

Countryside

Policy S14

Countryside

Development outside the settlements defined by Policies S10-S13 will preserve and where possible enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Detailed development management policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to the following criteria:

- a) Affordable and low cost housing to meet local needs, gypsy and traveller accommodation, residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings, replacement dwellings, housing essential to accommodate a rural worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling;**
- b) Appropriately scaled retail, employment, farm diversification, tourism and leisure related development (including appropriate conversion of existing buildings);**
- c) Appropriately scaled and designed extensions and other physical alterations to existing buildings;**
- d) Agricultural and equestrian development;**
- e) Community facilities, such as educational facilities, buildings associated with public open space, transportation and infrastructure proposals (including green infrastructure); and**
- f) Renewable energy and telecommunications.**

2.81 National policy supports thriving rural communities and encourages multiple benefits from the use of land in rural areas. Development in the countryside in the context of this policy is defined by land outside of the settlement limits of the main towns (S10-S12) and villages (S13). A strong rural economy is promoted by national policy through sustainable growth of business and enterprise in rural areas. Development in the countryside will be managed to meet local need, promote vibrant rural communities and help provide appropriate forms of agricultural and rural diversification to support the rural economy and sustain environmental qualities of the countryside. Development management policies allow for small-scale employment development in suitable locations whilst retaining the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. These sites can come forward according to market demand.

2.82 To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing has been allocated where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. New isolated homes will be avoided in the countryside unless there are special circumstances as set out in national policy and supplemented in relevant Local Plan policies such as Policy DM6 (rural exception sites), DM8 (rural workers dwellings) and DM9 (conversion of rural buildings). In the context of the Mid Devon Local Plan, 'isolated' refers to any location outside of defined settlement limits. Such land is defined as the countryside which can include small settlements and hamlets. National policy requires that new sites for travellers should be limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. In certain circumstances the development of such sites outside of settlement limits will be appropriate, providing it can meet the criteria set out within Policy DM7 (gypsy and traveller accommodation).

2.83 National policy advocates the provision of market housing in rural areas where it would facilitate the provision of significant affordable housing required to meet housing need. To facilitate the provision of affordable and low cost (discounted) housing in rural areas across Mid Devon, rural exception sites will be considered in line with Policy DM6 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Meeting Housing Needs.