



MID DEVON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2013 – 2033

Proposed Submission (incorporating proposed modifications) Examination

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Main Hearings - Hearing 1: Thursday 14th February 2019

Matters and Issues

**Vision, Spatial and Development Strategy, and
Strategic Policies**

Statement of Mid Devon District Council

ISSUE 10 Does Draft Policy S9 offer a sensible, general approach to the environment?

10) Does Draft Policy S9 offer a sensible, general approach to the environment?

- 10.1 Yes, Draft Policy S9 offers a sensible, general approach to the environment. It is positively prepared in that it helps facilitate the delivery of sustainable development, justified as it forms part of the plan's overall strategy to respect environmental limits and effective in that it is deliverable over the plan period and based on joint working. The approach is set out within the policy is consistent with all relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- 10.2 Policy S9 'Environment' aims to sustain the distinctive quality, character and diversity of Mid Devon's environmental assets. It reflects and responds to Mid Devon's historic built environment, natural resources, landscape, local biodiversity and geodiversity. It also seeks to minimise the impact of development on climate change through the provision of measures to reduce flood risk and supporting renewable energy in locations where there is an acceptable local impact. Principally, this policy reiterates locally the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 10.3 The policy is proportionate in its approach to protecting the environment and is supported by a number of development management policies which together provide a sound basis for decision making on planning applications. The Council's proposed development

management policies provide detailed criteria for development in relation to design, flooding, green infrastructure, protected landscapes/habitats and heritage and are therefore considered within more detail within the Council's statements for Hearing 4.

- 10.4 Criterion a) requires high quality design which reinforces the character and distinctiveness of Mid Devon's historic built environment. This supported by Policy DM1 'High Quality Design' which recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and ensures that new development contributes positively to making places better for people.
- 10.5 Criterion b) recognises the rural nature of Mid Devon and the importance of the efficient use of land. Previously developed land is a finite resource in Mid Devon which leads to a significant proportion of development on Greenfield land throughout the District. This criterion therefore reiterates national policy which encourages effective use of brownfield land. The criterion also seeks to preserve the quality and productivity of the best and most versatile agricultural land, recognising that this (particularly grade 1 and 2) is a limited resource across the District **[ENV15]**.
- 10.6 Criterion c) provides a strategic response to flooding issues across the district and reiterates locally, a sequential risk based approach to development. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment **[ENV08]** was commissioned in 2014 which considered the Local Plan Review and potential allocation sites. The conclusions from this assessment have been used in determining the strategic and site-specific options in the Local Plan Review to help steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Policies S9, DM1 and DM26 along with individual allocation specific mitigation measures provide a robust policy basis to implement these considerations for decision making purposes on planning applications.
- 10.7 Criterion d) makes provision for renewable energy in locations where there is an acceptable local impact. This is supported by Policy DM2 'Renewable and low carbon energy' which provides the development management criteria for considering the benefits of renewable and low carbon energy against its impacts.
- 10.8 Criterion e) promotes the preservation and enhancement of the distinctive qualities of Mid Devon's natural landscape. This builds upon the Council's Landscape Character Assessment **[ENV16]** which subdivides Mid Devon into 12 landscape character types and provides characterisation and information guidelines for each. It recognises Mid Devon's diverse landscape, ranging from the intimate valleys and surrounds of the River Exe, to the Blackdown Hills with its unique geology, to the low lying flat prosperous agricultural area known locally as the Mid Devon Farming Belt. Policy DM27 'Protected Landscapes' provides the basis to consider development proposals which affect protected landscapes, namely the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve.
- 10.9 Criterion f) requires the protection and enhancement of designated sites of international, national and local biodiversity and geodiversity importance. Whilst there are no Natura 2000 sites within Mid Devon District, there are 11 within 10km of the District's boundary. The

Culm Grasslands (SAC) is considered to be at greatest risk from development, due to its location on the A361 and proximity to the Mid Devon boundary. The Council's HRA evidence demonstrates that the Local Plan proposals, in combination with other plans and projects at the time of undertaking the HRA, will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Culm Grasslands SAC **[ENV04]**. More generally, this criterion is supported by a number of development management policies including DM26 'Green Infrastructure in Major Development', DM27 'Protected Landscapes' and DM28 'Other Protected Sites'.

- 10.10 Criterion g) requires the preservation and enhancement of Mid Devon's cultural and historic environment. This is supported by Policy DM25 'Development affecting heritage assets' and reflects and responds to Mid Devon's rich historic environment which includes over 2,000 listed buildings, 51 conservation areas, 49 Scheduled Monuments, 3 registered parks and gardens and 16 locally important parks and gardens. The Local Plan Review was informed by the Council's Historic Environment Appraisal **[ENV25]**. This was prepared in response to Historic England's representation to the 2015 proposed submission consultation. Consequently, for each proposed allocation, the Council appraised any likely impact of development and considered if harm would arise and if so, how this could be mitigated.