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District Council



# South Hams District Council

Improving the well-being of the people of the South Hams

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# The Planning White Paper



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## The Perspective from a rural Local Authority:

### Issues and challenges

**Cllr Judy Pearce**  
**Leader, South Hams District Council**





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## Issues:

- Rural only mentioned once
- Centralisation and standardisation
- White Paper or Green Paper – feels more like a discussion document
- Does nothing to tackle delivery issues
- What protection, if any, will rural areas not in the protected categories have?
- Weak on climate change and biodiversity
- Housing number: algorithm or formula?





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## Housing Numbers:

- **Will be centrally decided and binding**
- **Calculation based on affordability only – sustainability, local evidence of need?**
- **Are the figures are ‘policy on’ or ‘policy off’ ?**
- **National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, green belt, local wildlife sites, areas of significant flood risk, important areas of greenspace and conservation protected areas**
- **If you are not in a protected area, rural will only be ‘recognised’ in the planning balance**





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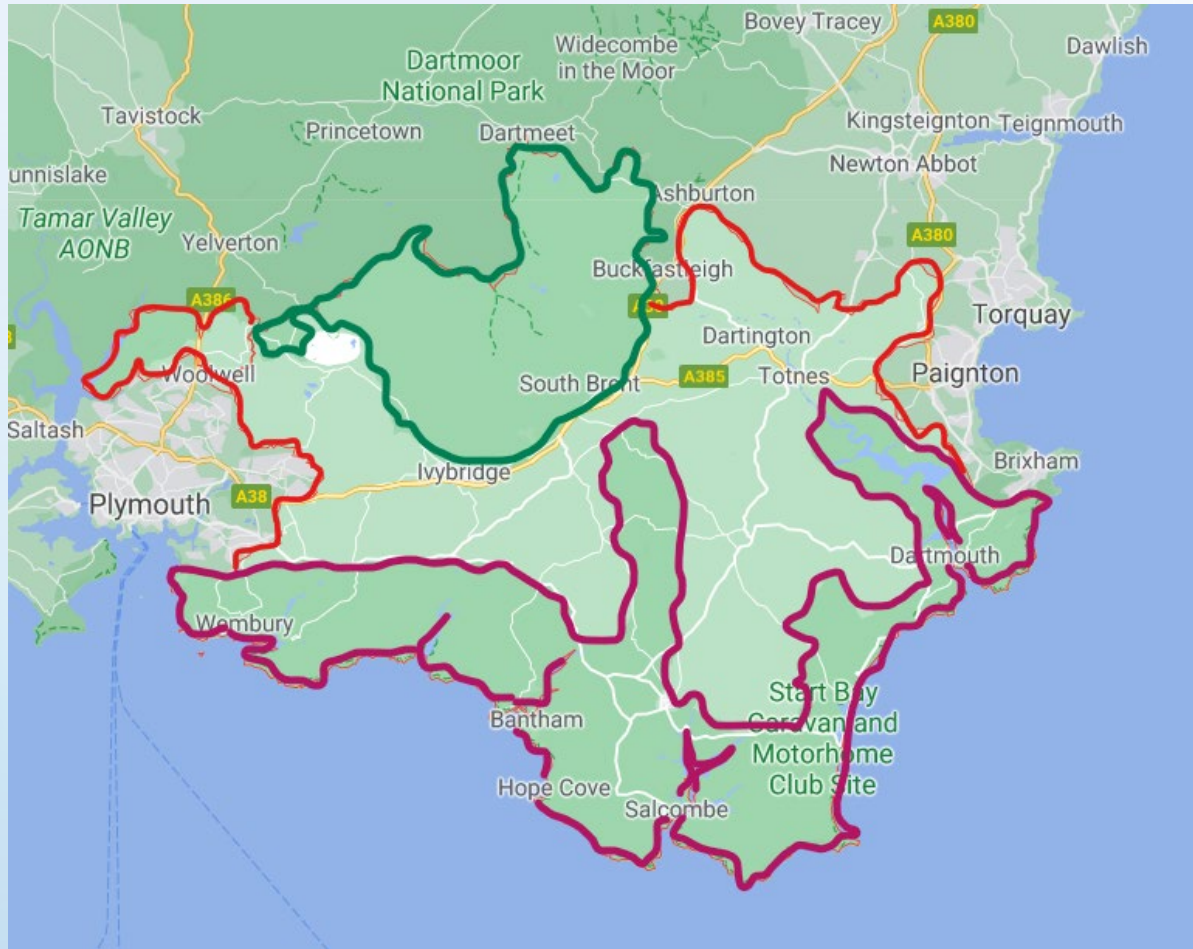
- **Plymouth and SW Devon Local Plan 2014-2034, adopted March 2019**
- **3 LPAs: Plymouth City, South Hams and West Devon BC**
- **South Hams annual delivery total 427 p.a – met every year**
- **Current standard number 356**
- **New ‘algorithm’ figure 769**
- **116% increase – highest in Devon**
- **Very high average house prices in District due to second homes**



## South Hams District showing National Park (green) and South Devon AONB (purple)



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- **342 square miles (885sq km) in total**
- **130 square miles (336 sq km) of AONB**
- **60 square miles (158sq km) of National Park**
- **Population density 250 people / square mile (97/sq km)**





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## Challenges:

- **Sherford new town and a 2000 home urban extension as part of Plymouth's housing need.**
- **Only 4 towns over 3000 population.**
- **Difficult terrain, poor road infrastructure and public transport**
- **Adjustment for 'protected' areas?**
- **New infrastructure levy and delivery of affordable housing**







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## Capacity:

- **Resources and skills**
- **No duty to cooperate - should we all be doing joint plans?**
- **30 month plan production period unrealistic**
  - **Upstream loading: huge amount of site preparatory work**
  - **Master planning and design codes**
  - **Public engagement**
  - **PINS and sustainability test?**







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## Democratic participation:

- **Downstream: should public and member participation be excluded?**
- **Long time span – many there later may not have been in at the beginning**
- **Digitalisation good in principle but**
  - **Poor connectivity in remote rural areas**
  - **Difficulty of reading plan detail on a phone**
- **Neighbourhood plans**





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## **Conclusion – more questions than answers:**

- **Does MHCLG understand ‘rural’?**
- **Thin on detail – how would the infrastructure levy work in rural areas?**
- **Rural areas and market towns could be hard hit by PD regime and new use classes**
- **How do these fit in with beautiful places and the sustainability test?**
- **Imperfect solution to only half the problem**
- **Fix the delivery problem first**
- **Is this the right time for a major upheaval?**





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# Thank you

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**Plymouth and South Devon Joint Local Plan:**

[https://www.southhams.gov.uk/media/4928/Plymouth-and-SW-Devon-Joint-Local-Plan/pdf/Plymouth\\_SW\\_Devon\\_JLP.pdf?m=636892878664170000](https://www.southhams.gov.uk/media/4928/Plymouth-and-SW-Devon-Joint-Local-Plan/pdf/Plymouth_SW_Devon_JLP.pdf?m=636892878664170000)



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Cllr Judy Pearce SHDC Leader