

# Land at Junction 27

## Policy J27

### Land at Junction 27 of the M5 Motorway

A site of approximately 71 hectares adjoining the south bound carriageway of the M5 motorway, adjacent to junction 27 is identified for major development. The land, which lies to the south of the A38, is allocated for the provision of a major high quality regional tourism, leisure and retail attraction supported by ancillary roadside services and supporting infrastructure including a pedestrian bridge across the M5 motorway linking the site to Tiverton Parkway railway station.

The site provides a prime location for delivery of a major leisure destination themed around agriculture and the agri-economy; the regional environment and tourism; outdoor land and water-based adventure activities and outlet-retailing. The site provides a major opportunity to deliver a unique leisure destination at the gateway to Devon and Cornwall which should be realised as a single cohesive and comprehensively masterplanned visitor attraction.

The allocation makes provision for the following elements:

- Travel Hub (7ha) – Motorway/roadside services; electric car hub; hotel.
- Agronomy Visitor Centre (9ha) – exhibition space and hall, gallery; research and education space; regional visitor centre and hotel. The Agronomy centre will include up to 1,000 square metres of ancillary retail.
- Outdoor Adventure Zone (6ha) – Surf lake/lagoon; beach; high ropes adventure area.
- Outlet Shopping Village (6ha) - Designer outlet shopping centre retailing controlled goods comprising discontinued/end-of-range lines, seconds and surplus/sample stock. The Outlet Shopping Village to include up to 14,000 square metres of controlled comparison goods and up to 2,000 square metres of A3 uses.

The development is subject to the following:

- a) Provision of supporting access roads, parking and infrastructure/landscaping (43 ha);
- b) Provision of transport improvements to ensure appropriate accessibility for all modes, including new or improved access and egress onto the M5 motorway and pedestrian and cycling links across the motorway to Tiverton Parkway Railway Station;
- c) Environmental protection and enhancement including noise mitigation;
- d) A comprehensive phasing programme to ensure the tourist and leisure provisions are delivered at the same time as the retail and service elements of the development; and
- e) Prior to the approval of any planning permission for the site any required mitigation measures for the Culm Grasslands Special Area of Conservation shall

**be identified and agreed together with a time-scale for their provision and a mechanism for their maintenance.**

**Development of the site should be brought forward in accordance with the terms of a detailed development brief, comprehensive masterplanning including at least two stages of public consultation and adoption of the Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document before any planning application for the any part of the site is determined.**

- 3.184a A site of 71 hectares is allocated to the south and east of Junction 27 of the M5 motorway. The allocation identifies the land for tourism, leisure and retail development. The proposal seeks to significantly increase the tourism and leisure offer available in Mid Devon as identified in the Mid Devon Tourism Study 2014. The 2014 study identified that the M5 and the mainline railway provides an opportunity to develop Mid Devon's tourism infrastructure around these key links. To encourage a greater proportion of people to break their journey in the area, for instance to visit a local attraction, market or retail facilities or to stay. It identifies that this opportunity builds on the District's location at the gateway location to Exmoor and the North Devon Coast; and on the route to Dartmoor, the South Devon Coast and Cornwall from much of the UK. Given the volume of tourists who pass through Mid Devon on route to other destinations, such as North and South Devon and Cornwall, the study identified that more could be done to encourage these tourists to stop en-route and increase the length of time (and money) tourists spend in Mid Devon.
- 3.184b The study identified six potential strands to assist the growth of tourism in Mid Devon offering opportunities for visitors to stop and stay when travelling through to destinations further south and west. The allocation at J27 makes provision to directly address three of the recommended strategies by setting a policy which can provide a major tourist, leisure and retail facility which caters for all age groups and which encourages visitors passing through to stop and spend time in Mid Devon.
- 3.184c The allocation includes associated outlet/discounted retail floorspace to meet a regional comparison need and deliver the tourist and leisure elements of the allocation. Existing town centres will be safeguarded through planning controls. There is a clear synergy between the Designer Outlet Village proposal and the tourism and leisure aspects of the proposed allocation. It is not considered viable to disaggregate this proposed allocation given the nature and interdependency of the uses. Therefore it needs to be in a location which can accommodate this scale of development and has appropriate links to the strategic highway and rail networks. A number of sites were considered both within and outside of Mid Devon. These sites included Cullompton, Tiverton, Taunton and Exeter. None could provide the site area required to accommodate the proposal as a single development nor could they provide the accessibility of the allocation site. The J27 site provides sufficient land to accommodate the proposal as a whole, adjacent to the strategic road and rail network and one which is served by local bus services. The site lies adjacent to the main road and rail tourist routes into the West Country and is also ideally situated to serve the wider catchment area. The site already has planning permission for a roadside service area. The allocation site lies within easy reach of Exeter Airport and on route to the southwest European ferry terminal. The site is adjacent to one of the larger M5 motorway junctions south of Bristol which can readily be improved to accommodate the proposal.

3.184d The proposals for a major facility of this nature needs to be considered carefully in terms of its impacts and the policy makes provision for detailed transport assessments, environmental protection and green infrastructure, energy conservation, provision of improved public transport, pollution and drainage considerations, phasing and importantly master planning with full public consultation prior to any planning applications being approved. Controls using legal agreements will be required to control the extent and types of use that take place on the site, particularly in respect of retailing which will be tightly controlled. Section 106 planning obligations will also make provision for any necessary infrastructure and public transport improvements and would need to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that the integrity of the Culm Grasslands SAC will not be adversely affected.