

Introduction

Clinton Devon Estates are the owners of a very large area of land within East Devon. As part of its interests, the Estate undertakes residential and commercial development and manages substantial farming and forestry operations. It is also an important custodian of the area's environment, notably the Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve. The Estate therefore has considerable interest in the future form of development in East Devon.

The Estate has provided representations to the Council as part of previous consultations on the draft local plan and via the related call for sites process. They therefore have considerable interest in the policies and objectives as now set out in the current draft of the plan. On behalf of Clinton Devon Estates, we have therefore reviewed the plan and a number of observations on the policies are set out below.

Strategic Policy SE10: Sustainable tourism

Strategic Policy SE10 sets out the Council's approach towards new tourism schemes. The policy aims to focus development towards the identified settlements. In countryside locations, the policy allows for tourism uses but encourages the reuse of existing buildings and requires that such uses be well located in relation to defined settlements. The policy does not allow new buildings to be provided for use as overnight accommodation in countryside locations but does allow temporary structures such as glamping pods to be used for this purpose.

Response

The Estate OBJECTS to this policy and considers that it is unsound.

The supporting text to the policy notes tourism is vital to East Devon and seeks to encourage green tourism schemes. However, the policy is highly complex and places a wide range of restrictions on the form and location of schemes which can be brought forward. Given the overly restrictive nature of the policy, we consider that it has not been positively prepared and won't be effective in achieving the Council's stated ambition of supporting tourism and of increasing opportunities for green tourism.

In addition, Criterion A of the policy indicates that any redundant buildings which are not used as part of the proposals should be removed. This part of the policy is presumably aimed at helping schemes to deliver wider environmental improvements. However, we suggest that this requirement is too onerous. Other redundant buildings in the vicinity, including ones currently in disrepair, may have potential for reuse at some point in the future and in ways which might not currently be apparent.

CLINTON DEVON ESTATES
RESPONSE TO THE EAST DEVON LOCAL PLAN 2020 – 2042 (REGULATION 19 PUBLICATION
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Requiring their removal as part of a diversification scheme has the potential to deprive the landowner of opportunities to reuse such buildings in the future and which, in so doing, would facilitate their restoration and improvement. This part of the policy should therefore be reworded.