



**Purbeck Core Strategy Development Plan Document**

**Examination into the soundness of the plan**

**Statement on behalf of Purbeck District Council**

**Hearing date: Thursday 18 May 2012 – 10am**

**Matter 20: Tourist Accommodation and Attractions (Policy TA)**

**Issues**

20.1 Is policy TA overly restrictive?

## Introduction

1. This statement considers all the issues within Matter 20: Tourist Accommodation and Attractions (Policy TA).

## Statements of common ground

2. No statements of common ground have been submitted in relation to this Matter.

## Why the Council considers the Core Strategy sound

3. Each issue raised by the Inspector is considered in turn below:

<h3>20.1 Is policy TA overly restrictive?</h3>
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4. Purbeck attracts around two million visitors annually. Tourist related facilities exist across the district, but with a concentration around coastal areas. Policy TA identifies those areas of the District most suitable for future tourism development and sets out requirements necessary to bring forward new facilities or to upgrade facilities on existing sites.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Core Strategy includes a spatial strategy which identifies the most sustainable locations for development in the district. This has also informed the location of future tourism provision, in order to both improve accessibility and protect the sensitive landscapes of the District. The towns and larger villages of the District have been identified as the most sustainable locations for development<sup>1</sup>.
6. The Purbeck Tourism Strategy<sup>2</sup> suggests that the existing provision of both touring and static caravan sites is adequate to provide a sufficient supply of accommodation to meet existing and predicted future requirements, while highlighting the need to provide for additional tented campsites over the plan period. Therefore, the Core Strategy encourages the upgrading and improvement of existing caravan facilities.
7. The Council considers that great weight should be given to protect the landscapes of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) from intrusive development, as reflected in paragraph 115 of the NPPF. Therefore, any new holiday chalet and tented camping sites, or the extension of existing facilities, should be outside of the AONB. The Council is also concerned that the significant biodiversity characteristics of the District should be appropriately conserved and enhanced. The positive management of recreational activities is important to help safeguard important habitat areas.
8. The Council considers that the development of new holiday chalet and tented camping sites, or the extension of existing facilities, should be located outside of the Green Belt. Such development would compromise the open character of the Green Belt and would not meet the exceptional criteria set out in paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

<sup>1</sup> CD36: Purbeck Settlement Strategy

<sup>2</sup> CD155: Purbeck Tourism Strategy

9. Policy TA supports the development of new sites, or extension to existing holiday chalet and tented camping sites and the upgrading and improvement of existing facilities, provided that any new development is sustainably located and all development outside of settlement boundaries accords with Policy CO: Countryside. This policy will help enable rural diversification across the District and support the tourism economy. The Council does not encourage any new touring or static caravan sites because there is currently a sufficient supply.
10. The Council's approach to safeguarding hotels, or accommodation, with more than six bedrooms is in response to the historic loss of such facilities to other higher value uses (such as housing development), particularly in Swanage. The Council considers it necessary to ensure that any property of this type is actively marketed for a period of nine months, in order that such facilities can be retained where someone may be interested in taking over the business. The Council also considers that the development of new tourist attractions should be in sustainable locations and has identified towns and key service villages as its preference. Where a countryside location is necessary for such tourism or leisure development, this will need to be in accordance with policy CO: Countryside.
11. Later this year, the Council will be reviewing the provision of campsites in Purbeck following complaints from the public about the number of sites occupied during peak periods and their visual impact upon the landscape. This will review existing permitted development rights at camp sites across the district and identify the most appropriate locations for future expansion. The results of the review may require an update to the Tourism Strategy and Policy TA through a subsequent plan to provide the right amount of sites in the right location in order to minimize their impact upon the landscape.

#### **Suggested changes for the Inspector to consider**

12. Update as per change number 99 of the Minor Changes Schedule<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> SD26: Minor Changes Schedule