



PLYMOUTH & SOUTH WEST DEVON JOINT LOCAL PLAN



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6 September 2016

Village Sustainability Assessment



The delivery of new homes through the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) is underpinned by a simple strategy; to put more homes in our most sustainable settlements. ❖❖

This will see the majority of new homes in the Joint Local Plan area going to Plymouth, but we need to ensure that all of the settlements in the rural areas ❖ the market towns and rural villages ❖ benefit from enough new homes to ensure that our communities can continue to function effectively. ❖❖

This means providing enough new homes to support the families and young people who live in our rural areas, providing a mix of homes that can be accessed by a wider range of people, and supporting the valuable services and amenities that provide such a crucial role in supporting our rural communities. ❖

We also need to balance the need for new homes with the requirement to protect our sensitive landscapes and the rich character of our rural settlements.

Sustainable Settlements



The JLP needs to show how and where new homes will be built, over a 20 year period. To do so, the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) that cover the JLP area will be allocating sites for new homes in our bigger, and most sustainable, settlements. The role for delivering new homes in our rural villages is being devolved to neighbourhood plan groups.

The following piece of work is intended to introduce an assessment framework for our rural settlements that can be used as a robust and consistent piece of evidence to support the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. The key function it will play is to help neighbourhood plan groups identify an appropriate number of new homes to be provided over the next 20 years.



By linking the number of new homes to the availability of services and facilities of the settlement is consistent with the approach being taken across the rest of the JLP area.

Some neighbourhood plan groups have already commissioned and received a piece of evidence called a Housing Needs Survey, which provides an understanding of the level of need for affordable housing. Whilst valuable, an HNS only provides one part of the wider housing need of an area, and

this settlement assessment will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the housing needs that a neighbourhood plan needs to address.

Before a comprehensive assessment can take place, we would like to share the framework that we intend to use, and ask if you think it should be altered or amended to provide the most effective outcome.

- **Firstly, have we identified the right services and facilities that contribute to making a settlement sustainable?**

If not, what services and/or facilities have we missed?

- **And secondly, have we attributed the right weighting to each of the criteria?** ❖

At the moment for example, the provision of a primary school is considered more important than the availability of allotments, do you agree? ❖❖

But is it more important to have a village hall than to have a chemist? ❖

How important is it to have a bus service that can get people to work before 9am, and get them home again after 5pm? ❖❖

This is your opportunity to tell us what you think makes a sustainable village.

The Weighting



Below are all of the services and facilities that have been identified that we feel contribute to making a sustainable village. ❖ We are not suggesting that a village needs to have all of these to be considered sustainable, but that each of these services and facilities makes a valuable contribution to supporting our rural communities. ❖ The nature of how rural settlements work is that rarely can a village be considered sustainable or not, it is not an either or consideration. ❖ Rather we need to consider the degree to which a village can be considered sustainable, and therefore how appropriate is it as a location for new homes.

The more of the services and facilities that a village has, the more sustainable it can be considered. ❖ And as it makes sense to provide a higher proportion of new homes in our most sustainable locations, this settlement assessment will provide a consistent level of guidance for neighbourhood plan groups to work with.

In no particular order, the services and amenities that have been identified as making a contribution to community sustainability are: ❖

Health centre	Fire Station	Police Station	Ambulance Station	Dentist
Primary school	Village Hall / Community Centre	Recreation Area / Play space	Village shop	Post Office
Commercial bus service	Community transport / Ring and Ride	Access to employment centres by bus (support 9-5)	Train station	Local employment area / large local employer
Internet service	Mobile phone network coverage	Petrol station	Chemist	Library
Hotel / holiday accommodation	Pub / café	Community greenspace / allotment / orchard	Place of worship	Walking and cycling networks
Cash point				

The First Question is:

Have we missed anything that you feel makes an important contribution to a rural village?◆

If so, what have we missed, and what contribution does it make to rural communities?

Of course each of these service / facilities makes a different contribution to a community, and as such a system of ◆weighting◆ will need to be used, helping to identify the services and facilities that make the greater contribution.

The following tables attribute a weighting to the services and facilities that are considered important to the communities that they serve ◆ the most important are given the greatest weighting, down to the services and facilities that make a moderate contribution to the functioning of a settlement.

Most important services and facilities for supporting rural communities (Highest weighting)					
Fire Station	Ambulance Station	Police Station	Primary School	Health centre	Dentist

Important services and facilities for supporting rural communities (Middle weighting)					
Commercial bus service	Ring and Ride / Community Transport	Public transport that can provide 9-5 access to employment	Train station	Chemist	Post Office
Shop	Pub / Café	Village / Community Hall	Recreation / Play space / sports facility	Local employment area / large local employer	Internet Service
Mobile Phone Coverage	Petrol Station				

Preferable services and facilities for supporting rural communities (Lowest Weighting)					
Cash Point	Walking and cycling network access	Place of worship	Hotel / Holiday accommodation	Library	Community greenspace / orchard / allotment

The Second Question is:

Do you agree with the weight that has been accorded to each of these services and facilities? 

If not, what would you change and why?

The Next Steps



Once we have received feedback on the assessment framework, we will review and potentially revise the scoring system before completing the assessment of villages.  The scores will then be shared with Members, Parish Councils and neighbourhood plan groups, along with the emerging policies that are being shaped to apply to the rural areas.

The village assessment score will equate a recommended number of new homes (a suggested range). It will be up to neighbourhood plan groups to use this as a starting point, and apply a certain amount of local interpretation to the housing figure. Some communities will experience more constraints than others being with the AONB, or rurally isolated from bigger settlements for example, and in these instances it may be appropriate to work towards a lower housing figure. Other communities will have aspirations to achieve significant community benefits, such as employment areas, enhanced village halls, new play areas etc, and these areas may choose to aim for a slightly higher housing figure to gain a bigger proportion of developer contributions. The policies that are informed by the settlement assessment will vary from place to place, reflecting the different character, opportunities and constraints that are unique to each neighbourhood plan area.



This is an informal consultation. It does not require a formal response following a parish council meeting. Clerks are asked to circulate the short paper to parish councillors, who can then respond individually using the contact details below. Similarly, neighbourhood plan coordinators are asked to circulate to those people involved in the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, you do not need to convene a meeting specifically to discuss this assessment framework.



It is important that feedback is received by no later than Friday 30th September.

Responses should be emailed to:

Strategic.Planning@swdevon.gov.uk

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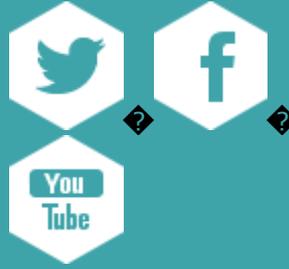


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