

## H11: Housing for Essential Rural Workers

### Overview of Comments:

**Support - 9**

**Neither support of object - 3**

**Object - 2**

The changes to the supporting text and the Local Plan policies have not only been informed by the responses to the Regulation 18 consultation but they have also taken on board any additional feedback that has come out of discussions/meetings with statutory consultees and members in order to improve the clarity and understanding of the contents of the Local Plan.

<b>Comments in support of H11 - Housing for Essential Rural Workers</b>		
<b>Respondent number</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Officer comment</b>
ANON-KSAR-N8YF-P	Should consideration be given to rural housing for other workers, e.g. local teachers, health workers, home carers etc to provide for the community?	Comments noted. Policy H11 requires a ' <i>functional need</i> ' for accommodation on a particular holding, as opposed to a more general need to serve a local community. Local needs for affordable / key worker housing could potentially be met under the provisions of policy H7 (affordable housing exception sites). <b>Recommended response:</b> No change

<b>Comments which neither support nor object to H11 - Housing for Essential Rural Workers</b>		
<b>Respondent number</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Officer comment</b>

<p>ANON-KSAR-NKFQ-1 Upham Parish Council</p>	<p>Concerned that this policy can be used to establish independent dwellings in the countryside via a temporary use as an agricultural dwelling. The transition from essential worker housing to unrestricted housing needs to be more rigorously monitored, which may be eased by imposing a size limit on accommodation, based on affordable housing standards, without the option of extension by 25% or under PD rights.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Policy H11 prevents permanent dwellings being established until the holding has been shown to be viable for at least 3 years. The policy is clear that occupancy conditions will be applied and presumes against their removal. It also contains size limits which could be accompanied by removal of permitted development rights, if justified. <b>Recommended response:</b> No change</p>
<p>ANON-KSAR-NKF6-6</p>	<p>Drainage and surface water policies need to be key for any development in the countryside. Avoid material harm to hedgerows and field margins and enhance existing hedgerows.</p> <p>Whilst protection of hedgerows is elsewhere in the plan it needs to be strengthened and applied to retrospective cases.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The Plan's policies on drainage and biodiversity would prevent harm to these aspects and the Plan should be read as a whole. Comments on the policy protecting hedgerows (policy NE15) are considered in the section on that policy. <b>Recommended response:</b> No change</p>
<p>BHLF-KSAR-N8TG-J</p>	<p>Agricultural, rural and forestry workers require accommodation and, whilst the Plan attempts to deal with this, it makes no reference to what happens when circumstances change and the accommodation is no longer required. The Plan must be specific on future habitation of these properties.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Planning consent is needed to remove occupancy conditions and the policy is clear that these should be retained unless the long-term need for the dwelling has ceased and there is no evidence of a continuing need in the surrounding area. <b>Recommended response:</b> No change</p>

**Comments which object to H11 - Housing for Essential Rural Workers**

Respondent number	Comment	Officer comment
<p>ANON-KSAR-NKBJ-P Soberton Parish Council</p>	<p>Three years is acceptable for temporary use but if a permanent dwelling is subsequently constructed then this should have a continued restriction on its use, negating the potential for change to a private dwelling or tourist use.</p> <p>Temporary dwellings should be assessed with regard to drainage and surface water policies and not harm hedgerows and field margins. Where appropriate hedgerows should be enhanced.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Policy H11 prevents permanent dwellings being established until the holding has been shown to be viable for at least 3 year and is clear that occupancy conditions will be applied. The policy requires the design of the dwelling to reflect local distinctiveness and rural character, and proposals should also accord with other policies on drainage, biodiversity, etc. Cross referencing is avoided as the Plan should be read as a whole, but similar issues have been raised by the Sustainability Appraisal. The design guidance in policy H11 is quite brief and it is proposed that the relevant policy text should be expanded. <b>Recommended response:</b> Amend policy H11, 2nd paragraph as follows: <b><u>...The design of the dwelling should reflect local distinctiveness and the rural character of its surroundings, while avoiding or mitigating adverse effects on the natural environment and biodiversity.</u></b></p>
<p>ANON-KSAR-N8N9-X</p>	<p>Agree to the provision of homes for rural workers but this needs to be extended to suitable sites in the countryside, not necessarily on the farm / agricultural land of the worker.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The purpose of policy H11 is to meet a <i>'functional need'</i> for accommodation on a particular holding.</p>

	<p>There may be no suitable area with an agricultural business to provide agricultural dwelling and it should be possible to provide e.g. an infill dwelling which is designated for agricultural workers.</p>	<p>A dwelling that is sited away from the holding would be unlikely to satisfy this requirement and could not therefore be justified.  <b>Recommended response:</b> No change</p>
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	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Officer response</b>
<p>Comments from SA</p>	<p>The following recommendations for the policy text are included to help mitigate any negative effects and strengthen any positive effects identified:</p> <p>Policy H11 could be strengthened by requiring dwellings for essential rural workers to be designed and located to avoid and mitigate adverse effects relating to the natural environment and biodiversity. This will help to conserve and enhance the value rural locations have in relation to landscape and biodiversity. Through the design process, development should respond positively to any opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure and provide habitat linkages in the locality. Alternatively, the policy could be cross referenced to the relevant landscape and biodiversity policies.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The policy requires the design of the dwelling to reflect local distinctiveness and rural character, and proposals should also accord with other policies on landscape, biodiversity, etc. Cross referencing is avoided as the Plan should be read as a whole, but similar issues have been raised by other respondents. The design guidance in policy H11 is quite brief and it is proposed that the relevant policy text should be expanded.  <b>Recommended response:</b> Amend policy H11, 2nd paragraph as follows:  <b>...The design of the dwelling should reflect local distinctiveness and the rural character of its surroundings, <u>while avoiding or mitigating adverse effects on the natural environment and biodiversity.</u> ...</b></p>
<p>Comments from HRA</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>NA</p>

**Policy H11 Housing for Essential Rural Workers**

## Amendments to policy H11

New permanent dwellings will generally only be permitted in the countryside to support existing agricultural/forestry activities on well-established agricultural or forestry enterprises. Proposals should demonstrate that:

- i. There is a clearly established existing functional need;
- ii. The need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the agriculture/ forestry enterprise, and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
- iii. The unit and the agricultural/ forestry activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so;
- iv. The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned;
- v. The dwelling is sited so as to meet the identified functional need and is well-related to existing farm buildings or other dwellings;
- vi. The dwelling is of a size appropriate to the productivity of the holding (normally 120 sq.m. – 150 sq.m. including office space).

The design of the dwelling should reflect local distinctiveness and the rural character of its surroundings, **while avoiding or mitigating adverse effects on the natural environment and biodiversity.**

All dwellings permitted under this policy will be subject to occupancy conditions restricting the occupancy of the dwelling to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture or forestry and any resident dependants.

Before permitting new permanent agricultural dwellings, a temporary building should first be established for at least three years to fulfil criterion (iii).

Before permitting a temporary dwelling the local planning authority will need to be satisfied that there is

- i. Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned;
- ii. Clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
- iii. A functional need for the accommodation, which cannot be satisfied by existing nearby accommodation.

Temporary agricultural dwellings will be subject to occupancy conditions and will only generally be permitted for a period of up to three years, after which time the needs of the holding will be reviewed.

Temporary permissions will not normally be renewed and it is expected that a permanent dwelling will be constructed in its place, or in the immediate location, should the need for long-term accommodation be demonstrated and the proposal fulfils criteria (i) – (vi) above for a permanent dwelling.

Occupancy conditions on essential rural workers dwellings will only be removed where the local planning authority is satisfied that the long-term need for the dwelling has ceased and there is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for workers solely or mainly employed in agriculture or forestry on the holding or in the surrounding area.

New housing in the countryside other than for agricultural or forestry workers (or replacement dwellings) will generally not be permitted. Where other rural workers claim to have essential accommodation needs. (e.g. in equestrian enterprises) these should normally be met within the existing housing stock. When applications for such dwellings are made they will be subject to the tests and requirements of this policy, where references to agriculture and forestry should be taken to apply to the particular enterprise concerned as appropriate.