural settlements across Mid Devon as 'villages suitable for limited development'. They include:

Bampton, Bow, Bradninch, Chawleigh, Cheriton Bishop, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Copplestone, Culmstock, Halberton, Hemyock, Holcombe Rogus, Kentisbeare, Lapford, Morchard Bishop, Newton St Cyres, Sampford Peverell, Sandford, Silverton, Thorverton, Uffculme, Willand and Yeoford.

16.5 These are places that provide a limited level of services (education, convenience store, transport service) which support vibrant rural communities and which are suitable for a limited level of development meeting local needs appropriate for their individual opportunities. This can include housing to meet identified local housing needs. Development at these villages can be limited to within defined settlement limits and to allocations, and could help attract investment to support and improve local services, facilities and infrastructure where they may be needed, and may benefit adjacent communities where there is a need to travel further to these. National planning policy makes clear where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.



16.6 Plan Mid Devon can provide an opportunity to reconsider what level of services are needed for a rural settlement to be suitable for development to meet local needs, and also where by allowing some growth this could help retain existing and attract new facilities to support and improve local sustainability and the concept of a 20 minute neighbourhood. New technologies through improved broadband connections have meant that many are now able to work from home and also make use of home deliveries for shopping. This has helped to reduce the need to travel and associated traffic congestion. The increased ownership of electric cars and phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles nationally will also continue to reduce pollutants from exhaust emissions. These trends have been accentuated through the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## Question 54

**What measures do you think we should take through Plan Mid Devon to support viable communities in the rural parts of the district?**

- **Continue to restrict development to the currently designated 22 rural settlements based on their level of services (Yes/No)**
- **Identify certain settlements to grow as service centres for a local hinterland including nearby villages and hamlets (Yes/No)**
- **Allow limited development at more villages and hamlets to help meet identified local housing need, where these have good digital communications (broadband / wireless internet / satellite) (Yes/No)**
- **Other (please tell us what this is and why)**

### Rural exceptions sites

16.7 National planning policy makes clear the Council should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and allow some market housing on these to help facilitate them. The current Local Plan allows rural exceptions sites within or adjoining a settlement, which can include Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, and also the 22 rural settlements designated as villages suitable for limited development.





16.8 While sites that are allocated for new housing development at the main towns will include a proportion of affordable housing, the proximity of local services can justify affordable housing on exceptions sites adjoining the defined settlement boundaries where there continues to be an unmet housing need and where other planning considerations (such as access, landscape impact, etc.) can be met. This flexible approach could include the consideration of development proposals for affordable housing on sites adjoining Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton that were not brought forward by land owners at the time that the Local Plan was being prepared. The national planning policy framework makes clear Local Planning Authorities should support the development of ‘entry-level’ exception sites (distinguished from rural exception sites), suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for such homes is not already being met in their area. These should be on land which is not already allocated for housing, and be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them and not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance and meet local design standards. Plan Mid Devon will provide an opportunity to consider how to plan for ‘entry-level’ exceptions sites.

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## New homes elsewhere in the countryside

16.9 Outside the main towns and villages, development is currently restricted to agriculture and other appropriate rural uses where this can help promote a strong rural economy, enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, whilst retaining the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. While national planning policy makes clear that isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided, there is a scope for Plan Mid Devon to include policies to support dwellings outside the main towns and designated rural settlements where there is an essential need for a rural worker; where the development would represent the optimal viable use of or secure the future of a heritage asset; it would reuse redundant or disused buildings; it would replace or involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or would provide accommodation for gypsies and travellers. In question 54 we have asked whether Plan Mid Devon should include scope for limited development at more villages and hamlets to help meet identified local housing need, where these have good digital communications (broadband / wireless internet / satellite) and could support viable communities in rural parts of the district.

## Question 55

**What other things do you think we should take into consideration in a strategy for the broad distribution of development in the new Local Plan for Mid Devon?**

## Question 56

**Are there any other issues that we have not identified or other matters that we have not discussed which you think are important to the future planning of Mid Devon? (Please tell us what these are and why)**

