

Independent Examination of Peak District National Park Development Management Policies

Peak District National Park Authority Responses to Matters and Issues

NB, existing modifications are highlighted in red with suggested new changes shown with strikethrough and underline.

Matter 7 – Recreation and Tourism

Issue: Are the policies clear and effective?

Policy DMR1: Touring camping and caravan sites

1 Part B allows for shopping, catering or sport and leisure facilities at camping and caravan sites. Should this require the scale of the development to be appropriate to the site as required by Core Strategy RT3?

DM policy needs to be read alongside the Core Strategy. The overall principles regarding the acceptability of sites in landscape terms are adequately addressed both through the Core Strategy and DMR1 part A. The additional criteria brought out here are to try and understand the operational needs of the site in its landscape context and the relationship to local services provided in nearby settlements. To simply refer to scale again would unnecessarily duplicate.

2 Is the reference in part C to a single shepherd's hut unnecessarily detailed and restrictive? Would the policy be more justified and effective if a generic description were to be used?

Read against the Core Strategy principles the introduction of permanent structures such as is unacceptable. Specifically policy RT3 refers to static caravans, chalets and lodges. This is particularly undesirable in the form of formal holiday park style development in which the expectations of facilities onsite and the regimented format of site layout is incongruous with the aim of promoting enjoyment of the natural beauty of the area.

This is a long standing policy principle which underpins the statutory purposes of the National Park. Nevertheless since the introduction of the Core Strategy the tourism industry has seen a growth in new products allowing an expansion of the holiday season in ways which can still fit comfortably with the characteristics and heritage of the Peak district.

Farm based camping and caravanning along with self-catered holiday cottages have long assisted in diversifying farming incomes. Since adoption of the Core Strategy in 2011 experience has highlighted a limited set of good examples that can most reasonably be justified as exceptions to the policy principle in RT3. In addition to small wooden pods in wooded settings the potential for shepherd's huts has also proved it could add a further dimension to the mix. This is because of the farming traditions linked to lambing. However in order to fulfil the exceptional limits provided through the Core Strategy the aim is to encourage a range of accommodation types that integrate best with the heritage and character of the area. A group or coral style encourages a layout at odds with these farming traditions.

In summary DMR1 has sought to draw out a more positive expansion of RT3 setting out those exceptions that are likely to work best within the landscapes of the National Park.

This does not prevent other forms of accommodation also be considered on an exceptional basis, but DMR1 provides a clear policy starting point to set the right expectations and retain consistency with RT3.

Policy DMR2: Holiday occupancy of camping and caravan sites

3 Is the rationale for parts A and B of the policy fully explained? In part A touring camping or caravan sites by their nature would provide pitches for temporary stays. If the use were restricted to that applied for what is the justification for requiring that they be occupied only as holiday accommodation?

Experience has shown that without clarity over the precise nature of holiday occupancy that sites may, over time, become established as permanent residential accommodation in locations and of a style incongruous with the character and appearance of the area, particular in respect of traditional farm and village settings. The Authority can provide examples of this at Highfield Farm Stoney Middleton¹ and Brosterfield Farm, Foolow.

4 As part A would allow year-round occupation of new sites, what is the reason for the restriction in part B? That part does not distinguish between touring caravans and static caravans. In the case of the latter are these normally expected to be removed from sites during the winter months?

DMR2 essentially strikes a balance between the need for a year round season whilst still allowing the decision maker to assess the impact of a change in

¹ <https://pam.peakdistrict.gov.uk/?r=NP%2FD00%2F0410%2F0381&q=Highfields&s=0>

conditions at each location. The open nature of some of the peak district landscapes (such as the white peak plateau which is populated by many farm campsites) is made particularly stark in the winter months through leaf-fall and without appropriate mitigation this balance can be hard to achieve.

Static caravans are not a common feature of the peak district landscape, hence the strong policy presumption against such forms of accommodation. It has not been viewed necessary to require the removal of any statics that do exist. Instead policies seek a positive approach to the approval of pitches for touring caravans and tents and by using the model of new forms of accommodation to drive enhancement of sites via the removal of statics. Through the development of a site the Authority has sought to enhance the quality of localised landscaping schemes providing a more natural setting to sites and introducing species which enhance local biodiversity.

Policy DMR3: Holiday occupancy of self-catering accommodation

5. Should part B of the policy state at the outset that removal of holiday occupancy conditions in order to provide affordable housing units would be acceptable subject to the required criteria? Should it refer specifically to the requirements in the affordable housing policies DMH1 and DMH2?

The Authority agrees that part B could be amended as suggested as this is the key aim, subject to the controls set out.

6 Is the size restriction in B (iii) unduly restrictive given that existing buildings may not be constructed to the size standards but may nonetheless still be suitable for affordable housing?

Experience has shown that unless properties are capable of remaining more affordable over time i.e. by virtue of their qualities as a modest home, they subsequently experience pressure to be released from their legal tie.

DMR3 Holiday occupancy of self- catering accommodation

Outside settlements listed in policy DS1 of the Core Strategy:

- A. where self-catering accommodation is acceptable, its use will be restricted to holiday accommodation; and
- B. for existing accommodation, the removal of any condition that stipulates either
 - a) months of, or
 - b) occupation for no more than 28 days per annum

will be permitted provided that:

- (i) ~~that~~ there would be no adverse impact on valued characteristics of the area or residential amenity; and
- (ii) the dwelling unit is tied by legal agreement to occupancy in perpetuity by those in housing need and having the required local connection as specified in policies DMH3 and DMH3; and
- (iii) the size of the dwelling unit is within that specified in ~~housing policies~~ policy DMH1 beyond which the dwelling unit cannot reasonably be rented or part owned at a price eligible occupants can afford.

Within a settlement~~s~~ listed in policy DS1 of the Core Strategy:

- C. a holiday occupancy condition will be applied to self-catering accommodation if the property being converted has inadequate indoor or outdoor living space or is so closely related to adjoining properties that the introduction of residential use would cause unacceptable harm to their amenity; and
- D. for existing accommodation, the removal of any holiday occupancy condition will be permitted where the criteria in B) above are met.