

## **Caravan & Camping Accommodation:**

### **Tourism Investment Support Scheme Sectoral Priorities**

#### **Caravan & Camping Sites:**

Priority will be given to those projects that can evidence a shift in grade to a 4 Star or 5 Star quality, **or** to substantive projects (not repairs and maintenance) where the quality achievement will be accredited strongly within a 3 Star Grade (under the new grade criteria). Investment will not be considered if the result of the project falls below this quality level.

In support of the above, credit will be given to those parks that have a clear and credible upgrading plan, or represent key accommodation products in support of activity tourism or regeneration themes, including the centres of excellence (E4G) programme and in support of a destination management approach.

The following specific examples may assist in determining eligible works:

- Eligible works include upgrading pitches, internal access roads, electric hook up facilities, dry changing areas, waste disposal points for motor homes, increasing the ratio of toilet, showers, urinals and washbasins to pitches, services (such as water stations), clubhouses, reception, leisure, signage, and toilet & shower block.
- Projects that focus mainly on providing services, such as roadways, or toilet & shower blocks, electric and water supplies, are traditionally high in cost and low in job outputs. It is likely in such cases, where infrastructure works are dominant and outputs are low, that support to eligible projects would be limited, to no more than £25,000 (at a maximum 25% intervention subject to state aid), and subject also to negotiation pre application.
- Under TISS, 'new capacity' (ie. expansion in the number of 'units') will likely only apply to the Caravan & Camping sector where the investment relates to units let to visitors, where the case for additional capacity is clearly proven, and where there is an 'exceptional' connection to activity tourism or to strategic regeneration themes.
- Consideration could be given to new capacity where the result also includes 'reconfiguration' which may increase the park's footprint to enhance the visual amenity, increase spacing distances between units of accommodation, and improve landscaping and the park's ecological profile. It may be acceptable, on a case by case basis, to consider new capacity related infrastructure expenditure for high quality letting and privately owned holiday lodges, caravan holiday homes, touring

caravan and tenting pitches, if positive quality, environmental and density outcomes are clear.

- In static sites, therefore, TISS *can* support infrastructure works that enable the business to reduce unit density where appropriate, improve site design, and landscape appropriately. Particular priority will be afforded to projects which lead to a conservation award.
- Such environmental projects are encouraged, but in view of the link to high cost low output infrastructure works, the TISS investment will be limited, on a case by case basis, to no more than £25,000 (ie. at 25% intervention - a £100k cost maximum), and subject to negotiation (and state aid rules), pre application.
- Under the revised accreditation scheme the exterior and immediate surround of letting fleets are assessed separately from those units that are privately owned. Previously both types of units were assessed within a single 'section'. Experience suggests that the privately owned units are generally better presented thus enhancing the scores.
- This change will now highlight possible weaknesses within hire fleets resulting in a worse presentation of a product to those purchasing a holiday, in contrast to those that are buying into the park and a certain lifestyle. Priority will therefore be given under TISS to design schemes where presentation around hire fleets is present.
- In any proposal, the *purchase* of caravan holiday homes of either single or twin unit construction, including any 'log cabin' or 'log pod' style accommodation is not an eligible cost.
- The purchase of tipis, yurts, wooden tents, and vintage caravans, as part of a visitor 'fleet' may be eligible under TISS, on a case by case basis, subject to quality, location and priority. Added value improvements such as Wi-Fi may also be eligible.
- The upgrading of services to static unit pitches will only be eligible if that pitch serves a unit that is let to visitors (as opposed to an owner occupied unit) and remains so throughout the compliance period. An exception could be made (as noted above) if infrastructure works led directly to exceptional environmental / site design / density improvements.
- In some locations Parks may be considering infrastructure works to mitigate potential risks to the public and the business from flood risk. Such work might reasonably qualify for TISS support, but only if the level of support does not exceed £25,000 (at a maximum 25% intervention) and where quality already meets a minimum 3 Star standard under the new grade criteria.

- It should be noted that a 'project' might include various content not limited exclusively to a single theme.

The following themes, related to improvements that may be driven by the change in grade criteria, can be considered substantive works and therefore eligible under TISS:

- Adequate heating throughout the year for 'all shower & toilet facilities' (if business operational between 1 October to 31 March).
- All shower & toilet facilities in use during the period 1 September to 31 May must be heated as appropriate for the prevailing conditions.
- Waste disposal point suitable for the use of motor-homes (at parks with over 50 touring pitches).
- 50% of non-seasonal touring pitches to have electric hook-up.
- To achieve 4 star level, there is a 'minimum ratio of toilet, showers, urinals and washbasins to pitches' which must be provided, as below:

<b>Gents</b>	<b>Ladies</b>
1 urinal/30 pitches	2 toilets/30 pitches
1 toilet/30 pitches	2 washbasins/30 pitches
2 washbasins/30 pitches	1 bath/shower/ 25 pitches
1 bath/shower/ 25 pitches	

To retain a 5 Star grade the following themes arise:

- At 5 star level, '100% of non-seasonal touring pitches to have electric 'hook-up'.
- At 5 star level, 'all showers to have a dry changing area within the shower cubicle'.

The above themes are an indication of the type of project that could be eligible under TISS in this sector. It is not however a definitive 'list' and, therefore, enquiries will be considered on a case by case basis.

It is important to remember that the above investment priorities do not override the due diligence process which will continue to emphasise factors such as confirmed funding, defined scheme costs, legal permissions, viability, need for funds, management experience, marketing and project rationale, and regional significance.

It is expected that applications would best be considered in the summer / autumn period to enable a decision that also allows works to complete over the winter period. Decision times on applications will be up to 20 working days, and 30 working days, for applications below and above £25,000 respectively. The TISS team is mindful of the need for disruptive infrastructure works to be carried out in the winter period, and would encourage enquiries to be made in good time.

LPM 28/04/11