



**MID DEVON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2013 – 2033**

Proposed Submission (incorporating proposed modifications) Examination

Inspector: Paul Griffiths BSc (Hons) BArch IHBC

**Main Hearings - Hearing 4: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Matters and Issues**

**Development Management Policies**

**Statement of Mid Devon District Council**

**ISSUE 13      Is Draft Policy DM15 (Development outside Town Centres) sufficient?**

**13) Is Draft Policy DM15 (Development outside Town Centres) sufficient?**

- 13.1 Yes, Draft Policy DM15 (Development outside Town Centres) is sufficient.
- 13.2 The Draft Policy establishes locally, the requirement to apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre. In accordance with paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the policy requires applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. Furthermore, the policy stipulates that edge of centre and other out of centre proposals must be well related to the town centre.
- 13.3 The policy requires an impact assessment to be submitted for any proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, where the total gross floorspace would exceed 500 square metres. Whilst the NPPF (paragraph 26) sets the trigger for an impact assessment at the default threshold of 2,500 sq. m, it does allow local authorities to establish their own locally set threshold. In setting a locally appropriate threshold, the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 016 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres') suggests consideration is given to: scale of proposals given to town centres; the existing vitality and viability of town centres; cumulative effects of recent developments; whether local town centres are vulnerable; likely effects of development on any town centre strategies and impact on any other planned assessment. Having regard to these

considerations, the Mid Devon Retail Study **[ECO03]** recommends a threshold of 500 square metres gross floorspace as a suitable level for the Mid Devon retail hierarchy. The Inspector's attention is respectfully drawn to the Inspector's Report into the examination of the Mid Devon Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies, whereby the Inspector concluded that a locally set threshold of 500 sq. m is justified by the findings of the Mid Devon Retail Study<sup>1</sup>.

- 13.4 Fundamentally, the scope of the policy has already been tested within the context of the Council's strategic allocation of land at Junction 27 of the M5, which is likely to be the most significant proposal considered against this policy. Indeed, following preliminary hearings, it was considered that a 'development of the nature proposed could take place without any significant adverse impacts on the economic, social, or environmental dimensions of sustainable development' **[ID08]**. Consequently, the policy is sufficient, accords with the tests of soundness, and provides the basis to ensure that the vitality and viability of town centres will not be harmed by out-of-centre development.

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<sup>1</sup> The Mid Devon Retail Study was finalised in 2012 and therefore forms part of the evidence base for the policies within the Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies as well as the Local Plan Review 2013 – 2033.