

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Holiday Accommodation



July 2011

**Joint Planning Policy Unit, Environmental Service, Regulatory Department –
Gwynedd Council**

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| CONTENT | | <i>Paragraph</i> |
|---|---|---|
| STATEMENT REGARDING CONSULTATION | | 1-2 |
| INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT | | 3- 6 |
| NATIONAL POLICY BACKGROUND | | 7 - 8 |
| SOME EXPLANATORY TERMS | | 9 - 13 |
| PERMANENT SERVICED AND SELF SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES | | 14 - 25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Converting existing buildings - High quality accommodation - Previously developed land - Scale of development - Existing supply of self serviced accommodation - Supporting evidence | | <p>15 - 19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21 - 22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> |
| IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVANS AND HOLIDAY CHALETS SITES | | 26 - 31 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant and permanent improvements - Physical extension to the site - Increase in the number of units | | <p>27 - 29</p> <p>30</p> <p>31</p> |
| TOURING CARAVANS, CAMPING AND TOURING UNITS | | 32 - 39 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality new sites (Policy D19) - Access to the main highway network - Touring purposes only - Cumulative impact (new sites) - Environmental and visual improvements (existing sites) - Cumulative impact (existing sites) | | <p>33</p> <p>34</p> <p>35</p> <p>36 - 37</p> <p>38</p> <p>39</p> |
| DIVERSIFICATION INTO NEW FORMS OF VISITOR ACCOMMODATION | | 40 - 44 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status in planning law/Gwynedd UDP - Yurts and Tepees or similar low impact structures - Wooden tents or similar structures | | <p>41</p> <p>42 - 43</p> <p>44</p> |
| HOLIDAY OCCUPANCY CONDITION | | 45 - 47 |
| APPENDIX 1 | POLICY D14 - SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION | |
| APPENDIX 2 | POLICY D16 - PROVISION OF NEW STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN AND HOLIDAY CHALET SITES POLICY D17 - UPGRADING OF EXISTING STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN AND HOLIDAY CHALET SITES | |
| APPENDIX 3 | POLICY D19 - NEW SITES FOR TOURING CARAVANS, CAMPING AND TOURING UNITS POLICY D20 - TOURING CARAVAN, CAMPING AND TOURING UNIT SITES – EXTENSION ADDITIONAL PITCHES, RELOCATION AND EXCHANGES | |
| | CONTACT DETAILS | |

STATEMENT REGARDING CONSULTATION

- 1 The draft version of this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was subject to public consultation between 7 October 2010 and 19 November 2010, and for further consultation between 16 February and 1 April 2011. A public notice was published in the Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald and the Cambrian News on 3 December 2010 and on 16 February 2011 in order to raise awareness about the public consultation. Copies of the SPG were available to view in the main Council offices, in the public libraries and on the Council's website during the consultation periods. Comments were invited from numerous individuals and organisations, which included the community councils. A summary of the representations that were received and the response to them can be seen in a document entitled "Consultation statement – July 2011".
- 2 The representations and the response to them were scrutinised by the Council Board on 26 July 2011 and the SPG was also adopted in that meeting.

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT

- 3 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is one of a series of guidance notes which support the policies of the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Although decisions on planning applications should be based on the UDP's adopted policies (as indicated in part 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), the content of the SPG is a material planning consideration.
- 4 Gwynedd Council is committed to the principles of sustainable development. The UDP promotes the concept of a sustainable tourism base, which is unique to the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority (LPA) area, and to promote a tourism product of the highest standard, which is able to compete with other parts of Britain and abroad.
- 5 This SPG seeks to raise awareness of all the factors that need to be considered when considering proposals relating to tourist accommodation within the Gwynedd LPA.
- 6 This SPG supplements policies D14 – D21 of the UDP adopted in July 2009 and will provide information about the following issues:
 - Permanent serviced and self serviced holiday accommodation facilities;
 - Improvements to existing static holiday caravans and holiday chalets sites;
 - Touring caravans, camping and touring units;
 - Diversification into new forms of visitor accommodation

The guidance should be considered in conjunction with the UDP and other adopted SPGs.

NATIONAL POLICY BACKGROUND

- 7 National planning guidance relating to tourism accommodation is contained in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 3 July 2010) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13: Tourism. Paragraph 11.1.2 of PPW outlines the Assembly Government's objectives for tourism:
- to encourage sustainable tourism in Wales, promoting local prosperity and supporting community well-being and involvement, while protecting and giving value to natural heritage and culture; and
 - to manage the tourism sector in ways which minimise environmental impact.
- 8 In respect of development control considerations paragraph 11.3.1 says of PPW that "In determining planning applications for tourism developments, local planning authorities need to consider the impact of proposals on the environment and local community. They may seek to reduce the impact of development using arrangements for traffic and visitor management."

SOME EXPLANATORY TERMS

- 9 The paragraphs below explain two terms that are used in the SPG and in the UDP:
- 10 ***Holiday accommodation*** includes, but is not restricted to, any house, flat, chalet, villa, beach hut, tent, caravan, or houseboat, which is let out to holiday makers, who may live or stay in the property for leisure purposes. The property is not normally a principle "home". The accommodation should be advertised or held out as suitable for temporary holiday/ leisure letting purposes. Occupation by the same person(s) throughout the year is not permitted.
- 11 A '***second home/ holiday home***' is a generic term for a property owned by an individual in addition to their principal private residence. The owner and/ or family lives in the property only for short periods, for example, for personal/ family holiday or weekend use.
- 12 They are therefore privately owned empty or irregularly occupied properties and are unlikely to benefit the rural community and, unlike properties that are let out for paying visitors, are unlikely to benefit the local economy.
- 13 Policy CH10 in the UDP deals with planning applications for new housing units in areas where this type of accommodation forms a high percentage of the existing housing stock. In order to make a distinction between permanent dwelling use and non-permanent dwelling use, such as a second/ holiday home, and in order to achieve the objective of sustainable

rural communities, it is considered reasonable to expect that, amongst other things:

- a property that falls within Use Class C3 (dwelling house), should be occupied as a main residence for a period of at least 225 days in any one calendar year;
- the owner's spouse/partner/children reside in the property;
- the majority of the owner's possessions are located in the property;
- evidence of membership of local clubs and attendance of social events locally
- its occupiers are registered locally, for example, for medical or dental care, voting, children attend local schools;
- cars are registered to the property;
- permanent occupation Council Tax is paid;
- that the property is not rated as a self-catering property because it is available for let for 140 days or more a year

Gwynedd Council will apply these criteria when it investigates the use of housing units or other types of accommodation that are subject to a mechanism, e.g. planning condition, that manages their occupancy.

PERMANENT SERVICED AND SELF SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

- 14 Policies D14 and D15 of the UDP (See Appendix 1) provide the primary policy framework for the provision of new or the extension of existing permanent serviced and self serviced holiday accommodation facilities. The main policy considerations are as follows:

- Converting existing buildings
- High quality accommodation
- Previously developed land
- Scale of development
- Existing supply of self serviced accommodation
- Supporting evidence

Converting existing buildings

- 15 When assessing planning applications for the re-use or adaptation of a building to either serviced or self serviced holiday accommodation facilities, the primary consideration will be whether the nature and extent of the new use proposed for the building is acceptable in planning terms. The Planning Authority is required to exercise care to ensure that allowing holiday accommodation in existing buildings in the countryside does not become a backdoor means of obtaining permission for residential use where it would not normally be allowed.

- 16 Policy C4 of the UDP, which mainly relates to a building's suitability for re-use, will be a key consideration and it reads as follows:
- “Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use as a first option over demolition will be approved provided that all the following criteria can be met:*
- 1. in the case of a building in the countryside, that the building is of permanent construction, structurally sound and is capable of being adapted without major or complete reconstruction;*
 - 2. that the building is suitable for the proposed use;*
 - 3. that the design, including any necessary changes/alterations, respects the structure, form and character of the existing building and its surroundings and retains any inherent traditional, historic or architectural features of merit in the building;*
 - 4. that any associated external storage or operations do not cause significant harm to the visual quality and character of its surroundings;*
 - 5. in the case of a building in the countryside, that the development does not lead to a dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town or village activity.”*
- 17 Any building which can not conform to the requirements of policy C4 of the Plan will not be considered suitable for conversion into holiday accommodation use. If the building is located in the countryside or within a rural village the applicant is also advised to consider advice provided by the SPG on the 'Conversion of buildings in the open countryside and rural villages' (Gwynedd Council, November 2009).
- 18 The following is a list of issues that will be considered in order to assess the building's suitability to be used specifically as holiday accommodation:
- the building's ability to accommodate the requirements of the proposed holiday accommodation without extensive alterations;
 - the need for new services to the property;
 - whilst it should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present purposes, it will be appropriate to investigate (a) the history of the building to establish whether it was ever used for the purpose for which it was claimed to have been built, and/or (b) the impact of its loss on any adjoining/nearby properties (e.g. loss of any curtilage buildings);
 - the proposed use's compatibility with existing adjoining/ nearby property's use in terms of noise, traffic disturbance, lack of privacy for any adjoining property/ nearby property;
 - the existing building's effect on the landscape in terms of visual amenity and whether the proposal would secure an improvement in the external appearance of the building.
- 19 Given that national and local planning policy draws a distinction between permanent residential dwellings and holiday accommodation in the countryside and rural villages, a business plan will be required to demonstrate that the

proposed conversion will meet an identified need and that the conversion will make a genuine positive contribution to the rural economy.

High quality accommodation

- 20 This refers to the quality of the development in terms of land use considerations and not to any recognised accommodation grading scheme operated by the tourist industry. A primary consideration will be the overall quality of the ‘scheme’ when measured against the requirements of policy B22 (Design). Further advice on design issues can be found in the ‘Gwynedd Design Guide (2005)’ SPG. In accordance with the advice contained within paragraph 2.3.3 of TAN 22 Planning for Sustainable Buildings¹ all new build serviced/self serviced holiday accommodation proposals will be expected to meet the minimum standard set out in national planning policy. This is contained in *Planning Policy Wales*² with guidance contained in Technical Advice Note 22.

Previously developed land

- 21 In the case of new developments, all development proposals will have to be either located within a development boundary or on suitable previously developed land. The issue of whether previously developed land is ‘suitable’ for the proposed scheme will be assessed against the requirement of policy C3 and other relevant policies in the UDP. The ‘List of Terms’ in the Gwynedd UDP defines ‘previously developed land’ as:

“that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The curtilage (see note 1 below) of the development is included, as are defence buildings, and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal (see note 2 below) where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures.

Excluded from the definition are:

- *land and buildings currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes;*
- *land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously, for example parks, recreation grounds and allotments, even though these areas may contain certain urban features such as paths, pavilions and other buildings;*

¹ Paragraph 2.3.3 of TAN 22 states “For those residential units which cannot be assessed under the scheme (such as a sheltered housing scheme), it is expected that these will be assessed under the non-residential scheme (e.g. BREEAM Multi-Residential) and achieve the same minimum sustainable building standard expected for non-residential development proposals as set out in PPW. The residential threshold will still apply in these circumstances.”

² See paragraph 4.11.4 of Planning Policy Wales for the current minimum standard.

- *land where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time so that they can reasonably be considered part of the natural surroundings;*
- *previously developed land the nature conservation value of which could outweigh the re-use of the site; and*
- *previously developed land later used as an amenity.*

Notes:

1. The curtilage is defined as the area of land attached to a building. All of the land within the curtilage of the site will also be defined as previously-developed. However this does not mean that the whole area of the curtilage should therefore be redeveloped. For example, where the footprint of a building only occupies a proportion of a site of which the remainder is open land (such as a hospital) the whole site should not normally be developed to the boundary of the curtilage. The local planning authority should make a judgement about site layout in this context, bearing in mind other planning considerations such as policies for the protection of open space, playing fields or development in the countryside. They should consider such factors as how the site relates to the surrounding area and requirements for on-site open space, buffer strips and landscaped areas.

2. This relates to minerals and waste sites which would otherwise remain unrestored after use because the planning permission allowing them did not include a restoration condition. All other such sites will be restored to greenfield status, by virtue of the planning condition.”

The ‘previously developed terminology used in the UDP re-iterates the definition used in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4).

- 22 New build development located on land outside development boundaries not meeting this requirement will not receive favourable consideration in the context of policies D14 and D15 of the UDP.

Scale of development

- 23 Criterion 2 of Policies D14 and D15 states “that the proposed development is of appropriate scale considering the site, location and/or settlement in question”. To ensure that this is achieved a thorough assessment of the character of both the site and its surroundings and the site’s existing or potential relationships with any important focal points, views, historic buildings etc needs to be undertaken. Factors that will be taken in account when assessing the scale of a proposal include;

1. *That the site is of a sufficient size to accommodate the proposal without prejudicing any appropriate provision of ancillary facilities such as soft landscaping and parking and service areas.*
2. *That the scale of the development is compatible with, and fits comfortably into, its surroundings.*

3. *In accord with the principles of promoting sustainable development it is important that large scale new development (including those on previously developed sites) which could substantially increase the number of journeys made by private vehicles should be located within or as close as possible to, or within reasonable walking distance of the service centres identified in the UDP's settlement hierarchy, and/or within reasonable walking distance to public transport interchanges or routes.*
4. *That the scale of the development does not adversely impact on the cultural character of the local community but is proportionate to the size and character of any settlement it is located within or nearby. Guidance in respect of the need for a Community and Linguistic Statement or a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment is provided the Council's adopted SPG 'Planning and the Welsh language'.*

Existing supply of self serviced accommodation

- 24 The number of second/holiday homes within some communities within the Plan area is already significantly high and have had a detrimental impact on the cultural character of those local communities. This is reflected in policy CH10 (Second Homes) of the UDP, which does not support proposals for new dwellings in areas that already has a high percentage of second homes, holiday homes or summer residences in a community where they already form a high proportion of the housing stock. Whilst self serviced accommodation may not fall within the definition of a second/holiday home, approving further proposals within communities which already have a significant concentration of second/holiday homes can exacerbate the impact on local services and the ability of that community and adjoining communities to support those services. The existing level of self serviced accommodation within particular communities will be assessed against the information provided by the 2001 Census and the latest edition of the Gwynedd Bed Stock Survey (Gwynedd Council), the Council's register of planning consents for holiday accommodation, and monitoring systems. The threshold, whereby further self serviced accommodation within a City/Town/Community Council will not receive favourable consideration in the context of policy D15 of the UDP, will be where:

- 10% or more of the housing stock are second homes (2001 Census), or where
- a high percentage of all holiday accommodation are self catering units

Supporting evidence

- 25 When submitting planning applications sufficient detail should be included with the application that will assist the LPA in reaching its recommendation/decision:

* The applicant should clarify whether the proposal is for serviced or self serviced accommodation. This is extremely important since different policy considerations are applicable.

* There are many types of self serviced accommodation e.g. farm house rented accommodation, owner occupied, time share apartments. The occupancy of these types of accommodation can vary from 'short' to 'long' stay. It is important that the application clearly states what type of self serviced accommodation is being proposed and specify their intended arrangements to manage the accommodation's occupation. This will be an important consideration in assessing the proposal's suitability in the context of policy D15 of the UDP and the use of any subsequent conditions the Council is likely to impose (see paragraph 36-38 of this SPG). If such information has not been provided as part of the application or on request, then the Council can not make an informed decision on that proposal and will take a precautionary approach and may refuse the application. This is consistent with the advice contained in paragraph 16 of TAN 13: Tourism (1997) which states that "Authorities should be able to establish whether accommodation is being used exclusively by holidaymakers."

* A Community and Linguistic Statement or a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment will be required for tourism development creating ten or more holiday units. Further guidance can be found in the Council's SPG Planning and the Welsh Language, which can be viewed on the Council's website (www.gwynedd.gov.uk).

IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVANS AND HOLIDAY CHALETS SITES - POLICY D17 (Appendix 2)

26 In both pre-application discussions and in assessing the merits of planning applications in respect of proposals involving existing static holiday caravans and holiday chalets sites the LPA will be guided by the fact that:

- policy D16 of the UDP (See Appendix 2) prohibits the development of new static holiday caravans and holiday chalets;
- the main aim of policy D17 is to foster development that will lead to the improvement and upgrading of existing sites, NOT to promote the increase the size of the business in terms of the number of units on the site.

The main policy considerations are as follows:

- *Significant and permanent improvements*
- *Physical extensions to the site*
- Increase in the number of units

Significant and permanent improvements

27 Developers will have to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that the proposal is fundamentally a scheme which aims to secure visual, environmental, ecological enhancements and/or upgrade the overall quality of the park (i.e. improve the image of the site). The need for improvements could arise from a need to improve and upgrade:

- the overall layout and appearance of the site including reducing unit density, introducing less sub-urban type layouts, the substitution of hard landscaping by soft landscaping, and incorporating informal open spaces and new landscaping measures; or
 - the range and quality of facilities on the site; or
 - the quality of visitor accommodation.
- 28 Where a 'Design and access statement' (DAS) is required, the LPA will expect applicants to produce a 'master plan' outlining the existing visual, environmental, ecological and overall quality of the existing park and how the proposal will secure significant and permanent improvements to the site. In particular, applicants will be expected to submit a landscaping scheme as part of the application. The scheme should be an integral component of the whole proposal and should have regard for the requirements of policy B27 (Landscaping schemes). A landscaping schedule should be included as part of the application and should consider all landscaping aspects of the whole site (i.e. both within the site and boundary treatment). Where, the developer proposes to screen sites through the use of adjoining trees and natural and man made features outside the ownership of the applicant/landowner, that on-site remedial measures are included to mitigate the potential loss of off site natural screening features. The soft landscaping element of the scheme should focus on using native species, and should take into account the cover to be provided throughout the seasons. However, in certain circumstances the use of conifers could be acceptable when interspersed with native species. The use of fast growing conifers or the blanket planting of conifers will not be acceptable.
- 29 Any scheme which has not sufficiently demonstrated this requirement will NOT be supported by the LPA.

Physical extensions to the site

- 30 Where the proposal involves a physical extension to a site, the fundamental principle the LPA will consider is whether the environmental/upgrading work can be undertaken within the existing boundaries of the site. Applicants will need to provide the LPA with convincing evidence (including a 'master plan) to justify why an extension to the whole site is required and clearly demonstrate how the existing site would benefit from such an extension. Any development which is considered to be harmful to the landscape surrounding the site will NOT be supported by the LPA. Consideration will also be given to other Plan policies (e.g. B8, B9, B10, B14, B23, B27, CH28, CH33, CH34), in particular where the extension involves the siting of additional units. Applicants will also be expected to demonstrate as part of their DAS how they have considered the information provided by the LANDMAP study (www.ccw.gov.uk/landmap) and the guidance provided by the Landscape Character SPG.

Increase in the number of units

- 31 This will ONLY be considered where the developer has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the LPA that it forms part of a scheme which will offer significant

and permanent improvements to the design, layout and appearance of the whole site and its setting in the surrounding landscape. The applicant will be required to provide evidence to justify the need of additional units as part of the overall proposal. Where an increase in the number of units can be justified then only the following proposals can be supported by the LPA:

- *Involve a minor increase in units and which are commensurate with the scale of any improvements to the site;*
- *Are not greater than 10% of the total units on the site at the date of the first application to increase the number on the site following the adoption date of the UDP (i.e. 16/07/2009).*

Within the AONB, Landscape Conservation Areas and other prominent sites a condition will be included in planning decision notices to ensure that additional units are of an appropriate colour in order to blend into the rural background.

TOURING CARAVANS, CAMPING AND TOURING UNITS

- 32 The primary policy framework for the provision of new touring sites or extensions, additional pitches, relocation and exchanges to existing facilities is provided by policies D19 and D20 of the UDP (See Appendix 3). The main policy considerations for new sites under policy D19 are as follows:

- High quality
- Access to the main highway network
- Touring purposes only

High quality - New sites (Policy D19)

- 33 This refers to the quality of the development in terms of land use considerations and not to any recognised accommodation grading scheme operated by the tourist industry. Criterion 1 of policy D19 identifies the elements that will require attention well in advance of any planning application in order to achieve a 'high quality' new site. Applicants are expected as part of their DAS to submit written and illustrative material demonstrating how their proposal will achieve the requirements of criterion 1 of policy D19. In particular, applicants will be expected to submit a landscaping scheme as part of the application. The scheme should be an integral component of the whole proposal and should have regard for the requirements of policy B27 (Landscaping schemes). Where, the developer proposes to screen sites by taking advantage of adjoining trees and natural and man made features outside the ownership of the applicant/landowner, that on-site remedial measures are included to mitigate the potential loss of off site natural screening features. The soft landscaping element of the scheme should focus, where possible/ feasible, on using native species, and should take into account the cover to be provided throughout the seasons. However, in certain circumstances the use of conifers could be acceptable when interspersed with native species. The use of fast growing conifers or the blanket planting of conifers will not be acceptable. Any scheme which has not sufficiently demonstrated this requirement will NOT be supported by the LPA.

Access to the main highway network

- 34 It is important that new sites are located as close as possible to the main highway network (i.e. 'A' and 'B' class roads), in particular those sites which intend to access onto unclassified rural roads. Unclassified rural roads are generally single track lanes and are considered unsuitable for heavy traffic. Any proposal which in the LPA's opinion is not sited within close proximity to the main highway network will not be supported. Furthermore, these roads are generally bounded by natural/man made features (e.g. stone walls, cloddiau, hedgerows) which are important to the visual character of rural areas. Providing suitable access from new sites onto these roads may require the removal of important landscape features. The importance of such features has been identified by the LANDMAP study (www.ccw.gov.uk/landmap) and the LPA will be guided by the findings of this study. The LPA will expect applicants to demonstrate as part of their DAS how they have considered the information provided by the LANDMAP study and the guidance provided by the Landscape Character SPG. Any scheme which has not in its opinion sufficiently demonstrated this requirement will NOT be supported by the LPA.

Touring purposes only

- 35 Policy D19 does not promote the development of 'static touring caravan/units' whereby the caravan/unit is left permanently on site throughout the whole holiday season and used only occasionally by its owners or other groups of visitors during that period. Criterion 3 of policy clearly stipulates that the site is used for touring purposes only and that any units are removed from the site during periods when not in use. As part of their DAS, applicants will be required to demonstrate how they propose to conform to this requirement, including, any proposed storage facilities. Where planning permission is granted for new touring sites a planning condition will be attached limiting the use of the site for touring purposes only. The LPA will not support any scheme which proposes the development of a 'static touring caravan/unit site'

Cumulative impact

- 36 Some areas of the UDP area already have a high concentration of touring pitches. The cumulative impact of additional touring pitches will be an important consideration. Applicants are expected to provide evidence about how they have considered the cumulative impact of their proposal in terms of the requirement of criterion 4 of the policy. A register of all caravans within Gwynedd is held by the Council's Public Protection Service and the relevant information from this register can be obtained on request from the Council's Caravan Sites Inspection Officer (see information at the end of this guidance). There will be a charge to obtain paper copies of the register. Information can be obtained from the Planning Policy Unit (see information at the end of this guidance) regarding the results of the Council's most recent version of the 'Gwynedd Bed Stock Survey'.

37 The main policy considerations for *extensions, additional pitches, relocation and exchanges in respect of existing sites under policy D20* are as follows:

- Environmental and visual improvements
- Cumulative impact

Environmental and visual improvements

38 As in the case of policy D17 the main aim of policy D20 is to foster development that will lead to the visual improvement and upgrading of existing sites NOT to promote the increase in size of the business in terms of the number and size of units on the site. Applicants will have to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that the proposal is fundamentally a scheme to improve the visual, environmental, ecological or economical (i.e. improve the image of the site) improvements. The need for improvements could arise from a need to improve and upgrade:

- the overall layout and appearance of the site including reducing unit density, introducing less sub-urban type layouts, the substitution of hard landscaping by soft landscaping³⁴, and incorporating informal open spaces and new landscaping measures; or
- the range and quality of facilities on the site.

Where a DAS is required, the LPA will expect developers to submit a 'master plan' outlining how the proposal will secure significant and permanent improvements to the existing site. In particular, applicants will be expected to submit a landscaping scheme as part of the application. The scheme should be an integral component of the whole proposal and should have regard for the requirements of policy B27 (Landscaping schemes). A landscaping schedule should be included as part of the application and should consider all landscaping aspects of the whole site (i.e. 'hard/soft' landscaping both within the site and boundary treatment). The soft landscaping element of the scheme should focus on using native species, and should take into account the cover to be provided throughout the seasons. However, in certain circumstances the use of conifers could be acceptable when interspersed with native species. The use of fast growing conifers or the blanket planting of conifers will not be acceptable. Any scheme which has not sufficiently demonstrated this requirement will NOT be supported by the LPA.

Cumulative impact (existing sites)

39 The considerations required are the same as those outlined previously in respect of new touring sites (see para. 34)

³ 'Hard' landscaping refers to features such as paving, walls, railings, fences, retaining structures and street furniture such as lighting, bollards, adverts and signs. The 'soft' landscaping includes features such trees, plants, grass, water and earth modelling.

⁴ Developers should be aware that the development of 'hard standings' on touring sites generally requires planning permission and that they should contact the LPA to discuss any proposed provision of 'hard standings' on their site.

DIVERSIFICATION INTO NEW FORMS OF VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

40 Nationwide many traditional camping and caravan operators are diversifying and many businesses are now offering alternatives to standard/ traditional caravanning and camping accommodation. Over recent years there has been a rise in what has become to be called 'glamping' (i.e. glamorous camping), which offer the visitor a certain level of luxury and comfort above what can be offered in the traditional tenting experience. These are usually semi-permanent structures and examples include:

- Yurts - usually Mongolian type wooden frame structures, with rugs on wood floors and a wood burning stove
- Tepees – usually North American styled tepees which can be equipped with such features as futon beds and bedding, open fires and cooking utensils
- Wooden tents – simple wooden structures which can be placed on land without the need for foundations and are not connected to services. They have a single sleeping open space and offer users the benefit of the camping experience without the need for their own tent.

Status in planning law/Gwynedd UDP

41 In dealing with applications for non traditional forms of caravanning and camping accommodation the LPA will adopt the following sequential approach:

1. Does the structure fall within the statutory definition of a caravan⁵ or is it a tent? then
2. Is the caravan or tent a 'touring unit' as defined in the explanation to policy D19 of the UDP, i.e. touring caravans, tents, trailer tents and motor-caravans? then
3. The degree of permanency of the unit on the site during the holiday season, i.e. will the unit be removed off site when it isn't occupied as holiday accommodation?

Yurts and Tepees or similar low impact structures

42 These are not considered to fall within the statutory definition of a caravan and can be described as luxury tents . The following is a list of matters that would require consideration in relation to a proposal to locate these types of units on existing pitches on tenting campsites:

- whether the proposal would lead to changes to the operational arrangements of the site beyond that which is already granted through the

⁵ Section 29 (1) of the Caravan Sites & Control of Development Act 1960 defines a caravan as:

"Any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted, but does not include any tent."

land use planning system for that camp site (e.g. operating beyond the permitted touring holiday season;

- whether the proposal involves the provision of more permanent type structures with associated facilities e.g. wooden decking;
- whether the units would be removed from the site when they are not occupied as holiday accommodation.

- 43 Proposals that involve establishing new sites or for increasing the number of pitches on existing tenting campsites will be considered against the requirements of policies D19 or D20 (whichever is applicable) of the UDP. One of the main policy considerations will be the degree of permanency of the structure and whether it can be removed when not in use. Paragraph 35 of this guidance highlights the LPA's position in respect of this issue. Applicants are expected to include written clarification within their DAS on how they propose to comply with this issue.

Wooden tents or similar structures

- 44 Wooden tents is a relatively recent type of development. If they are capable of being delivered to a site complete and no operations are required, then they conform to the statutory definition of a 'caravan'. However, given their degree of permanency on the site such structures can not be categorised as 'touring units' as set out in the explanation to policy D19 of the UDP. In terms of the UDP they will therefore be considered as 'static caravans'. Consequently a proposal for this type of structure will be considered against the requirements of policies D16 and D17 of the UDP.

HOLIDAY OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

- 45 Nationally, the nature of holidays has become increasingly more diverse in terms of location, season and duration. Many more people are now going on holiday several times a year, more often for shorter time periods and not necessary during the summer. Much of this demand is for self-catering accommodation in new and converted buildings and in static holiday caravans and holiday chalets. The UDP already recognises that the seasonal nature of tourism causes a considerable variation in the demand for employees during the year, and has a significant effect on the economic prosperity of Gwynedd. Therefore the spread of demand for accommodation outside the traditional holiday period is therefore encouraged by the Plan.
- 46 Whilst extending the holiday season is to be encouraged this needs to be balanced against the need to ensure that self serviced accommodation and static holiday caravans and holiday chalets can not be used as permanent residences. Appropriate holiday occupancy conditions will therefore be attached to all planning permissions granted for permanent self-serviced and static holiday caravans and holiday chalet proposals.

- 47 The holiday occupancy conditions⁶ that will be applied will ensure the following:
- that the accommodation will be occupied for holiday purposes only and will not be occupied as a person's sole, or main place of residence;
 - in the case of permanent holiday accommodation (i.e. the type of holiday accommodation that would be covered by policies D14 and D15), that the same family will not be allowed to occupy the same holiday unit for more than 28 days at a time and will only be allowed to occupy the same unit up to a maximum 3 months in any calendar year;
 - that the owners/operators maintain an up to date register of the names of all owners/ occupiers of individual holiday unit(s) and of their main home addresses, and their length of stay and that this register is made available at all reasonable times to the LPA.

⁶ The imposition of holiday conditions will not result in the removal or application of operational conditions in respect existing static holiday caravan and holiday chalet sites/existing touring caravans, camping and touring units sites or any new proposals granted under policies D17, D19 or D20 of the UDP.

APPENDIX 1

POLICY D14 - SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for:

- a. the development of new permanent serviced holiday accommodation, or the conversion of existing buildings into such accommodation, or
- b. extending existing serviced holiday accommodation establishments

will be approved, provided they are of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance and that all the following criteria can be met:

1. in the case of new build, that the development is located within a development boundary, or makes use of a suitable previously developed site;
2. that the proposed development is of appropriate scale considering the site, location and/or settlement in question.

- 6.3.10 Explanation - This policy applies to a variety of different types of serviced accommodation, from large high quality hotels to small bed and breakfast accommodation on farms. Quality hotels and other serviced accommodation can potentially bring significant economic benefits to the Plan area and broaden the range of holiday accommodation available to visitors. In general the Plan area lacks an adequate range of such accommodation. The aim of this Policy is to support the principle of expanding the range and improving the quantity and quality of serviced accommodation.

POLICY D15 - SELF-SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for:

- a. new development, or the conversion of existing buildings into permanent self-serviced holiday accommodation, or
- b. extending existing self-serviced holiday accommodation establishments

will be approved providing the development is of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance and that all the following criteria can be met:

1. in the case of new build, that the development is located within a development boundary, or makes use of a suitable previously developed site;

2. that the proposed development is appropriate in scale considering the site, location and/or settlement in question;
3. that the proposal will not result in a loss of permanent housing stock;
4. that the development is not sited within a primarily residential area or does not significantly harm the residential character of an area;
5. that the development does not lead to an over-concentration of such accommodation within the area.

- 6.3.11 Explanation - A wide range of high quality self-serviced accommodation is essential in providing visitors with choice. The aim of this policy is to support the principle of providing high quality self-serviced holiday accommodation which presents such a choice.
- 6.3.12 Where planning permission is given for self-catering holiday units, a condition will be attached to ensure that the building will only be used as holiday accommodation and that it cannot be used for permanent occupation.
- 6.3.13 Existing national guidance and the priority given to the conversion of existing buildings for economic use, means that within some areas, there is an abundance of buildings that have been converted to self-serviced accommodation. Clearly it is not the intention of national guidance or the Council for this policy to lead an over-concentration of this type of holiday accommodation within a particular location. In assessing proposals under this policy, the Council will consider the locality's capacity to reasonably accommodate such developments in terms of its impact on the environment, social and cultural character, road network, amenities etc.
- 6.3.14 This policy is not relevant to proposals to establish new static holiday and touring caravans and holiday chalets sites. Such proposals will be considered under policies D16 and D17 of this Plan.

APPENDIX 2

POLICY D16 - PROVISION OF NEW STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN AND HOLIDAY CHALET SITES

Proposals for the development of new sites for static holiday caravan (single or twin caravan) units¹ or holiday chalets ² will be refused.

- 6.3.15 Explanation - The proliferation of static caravan and chalet parks, in particular along the coastline has had a detrimental impact on the appearance of the landscape. The high number of existing sites means that the Plan area is already well served by such uses, with the static holiday caravan and holiday chalet sector providing the majority of all visitor accommodation bedspaces within the County. Consequently, there is no justification for the provision of either new static holiday caravans (single or twin units) or new holiday chalets sites within the Plan area.

¹ Defined under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (as amended by the Caravan Sites Act 1968)

²For the purpose of this Plan, a holiday chalet will be defined as any structure or suitable building intended for use as holiday accommodation, which is not defined by the statutory definition of caravan, that is:

- when it is not possible to transport the structure to the site in one piece, and/or
- that the structure/building prior to assembly is composed of more than two parts; and/or
- that the structure is placed on a purpose-built foundation, and /or
- that the structure, once assembled, cannot be removed from the site in one piece

POLICY D17 - UPGRADING OF EXISTING STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN AND HOLIDAY CHALET SITES

Proposals to upgrade existing static holiday caravan and holiday chalet sites by:

- a. minor extensions to the land area of existing static holiday caravan sites (i.e. single or twin caravan units) and holiday chalet sites,
- b. the relocation of static holiday caravan or holiday chalet units from prominent settings to less prominent locations;
- c. a minor increase in the number of static holiday caravan or holiday chalet units, or
- ch. proposals to exchange touring pitches for static holiday caravan units;

will be approved provided that all the following criteria can be met:

1. that the proposed development is part of a scheme to improve the range and quality of tourist accommodation and facilities on the site;

2. that the proposed development offers significant and permanent improvements to the design, layout and appearance of the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape;
3. that any increase in the number of static holiday caravan or holiday chalet units is minor and is commensurate with the scale of any improvements to the site.

6.3.16 Explanation - High quality static holiday caravan and holiday chalet sites make a vital contribution to providing a variety of high standard tourist accommodation. Whilst some sites have already seen progressive improvement, many require upgrading and improvement. Correspondingly, many sites are located in visually sensitive areas, particularly along the coastline. The aim of this policy is to promote improvements and upgrade the standard of visitor accommodation on existing sites, and to reduce the impact of these sites on the landscape, including views out of the Snowdonia National Park. A proposal with the sole purpose of replacing single unit holiday caravans with twin unit holiday caravans will be regarded as insufficient justification for permitting applications under this policy. Proposals to provide retail facilities (foods and non-food), restaurants/cafes and take-away food are dealt with under the retailing policies of this Plan.

6.3.17 'Minor' in relation to extending site area is not defined except in relation to an increase in the number of units and should be no greater than a 10% increase on the number at the time of the first application to increase the number of units. However, because of the considerable variety in the size, nature and location of sites, each application will be assessed on its merit within this general guide.

APPENDIX 3

POLICY D19 - NEW SITES FOR TOURING CARAVANS, CAMPING AND TOURING UNITS

Proposals for new touring caravan, camping or touring unit sites will be permitted provided that all the following criteria can be met:

1. that the proposed development is of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance, and is sited in an unobtrusive location which is well screened by existing landscape features and/or where touring units can be readily assimilated into the landscape in a way which does not significantly harm the visual quality of the landscape;
2. that the site is close to the main highway network and that adequate access can be provided without significantly harming landscape characteristics and features;
3. that the site is used for touring purposes only and that any units are removed from the site during periods when not in use;
4. that the proposed development, taking into account the cumulative impact of existing and approved touring caravan, camping and touring unit sites within the immediate locality, will not exceed the capacity (e.g. environmental, social and cultural, road network, amenities etc.) of that locality to reasonably accommodate such developments.

6.3.20 Explanation - The aim of this policy is to facilitate the establishment of high quality touring and camping sites in appropriate locations and recognises:

- the contribution made by high quality touring and camping sites to the range of holiday accommodation available for visitors;
- that touring caravan and camping sites situated in prominent and open locations can have a significant impact on the appearance of the countryside;
- that some areas already contain a high density of this type of holiday accommodation (e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and coastal areas in general) and additional provision could have a detrimental impact on landscape, and could also spoil the intrinsic qualities which render those areas popular tourist destinations in the first place.

In order to avoid doubt 'touring units' includes touring caravans, tents, trailer tents and motor-caravans.

6.3.21 In all cases, the applicant will need to submit a landscaping scheme, as well as an improvement plan, with the application. Since the countryside looks very different during the winter months, a condition will be attached to planning permissions for all new sites approved, limiting the operational period of the site to between 1st March and 1st October of the same year.

POLICY D20 - TOURING CARAVAN, CAMPING AND TOURING UNIT SITES –
EXTENSIONS, ADDITIONAL PITCHES, RELOCATION AND EXCHANGES

Proposals for:

- a. an increase in the number of pitches on, or extensions to, existing touring caravan, camping and touring unit sites
- b. the relocation of pitches away from visually prominent sites, or
- c. the exchange of tent or touring caravan pitches for an appropriate number of touring unit pitches

will be approved provided that the proposal forms part of a scheme that will result in environmental and visual improvements in terms of siting, layout, design and the appearance of the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape and the proposed development, taking into account the cumulative effect of existing and approved touring caravan, camping and touring unit sites within the locality, will not exceed the ability (e.g. environmental, social and cultural, road network, amenities etc.) of that locality to reasonably accommodate such development.

- 6.3.22 Explanation - High quality touring and camping facilities make an important contribution to providing a variety of high standard tourist accommodation. Whilst some of the existing site operators have invested in providing high standard facilities, a large number of sites need to be significantly upgraded and improved. Additionally a number of sites are located in visually sensitive areas. The purpose of this policy is to promote improvements to the quality of existing touring caravan, camping and touring unit sites and to reduce their visual impact on the landscape, subject to specific criteria.
- 6.3.23 Due to the substantial range in the size, nature and location of sites, each application will be assessed on its merit. In respect of 'exchanges' the 'appropriate' number of touring unit pitches permitted on existing sites will be assessed against the size and character of the existing site and the impact of the proposed development on those issues listed in the above policy and all other relevant policies of the Plan. In all cases, the applicant will need to submit a landscaping scheme with the application along with an improvement plan.

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