

**STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON
LDF CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

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Topic Paper No. 7

Recreation and Tourism



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Your comments and views on this options paper are welcomed up to Friday 16th January 2009. Enquiries can be directed to Ruth McArthur/Jo Symons, Policy and Community Manager on 01398 323665.

This report is also accessible from our website located under:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/living-in-ldf-core-strategy.htm

We are happy to provide this information in alternative formats on request where reasonable.

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Issues

1. Providing and enhancing opportunities for quiet enjoyment which do not harm landscape, wildlife and archeological interests and do not affect the enjoyment of Exmoor National Park's special qualities.
2. Safeguarding existing sports and recreation sites and resources and providing for new facilities where required.
3. Enabling equestrian activity and development as a traditional activity on Exmoor including stables/loose boxes, field shelters, ménages and horse riding or equestrian centres so as to avoid adverse impacts on the landscape and the amenity of nearby occupiers.
4. Managing game shooting sustainably so as to avoid adverse impacts on the landscape, wildlife, quiet enjoyment and public safety and enjoyment of access rights.
5. Evidence suggests that occupancy rates for self catering accommodation are relatively low. There is therefore a need to manage the number of new self catering units.
7. The siting of caravans and camping needs to be carefully managed in terms of their impact on the landscape and road access.
8. Improving recreational and tourism facilities and businesses in sustainable locations.
9. To seek and promote opportunities for improved access for the enjoyment of Exmoor's special qualities by the public in a sustainable manner.
10. To ease traffic congestion in the tourism season and provide more sustainable ways of accessing the National Park.
11. Safeguarding Public Rights of Way and providing appropriate pedestrian, cycling and equestrian access.

The Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-2012

Desired Outcome: By 2020 there is a warm welcome and high quality experience for everyone who visits Exmoor seeking inspiration, tranquility and active outdoor recreation, provided by sustainable tourism and recreation economy in harmony with local communities and the environment, and contributing to the achievement of a carbon-neutral National Park'.

Key statistics

- ◆ More than 1.7 million people live within 50km of Exmoor and more than 5 million within 100 km making the National Park an accessible destination for a large number of people. (Exmoor National Park Management Plan).
- ◆ Tourism expenditure equated to £83.12 million in 2007 in Exmoor National Park.
- ◆ Visitor numbers have risen steadily over the period 2004 -2007 but are still subject to annual fluctuations.
- ◆ General perception is that a growth in visitor numbers would be welcomed (response to National Park Management Plan saw 73% of respondents living in the park stating they wouldn't object to a 24% rise). However the desired occupancy levels of most providers is not much higher than current levels.

Appendix

Policy and Strategy

National

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- Noisy and other intrusive activities should be restricted to locations where they will have minimal or no impact on residents and other recreational users. (however NP designation does not preclude sport and recreation per se)
- Tourism developments should be strictly controlled in number, location and extent to ensure conservation of the special qualities and features that led to National Park designation.
- Open space or sports fields should be protected from development unless they are surplus to requirements, or an alternative of equivalent or better quality or quantity in a suitable location is provided.

PPG17 Good Practice Guidance

- Policies should identify existing spaces and facilities, and consider their protection and enhancement and new provision to fill gaps.

PPS7, Sustainable Development in rural areas

- Sustainable tourism and leisure developments should benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and enrich the character of countryside, towns, villages and buildings.
- Convert suitable buildings to hotel and other serviced accommodation, and be positive towards extensions to existing accommodation.
- Support other forms of self-catering accommodation where this would accord with sustainable development objectives.
- Authorities should support the provision of appropriate facilities to enhance visitors' enjoyment, if they conserve and enhance the surrounding countryside.
- Camping and caravan sites should not be prominent in the landscape.
- Authorities should balance the impact of proposed new or expanded caravan parks and chalets, against the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites.
- Authorities should examine the scope for relocation of existing visually or environmentally intrusive sites away from sensitive areas (PPS7).

PPG21 Tourism (& Good Practice Guide)

- Authorities and the tourism industry should work together to provide sufficient visitor accommodation, but particular care must be taken in designated areas.
- The provision of essential facilities for visitors is vital for the development of tourism in rural areas. Tourism can:

- be a key element in rural and farm diversification;
- help to revitalise market towns and villages;
- support important rural services and facilities; and
- underwrite environmental schemes and improvements to the built and natural environment

RSS and LDF policies should therefore engender a positive approach to rural tourism proposals, applying the following principles:

- Wherever possible, tourist and visitor facilities should be housed in existing or replacement buildings, particularly where they are located outside existing settlements.
- In statutorily designated areas they should seek to conserve and enhance the qualities and features that justified the designation.
- Large-scale tourist proposals must be assessed against the whole range of sustainable development objectives. This includes not only their transport implications but also other sustainability considerations such as how they assist rural regeneration and the well being of communities.

Regional

SW Regional Spatial Strategy

Policy TO1 Sustainable Tourism: Local Authorities, regional partners, stakeholders and the tourism industry (particularly Destination Management Organisations) should have regard to the development of tourism by;

- Embedding sustainability practices in all new tourism development;
- Taking into account identified regional and sub-regional cultural needs of our visitors and local communities;
- Improving the quality and diversity of existing facilities and accommodation throughout the region, particularly where this would increase out of season visits especially in winter and spring periods;
- Realizing the potential of the region's environmental, cultural and heritage assets as a basis for the development of sustainable tourism, where consistent with their conservation;
- Ensuring that, as far as possible, new tourism developments are accessible by public transport and supported by green transport plan and visitor management programmes. In rural areas creative and collaborative solutions may need to be found where it is difficult to meet the objectives of access by sustainable modes of transport; and;
- Identifying opportunities for the development of new facilities and accommodation related to outdoor leisure pursuits and recreational cycle and footpath networks within the region.

Local

Local Plan

Local Plan policies generally support tourism and recreational related developments which are based on, enhance, or increase appreciation of the special qualities of the National Park.

Is there further evidence that you wish to draw to our attention?

Do you have any further issues that you wish to raise?