

2.19 Housing

Affordable housing for local people

2.19.1

The Core Strategy puts forward the overarching aim for housing in Dartmoor National Park. It recognises that there must be active encouragement and promotion of affordable housing delivery in the National Park's towns and villages, but that careful consideration of where that housing is located will be needed in order to protect the National Park's special qualities.

2.19.2

The strategic aim emphasises the priority for affordable housing delivery, as being the best approach to maintaining balanced communities on Dartmoor. Over the years, open market housing development in Dartmoor National Park has substantially exceeded the provision of affordable housing. In the period 2001/02 to 2006/07, 581 dwellings were built, but only 107 (18%) were affordable dwellings for local needs. However, the Local Plan (adopted in 2004) put in place policies which sought to restrict opportunities for the development of open market housing and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2008) increased those restrictions even further. Over the period 2007/08 to 2010/11, 286 dwellings were built (23% affordable) but the proportion of affordable housing units permitted during this period rose to 52%. In years 2009/10 and 2010/11, the proportion of houses built that were affordable had risen to 44% of all completions.

2.19.3

Recent parish housing surveys have shown that there is a continuing need for affordable housing in National Park settlements and while there has been a small reduction in house prices in recent years, differentials between local incomes and house prices remain very large and mortgage finance is now more difficult to obtain without a substantial deposit. The aim must therefore be to continue to encourage high levels of affordable housing delivery for the foreseeable future.

The definition of 'affordable housing'

2.19.4

The Government has provided a definition of affordable housing (see box below). The Authority uses this definition for the purposes of implementing planning policies in respect of affordable housing.

Affordable housing is defined as:

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Affordable housing should:

include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is:

owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the *Housing and Regeneration Act 2008*), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is:

let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is: homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as "low cost market" housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Source: National Planning Policy Framework 2012