



**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 20** Does draft Policy DM22 (Tourism and Leisure Development) accord with the (previous version of the) Framework?

- 20.1 Policy DM22 carries forward policy DM24 of the Development Management Policies DPD (LDO03), that was previously examined under the 2012 NPPF. There is a small change to Policy DM22 from the previous plan to recognise that it may not always be appropriate to convert existing tourism buildings.
- 20.2 The Local Plan Review was supported by the **Mid Devon Tourism Study G L Hearn (November 2014) (Document EC005)**. This identified the need to develop Mid Devon's tourism offer, particularly through the development of a major tourism facility (Strand 5). The evidence for J27 was considered in the Preliminary Hearings in September 2017. The Tourism Study identified other stands to enhancing tourism, including marketing the market towns, developing the accommodation offer and maximising the natural offer. Devon's core asset is its natural environment, which is a key driver of visits. Mid Devon's three market towns, its natural and green infrastructure, castles and stately homes and various family attractions are also identified as assets that benefit from the predominantly rural and character of the area.
- 20.3 As set out in Appendix 1 to the Council's Proof on Commercial Development (Hearing 1, Issue 8), about 5% of employment in Mid Devon is in tourism related businesses. However, Mid Devon has the lowest number of tourism visits and spending in Devon. There is therefore scope to expand the sector.

- 20.4 Many tourism or leisure developments are defined in the NPPF as main town centre uses (Glossary P53). Policy DM22 appropriately directs tourism facilities to, or adjacent to, defined settlements where this is appropriate. An 83 bedroom Premier Inn at Phoenix Lane, Tiverton (approved November 2017 under reference 16/00015/MFUL and currently under construction) is a significant boost to tourism employment and tourism led regeneration.
- 20.5 Nevertheless, the Policy recognises that there will be a need and demand for countryside locations for other forms of tourism or leisure activities. Policy DM22 sets out criteria requiring tourism development to avoid unacceptable traffic impacts, respect the character and appearance of the location, reuse existing buildings where appropriate, and demonstrate that provision is not met within existing settlements.
- 20.6 There were no representations to Policy DM22 in the 2017 Proposed Modifications Consultation. In the 2015 Consultation there were three representations. Willand Parish Council (44) and Friends Life/G L Hearn (3781)'s comments relate to J27 rather than to Policy DM22 directly. Savills on behalf of the Caravan Club (5789) argued that the Local Plan Review should be less restrictive of caravan development. This representation is in the context of the promotion of a specific site (Exbridge Lake Side Caravan Club, near Dulverton TA22 9BE). Policy DM22 sets out a balanced approach to protecting Mid Devon's rural setting whilst allowing appropriate rural tourism development.