



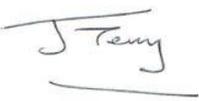
For and on behalf of
GLEESON STRATEGIC LAND

STATEMENT TO THE MDDC LOCAL PLAN REVIEW EXAMINATION

Hearing 1: Vision Spatial and Development Strategy and Strategic Policies S1 - S9

**Prepared by
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement is prepared by DLP Planning Ltd on behalf of our client Gleeson Strategic Land and is submitted as supplementary evidence as part of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review Examination.

1.2 The issues covered by this Statement relate to Hearing 1 Vision Spatial and Development Strategy and Strategic Policies S1 - S9. Specifically, it makes supplementary comments in relation to the following Questions:

Q1: Is the Vision and Spatial Strategy for the area a reasonable one, and does Draft Policy S1 work?

Q2: Is the OAN of 7860 (or 393 dwellings pa) (and thereby Draft Policies S2, S3 and S4) correct?

Q3: Is the spatial distribution of housing soundly based in the light of possible alternatives?

Q4 Will the spatial distribution of housing be effective, given questions about viability?

Q7 Why is there no provision for Gypsies and Travellers?

2.0 Q1: IS THE VISION AND SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE AREA A REASONABLE ONE, AND DOES DRAFT POLICY S1 WORK?

2.1 Paragraph 1.15 of the Local Plan Review sets out the Vision for the District as: 'The vision and spatial strategy describes how the sustainable development of Mid Devon will bring positive benefits to local communities through promoting community well-being, supporting economic success, conserving and enhancing the area and respecting environmental limits'. This is considered to be a reasonable vision for the District which is taken forward in Policy S1: Sustainable Development Priorities.

2.2 Policy S1: 'Sustainable Development Priorities' sets out what Mid Devon consider to be necessary to deliver the Vision and address the key issues identified with all development being expected to support the creation of sustainable communities through specific criteria a) – m). There is no objection per se to the criteria listed but as currently drafted, the policy is not considered fit for purpose by virtue of the inclusion of the following text: '*All development will be expected to support the creation of sustainable communities by: [all of the criteria listed]...*' Clearly not all development will be able to support each and every one of the criteria set out and the policy is therefore ambiguous in what its requirements for individual development proposals would be. Accordingly, to bring clarity and certainty to the policy and therefore to provide clarity and make the Plan effective, the following revision to both the policy and supporting text is proposed:

Policy S1

Sustainable Development Priorities

New paragraph 2.16: The following policy sets out the criteria against which the Council will consider the sustainability of a proposal and which will assist the Council in its consideration of the overall 'Planning Balance' of development proposals, application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and as appropriate, application of the 'tilted balance'. For clarity, it is recognised that proposals may be able to positively address some of the criteria, to a greater or lesser degree, but not others. The policy does not require any proposal to achieve a benefit against every criterion, but it seeks to provide a basis on which to recognise the various sustainability costs and benefits of a proposal.

The following strategic priorities outline what will need to be achieved to deliver the Vision

~~and address the key issues that have been identified in Mid Devon. All development will be expected to support the creation of sustainable communities by.~~

a) – m)

Development proposals will be considered against these key issues to determine how they support the creation of sustainable communities in the planning balance.

3.0 Q2: IS THE OAN OF 7860 (OR 393 DWELLINGS PA) (AND THEREBY DRAFT POLICIES S2, S3 AND S4) CORRECT?

- 3.1 Policy S2 sets out the amount and distribution of development. In terms of quantum, we would concur with the HBF representation in terms of quantum of development. As far as distribution goes, the policy confirms that development will be concentrated at the main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, to a scale and mix appropriate to their individual infrastructures, economies, characters and constraints with other settlements having more limited development to meet local needs and promote vibrant rural communities. We are supportive of this broad distribution but the Policy should refer to the provision of ‘a *minimum*’ quantum of development rather than an ‘*approximate*’ quantum of development. We also raise specific points in relation to Policy S3 and against Q3: Is the spatial distribution of housing soundly based in the light of possible alternatives? and Q4: Will the spatial distribution of housing be effective, given questions about viability? below.
- 3.2 Notwithstanding the above, and without prejudice, the Table which forms part of Policy S2 sets out the development targets for residential and commercial development in each of the main towns and rural areas. This is couched in terms of an ‘approximate’ quantum of development. This is considered to be contrary to the national policy for growth set out in the NPPF and should therefore be redrafted to refer to ‘a minimum’ quantum of development.
- 3.3 This table also needs to be updated to take into account planning consents granted or with resolution to grant, since the Proposed Modifications were made in November 2016. This includes our client’s site at Pedlerspool, CRE5 which is allocated for 200 dwellings but now has the benefit of a resolution to grant up to 257 dwellings. This should be reflected in the target table.
- 3.4 The table also states that the targets are approximates yet the figures are very precise and consequently leaves no margin for flexibility to make the most efficient use of land within allocated sites as required in Section 11 of the NPPF. Rather than stating ‘7,860 Total Residential’, Policy S3 should therefore be rounded up (taking into account the enhanced quantum of development on sites that have either been consented or have a resolution to grant). Changes to both the Policy and the supporting table should be made as set out below:

Policy S2

Amount and distribution of development

The diverse development needs of the community will be met through the provision of **approximately at least 8,100** ~~7,8607,200~~ dwellings and 147,000 ~~154,000~~ square metres of commercial floorspace between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2033.

Development will be concentrated at Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, to a scale and mix appropriate to their individual infrastructures, economies, characters and constraints. Other settlements will have more limited development which meets local needs and promotes vibrant rural communities. In addition, development as proposed at Junction 27 of the M5 meets a tourism / leisure need in a location which is suitable for its regional role with a controlled retail element supporting the tourism and leisure aspects of the proposal.

Minimum development targets are **approximately** as follows:

Location	Total Residential (commitments and allocations; dwellings)	Total Residential – rounded up to give approximate commitments and allocations:
Tiverton	2,3582,160	2,400
Cullompton	3,9303,600	4,000
Crediton	786720	900 (including the resolution to grant 257 units at CRE5)
Rural areas	786720	800
Total	7,8607,200	8,100

[Key: Red = DLP/Gleeson suggested revisions]

3.5 Policy S3: Meeting Housing Needs follows on from Policy S2 which sets out the quantum of residential development required to meet the District's but specifically deals with the District's diverse housing needs during the Plan period.

3.6 Policy S3 also includes specific criteria e), the supply of gypsy and traveller pitches. The policy sets out the mechanisms to be utilised for the supply of gypsy and traveller pitches: Provision will be through allocation on deliverable sites; the identification of a further supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth equivalent to a further ten years of predicted growth; and provision of a public site subject to funding. This criterion is highly aspirational and is unlikely to be delivered for the following reasons:

- The difficulty of pitch provision within the allocated sites – our statements to Hearing 3

Site Allocations: Crediton and Rural Areas and Hearing 4 Development Management Policies, Draft Policy DM7 in relation to Traveller Sites refer in more detail;

- Neither a further supply of developable sites nor any broad locations for growth have been identified;
- Our understanding is that there is a funding gap for the provision of a public site.

3.7 It should be noted that at the time of writing there is no published Five-year Gypsy and Traveller Site Land Supply and it has therefore not been possible to comment on this aspect.

3.8 It is our view therefore that to make the Plan effective and therefore sound, criterion e) should be revised to provide greater flexibility for the provision of gypsy and traveller pitches within allocated sites to allow for provision elsewhere. Additionally, further developable sites and / or broad locations for growth and the public site should be identified within the Plan which would give certainty to the supply of sites. It is proposed that Policy S3 e) be revised as follows:

Policy 3: Meeting Housing Needs

e) A five-year supply of gypsy and traveller pitches will be allocated on deliverable sites within Mid Devon to ensure that the predicted need for traveller sites will be met. In order to ensure delivery, taking into account difficulties with on-site provision and viability, additional flexibility will be built into allocation requirements to allow for off-site provision.

A further supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth ~~will be~~ has been identified equivalent to a further ten years of predicted growth. These are identified on Plan XXX. ~~The Housing Authority will seek to provide~~ A public site for gypsy and traveller pitches within Mid Devon, ~~subject to the availability of funding~~ is identified at XXX.

[Key: Red = DLP/Gleeson suggested revisions]

4.0 Q3: IS THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING SOUNDLY BASED IN THE LIGHT OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES?

Q4: WILL THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING BE EFFECTIVE, GIVEN QUESTIONS ABOUT VIABILITY?

- 4.1 Policy S2 sets out the distribution of development and confirms that development will be concentrated at the main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, to a scale and mix appropriate to their individual infrastructures, economies, characters and constraints with other settlements having more limited development to meet local needs and promote vibrant rural communities.
- 4.2 As set out above, we are supportive of this broad distribution of development as it focusses on the most sustainable settlements, the main towns. However, the distribution of development is broken down to the constituent areas with Crediton being allotted to only 10% of the requirement (786 units) (paragraph 2.3). This is not proportionate to its size, role and standing within the settlement hierarchy of Mid Devon. The reason for this is referenced in paragraph 1.16 where *'Environmental constraints at Tiverton and Crediton mean that a new approach to the strategic distribution of development is required in this Local Plan Review.'* This approach is not considered to be soundly based in the light of possible alternatives including making the most efficient use of available land as required by NPPF Section 11 'Making effective use of land', and a more even spread of development. Whereas available and suitable land for development in Tiverton has become increasingly scarce as the town has grown (paragraph 2.21), it is acknowledged that Crediton although the smallest of Mid Devon's market towns, serves a wide area in terms of employment, education and shopping (paragraph 2.24) and does have a number of large available sites. Reference is made to traffic and topographical constraints which have been factored in to limit the town's growth albeit the Relief Road is now in place and topography can be dealt with through the detailed design process. The 10% limitation on distribution is therefore considered to be unduly restrictive. In site specific terms, the resolution to grant planning permission for an enhanced yield on the CRE5 allocation at Pedlerspool, Crediton (which has been achievable through careful and sensitive master planning to overcome perceived constraints of 'traffic and topography') demonstrates that the allocation numbers for the site are too low.
- 4.3 The spatial distribution of housing cannot therefore be soundly based in the light of possible

alternatives and a re-distribution should be considered as a result. In fact, to do otherwise would be ineffective in not making efficient and best use of available land which in turn, is likely to lead to less sustainable development overall.

- 4.4 The question of viability also needs careful consideration with allocation policies being sufficiently flexible and responsive to detailed site and market conditions and which would allow sites to come forward quickly and easily. This is particularly important for allocations in Crediton which are intended to help bolster the District's housing supply in the first five years of the plan allowing a sufficient lead-in period for the larger town sites which have more complex infrastructure and master planning requirements (paragraph 2.4). This is picked up in greater detail in our statement to Hearing 3: Site Allocations: Crediton and Rural Areas.

5.0 Q7 WHY IS THERE NO PROVISION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS?

- 5.1 Policy S3: Meeting Housing Needs, includes at criterion e) a general statement as to how the needs of the gypsy and traveller community will be met through the Plan period: allocations on deliverable sites; a further supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth for a further 10 years of predicted growth and provision of a public site.
- 3.9 Notwithstanding that, the Plan does not identify a supply of developable sites or broad locations, or the location of a public site which renders the policy at best, aspirational. It should be noted that at the time of writing there is no published Five-year Gypsy and Traveller Site Land Supply and it has therefore not been possible to comment on the adequacy of supply (both in terms of quantum and delivery).
- 5.2 Policy DM7 manages the development of specific sites but is very restrictive being permissible only where *'the need cannot be met on another suitable site in Mid Devon which has consent or is allocated for gypsy and traveller pitches'*. This combined with identified difficulties in bringing pitches forward as part of allocated sites (referenced within our statements to Hearing 3: Site Allocations: Crediton and Rural Areas and Hearing 4 Development Management Policies (draft policy DM7), will severely restrict the Plan's ability to deliver the aspirations set out in Policy 3 e).
- 5.3 In combination, the two policies present a very restrictive regime which is unlikely to fulfil the Plan's stated objective of maintaining a five-year supply of deliverable sites with a further ten-year supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth on top of this (paragraph 2.31).
- 5.4 Without the specific identification of a sufficient number of developable sites or a broad location for growth, the Plan must be considered to ineffective.

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