

# **Representations to East Devon District Council's emerging Local Plan (Review) 'Draft Issues and Options Stage Report' (January 2021) (Regulation 18) public consultation**

Landmark Estates Development Ltd

## **Prepared by**

**Robin Whitehouse** B. Sc. (Hons), Dip. Tp., MRTPI  
**Town Planner – Pearlsfield Planning Ltd**

B. Sc. (Hons) Environmental Planning, Diploma in Town and Country Planning (Dip. TP.), Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI) (London).

## **On behalf of Landmark Estates Development Ltd**

**9 April 2021**

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd is supported by Goldfinch Town Planning Services (West Midlands)



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This 'Made' Representations Statement document is submitted in response to East Devon District Council's District emerging Local Plan (Review) 'Draft Issues and Options Stage Report' (January 2021) Regulation 18 public consultation. It is 'made' by Pearlsfield Planning Ltd **on behalf of their client Landmark Estates Development Ltd.**

This 'Made' Representations Statement document has been submitted to East Devon District Council's Planning Policy Team (Local Plans) via e-mail to the following public consultation address on **08/04/2021**.

[planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Within this Representations Statement document, Pearlsfield Planning Ltd has only focused on responding to those questions which are relevant to our clients primary business interests, which are new housing development site promotion activities and promoting high-quality sustainable residential communities.

### Limitations

This document has been prepared for the stated objective and should not be used for any other purpose without the prior written authority of Landmark Estates Development Ltd. Both Pearlsfield Planning Ltd and Landmark Estates Development Ltd accept no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than for which it was commissioned.

Put your contact details in the box(es) below – please use BLOCK CAPITALS

<b>Person(s) or Organisation Submitting Comments</b>	
Name	MOHAMED ANNES FATEHMAHOMED
Job title	DIRECTOR
Organisation	LANDMARK ESTATES DEVELOPMENT LTD
Address	
Telephone number	Please use our agents telephone number as the primary point of contact.
E-mail	As above.
Data Protection Act 2018:	-
Please place an <b>X</b> in this box if you wish to be kept informed on future policy consultations within the District.	<b>X</b>

<b>Agent (if applicable)</b>	
Name	ROBIN WHITEHOUSE
Organisation	PEARLSFIELD PLANNING LTD  <b>ALL REPRESENTATIONS BEING SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF LANDMARK ESTATES DEVELOPMENT LTD</b>
Address	
Telephone number	
E-mail	

Data Protection Act 2018:	-

Date	<b>9 April 2021</b>
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## East Devon District Council Local Plan (Review) 'Issues and Options' Regulation 18 Consultation Comment Form

### Chapter 2 – Objectives, scope and background (page 2)

#### Question 1 – Local Plan Objectives

Do you think these are the right objectives for the new local plan, are there any further objectives that you would wish to see added or amendments made?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 1:

The list of key objectives should be further expanded to recognize the important role that new housing developments (Use Class C3: Residential) located on the edges of existing village settlements and other settlements (e.g. such as new housing development being located adjacent to larger settlements and in areas of countryside located on the edges of existing town centres) within the District can play in helping to support the future vitality and vitality of existing village settlements located within the District. Expanding the list of objectives to cover this issue would accord well with Government guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that:

“...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive...”

This type of suggested objective would also help to promote more sustainable patterns of development within the East Devon District by encouraging new housing development in sustainable locations in areas of countryside on the edges of existing village settlement boundaries. Expanding the list of objectives as suggested would therefore result in a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019). As well as ensuring that the new emerging Local Plan had a strong level of planning policy compliance with paragraph 59 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which reinforces the need to significantly boost the supply of new housing across the United Kingdom.

It would also help to promote a more sustainable pattern of development coming forward within the District, consistent with advice in paragraphs 11 and 38 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

### **The scope of the local plan (page 3)**

#### **Question 2 – The scope of the Local Plan Objectives**

Do you think these are the right objectives for the new local plan, are there any further objectives that you would wish to see added or amendments made?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 2:

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would support Option 1 which suggests producing a single local plan covering all policy matters as this would help make the new Local Plan document as this would help improve clarity and make the new Local Plan more user-friendly for local communities within the East Devon District and other key stakeholders such as local businesses, land promoters and the house building development industry. This would assist housing developers when submitting formal planning applications and pre-application enquiries as there would be one single point of contact / one Local Plan as a point of reference to help assist the preparation of Planning Statements to accompany planning application submissions, and to help assist in the identification of appropriate relevant Local Plan policies to help assist in the appraisal of potential new housing development sites. It would also help provide a more clear and certain planning policy framework to assist both the development industry, land promoters, rural landowners and local communities within the East Devon District.

### **Where neighbourhood plans fit in (page 6)**

#### **Question 3 – Neighbourhood Plans and the new Local Plan**

How do you think we should make best use of existing neighbourhood plans to inform the new local plan that we are producing?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 3:

The key issue in spatial planning policy terms which should be reflected within the new emerging Local Plan is the critically important issue regarding the sustainable future expansion of existing village settlements and larger settlements (such as Brixington and

Exmouth) across the East Devon District. In terms of the identification of future sustainable housing-led regeneration opportunities in areas of countryside on the edges of existing villages and larger settlements across the East Devon District.

To help meet the urgent housing needs of local communities across the East Devon District, the Council should use existing and emerging Neighbourhood Plans to identify potential future housing-led expansion opportunities within areas of open countryside bordering/ located on the edges of existing village settlement boundaries (areas of countryside bordering Neighbourhood Plan boundaries). Neighbourhood Plans should help guide future site selection of areas of land located outside the existing boundaries of existing village settlements for consideration within the emerging Local Plan (Review). This suggested planning policy approach would help to ensure that the emerging Local Plan (Review) is prepared in accordance with guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which attaches great importance on the need for Council's to strongly encourage the sustainable expansion of existing village settlements to help meet the urgent housing development needs of the local area and support the vitality and viability of existing rural village settlements. It confirms that:

“...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive...”

The above suggested planning policy approach would also help to ensure that the Council's planning policy approach on this issue is consistent with guidance in paragraph 11 (indent a) of the Revised NPPF (2019) which states that: “...Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that: (indent a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change...”

Pearlsfield Planning considers that following the above suggested planning policy approach in Council's emerging Local Plan (Review) would result in a more effective, positively prepared, and justified plan, in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

It would also help to promote more sustainable patterns of development across the wider District and help boost the supply of new housing which is expected by paragraphs 11, 38 and 59 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

#### **Question 4 – Planning for health and well-being**

How important do you think it is that we should actively promote health and wellbeing throughout our new local plan?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 4:

We would select 'Absolutely essential' option. In terms of comments, Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would stress the benefits of new housing development proposals in helping to improve the health and well-being of local communities given that new housing offers significantly improved living standards in comparison to older housing stock. In terms of higher insulation and energy efficiency standards associated with new residential dwellings, avoiding problems of over-crowding associated with older housing stock (smaller room sizes, cramped living conditions associated older properties, such as older terraced housing), damp associated with older dwellings, etc.

The ongoing years 2020 and 2021 severe global coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic across the United Kingdom has highlighted and placed into very sharp focus the health implications of poor quality, older housing stock. Poor housing conditions such as overcrowding, high density, poor quality ventilation, rising damp, etc typically associated with older, poor quality housing stock - are all associated with greater spread of covid-19. For example, damp problems typically associated with poor quality older housing stock, have been linked to a number of health problems, including respiratory issues, physical pain, and headaches, particularly affecting children. Older housing stock can also likely to suffer from over-crowding due to small habitable room sizes, and smaller rear residential garden spaces. The importance of residential gardens has come under sharp focus during the coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic to the prolonged lock-down restrictions as physical exercise/ access to outdoor space has become more important.

The importance of the physical characteristics (quality and condition and living standards) associated with high-quality new housing developments in helping to promote more healthier lifestyles is therefore a critical issue and has never been more important due to the issues described above. In its planning policy approach (and consistent with advice in paragraph 59 of the Revised NPPF), the Council should therefore be seeking to encourage new housing development within areas of countryside bordering existing settlements to help improve the health, well-being and living standards of local communities within the East Devon District.



The severe and unprecedented coronavirus (covid-19) global pandemic and the continued pro-longed lockdown restrictions across the UK during 2020 and 2021 has highlighted the continued relevance of housing to health.

#### **Section 4 – Tackling the Climate Change Emergency (page 13)**

##### **Question 5 – Energy efficiency of new buildings**

##### **Various options – Options 1, 2 and 3**

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 5:

General observation comments: Options 1 (Plan for net-zero carbon from plan adoption) and Option 2 (Plan for net-zero carbon from a future date) could potentially harm the future financial viability of future residential schemes coming forward within the District. This is considered particularly important for the reasons set out below.

At this uncertain, unprecedented and economically challenging time with an abnormal set of circumstances in place due to the combined impacts of an ongoing global coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic, and an enduring, severe and long-term forthcoming economic recession, we would respectively suggest that the house building development industry and rural landowners within the District require support from the local planning authority and reasonable and realistic local-level planning policy guidance going forward within the emerging Local Plan. In relation to ‘energy efficiency of new buildings’, we would suggest that the Council’s proposed planning policy expectations on this issue need to be realistic, taking into account the fact that there has been a clear, fundamental and significant shift and long-term material change in economic circumstances now facing the District since initial work on the Council’s emerging Local Plan (Review) commenced as part of earlier previous Local Plan (Review) preparation stages. Most notably, at the earlier initial frontloading consultation stage (the initial evidence gathering capture stage to capture baseline data and identify key issues).

This significant and fundamental material change in economic circumstances now facing the District in our view needs to be carefully considered by the LPA when considering its proposed future planning policy approach within the emerging Local Plan Review to ensure that the future financial viability of future residential schemes coming forward within the District is not adversely affected and harmed. Whilst we support the principles behind the policy and the need to incorporate climate change mitigation features within new buildings, incorporating these types of features can often significantly increase the financial build costs for new-build residential schemes. We would therefore advise that a pre-cautionary policy approach is therefore taken by the LPA in relation to this issue for the reasons set out above.

## Chapter 5 - Meeting housing needs (pages 17 to 20)

### Question 8 – How many new homes should we plan for each year?

Which option do you think we should take?

**Option 1 – plan for an average of at least 928 new homes being built each year –**

This would accommodate levels of house building that accord with current Government requirements. It may mean, however, that we fall a long way short of meeting all affordable housing needs.

**Option 2 – plan for a greater number of homes, for example 1,200 -** this may meet more of the affordable housing need but not all of it.

**Option 3 – Plan to build considerable more homes each year -** A figure of 1,614 homes would align with Governments previous thinking and would potentially result in all affordable housing needs being met.

### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 8:

Pearlsfield Planning would support Option 3 above as this option would more strongly accord with Government planning guidance as set out in paragraph 59 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which reinforces the importance of significantly boosting the supply of new homes across the United Kingdom as well as better meet the urgent housing needs of local communities within the East Devon District. Option 3 would also accord with current Government policy which is now governed by a pro-growth National Planning Policy Framework which gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Option 3 would also result in a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with Government guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

### Question 9 – Sites for small housing developments

Which option do you think we should take?

**Option 1** – Allocate or identify land for around 10% of homes to be on small sites – this approach would meet minimum government standards.

**Option 2** - Allocate or identify land for around 11% to 25% of homes to be on small sites – this approach would be higher than Government minimum standards.

**Option 3** - Allocate or identify land for 26% to 50% of homes to be on small sites – this approach would be substantially higher than Government minimum standards.

**Option 4** - Allocate or identify land for 51% or more of homes to be on small sites – with such a high figure this approach could fundamentally change the nature of house building in East Devon.

**Option 5** - None of the above or an alternative.

#### Pearlsfield Planning response to question 9:

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would support Option 4 above as this option would more strongly accord with Government planning guidance as set out in paragraph 59 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which reinforces the importance of significantly boosting the supply of new homes across the United Kingdom as well as better meet the urgent housing needs of local communities within the East Devon District.

Option 4 would also accord with current Government policy which is now governed by a pro-growth National Planning Policy Framework which gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Option 4 would also result in a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with Government guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019). Option 4 would also be supported by guidance in paragraph 68 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that: “...Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly...”

**Question 10 – Planning for housing for people at all stages of their life.**

Which option do you think we should take?

**Option 1-** We should explicitly require housing provision for people at all stages of life – this approach could place demanding standards on developers to provide housing for all stages of people lives. It could though reduce monies available to pay for other wider community benefits from development.

**Option 2 –** We should encourage but not require housing provision for people at all stages of life – under this approach we could encourage and support such housing but be less demanding on specific standards to be met.

**Option 3 –** not set standards for differing types of housing provision – this approach would leave developers to determining the types of houses that should be built rather than policy seeking to require specific outcomes.

**Option 4 –** None of the above or an alternative.

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 10:

At this uncertain, unprecedented and economically challenging time with an abnormal set of circumstances in place, due to the combined impacts of an ongoing coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic, and an enduring, severe and long-term forthcoming economic recession, we would suggest that the house building development industry, land promoters and rural landowners within the District require support from the local planning authority and reasonable and realistic local-level planning policy guidance going forward.

In relation to “Planning for housing for people at all stages of their life” planning policy requirements, we would suggest that the Council’s proposed planning policy expectations on this issue need to be realistic, taking into account the fact that there has been a clear, fundamental and significant shift and long-term material change in economic circumstances now facing the District since initial work on the Council’s emerging Local Plan (Review) commenced as part of earlier previous Local Plan (Review) preparation stages. Most notably, at the earlier initial frontloading consultation stage (the initial evidence gathering capture stage to capture baseline data and identify key issues with key stakeholders).

This significant and fundamental material change in economic circumstances now facing the District in our view needs to be carefully considered by the LPA when considering its proposed future planning policy approach within the emerging Local Plan Review to ensure that the future financial viability of future residential schemes coming forward within the District is not adversely affected and harmed given the adverse economic

conditions described above. Whilst we support the principles behind the need to plan for the housing needs for people at all stages of their life, building homes to these standards can substantially increase financial build costs for new-build residential schemes. We would therefore advise that a pre-cautionary policy approach is therefore taken by the LPA in relation to this issue for the reasons identified above.

On this basis, we would suggest Option 3 is pursued given that this Option would be more responsive to the huge and substantial shift in economic conditions now facing the District for the reasons identified above.

### **Additional housing policy objectives**

#### **Question 11 – Additional housing policy objectives**

Do you think these are appropriate housing policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 11:

The new emerging Local Plan (Review) Plan timeframe will extend from the years 2021 up until the year 2040. The future housing development needs of existing rural village settlements across the Plan area will therefore require careful consideration. In terms of considering how these existing rural village settlements can grow and thrive by bringing forward sustainably located new housing development sites through the emerging Local Plan (Review). The future growth and sustainable and sensitive expansion of existing rural village settlements across the new Local Plan area therefore requires careful consideration by the local planning authority. Particularly, the sustainable expansion of existing rural village settlements on the edges of their existing boundaries with new housing, the policy approach strongly encouraged by guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF as considered below.

Whilst we recognise that main village settlements will have their own individual Neighbourhood Plans which will consider the development needs of existing rural village settlements, we still consider that a policy should be included within the new emerging Local Plan Core (Review) to focus on considering how villages can grow over the new Plan period extending up to the year 2040.

In particular, sustainable housing-led expansion located outside of/ immediately bordering the edges of existing village settlement boundaries. Clearly there will need to be some expansion of existing village settlements over the time frame of the new Local Plan (Review) (extending up to the year 2040) to help meet the community's future urgent

needs for new rural housing, and in order to allow villages to grow and thrive - the policy approach strongly encouraged by Government guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that:

“...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive...”

On this basis, to satisfy guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF and to ensure that the new emerging Local Plan (Review) is a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019), Pearlsfield Planning Ltd considers that a Policy should be included within the new emerging Local Plan (Review) that encourages new housing development growth on the edges of existing rural village settlements within the East Devon District Council's administrative boundary.

The above is also relevant given that not all village settlements located within the emerging new Local Plan (Review) area have their own Neighbourhood Plans. This is particularly the case for smaller rural village settlements. The above proposed policy approach is therefore considered beneficial and responds more effectively to the above NPPF guidance.

## **Chapter 6 – Supporting the jobs and the economy (pages 21 to 25)**

### **Questions 12, 13 and 14**

See below comments

### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to questions 12, 13 and 14:

Initial work on Plan preparation for the Council's emerging Local Plan (Review) (the frontloading consultation evidence gathering stage with key stakeholders to capture and identify key baseline data and key issues) was undertaken under a significant and entirely different set of economic circumstances. Essentially, this early evidence gathering stage work undertaken by the LPA with key stakeholders to inform very early stages of Plan Preparation work on the emerging Local Plan (Review) has been undertaken before the year 2020 coronavirus (covid-19) (the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic became more acute in late 2020) pandemic which is likely to cause one of the worst UK economic recessions in living memory, extending well into the new Local Plan period once it's been adopted.

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would therefore suggest that a pre-cautionary approach is taken towards employment land spatial planning needs by the LPA within the East Devon District (and any subsequent modelling assumptions used to inform economic and housing spatial policy to inform the ) given that there has now been

given that it was prepared long before the late year 2020 fundamental economic shift started to take place as a result of the severe coronavirus pandemic (covid-19) across the United Kingdom (UK) (2020). Which is expected to cause a huge and unprecedented economic recession across the UK over the coming years – one of the worst economic recessions in living memory since records began.

This will clearly have significant implications for the District in terms of a potential significant economic downturn, which, given its anticipated severity (the severity of the forthcoming recession is now acknowledged by the Government), is likely to extend long into the new Plan period once the new Local Plan has been adopted. This huge economic shift and significant material change in economic circumstances now facing the District over the coming years due to the anticipated forthcoming recession, clearly will need to be factored and shaped into the Council's emerging policy approach, throughout all Chapters/ topic areas of the emerging Local Plan (Review). And any supporting background technical evidence base modelling used to underpin and inform policy preparation will need to consider the issues described above to help ensure that the proposed policy approach to Local Plan preparation accords with guidance in paragraph 11 (indent a) of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that: "...Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that: (indent a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the are, and be **sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change....**" The rapid change in economic conditions now facing the Plan area (the District) and their long term implications (in terms of a pro-longed and significant economic downturn) should now therefore be shaped into the approach taken by the LPA in its Plan preparation approach taken within the emerging Local Plan (Review).

The above suggested approach would also conform with the planning policy approach expected by paragraph 31 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that: "...The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence..."

In conclusion therefore, some of the employment land emerging spatial planning requirements being identified within the Council's emerging Local Plan (Review) may no longer be based on credible, robust, reliable and up-to-date evidence or indeed be fit-for-purpose. The employment land site selection/ identification approach therefore needs to be more responsive to the huge shift in economic conditions now facing the Plan area due to the implications of the forthcoming severe economic recession as described above. **On this basis, Pearlsfield Planning maintains its view that some employment land sites identified in the emerging Local Plan (Review) may no longer be suitable and viable for future employment uses, and would therefore be more appropriately**

**utilized for large-scale new-build housing (Use Class C3: Residential) re-development** to help meet the urgent housing needs of local communities within the East Devon District, consistent with the planning policy approach expected by guidance in paragraph 59 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

The severe, long-term and substantial shift in the economic conditions now facing the Plan area for the reasons identified above is now a key material planning consideration which should now play a significant role in shaping the Council's emerging spatial planning policy approach towards employment land requirements within the emerging Local Plan (Review) across the East Devon District.

It is important to reinforce the point that the severe global coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic is likely to be causing one of the worst economic recessions in living memory since records began within the East Devon District and across the wider UK. This will have huge implications for the spatial planning approach taken within the emerging Local Plan, particularly in respect of employment land spatial planning issues, to ensure that the Council's planning policy approach is soundly based on robust, up-to-date and credible evidence and accords with the NPPF guidance referred to above and Local Plan preparation tests reinforced in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

## **Chapter 8 – Designing beautiful and healthy spaces and buildings (pages 29 to 31)**

### **Question 18 – Additional design policy objectives**

Do you think these are appropriate design policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 18:

When considering where new housing site allocations should come forward in the emerging Local Plan (Review) Pearlsfield Planning Ltd maintains its view that the new emerging Local Plan (Review) Plan timeframe will extend from the years 2021 up until the year 2040. The future housing development needs of existing rural village settlements across the Plan area will therefore require careful consideration. In terms of considering how these existing rural village settlements within the East Devon District can grow and thrive by bringing forward sustainably located new housing development sites through the emerging Local Plan (Review). The future growth and sustainable and sensitive expansion of existing rural village settlements across the new Local Plan area therefore



requires careful consideration by the local planning authority. Particularly, the sustainable expansion of existing rural village settlements on the edges of their existing boundaries with new housing, the policy approach strongly encouraged by guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF as considered below.

Whilst we recognise that main village settlements will have their own individual Neighbourhood Plans which will consider the development needs of existing rural village settlements, we still consider that a policy should be included within the new emerging Local Plan Core (Review) to focus on considering how villages can grow over the new Plan period extending up to the year 2040.

In particular, sustainable housing-led expansion located outside of/ immediately bordering the edges of existing village settlement boundaries. Clearly there will need to be some expansion of existing village settlements over the time frame of the new Local Plan (Review) (extending up to the year 2040) to help meet the community's future urgent needs for new rural housing, and in order to allow villages to grow and thrive - the policy approach strongly encouraged by Government guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that:

“...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive...”

On this basis, to satisfy guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF and to ensure that the new emerging Local Plan (Review) is a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019), Pearlsfield Planning Ltd considers that a Policy should be included within the new emerging Local Plan (Review) that encourages new housing development growth on the edges of existing rural village settlements within the East Devon District Council's administrative boundary.

The above is also relevant given that not all village settlements located within the emerging new Local Plan (Review) area have their own Neighbourhood Plans. This is particularly the case for smaller rural village settlements. The above proposed policy approach is therefore considered beneficial and responds effectively to the above NPPF guidance.

## Chapter 10 – Our outstanding natural environment (pages 35 to 38)

### Question 20 – Development in protected landscapes

In considering whether we should allow for development in protected landscapes do you think:

**Option 1-** Place significant restrictions on development - This approach would apply very tight constraints on development. However, it could mean more development pressure elsewhere in East Devon.

**Option 2** – Allow for development to meet local needs - This would allow for limited development, specifically where it will meet smaller scale local housing, community or economic needs, though it could still mean more development pressure elsewhere in East Devon.

**Option 3** – Allow for greater levels of development - This approach would allow for much more development in protected landscapes, in so doing it could, however, reduce the need to build elsewhere.

**Option 4** – None of the above or an alternative

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 20:

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would support Option 3 as this would help to meet the urgent housing needs of local communities within the East Devon District and ensure that the proposed planning policy approach taken by the LPA within the emerging Local Plan has a strong level of planning policy compliance with guidance in paragraph 59 of Revised NPPF (2019) which reinforces the need to significantly boost the supply of new homes across the United Kingdom. It would also help to ensure that the Council's proposed planning policy approach taken within the emerging new Local Plan (Review) would result in a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

Option 3 would also help to ensure that the planning policy approach taken by the LPA within the emerging Local Plan (Review) more strongly accords with Government guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that:

“...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive...”

Many small rural village settlements within the East Devon District countryside are located within protected landscapes. Pearlsfield Planning maintains its view that high quality new-build residential schemes can still be delivered on the edges of existing rural village settlements despite the fact that many of these existing rural village settlements are located in areas of environmental constraint/ protected landscapes. The above policy approach would also help to promote more sustainable patterns of development within the East Devon District consistent with advice in paragraphs 11 and 38 of the Revised NPPF, and would be fully planning policy compliant with paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF as discussed above. The above issues are particularly important given that the new Local Plan period will extend up to the year 2040 so the Council will need to plan for the future expansion of these villages with new housing-led development.

On this basis, to satisfy guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF and to ensure that the new emerging Local Plan (Review) is a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019), Pearlsfield Planning Ltd considers that a Policy should be included within the new emerging Local Plan (Review) that encourages new housing development growth on the edges of existing rural village settlements within the East Devon District Council's administrative boundary, despite the fact that these locations are within areas of environmental constraint, given that these edge-of-village locations are the most environmentally sustainable locations for new housing development and have a strong level of planning policy compliance with the above NPPF guidance.

### **Question 21 – Net gains in biodiversity**

Do you think these are the right objectives for the new local plan, are there any further objectives that you would wish to see added or amendments made?

#### Pearlsfield Planning Ltd response to question 21:

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would support Option 1 on-site provision, with a cautionary note to advise that it is important to ensure that the future financial viability of new housing development schemes is not adversely affected when considering new on-site natural green space requirements for reasons set out below.

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd represents a housing developer who delivers very high-quality new luxury homes, and as a housing developer of very high quality residential schemes, we take our environmental responsibility very seriously and where opportunities exist, we are keen to support biodiversity enhancement features within our residential development schemes. As a highly experienced housing developer of new-build high quality residential schemes, we therefore suggest that the nature conservation focused policy approach taken within East Devon District Council's emerging Issues and Options Report (January

2021) could be significantly strengthened and improved from a nature conservation new habitat creation planning policy perspective, by emphasizing the important role that new housing development sites can play in helping to promote and deliver new on-site nature conservation habitat features. Or if insufficient land resources are available on-site for natural green space habitat creation (e.g. due to a development sites limited and constrained overall land parcel size which could make the inclusion of significant new on-site natural green space features financially unviable due to the loss of residential units from the site) then the benefits of off-site habitat creation can be explored. This policy approach is supported by Government planning guidance set out in paragraph 175 (indent d) of the Revised NPPF (2019) as considered further below.

Where opportunities exist, on-site habitat features could include the creation of new natural green space thin linear dry swale Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) features (to help reduce surface water run-off but also provide beneficial wildlife habitat features). In addition, the inclusion of small wildlife ponds within rear garden spaces within new-build residential site layouts to help support currently declining amphibian species (frogs, toads and newts).

This is relevant given that research from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) suggests that during the past century, nearly 70 per cent of ponds have been lost from the British countryside, meaning that creating new small wildlife ponds in private residential gardens within new-build housing estates now has increased importance for wildlife. The decline is largely due to modern industrial-scale mechanized intensive farming practices within the British countryside which has resulted in widespread habitat destruction. Such as drainage of small wildlife ponds within farmland and loss of other wetland habitats, widespread hedgerow removal within arable farmland, loss of lowland heath habitat, etc.

New-build residential schemes located in areas of open countryside bordering existing village settlement boundaries (Use Class C3: Residential) can therefore have an important role to play in helping to replace threatened wildlife habitat features that have otherwise already been lost from the open countryside. Small wildlife garden ponds provide an excellent, robust and defendable example of a type of ecologically important and declining wildlife habitat feature that can be easily replicated and incorporated into new residential site layouts.

Other on-site biodiversity features can include use of native species shrubs and wild flowers within wider on-site landscaping and rear garden spaces to support insect pollinators, including bird hole nest boxes on garden fencing, the incorporation of hedgehog gates (which are equally useful for amphibians) in rear garden fencing to form a connecting wildlife corridor through rear gardens to connect to rural fringe farmland (helping to support a connected landscape and maximize the biodiversity value of residential gardens). Retention of some existing landscape features within development sites such as rural fringe established boundary hedgerows, the orientation of individual rear garden spaces within new-build residential layouts to form linear connecting green space wildlife corridor connecting through development sites (these are typically used by

foraging bats as well as by garden bird species). Also, the use of native tree species in on-site landscaping schemes in front and rear garden spaces (using native tree species suitable for small rear garden spaces such as Hazel, Silver Birch, Rowan and Hawthorn). And using native tree species on the edges of development sites to provide effective visual amenity screening as well as on-site wildlife habitat. Swift nest-boxes and bat boxes can also be included high-up on the external facades of new-build residential dwellings to help support populations of these declining wildlife species.

Where no or very limited opportunities exist on-site for new habitat creation due to a development sites limited and constrained overall land parcel size, then new wildlife habitat features can be created through use of reasonable related in scale and kind planning obligations to deliver off-site biodiversity enhancements. This can help to sensitively restore and improve existing nearby wildlife habitats through appropriate habitat restoration works. All of the above suggestions have planning policy support in paragraph 175 (indent d) of the Revised NPPF (2019) which confirms that: "...When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: (indent d) ...opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains in biodiversity..."

Given the issues identified above and the clear planning policy support in paragraph 175 (indent d) of the Revised NPPF, we consider that the development of areas of countryside (greenfield sites) for new housing development, bordering existing rural village settlements within the District should be actively encouraged by the Council in order to help deliver meaningful biodiversity enhancements within the District, and to help assist in the replacement of threatened biodiversity habitat features that have already been lost within the District's countryside due to years of successive intensive farming practices. This will also help the Council to deliver a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019) and ensure that the planning policy approach responds effectively to guidance in paragraph 175 (indent d) of the Revised NPPF (2019) as discussed above.

## **Chapter 13 – Developing a strategy for the distribution of development (pages 47 to 56)**

### **Question 27 – Retaining and refining the existing settlement hierarchy**

Which of the following options do you prefer for a potential settlement hierarchy?

**Option 1:** Same hierarchy as current Local Plan: 7 Towns plus Cranbrook and the 15 Villages

**Option 2:** A hierarchy that retains the towns and Cranbrook but has a lower number of villages that may accommodate development

**Option 3:** A hierarchy that retains the towns and Cranbrook but has a higher number of villages that may accommodate development

**Option 4:** Do something different in terms of a hierarchy or not have one

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would suggest Option 3 as this would help to ensure that the Council's proposed planning policy approach taken within the emerging Local Plan (Review) accords with Government planning guidance set out in paragraph 59 of Revised NPPF (2019) which reinforces the need to significantly boost the supply of new homes across the United Kingdom. It would also help to ensure that the Council's proposed planning policy approach taken within the emerging new Local Plan (Review) would result in a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

Option 3 would also help to ensure that the emerging Local Plan (Review) is prepared in accordance with guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which attaches great importance on the need for Council's to strongly encourage the sustainable expansion of existing village settlements to help meet the urgent housing development needs of local communities within the local area and support the future vitality and viability of existing rural village settlements. It confirms that:

"...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive..."

Option 3 would also help to ensure that the Council's planning policy approach on this issue is consistent with guidance in paragraph 11 (indent a) of the Revised NPPF (2019) which states that: "...Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that: (indent a) plans should **positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area**, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change..."

### Question 28 – Broad distribution of housing development

Which broad approach to the distribution of housing development would you favour in a new local plan?

**Option 1** - As existing - Continue with a distribution pattern of planned new development that is in line with the current local plan – for 60% of new homes at the West End, 30% in Towns and 10% in Villages and rural areas.

**Option 2** – More West End focused – This approach would focus more of the future new house building close to Exeter, perhaps as much as 75%, with the remaining 25% being in town and villages (for example 20% in towns and 5% in villages).

**Options 3** – A less West End focussed pattern – This approach would seek to accommodate far less development close to Exeter, maybe as little as 20% of future new homes, with the bulk of new housing, 80% of provision, being dispersed across towns and villages (for example 50% in towns and 30% in villages and rural areas).

**Options 4** – an alternative to the above – you may consider that there are different ways or approaches to look at development distribution (if so we would welcome your thoughts and comments).

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would suggest Option 3 as this would help to ensure that the Council's proposed planning policy approach taken within the emerging new Local Plan (Review) would result in a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019). **It would also** help to spread a more evenly balanced spatial planning development pattern across the District rather than just concentrating new housing development within limited focused parts of the District.

Option 3 would therefore have a stronger level of planning policy compliance with paragraphs 11 and 38 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which both reinforce the importance of 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development' and Option 3 would more strongly accord with current Government policy which is now governed by a pro-growth National Planning Policy Framework which gives a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the NPPF.

Increasing the levels of new housing development being directed towards land within and on the edges of existing village settlements within the District in Option 3 would also help

to ensure that the emerging Local Plan (Review) is prepared in accordance with guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) which attaches great importance on the need for Council's to strongly encourage the sustainable expansion of existing village settlements to help meet the urgent housing development needs of local communities within the local area and support the future vitality and viability of existing rural village settlements. It confirms that:

“...To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive...”

<b>Question 29 – Future options for the type and location of development</b>
<b>For each option please tick one box only</b>
How do you feel about the development types and locations listed below:
Strongly support / Support / Neither oppose or support / Oppose / Strongly oppose / None of the options
Infilling in towns and at larger villages
Building one or more additional new towns
Planning for new villages
large scale (over 50 home) urban expansions to existing towns
small scale (under 50 home) urban expansions to towns
Building houses on the edges of East Devon villages

Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would have the following observation comments as shown in solid bold text immediately below in connection to Question 29.

- Infilling in towns and at larger villages – **strongly support**
- Building one or more additional new towns - **strongly support**
- Planning for new villages - **strongly support**
- large scale (over 50 home) urban expansions to existing towns - **strongly support**
- small scale (under 50 home) urban expansions to towns - **strongly support**



- Building houses on the edges of East Devon villages - **strongly support**

Pearsfield Planning Ltd would particularly support the option of “Building houses on the edges of East Devon Villages” as described above.

On its future adoption, the East Devon District Council new Local Plan (Review) Plan timeframe will extend up until the year 2040. The future housing development needs of existing rural village settlements across the Plan area will therefore require careful consideration by the LPA. In terms of considering how these existing rural village settlements can grow and thrive by bringing forward sustainably located new housing development sites. The future growth, sustainable and sensitive expansion of existing rural village settlements across the new Plan area therefore requires careful consideration by the LPA. Particularly, the sustainable expansion of existing rural village settlements on the edges of their existing boundaries with new housing, the policy approach strongly encouraged by guidance in paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF as considered throughout this Local Plan Representations Response.

Whilst we recognise that main village settlements will have their own individual Neighbourhood Plans which will consider the development needs of existing rural village settlements, we still consider that a policy should be included within the new Local Plan Review to focus on considering how villages can grow over the new Plan period extending up to the year 2040. In particular, sustainable housing-led expansion located outside of/ immediately bordering the edges of existing village settlement boundaries.

Our suggestions would ensure that the planning policy approach taken by the LPA in the emerging Local Plan accords with paragraph 78 of the Revised NPPF (2019) (as stated above) and help to ensure that the new Local Plan (Review) is a more effective, positively prepared and justified plan, in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Revised NPPF (2019).

The above is also relevant given that not all village settlements located within the emerging Local Plan area will have their own individual Neighbourhood Plans. This is particularly the case for much smaller rural village settlements. The above proposed policy approach is therefore considered beneficial and responds more effectively to the above NPPF guidance.

### **Question 30 – Establishment of a Development Corporation (page 55)**

If one or more big strategic sites for housing or mixed use development are allocated in the new East Devon local plan how important do you think the creation of a Development Corporation would be?

Please tick one box only

- Absolutely essential
- Very important
- Quite important
- Of limited importance
- Not important at all
- It would be a bad thing

In connection to question 30, Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would select the “**Not important at all**” option.

### **Question 31 – Planning for development beyond 2040 (page 55)**

Do you consider that it would be appropriate to start to plan for development in East Devon for a date well beyond 2040 in this Local Plan?

Please tick one box only

- Yes it would be very sensible whether a new town is proposed or not
- Sensible only if a new town is proposed
- It does not really matter what end date is set
- It would be undesirable and the end date should be 2040
- None of these options

In connection to question 31, Pearlsfield Planning Ltd would select the “**It would be undesirable and the end date should be 2040**” option.