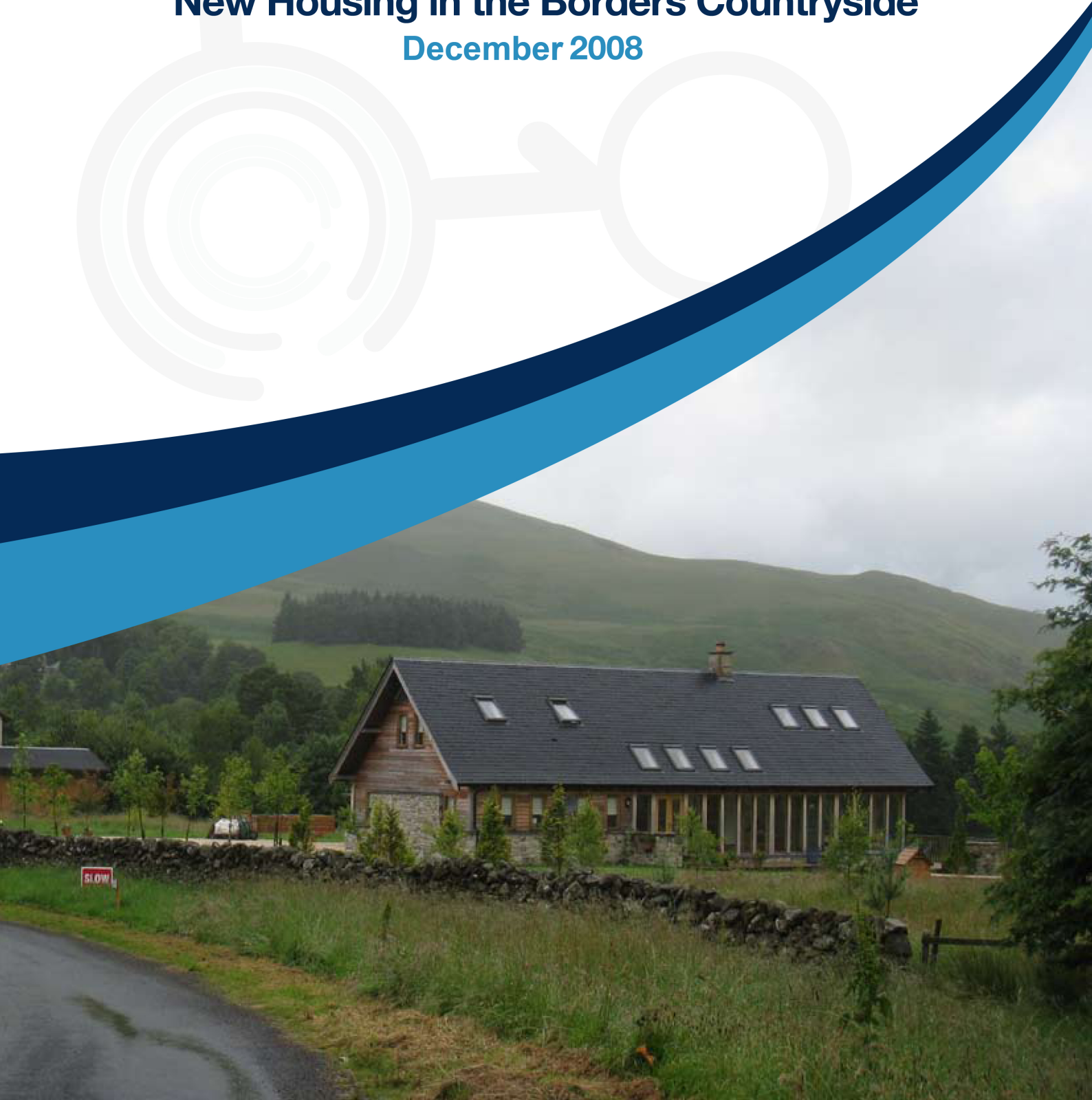


Scottish Borders Local Plan

Supplementary Planning Guidance on

New Housing in the Borders Countryside

December 2008



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New Housing in the Borders Countryside

Policy and Guidance Note

December 2008

Planning and Economic Development Department

Scottish Borders Council

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Foreword

This guidance is intended to offer advice and assistance with the siting and design of new housing in the Borders countryside and updates the original 1993 guidance and later Council supporting statements.

In assessing any planning application relating to housing in the countryside, the overall design is of utmost importance. This includes the location and siting of new housing, housing design and associated landscaping. It should be noted that the Planning Authority will consider the planning merits of each application submitted in coming to their recommendation.

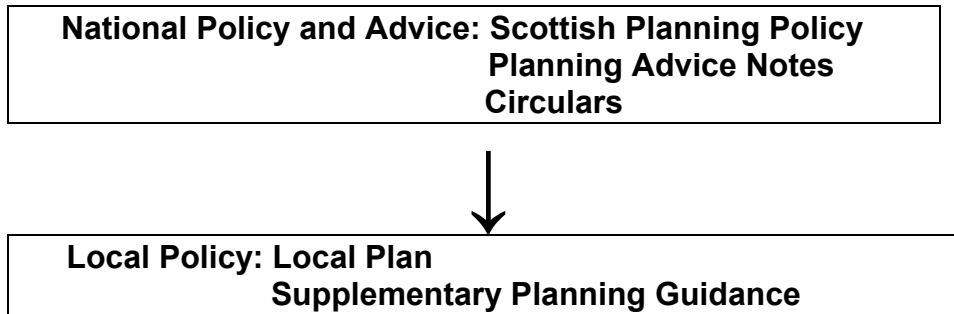
This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) seeks a long term sustainable pattern of rural housing development that reduces the development of inappropriate isolated housing in the countryside, and directs development to identifiable building groups or to remote rural anchor points. This is in line with Local Plan Principle 1 – Sustainability. The Borders countryside is a precious and finite asset and comprises some of the finest unspoilt scenery in the United Kingdom which is appreciated by visitors, residents and investors. The utmost care must be taken to reduce negative impacts of development on the countryside. Design of any new house in the countryside is important. If the house is sited in open countryside, it can be widely exposed to view and the design of the property may impact on neighbouring buildings and building patterns.

This guidance updates the previous 1993 guidance and working group reports from 2000 and 2004 to reflect recent national policy guidance, and the policies within the approved Structure Plan (2002) and the Local Plan (2008). It gives guidance on the selection of sites and demonstrates principles for appropriate designs. This guidance should not be seen as a constraint but rather an opportunity for innovative and carefully considered contemporary solutions to the design and construction of new housing in the countryside. For the purposes of clarity, it should be noted that a new plan period has now commenced with the adoption of the Scottish Borders Local Plan 2008.

It should be noted that there are other policies and guidance notes which will also apply to development within the Scottish Borders Council area, along with Building Standards which must be applied.

1. National and Local Policy

National policy, and other guidance, is produced by the Scottish Government for a wide range of development proposals. This provides a framework within which local authorities can develop policies and guidance appropriate to their area. National policy and guidance is therefore the starting point in the development of any Housing in the Countryside Policy for the Scottish Borders area. Local policy and guidance should take consideration of national policy and advice.



1.1 Development of National Policy

National Policy and Guidance is produced by the Scottish Government for a wide range of development proposals. This provides a framework within which local authorities can develop policies and guidance appropriate to their area. National policy and guidance is therefore the starting point in the development of any Housing in the Countryside Policy.

The main national policy and advice, and local policies are highlighted below:

Scottish Planning Policy 3: Planning for Homes (Revised 2008)

This SPP focuses on “the supply and delivery of new housing, which must be of a high-quality design and contribute to the creation of sustainable places.” It recommends that:

“The settlement pattern is the product of generations of investment in physical infrastructure, social and cultural facilities and public amenities. Planning authorities should promote the efficient use of land and buildings. In principle this means directing the majority of new development towards sites within existing settlements to make effective use of existing infrastructure and service capacity, and reduce energy consumption, while ensuring the creation of quality residential environments.”

Scottish Planning Policy 15: Planning for Rural Development

With regard to Housing, this SPP “advances policy in respect of small scale rural housing developments including clusters and groups in close proximity to settlements, replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed houses, and holiday homes.” Further guidance and criteria for suitable development is detailed within the document.

Planning Advice Note 72: Housing in the Countryside

Published in 2005, this places a strong emphasis on design and quality:

“... sets out key design principles which need to be taken into account: by applicants when planning a new development and by planning authorities, when preparing development plans and supporting guidance, and determining applications.

The purpose is to create more opportunities for good quality rural housing which respects Scottish landscapes and building traditions. The advice should not, however, be seen as a constraint on architects and designers wishing to pursue innovative and carefully considered contemporary designs.”

In addition to policy and advice in the SPPs and PANs referred to above, Circular 5/1992 advises that particular care should be exercised when considering planning applications for houses within 400m of established intensive livestock units, to minimise the potential for future problems of nuisance.

Summary:

National policy and guidance with regard to housing in the countryside has been reviewed and favours development close or adjacent to existing settlements, but does allow for some rural development of housing providing the circumstances and locations are appropriate.

1.2 Development of Local Policy

The Scottish Borders Councils' Housing in the Countryside Policy has developed over a number of years in response to changing pressures and circumstances.

Scottish Borders Council first developed Housing in the Countryside policy in 1986 in response to Circular 24/1985 and a concern that countryside policy at that time was unduly restrictive. With the exception of Tweeddale District, this policy encouraged new housing development within and adjacent to existing building groups in the countryside subject to a number of criteria. Throughout the Borders, there was to be a presumption against single housing in the countryside unless an economic need for the development could be clearly substantiated.

Scottish Borders Structure Plan 2002

In line with national policy guidance and advice, Scottish Borders Structure Plan 2002 states in chapter 4 – Housing – that 'New Housing in the Borders Countryside' policies are: *“generally supportive of conversion and rebuilding proposals, while new housing is guided to existing ‘building groups’.* Isolated housing development proposals are generally discouraged unless the economic need for the house can be clearly substantiated.” (See Appendix 1 for policies H4, H5 and H6).

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Structure Plan Policy H4 – Housing in the Countryside – Conversion or Rebuilding aims to support the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside outwith defined settlements (subject to the policy criteria set out in Appendix 1).

Policy H5 'New Housing in the Countryside – Building Groups' aims to support new housing in the countryside that is associated with existing building groups. The policy highlights that proposals which are readily accessible to the strategic public transport network, employ energy efficient and/or innovative design principles, incorporate employment-generating uses appropriate to a countryside setting will more likely be considered favourably (subject to the policy criteria set out in Appendix 1).

Policy H6 New Housing in the Countryside – Isolated Housing aims to support isolated housing in the countryside outwith defined settlements and unrelated to building groups where the house can be shown by the developer to be essential at that location for the needs of agriculture or other uses currently occupying or requiring an appropriate rural location, and the requirement for a house cannot be satisfied by Policy H5.

The Council have now approved a Finalised Structure Plan Alteration. This document has now been submitted to the Scottish Ministers for their approval.

Scottish Borders Local Plan 2008

In line with Government policy and advice the Scottish Borders Council wishes to direct most new housing development to sites in existing settlements but recognises that there is demand for housing in the countryside. The Scottish Borders Council supports housing development in appropriate locations in rural areas but wishes to prevent a proliferation of sporadic developments in the countryside. (Refer to Appendix 1 for policies D1, D2 and G8).

The Local Plan policy D1 – Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside aims to allow appropriate employment generating development in the countryside whilst protecting the environment in the countryside and to ensure that business, tourism and leisure related developments are appropriate to their location.

Policy D2 – Housing in the Countryside restricts isolated new housing in the countryside in accordance with government guidance unless it can be satisfactorily substantiated by compliance with the above criteria. Any housing built under this justification as affordable housing will only be supported if it addresses an identified housing need, (as listed in policy H1 – Affordable Housing), or in a local housing needs survey, or in a Registered Social Landlord's delivery programme.

Development that involves both employment and housing uses will be assessed against this policy and policy D2.

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Policy G8 – Development outwith Development Boundaries of the Local Plan aims to ensure that most of the development that occurs in the Scottish Borders does so within the Development Boundary; any development that does occur outwith the Boundary should comply with the rigorous criteria contained within this policy.

The timeframe of this Supplementary Planning Guidance is in line with that of the adopted Local Plan. However, it should be noted that this is subject to update as part of the Local Plan Amendment.

2. Housing in the Countryside

The Housing in the Countryside Policy encourages new housing development in appropriate locations. Any development that takes place under the Housing in the Countryside Policy should meet the following standard criteria:

- 1. No adverse effect on the viability of a farming unit or conflict with the operations of a working farm;*
- 2. Satisfactory access and other road requirements;*
- 3. Satisfactory public or private water supply and drainage facilities;*
- 4. No adverse effect on countryside amenity, landscape or nature conservation;*
- 5. No adverse impact on ancient monuments, archaeological sites, or on gardens or designed landscapes in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland;*
- 6. Appropriate siting, design and materials in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies;*
- 7. The safeguarding of known mineral resources from sterilisation unless this is acceptable following an assessment of the environmental implications.*

2.a. Conversion of Existing Buildings and Rebuilding on Existing Sites

Rehabilitation of any available existing buildings should be considered as an alternative to new development and the Scottish Borders Council will look sympathetically at proposals for the sensitive reuse, conversion or rehabilitation of traditional buildings. There is, however, no automatic presumption in favour of redevelopment or replacement of derelict or dilapidated buildings in the countryside, particularly where the proposed housing is of a different scale and character to that which had existed previously.

2.a.1 Conversions

In assessing proposals for the conversion of agricultural and other non-residential buildings to residential use, and in addition to policy D2 in the Local Plan, the following criteria will be applied:

- 1. No adverse effect on the viability of a farming unit or conflict with the operations of a working farm;*
- 2. Satisfactory access and other road requirements;*
- 3. Satisfactory public or private water supply and drainage facilities;*
- 4. The building is structurally sound, in a reasonable state of repair, and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding. A Structural Survey will be required where it appears that a building may not be capable of conversion. If it is incapable of conversion, any replacement building should reflect the form and character of the original structure. Significant alterations will only be permitted where it*

can be demonstrated that these provide environmental benefits such as a more sustainable and energy efficient design;

- 5. The building can be converted without alterations to its external appearance which would detract from its character and attractiveness;*
- 6. The building makes a positive contribution to the landscape and has no adverse effect on countryside amenity or nature conservation;*
- 7. No adverse impact on ancient monuments or archaeological sites;*
- 8. Appropriate siting, design and materials in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies.*

Where existing agricultural buildings are being lost to agricultural use, the applicant will be required to give information on any consequent need and proposals for siting new agricultural buildings to replace those which are redundant. Such buildings should not conflict with the residential use of the redundant buildings. (Refer to Appendix 2 for further advice on Farm Steading Conversions).

Similarly, if existing agricultural uses are to be retained in buildings adjacent to or close to the proposed residential uses, consent will not normally be granted unless assurance can be given that conflict or nuisance will not occur.

2.a.2 Rebuilding

In assessing proposals for the rebuilding of existing dwellings and for the construction of new dwellings on derelict residential sites, the standard policy criteria will be applied. In these cases there is also a requirement that:

- *there is substantial evidence of residential use on site.*

Substantial evidence would require that:

- *the walls of the former residential property are substantially intact.*

2.b. Building Groups

PAN 36 indicates that in addition to new housing development in settlements there is scope for adding to, or creating, small groups of housing in the countryside provided that they are sympathetic in terms of scale, proportion and materials to other buildings in the locality.

The Scottish Borders Council's policy is that in the countryside new housing will be encouraged to locate within or adjacent to building groups. Such development must meet the standard criteria as listed on page 7.

All applications for new houses at existing building groups will be tested against an analysis of:

- a) the presence or, otherwise of a group; and
- b) the suitability of that group to absorb new development.

The Scottish Borders Council considers that there are adequate opportunities for new development in the countryside at existing building groups and will resist the formation of new building groups.

2.b.1 Definition of a Building Group

The existence of a group will be identifiable by a sense of place which will be contributed to by:

- natural boundaries such as water courses, trees or enclosing landform, or
- man-made boundaries such as existing buildings, roads, plantations or means of enclosure.

Sites should not normally break into previously undeveloped fields, particularly where there exists a definable natural boundary between the existing group and the field. Natural boundaries should take precedence over man-made boundaries when defining the extent of a building group.



Figure 1: Edge of Building Group

Normally a group will consist of residential buildings comprising at least three dwelling units. Conversions may themselves constitute a complete building group. Building groups should not be allowed to expand by more than 100% from the baseline (see section 2.b.2), unless it can be demonstrated that additional development would provide overriding economic benefits.

Additionally, there may be locations where a more dispersed building pattern is the norm. These areas are referred to as “anchor points” and are found within the Southern Housing Market Area. A lower threshold may also be

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accepted in instances where the development would bring tangible environmental benefits. In all cases, the existence of a sense of place will be the primary consideration.

New housing within walled gardens will only be considered favourably if the walled garden is itself part of an existing building group.

In assessing the suitability of any particular group to accommodate new houses, other factors will also be taken into account:

- *The scale and siting of new development should reflect and respect the character and amenity of the existing group, and the individual houses within the group;*
- *New development should be limited to the area contained by that sense of place;*
- *Any new build should be located within a reasonable distance of the existing properties within the building group, the distance between existing properties and proposed new build should be guided by the spacing between the existing properties within the group;*
- *Proposals which involve the formation of new public roads for access (and public street lighting) will normally be of too large a scale;*
- *Sites should not normally break into a previously undeveloped field or require the removal of mature trees in good condition;*
- *Sites within 400m of existing intensive livestock units, will not normally be permitted unless required in connection with the farm or business itself;*
- *Sites close to working farm buildings or other rural industries will be given careful consideration to ensure no potential conflict;*
- *Existing groups may in themselves be complete, such as terraces of farm cottages and may not be suitable for further additions;*
- *Extensions of ribbon development along public roads will not normally be permitted;*
- *There will be a presumption against development which would result in the coalescence of a group with a nearby settlement;*
- *The use of Section 75 Agreements will be considered, for example, to restrict further housing at a building group.*

2.b.2 100% Rule

Subject to amenity, environmental and built form considerations, housing in the countryside policy prohibits building groups from being developed by more than 100%.

In assessing planning applications that propose an extension to a building group, the Council will not approve development that would be visually intrusive in the landscape, or detrimental to landscape characteristics, scenic quality or attributes of the existing building group. Therefore only sites that have little or no amenity, environmental, landscape or sustainability constraints, and provide a building design suitable to the building group will be considered acceptable. In addition to the criteria set out in this section, in

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assessing any application the above criteria in section 2.b.1 will also be taken into consideration.

The Council will also consider whether building groups should support further development or whether they are considered to be complete.

A group will be considered to be complete where further development could result in a detrimental impact on the building group.

In particular, the Council will carefully consider the potential adverse impact of additional development on those groups that have already been subject to recent development under the housing in the countryside policy. The amenity of the existing properties and householders is a primary consideration. The aim is to ensure that building groups are not subject to development that impacts on the amenity or character of the group to the detriment of residents. Even where an appropriate site exists, no further development will be permitted where residential amenity is compromised.

The 100% rule is calculated in terms of the existing number of housing units within the group as at the start of the Local Plan period, this includes those units which are being built, or have planning permission but building has not commenced. Therefore if a building group is made up of three housing units, the maximum it can grow is by three units and only where an appropriate development opportunity exists.

2.c. Isolated Housing and Housing for Local Needs

Although the rural economy has changed dramatically in the last century and only a relatively few people now have an economic base in the countryside, there are still circumstances where a new house may be required for genuine circumstances of local need. In assessing such a proposal the Council will take into account a number of factors:-

- *Whether the need for the house is supported on an agricultural basis by an appropriate agricultural adviser with suitable accreditations;*
- *Whether the need for the house is demonstrated to be essential for the running of an agricultural or rural business at that location;*
- *Whether there is a need for new accommodation for an existing local resident to suit changed and exceptional circumstances e.g. a retiring farmer or farm worker retaining an interest in the land;*
- *Whether the applicant has selected the most satisfactory site in terms of the standard policy criteria on page 7.*

Anchor Points

The Scottish Borders Council's Local Plan identifies specified areas of the Borders where it is considered that isolated housing may be appropriate. Anchor points are areas that can be found within the Area of Dispersed Communities as shown in the Local Plan Policy Maps. The provision of anchor points has been formulated in response to concerns over rural



Figure 2: Dispersed Community

depopulation in specific areas of the Southern Borders. Currently anchor points may be identified at Ettrick and Yarrow Feus, others may be identified during the lifetime of the Local Plan. Within these areas there will also be encouragement for new houses within or adjacent to building groups. New housing development in these areas will still be subject to the standard criteria listed on page 8. In addition the requirement for a high standard of siting and design will be rigorously applied where isolated sites are approved. Sites will generally require being inconspicuous, often well set back from the public road, and integrated into the landscape.

Isolated Housing – Economic Justification

Although the general presumption in national guidance is that isolated housing development should be discouraged, development plans can, with reasoned justification adopt a more permissive approach to new housing development in clearly identified isolated locations. Where permission is sought for a house relating to a business, a Business Plan, supported by referees or independent business adjudication, will be required.



Figure 3: Working farm in valley

Hobby/Part-time Farming

In the case of proposals for a new house based on the operation of a farm unit on a part-time or hobby basis, where farming represents only a proportion of household income, each case will be assessed taking into account the physical characteristics of the unit and the contribution of the farming element to the overall household income.

Mansion Houses

In some circumstances, development of isolated housing not relating to the above criteria may be encouraged. When the proposed development is the rebuilding or restoration of a house within established policy/parkland settings, (not normally comprising part of a designed landscape) the development may be encouraged. There is a requirement for evidence to be provided to the satisfaction of the Council showing the existence of the building as described in policy D2, or documentary evidence relating to the siting and form of the previous house. The siting and design of new buildings should respect the historical building pattern and the character of the landscape setting. The extent of new building should not exceed the original historic building.

Guest Houses

New guest houses within the Countryside should only be encouraged within an existing building group or within buildings that are capable for conversion. The same criteria as set out in Section 3: Building Groups will still apply.

Section 75 Agreements

Where a new house is permitted in these circumstances, the Scottish Borders Council will normally seek to enter into a Section 75 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 with the landowner. The terms of such an agreement will depend upon the specific circumstances of the application but typically may:

a) restrict further residential development on other land in the area in the owners control; or

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b) require that the land unit and the dwelling house be treated as a single indivisible unit in any future sale of the property.

Alternatively, any planning consent may be subject to a condition similarly restricting occupancy.

The Scottish Borders Council generally supports new rural development and proposals for agricultural diversification. Proposals for new houses related to prospective enterprises will require to be accompanied both by adequate evidence substantiating the viability of the project and justification that the provision of a house is essential to the enterprise.

3. Siting and Design

In recent years there has been growing concern about the lack of sensitivity in the siting of new housing in the countryside and about the introduction of house styles which are more characteristic of suburban rather than rural areas. Too often designs and styles are shuffled from one part of the country to the other with scant regard for regional identities. The result is a pastiche and a sad loss of local identity.

The Council will encourage a full planning application in preference to an outline application for any housing in the countryside proposal - including rebuilding, conversions and mansion houses. This applies in particular to those proposals which may impact on a:

- National Scenic Area
- Area of Great Landscape Value
- Historic Garden or Designed Landscape
- Special Protection Area
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Listed Building
- Conservation Area

It is particularly important to establish the relationship that the proposed housing will have with existing buildings, and with the wider countryside. It is also important to identify the cumulative impact of housing in the countryside has on the area, particularly on the areas under the designations listed above.

As a consequence, the main criticisms of new housing in the countryside have been:

- *the selection of obtrusive rather than sheltered sites;*
- *the failure to integrate new housing with the surrounding landscape;*
- *the introduction of suburban house types which, by virtue of their shape, shallow roof pitch, overhanging eaves and verges, window proportion, and general detailing including site layout are out of character with traditional rural building styles:*
- *the use of excessive underbuilding, particularly on sloping sites, resulting in buildings which are unrelated to the existing landform;*
- *the use of materials such as facing brick and some types of artificial stone which can be incongruous in a rural setting particularly when used in combination on the same building.*

The advice given in this guidance seeks to reverse this trend.

In general, the guidance on siting acknowledges the range of circumstances which exist and the variation in the capacity of different landscapes within the Borders to absorb development. It does not, therefore, seek to impose standard solutions throughout the Borders. Equally, in formulating a set of principles on the design of new housing in the countryside the objective will not be to recreate the rural Borders of previous eras. This said, designers of new housing will be expected to respect and learn from what has gone before. This does not mean copying the buildings of the past, nor does it mean the mere application of a list of vernacular details in an attempt to achieve the necessary quality, but it does involve interpreting traditional forms and materials in a modern context.

A well designed and carefully sited house will not only look more pleasing and provide shelter from prevailing winds and rain, but may also provide a more interesting interior, lower maintenance costs and maintain its value better in the longer term. In essence, the building of new housing in the countryside should be regarded as an opportunity to contribute to, rather than detract from, the Borders countryside and heritage.

3.1 Siting

General Considerations

The Borders area is not uniform in its landscape character. There is a wide variation from the well defined field systems of the Merse with its hedgerows and woodland copses to the open, rolling upland areas of the Cheviots, the Lammermuirs and the Tweedsmuir Hills with their deeply incised valleys. If new housing is to be absorbed successfully into a particular landscape it is important that the setting is selected by respecting the local landform, the field patterns and the tree and hedgerow cover. In addition, by observing the way in which traditional buildings have been set into a particular landscape a great deal can be learned on how new buildings can contribute to maintaining a sense of place and identity and, at the same time, integrate with the surrounding landscape.

Advice on siting is, therefore, primarily concerned with ensuring that, by respecting the local landform, the pattern of fields and the distribution of tree and hedgerow cover, new housing is in harmony with its immediate and wider surroundings. If a site is selected which is unduly prominent on a ridge or in a skyline position, then the task of designing a house which does not look out of place is made extremely difficult. In order to allow a proper assessment of the suitability of countryside sites, applicants will be encouraged to submit indicative plans of site layout, house type, means of access, servicing and landscape proposals even at outline application stage.

Terracing and Underbuilding

Many sites selected for new houses are sloping in nature and, in some instances, their preparation to take a house conflicts with the surrounding landform. This happens where excavations create a flat building platform out of a sloping site in order to accommodate a house style designed specifically for a flat site. The resultant distortion of the landform can be visually disruptive

especially if retaining walls are required on the downhill side of the excavations. Similarly, visual disruption can occur where extensive underbuilding is required to create an artificial platform for the house. The use of contrasting colours or materials on the underbuilding can accentuate this problem.

Extensive excavation or underbuilding as described above should be avoided. As a general rule, to ensure that siting is sympathetic to landform, a new house should be parallel with the contours so that the house fits into the landform naturally rather than appearing to have been deposited on, or engineered into, the site. The use of split levels to achieve a stepped or terraced effect that fits into the landscape, particularly



Figure 4: Buildings "stepped" into landscape

between the main 'front' of a house and service accommodation to the rear, can help reduce the amount of underbuilding where it is necessary.

Woodlands and Hedgerows

Setting a building against a background of trees is one of the most successful means by which new development can be absorbed into the landscape. It is important, therefore, to retain existing trees wherever possible both within the site and on its boundaries. In addition to reducing the visual impact of the new development, the retention of existing trees can reduce the extent of new planting and landscaping which may be required. Where retained, trees should be a suitable distance from the proposed house and foundations should be designed to avoid any subsequent structural damage. Where new planting is necessary, care should also be taken to avoid damage to services and utilities, including drainage and to integrate any lighting scheme with landscape proposals. In parts of the Borders where there is little existing planting and limited scope for landscaping due to exposure, such as the Lammermuir or Tweedsmuir Hills, particular care should be taken in the selection of the site and the design of the house.



Figure 5: House against a background of trees

Tree and hedgerow planting can be invaluable to visually integrate development with the landscape. The purpose of landscaping however, should not be to screen or hide development, but to enhance its setting.

Outbuildings and Boundary Treatments

Where new houses are proposed it is also important to consider the location and appearance of outbuildings such as garages and liquid gas and oil storage tanks. The position of these buildings and structures should be considered at the outset of the planning process and should be used to create a sense of enclosure, define spaces and, built in a style and with materials similar to the dwelling house.

Similarly, the space associated with a new house should be considered as an integral part of the development and not as an afterthought. Applicants should consider new boundary walls, bin recycling/housings, driveways, fences and hedging at an early stage in the design process and design them in keeping with local traditions. Concrete block walls, concrete kerbing, suburban ranch type fences, inappropriate lighting and the use of fast growing conifers for hedgerows should be avoided.

Neighbourliness

In addition to respecting its location in the countryside generally, a new building should be a good neighbour to existing buildings in two ways. Firstly, its siting should take account of and be sympathetic to the existing layout of other buildings in the area. Secondly, the new building should not detract from the setting, aspect or privacy of existing buildings. Government advice encourages planning authorities to exercise particular care when considering planning applications for new houses within 400 metres of established intensive livestock units because of the possible problems of nuisance. This principle will be extended by the Scottish Borders Council to take into account possible problems from any bad neighbour development and, where these problems appear too great, consent may be withheld.

3.2 Design

General Considerations

The detailed design of buildings has varied in the past according to local climate, site conditions, materials, skills and traditions. Fashion, technology and economics have also played their part. Recently, building design has become increasingly homogeneous, often with suburban house designs, derived from regional styles from throughout Britain, being directly translated into locations within the Borders countryside. This lack of sensitivity and failure to refer to local design characteristics when considering house design, has led to many examples of intrusive housing developments in prominent locations, which now detract seriously from our rural environment.

Of particular concern, in recent years, has been the considerable increase in the use of standard suburban designs which tend to ignore local building traditions. Irrespective of style, a house requires to be designed for its setting and the importation of standard suburban designs or the cosmetic

modification of standard types, is never successful in a rural setting.

For a new house to be successful, the designer should draw on the widely appreciated and accepted traditions of Border house design rather than from models more suited to a suburban context or from designs which derive from other regions. It is therefore important to be aware of the key elements of building design which characterise the indigenous architectural form. By referring to these key elements when considering the design of a house, it should be possible to ensure that the new building is sympathetic to, and compatible with, the traditional building form of the Borders.

This guidance should not, however, be applied unthinkingly nor across the board, as there will be circumstances where, with sound reasoned justification, a different solution, in terms of building form, proportion and materials, can legitimately be pursued. Innovative designs, therefore, which are sympathetic to their setting and to the general principles in respect of siting set out above, will also be encouraged. There are a number of examples of new buildings which relate well to neighbouring buildings of past styles without attempting to copy those styles.

A forthcoming SPG on design will provide additional information, guidance and advice.

Form and Proportion

The satisfactory composition of a building depends, to a large extent, on there being a unity between its main constituent parts. In this respect, the main elements for houses of the “kit house” type are plan depth, wall height, roof pitch, length of frontage and window proportions.

The majority of roofs on older houses in the Borders are pitched at between 40 and 45 degrees. This pitch is suitable for natural slate whereas modern lower pitched roof are technically unsuitable for slating and tend to be roofed with interlocking tiles. This tendency to have their roofs pitched lower, often as low as 25 degrees, is one of the reasons why modern houses can look so out of place in our countryside. The older house also has a relatively narrow plan depth and short frontage which allows a satisfactory overall composition when combined with a roof of between 40 and 45 degrees.

Modern houses vary greatly in size but are almost invariably larger than the traditional farmworkers’ cottages and, as a consequence, have both deeper plans and longer frontages. This makes it extremely difficult to achieve a satisfactory composition if a roof of between 40 and 45 degrees is to be used. The resultant house will inevitably have a “long roof” from eaves to ridge and appear top heavy and clumsy. A top heavy appearance also occurs in many current designs for one and half storey houses where the plan is deep and the accommodation requirements result in rooms in the roofspace.

The size of house and its component parts can however, be kept in balance and within reasonable limits if the basic house plan is combined with suitably designed and proportioned extensions either to the side or rear. In this way

the key elements of plan depth, wall height, roof pitch and length of frontage, can be both traditionally derived and in balance. This should also allow the prospective occupant to achieve the space standards necessary for a modern lifestyle.

3.3 The Elements of Buildings

Doors and Porches

Traditionally doors were broad and short, framed and lined or panelled, often with fanlights inserted above and in most cases with the same types of surround as the windows on the property i.e. rybats with rybats, and margins with margins. Every effort should be made to follow these styles for house doors and also to use appropriate timber doors for garages. Where double garage doors are proposed a solid pier should be introduced to maintain as strong a vertical emphasis as possible. Porches have also become a common feature and a variety of styles has evolved often for decorative rather than for functional reasons. There are a number of traditional styles which are repeated throughout the Borders and reference to these is encouraged where porches are proposed.

Windows and Dormers

Windows have traditionally been designed with a strong vertical emphasis. This is generally achieved by vertically proportioned window openings and panes. Where a room does require a large area of glazing the window should be divided by the use of mullions to retain this vertical emphasis. Where the roof space is required for accommodation, roof lights with vertical proportions or traditional dormers should be used in preference to box dormers which look unattractive, can be noisy and can suffer from maintenance problems.

Chimneys, Eaves and Verges

Chimneys were normally provided on traditional buildings and their absence from a roofline removes interest. Normally stacks should be located on the gables or on the ridge line. Chimneys breaking roof pitches will be discouraged. Stacks should normally be stone (natural or artificial), wet-dash or fireclay brick, with a coping and chimney cans. Eaves are generally either kept to a minimum with the gutter kept to the wall face (and fixed with rafter straps, not to a painted fascia board) or oversailing open rafters. The use of box soffits and barge boarding will therefore be discouraged.

Verges are generally either finished against a stone skew (or coping) or the slating projects beyond the gable wall below, sometimes with a decorative barge board and these details should be used wherever possible.

Materials and Colours

Sensitive use of materials and colour is essential to ensure that a building blends into the landscape. Appropriate materials are particularly important in the two main elements of design, roofs and walls. The use of appropriate natural slate or clay pantiles will be encouraged in areas where they are traditional. There is also an extensive range of artificial slates and concrete

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tiles now available and these will be acceptable in less sensitive locations. The use of appropriate natural stone and wet dash render for external walls will be encouraged. In certain instances timber facings will be considered as an external finish. The use of facing brick is not traditional in the Borders and its use will not normally be encouraged.

The selection of appropriate colours is important and a well designed house may still fail to blend with its setting if its colours are badly chosen. Colours based on local stone and soil will complement the natural environment and contribute to the sense of regional identity. Looking at older traditional buildings can be a useful starting point. The imaginative use of colour which adds interest to a design is not precluded where this is sensitive to the wider setting.

4. Access and Servicing

4.1 Roads and Access

Just as the rural economy has changed in the past century so has the pattern and volume of traffic on rural roads. Yet, despite some improvements the road network in rural areas and the geometry of minor rural roads is largely unchanged. In the interests of public safety it is therefore important that any new houses in the countryside are served by a vehicular access of a safe standard and provided with adequate on site facilities for vehicle movement and parking. Unless such provision can be made, planning consent will not normally be granted for development.

The vehicular access to the site will require to be of adequate width and gradient and have visibility splays appropriate to both the location and the speed of traffic on the adjoining road system.

Within the site a minimum of two car parking spaces will be required. A garage will not be accepted as contributing a parking space to the development. Where access is direct on to a classified road a turning space will also be required within the site and a lay-by may be required for visiting service vehicles where the public road might otherwise be obstructed.

Where an access is to serve five or more houses, the Council normally requires that the access be constructed/upgraded to a public road standard. As part of this standard, street lighting will normally be required. In some cases, such public roads and street lighting are urban in character and development of a scale involving such infrastructure could be inappropriate and may result in planning consent being withheld. A particular concern with street lighting is the daytime impact of standard lamp columns and lanterns and the night time impact of light intrusion and pollution. A concern with allowing too much development in a rural location is the negative impact this can have on sustainable transport.

4.2 Water and Drainage

No matter where a new house is located, it is essential that it can be provided with an adequate water supply and be serviced by a satisfactory system of drainage.

Whilst it is preferable that a public water supply or drainage system should be available, in many rural areas this is not possible. Proposals for new houses in the countryside which cannot connect to a public service will require to be accompanied by adequate evidence to demonstrate that private facilities for water supply and drainage are available. Although this may involve the applicant in survey work to test a water supply or a soakaway drainage system, there is a little to be gained by the Planning Authority granting planning consent for sites which are technically unsuitable for development. Such information should therefore be lodged with the application to avoid delay in processing.

5. Good Practice

General good practice advice is provided in PAN 72 – Housing in the Countryside. The PAN provides advice and background information that should be taken into consideration when building housing in the countryside.

Location

3 factors that influence location: Landscape, Layout and Access.

Design

3 factors that influence design: Scale, Materials, Details

Examples of good practice in developments and design are included in the PAN.

The Scottish Borders Council supports the principles of development in the countryside stated in 'Tomorrow's Architectural Heritage - landscape and Buildings in the Countryside' by J M Fladmark, GY Mulvagh and BM Evans. That publication highlights the following principles:

Respect the Natural and Cultural Heritage:

- *observe the time-honoured response to climate and landform in vernacular architecture*
- *respect original style and detailing when converting old buildings, and demolish only as a last resort*

Locate Development in a Sustainable Manner:

- *use locations near settlements rather than remote sites*
- *work with the climate, contours and scale of the locality*

Design the setting to be in Character with the Surroundings:

- *treat the whole site as an entity, and design buildings and landscape together*
- *use planting and walls to create enclosure, and to tie the buildings into the landscape*

Built Form and Layout should be Functional and Appropriate:

- *use style and scale consistently throughout a site*
- *design both internal and external spaces so that their functions and relationships are easily perceived*

Use a Limited Range of Colours and Materials for Visual Unity

- *use complementary and earth colours for harmony, and bold colours for contrast and emphasis*
- *consider the life expectancy and the maintenance of both buildings and landscaping*

Further advice on Farm Steading Conversions can be found in the advice note in Appendix 2.

6. Further Advice

This guidance is intended to provide the first steps for building a house in the Borders countryside. If you are interested in any particular location or have a particular site in mind you should contact the Planning and Economic Development Department for an informal assessment of the suitability of your proposal. (See page 27)

Whilst the Council will encourage a full planning application in preference to an outline application for any housing in the countryside proposal, you may prefer to submit an application for outline consent in order to get a formal decision from the Scottish Borders Council on whether your proposed site is acceptable in principle. However, even at the outline stage, sketch proposals for sensitive sites or an explanation of the circumstances justifying a house based on special need will be important to assist in the processing of the application.

All applications for full planning consent for a new house will require to provide information on all aspects of the proposal including details of external materials and their colours, floor and site levels, landscaping and boundary treatments, means of access and means of servicing.

For further advice on the detailed design of a new house it is recommended that you consult an architect with experience in the design of new houses in the countryside or a local builder with similar experience.

Publications

Further information on building in the countryside is also available in recent publications:

Scottish Government Scottish Planning Policy 3 – Planning for Homes
Scottish Executive Scottish Planning Policy 15 – Planning for Rural Development
Scottish Executive Planning Advice Note 72 – Housing in the Countryside
Scottish Office National Planning Policy Guideline 14 – Natural Heritage
Tomorrow’s Architectural Heritage - Landscape and Buildings in the Countryside - JM Fladmark, GY Mulvagh and BM Evans

7. Glossary Of Terms

Anchor Point: A dispersed community that is located within the Southern Housing Market Area.

Building Group: A group of residential buildings comprising at least three dwelling units which are situated closely together and which are identifiable by a sense of place. Natural boundaries such as water courses, trees or enclosing landform, or man-made boundaries such as existing buildings, roads, plantations or means of enclosure contribute to the group. Where conversion is required to establish a cohesive group of at least three houses, no additional housing will be approved until such conversion has been implemented.

Housing in the Countryside: Housing located outside the development boundaries of settlements included in the Local Plan.

Isolated Housing: Individual houses in the countryside which are not considered to be part of a building group.

Local Policy: Policy that is formed at the local level. Local policy must comply with national policy.

National Policy and Advice: National Policy and Advice which is produced at national level and that local policy must adhere to.

PAN/ Planning Advice Note: A series of documents that are produced at the national level and which provide advice on good practice.

Section 75 Agreement: A legal agreement which regulates the development or use of land and is entered into by the Planning Authority and any person interested in the land to which it relates.

SPG/ Supplementary Planning Guidance: Documents which summarise the Planning Authority's detailed advice on its planning policy.

SPP/ Scottish Planning Policy: A series of documents that provide statements of Scottish Government policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters.

Contact Addresses

Advice from the Planning and Economic Development Department can be obtained at the appropriate offices as follows:

Council Headquarters,
Newtown St Boswells
TD6 0SA
Telephone: 01835 825060

Galashiels Area Office
Albert Place,
Galashiels
TD1 3DL
Telephone: 01896 662705

Berwickshire Area Office,
Newtown Street,
Duns
TD11 3DT
Telephone: 01361 886105

Peebles Area Office,
Rosetta Road,
Peebles
EH45 8HQ
Telephone: 01721 726305

Hawick Area Office
Town Hall
High Street
Hawick
TD9 9EF
Telephone: 01450 364705

APPENDIX 1: STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES H4, H5 & H6, AND LOCAL PLAN POLICIES H1, D1, D2 & G8

POLICY H4 HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE – CONVERSION OR REBUILDING

Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings to residential use and the rebuilding of existing dwellings in the countryside outwith defined settlements will normally be supported where they are in accordance with the provisions of the policy guidance 'New Housing in the Borders Countryside'.

POLICY H5 NEW HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE – BUILDING GROUPS

Proposals for new housing in the countryside outwith defined settlements but associated with existing building groups will normally be supported where they are in accordance with the provisions of the policy guidance 'New Housing in the Borders Countryside'. Favourable consideration is more likely where development proposals:

- (i) are readily accessible to the strategic public transport network,
- (ii) employ energy efficient and/or innovative design principles,
- (iii) incorporate employment-generating uses appropriate to a countryside setting.

POLICY H6 NEW HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE – ISOLATED HOUSING

Proposals for new housing in the countryside, outwith defined settlements and unrelated to building groups, will only be supported where:

- (i) the house can be shown by the developer to be essential at that location for the needs of agriculture or other uses currently occupying or requiring an appropriate rural location, and
- (ii) the requirement for a house cannot be satisfied by Policy H5.

POLICY H1 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Where the Local Housing Strategy or local needs assessment identifies a local housing need, the Council will require the provision of a proportion of land for affordable or special needs housing, both on allocated or windfall sites. The final scale of such affordable and/or special needs housing will be assessed against:

1. ongoing local housing needs assessment work being carried out by the Council,
2. the location and size of the site, and
3. the availability of other such housing in the locality.

Developers may be required to make contributions through:

4. the provision of a proportion of the site for affordable housing affordable, or
 5. the provision of additional land elsewhere to accommodate the required number of affordable housing units,
- or
6. the provision of commuted payments.

JUSTIFICATION

The aim of the policy is to ensure that new housing development provides an appropriate range and choice of “affordable” units as well as mainstream market housing. The provision of affordable housing is a material consideration in the planning system, and the development plan is recognised as an appropriate vehicle through which it may be facilitated by planning authorities.

The requirement set by this policy, and the means of meeting it, will vary between settlements and between sites. Negotiation on a site by site basis at the time of an application will determine the precise requirements relating to any specific development proposal. Ongoing research as part of the local housing needs assessment has identified, and will continue to identify, areas where there is a demonstrable need for affordable housing. Where surveys have been undertaken on local housing need, this is indicated in the Settlement Profiles.

Decision making will be guided by the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing which, at the time of writing, provides for a minimum 10-25% in line with the SPG on Affordable Housing. These percentages may be revised upwards depending on the site or the information available on local need.

“Affordable” housing is broadly defined as housing that is available for rent or sale that meets local identified needs of people who cannot afford to buy or rent housing for their requirements that is generally available on the open market. A fuller definition is given in the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

POLICY H2 – PROTECTION OF RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Development that is judged to have an adverse impact on the amenity of existing or proposed residential areas will not be permitted. To protect the amenity and character of these areas, any developments will be assessed against:

1. The principle of the development, including where relevant, any open space that would be lost; and
2. The details of the development itself particularly in terms of:
 - (a) the scale, form and type of development in terms of its fit within a residential area,
 - (b) the generation of traffic or noise,
 - (c) the level of visual impact.

JUSTIFICATION

The aim of the policy is to protect the amenity of both existing established residential areas and proposed new housing developments. The policy applies to areas where the predominant use is residential; such areas are not identified on the Proposals Maps given that the predominant use of an area can change over time. The policy will be applicable for alterations and extensions, development on garden ground or “backlands”, redevelopment of brownfield sites and development on gap sites. It applies to all forms of development and will often be most applicable to development other than housing.

The Scottish Government’s Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)³ Housing, states the need for high quality layout in housing developments in order to protect residential amenity.

POLICY D1 – BUSINESS, TOURISM AND LEISURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Proposals for business, tourism or leisure development in the countryside will be approved provided that:

1. the development is to be used directly for agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations, or for uses which by their nature are appropriate to the rural character of the area, or
2. the development is to be used directly for leisure, recreation or tourism appropriate to a countryside location and is in accordance with the Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy, or
3. the development is to be used for other business or employment generating uses, provided that the Council is satisfied that there is an economic and/or operational need for the particular countryside location, and that it cannot reasonably be accommodated within the Development Boundary of a settlement.

In all cases:

4. the development must respect the amenity and character of the surrounding area,
5. the development must have no significant adverse impact on nearby uses, particularly housing,
6. where a new building is proposed, the developer will be required to provide evidence that no appropriate existing building or brownfield site is available, and where conversion of an existing building is proposed, evidence that the building is capable of conversion without substantial demolition and rebuilding,
7. the expansion or intensification of uses will be approved, in principle, where the use and scale of development are appropriate to the rural character of the area,
8. the development must take account of accessibility considerations in accordance with Policy Inf11.

JUSTIFICATION

The aim of the policy is to allow for appropriate employment generating development in the countryside whilst protecting the environment in the countryside and to ensure that business, tourism and leisure related developments are appropriate to their location. This policy will be applied to any applications that involve economic diversification in rural areas, for example diversification of agricultural land. Any diversification must involve land uses that are complementary to or appropriate for the area.

Developments that involve both employment and housing uses will be assessed against this policy and Policy D2.

The policy recognises that some tourism related developments may not be able to be easily accommodated within settlements and may be satisfactorily located in certain countryside locations subject to compliance with environmental policies. Decision making will be guided by reference to the

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Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy which requires all tourism developments to be of high quality, sustainable and customer focussed.

The relevant government guidance is NPPG14 and SPP 15 – Planning for Rural Development.

POLICY D2 – HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Council wishes to promote appropriate rural housing development:

- (a) in village locations in preference to open countryside, and
- (b) in dispersed communities in the southern Borders that are experiencing depopulation in preference to areas under significant commuter pressure in the Northern Borders, Central Borders and Berwickshire.

These general principles will be the starting point for the consideration of applications for housing in the countryside which will be assessed against the Council's Policy Guidance Note "New Housing in the Borders Countryside" 1993, as amended 2000 and 2004 and Structure Plan policies H5 and H6. This policy should be read in conjunction with these other policy statements which give more detailed guidance on siting, design and interpretation.

Housing in the countryside may be approved provided that:
EITHER

(Building Group)

1. The Council is satisfied that the site is well related to an existing group of at least three houses or building(s) capable of conversion to residential use. Where conversion is required to establish a cohesive group of at least three houses, no additional housing will be approved until such conversion has been implemented.
2. In a small number of areas of the Borders where there are few building groups comprising 3 houses and a more dispersed pattern is the norm, a lower threshold may be appropriate. A lower threshold may also be accepted in instances where the development would bring tangible environmental benefits. In these cases the existence of a sense of place will be the primary consideration.
3. Any consents for new build granted under this part of this policy should not exceed 100% of the existing number of housing units in the group. No further development above this threshold should be permitted.
4. The cumulative impact of new development on the landscape and amenity of the surrounding area will be taken into account when determining new applications. Additional development within a building group will be refused if, in conjunction with other developments in the area, it will cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the landscape or the natural heritage, unless it can be shown that development is merited through other criteria as set out below.

OR

(Anchor point)

The Council is satisfied that the site lies within a recognised "dispersed community" that functions effectively as an anchor point in the southern Borders. These dispersed communities are to be found in areas of rural depopulation and comprise the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys and southern Borders as indicated on Policy Maps P0-P5. Any consents granted under this part of this policy will not normally exceed 100% of the existing number of housing units in the dispersed group. The design of housing will be subject to

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the same considerations as other types of housing in the countryside proposals.

OR

(Economic Requirement)

The Council is satisfied that:

1. the housing development is a direct operational requirement of an agricultural, horticultural, forestry or other enterprise which is itself appropriate to the countryside; such could include businesses that would cause disturbance or loss of amenity if located within an existing settlement, or
2. the housing development would help support a business that results in a clear social or environmental benefit to the area, including the retention or provision of employment or the provision of affordable or local needs housing

AND

3. no appropriate site exists within a building group, and
4. there is no suitable existing house or other building capable of conversion for the required residential use, and

EITHER

5. a) it is for a worker predominantly employed in an enterprise which is itself appropriate to the countryside and the presence of that worker on-site is essential to the efficient operation of the enterprise,

OR

- b) it is for use of a person last employed in an agricultural, horticultural, forestry or other enterprise which is itself appropriate to the countryside, and also employed on the unit that is the subject of the application, and the development will release another house for continued use by an agricultural, horticultural, forestry or other enterprise which is itself appropriate to the countryside.

The applicant and, where different, the landowner, may be required to enter into a Section 75 agreement with the planning authority: to tie the proposed house (or, in the case of 5b). above, any existing house) to the business for which it is justified and to restrict the occupancy of the house to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in that specific business, and their dependants.

A Business Plan, supported by referees or independent business adjudication, may be required in some cases.

OR

(Conversion)

The proposed development is a change of use of a building to a house, provided that:

1. the Council is satisfied that the building has architectural or historic merit or is physically suited for residential use; and

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2. the building stands substantially intact (normally at least to wallhead height) and the existing structure requires no significant demolition. A structural survey will be required where in the opinion of the Council it appears that the building may not be capable of conversion; and
3. the conversion and any proposed extension or alteration is in keeping with the scale and architectural character of the existing building.

OR

(Rebuilding)

The proposed development is the rebuilding or restoration of a house, provided that either:

1. the existing building makes a positive contribution to the landscape
2. the walls of the former residential property stand substantially intact (normally at least to wallhead height), and
3. no significant demolition is required (A structural survey will be required where it is proposed to fully demolish the building, showing that it is incapable of being restored); and
4. the restoration/rebuilding and any proposed extension or alteration is in keeping with the scale, form and architectural character of the existing or original building,
5. Significant alterations to the original character will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that these provide environmental benefits such as a more sustainable and energy efficient design

or:

6. the proposal relates to an established policy/parkland setting, not normally comprising part of a designed landscape, and
7. there is evidence of the existence of the building in terms of criteria 1-3 above, or, alternatively, sufficient documentary evidence exists relating to the siting and form of the previous house and this evidence is provided to the satisfaction of the Council, and
8. the siting and design of new buildings reflects and respects the historical building pattern and the character of the landscape setting, and
9. the extent of new building does not exceed what is to be replaced.

In **ALL** instances there shall be compliance with the Council's Policy and Guidance Note on 'New Housing in the Borders Countryside' and must not negatively impact on landscape and existing developments. The cumulative effect of applications under this policy will be taken into account when determining impact.

JUSTIFICATION

*The aims of the policy are: to encourage a long-term sustainable pattern of appropriate rural housing development that restricts development outwith defined settlements in accordance with the need to support existing services and facilities in villages and the promotion of sustainable travel patterns; to support rural businesses; to protect the environment from inappropriate and sporadic new housing development; and to direct new housing in the countryside development into identifiable building groups or to remote rural anchor points. Any housing built under this policy will **not** be treated as a new*

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anchor point or building group within this local plan period. The provisions regarding anchor points within the Policy have been formulated in response to concerns over rural depopulation in specific areas of the Southern Borders. Currently, anchor points may be identified at Ettrick and Yarrow Feus. Further anchor points may be identified during the lifetime of the Local Plan. Detailed evidence on the relationship to the anchor point should accompany planning applications seeking approval under this provision.

The policy restricts isolated new housing in the countryside in accordance with government guidance unless it can be satisfactorily substantiated by an economic justification. Any housing built under this justification as affordable housing will only be supported if it addresses an identified housing need, as listed in policy H1, or in a local housing needs survey, or in a Registered Social Landlord's delivery programme. Further information on this can be found in Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

The Council intends to consolidate its policy guidance on housing in the countryside by producing Supplementary Planning Guidance on Rural Development.

The relevant Scottish Executive Planning Policy Guidance is SPP3 – Planning for Housing and SPP15 – Planning for Rural Development which supports appropriate housing in the countryside. This refers to Planning Advice Note (PAN) 72– Housing in the Countryside (which states that development in the countryside will be determined by a number of factors including context, identity and connection). It also states that Housing in the Countryside developments must also comply with the six key qualities identified in “Designing Places” which make a successful place - one major consideration is the requirement for new development to fit within the landscape. PAN 36 – Siting Housing in the Countryside is also relevant.

POLICY G8 – DEVELOPMENT OUTWITH DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES

Where Development Boundaries are defined on Proposals Maps, they indicate the extent to which towns and villages should be allowed to expand during the Local Plan period to 2011. Development should be contained within the Development Boundary and proposals for new development outwith this boundary and not on allocated sites identified on the proposals maps will normally be refused.

Exceptional approvals may be granted provided strong reasons can be given that:

1. it is a job-generating development in the countryside that has an economic justification under Policy D1 or D2, OR
2. it is an affordable housing development that can be justified under in terms of Policy H1, OR
3. there is a shortfall identified by Scottish Borders Council through the housing land audit with regard to the provision of an effective 5 year housing land supply; OR
4. It is a development that it is considered would offer significant community benefits that outweigh the need to protect the Development Boundary.

AND the development of the site:

5. represents a logical extension of the built-up area, and
6. is of an appropriate scale in relation to the size of the settlement, and
7. does not prejudice the character, visual cohesion or natural built up edge of the settlement, and
8. does not cause a significant adverse effect on the landscape setting of the settlement or the natural heritage of the surrounding area.

The decision on whether to grant exceptional approvals will take account of:

1. any indicators regarding restrictions on, or encouragement of, development in the longer term that may be set out in the settlement profile in Section 4;
2. the cumulative effect of any other developments outwith the Development Boundary within the current Local Plan period;
3. the infrastructure and service capacity of the settlement.

JUSTIFICATION

The aim of the policy is to ensure that most development is located within defined Development Boundaries. Any development proposals outwith the boundary would have to comply with the rigorous exceptions criteria contained within this policy. It is considered that development outwith the Development Boundary should not be seen as an alternative to allocated sites where these are available and therefore, should only be an “exceptional” occurrence.

The policy recognises that it is not practicable to provide detailed development boundaries for every settlement. It also recognises that within the lifetime of the local plan, it is inevitable that unanticipated or windfall

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developments will arise immediately outwith development boundary and that on occasion these might be acceptable provided they are in line with the Plan's other policies. Examples of developments offering significant community benefits might be a school, community or health centre or in the case of a village, there might be community support for housing development that could help provide a population to support local services.

For clarification, any development for affordable housing must meet the requirements of policy H1, namely, there must be evidence that the proposed development meets an identified housing need for the settlement and that it will provide housing defined as affordable under the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

This policy is supported by Scottish Executive Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)3 and Planning Advice Note (PAN) 44 which set out development control criteria for expansions to existing settlements and guidance on fitting new housing development into the landscape.

APPENDIX 2: FARM STEADING CONVERSIONS ADVICE **NOTE**

Farm Steading Conversions

This note may also be useful when dealing with the conversion of other buildings found in the countryside, such as derelict cottages and stables.

Scottish Borders Council has seen a significant rise in the number of planning applications for housing in the countryside. The annual average of planning approvals relating to Housing in the Countryside is 247. Many of these applications are for farm steading conversions or associated new build. Due to a significant increase in steading conversions, it has become increasingly important to ensure that these planning applications are dealt with appropriately.

The topics covered by this Advice Note are:

1. Rural Character
2. Policy
3. Steading Conversions – Design
Landscape
Access
Planning Control
4. New Build Associated with Steading Conversions – Building Groups
Access & Roads
Layout & Design
Planning Controls
5. Appendice – The Appendice is a checklist to assist in reminding Officers of the various issues covered in this Advice Note. It also includes key words as reminders.

1 Rural Character

The Scottish Borders like many other parts of Scotland has a range of rural buildings that can be found in attractive settings. Where these buildings become redundant it may be considered appropriate that they be re-used to keep the appearance and character of the rural farm buildings as well as the rural countryside. A balance needs to be found to accommodate the requirements for the new use yet retain the rural character and setting of the steading. *Only buildings that the Council are satisfied have a design merit and the character of traditional farm buildings will be supported for conversion.*

Where any pre-application discussions take place, Officers should encourage applicants *to submit a Full Planning Application for a proposal of this type, and this should be supported by a full set of drawings to demonstrate how the conversion will be carried out.* Some proposals may also require Listed Building Consent.

2 Policy

Local Plan Policy D2: Housing in the Countryside makes it clear that the conversion and any proposed extension (although this should normally be discouraged) or alteration is in keeping with the scale and architectural character of the existing building. The policy also makes it clear that in terms of an addition to a Building Group, the cumulative impact of new development on the landscape and amenity of the surrounding area will be taken into account when determining new applications. The policy continues by stating that additional development within a Building Group will be refused if, in conjunction with other developments in the area, it will cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the landscape or natural heritage, unless it can be shown that the development is merited through other criteria as set out in the Policy.

Q: Is the building still capable of its original use?

If not – possibility for change of use to residential or business diversification?

It is important to establish that the building is no longer suitable for its intended use and to consider all the possible alternative uses. Whilst most proposals relate to conversion for residential use, it may be possible with minor repairs and amendments to utilise the building for modern agricultural, commercial or community purposes. The Scottish Executive, through SPP 15: Planning for Rural Development states that “planning authorities should support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas and seek environmental enhancement through development at every opportunity.”

Rural buildings have an important economic role to play in providing valuable workspace for rural businesses; or may provide the opportunity for diversification into self-contained holiday accommodation thus reducing the demand for new buildings in the countryside. SPP 15 also states that “Diversification is often most successful where activities are complementary and are carefully targeted”. This document also states that local enterprise companies are a good sources of expertise on what type of business development is likely to succeed in an area as well as where there may be potential for further development.

Q: Is there an existing agricultural operation on the site? If so, is it intended that this operation will remain within the area?

If this agricultural operation is to stay, can the two uses co-exist? If not, Environmental Health may need to be consulted specifically in relation to noise and smell. Often rural buildings such as steadings have their own private water supply; the quality and quantity of this supply may also need testing.

3 Steading Conversion

Where an applicant or enquirer proposes significant changes to a steading building, such as using modern design and materials or raising wallheads, consultation with the Heritage and Design Section is encouraged at the outset and in particular if the property is a listed building.

Design

Any alterations to the existing steading should be carried out in a sensitive manner in order to retain the architecturally important features of the traditional building. Where possible all of the buildings should be used within the conversion and only in exceptional circumstances where buildings have deteriorated excessively will demolition be acceptable.

Your attention should also be drawn to “Guide for Traditional Practitioners 1: Rural Buildings of the Lothians Conservation and Conversion” - a copy of which you should have in your Area Office.

It should also be noted that where the Development Management Officer feel that they require further guidance on issues such as Public Rights of Way, access, biodiversity, archaeology, trees and roads, the relevant sections of the Council should also be consulted.

Detailed proposals should conform to the following criteria:

Q: Is the structure capable of conversion?

Careful consideration should be given to whether the building is structurally sound, and readily capable of conversion without the need for substantial rebuilding or alterations.

The Local Plan Policy D2: Housing in the Countryside states the building should be substantially intact (normally at least to wallhead height) and the existing structure requires no significant extension (including increase in height) or demolition. It also states that a structural survey will be required where the council is of the opinion that the building may not be capable of conversion.

Details such as the retention of traditional features including roof timber, the positioning of new windows and doors, the accommodation of garage space and vehicular parking, and the provision of domestic gardens are important features and should be considered at the outset.

Retaining the original structure is obviously an essential part of any conversion as removing prominent features and characteristics will cumulatively result in a deterioration of the character of the original steading.

All associated storage provision should be included in the original buildings to avoid where possible the need for additional garden sheds and other out-buildings to be erected once the conversion is complete.

Where applications are approved, conditions must be applied to remove permitted development rights (for both alterations and outbuildings), and to ensure that any works purporting to be necessary for the purposes of conversion do not amount to a rebuilding of the existing buildings.

The following standard condition should be applied in all cases:

RS15 Conversion to Dwelling – No Rebuilding

This permission shall only permit the conversion and adaptation of the existing structure as a single dwelling unit. It shall not purport to grant permission for the erection of a new dwelling nor for any extensive rebuilding which would be tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling.

Reason: Permission has been granted for the conversion of an existing building to habitable accommodation in a location where a new dwelling would not otherwise be appropriate.

A proliferation of new outbuildings provided through permitted development rights can ultimately have an adverse affect on the appearance of the completed conversion. Careful consideration should be given to the need to storage space for garden equipment, bicycles, and other items. The developer should be encouraged to address the issues of ancillary sheds etc as part of the title deeds.

Q: Can the steading accommodate an extension?

Generally speaking, conversion of buildings should only normally be acceptable without recourse to significant extension. Remember, the underlying principle is that the justification for conversion in the first place is that the building is deemed to be worthy and capable of conversion, rather than that the Council is allowing residential development in a location where it would not ordinarily be acceptable.

Extensions ancillary to conversion schemes will only be accepted where it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to secure the restoration of the existing building, without adversely affecting its character. They should be subordinate in scale and should also relate to the character of the farmstead group. This is especially the case where the existing building(s) are listed. Extensions after conversion will be discouraged and removal of permitted development rights for later extensions should be considered.

Where acceptable extension or alteration is proposed to the steading, it is preferable if these are accommodated on 'private' elevations.

It should be encouraged that any extension proposed to steading should look “obviously new” allowing for a clear distinction to be made. They may take the form of a contemporary design or one based on an existing outbuilding.

Q: What materials, finishes and colours are appropriate?

Retention of existing material must be a priority when considering the conversion of any rural building. Replacing traditional materials such as timber windows and doors to modern uPVC will inevitably result in a significant loss in the character of the property. Where part demolition takes place, materials should be salvaged for re-use where possible.

The original finishes of the steading should be retained and repaired where necessary and appropriate. In the event of an extension to a steading the original finishes should be respected. Materials commonly used were local stone, harl, slate and timber.

Where new mortar is to be used, careful colour matching to the existing should be undertaken and nature of pointing must be specified.

Where roofing materials are concerned it may be difficult to source the original roofing material – be it slate or pantile, where this is the case all of the original covering should be reused on the main elevations thereby allowing a similar slate/ pantile to be then used on the minor elevations.

Traditional finishes such as cobbles or setts should be retained and repaired where necessary.

Where painting is required – traditional, natural or ‘earthy’ colours should be used, for example on doors and windows – dark greens and dark reds were traditionally common colours. The use of an “estate” colour for all external openings should be encouraged as a means of unifying the development. The use of white or cream is seldom successful.

Q: How do you deal with new and proposed Openings, Windows and Doors?

All original openings should be retained in a form where they can be easily read as “original openings”. Where these are to be ‘filled-in’ – glazing or a timber infill is preferred.

Keeping the original doors and windows, or replacing them with ‘like for like’ will ensure that alterations to the steading are kept to a minimum.

In all cases, doors and windows should be recessed from the wall face, rather than flush. Normally a recess of 100mm will suffice however,

Development Management Officers should check existing recess dimensions to obtain the most appropriate.

Windows: Existing windows may not be necessarily sash and case, these were commonly found in the cottages, houses or in farm buildings of the highest architectural pretensions, or on those parts of the steading that were of residential use. It is not uncommon to find fixed windows (i.e. those that do not open) as their purpose was simply to provide light. Casement windows can sometimes also be found and quite often with astragals. On occasion casement windows with an inward opening can be found, where this is the case they should be retained.

When inserting windows into existing openings where these were originally unfilled, no attempt should be made to enlarge the opening. New windows in these situations should be kept simple and less fussy in design.

When inserting new windows or doors into existing or new openings it is important to ensure the continued simplicity of design by using traditional materials, to retain the character of the building.

The shape of any new window opening should be influenced by the existing openings of the building. Therefore they may be vertically proportioned or square, and their size and style should also take reference from existing windows, including details of cills, lintels and margins. The frames should be timber, but painted or stained a darker colour. The number of new windows should be minimised and large areas of unbroken masonry walls should be retained to avoid change to the character of the building.

Doors: Traditionally all doors were painted timber. The most common type is the vertical 'boarded' doors although their exact sizes can vary. Boarded doors tended to be used in majority of rural buildings with the exception of the most prestigious. Generally 'panelled doors' are inappropriate on steadings.

Boarded doors that were split into two sections and are capable of being opened independent of each other were usually only found on stable or other similar situations.

Conversion of door opening to windows: to deal with this situation there are various acceptable options.

1. The existing door can be retained and used as a shutter, where this is the case the door should open outwards, and the opening should be recessed deeply and simply glazed on the inside.
2. The original door should be retained but be partially glazed. The style of glazing will depend on the type of door although it is best that the glazing is retained to the upper half only.
3. The door surround should be retained unaltered and a window placed neatly to the upper section of the opening. The lower

section should then be filled with recessed blocking, preferably matching stone or render.

Q: Can new rooflights be inserted and if so what type?

Traditionally rooflights had a more vertical emphasis and tended to have a vertical astragal running down the centre. Where rooflights are proposed for replacement this feature should be retained. Where new rooflights are to be inserted, it is essential that they mirror the traditional form and should be kept to a minimum. *The use of conservation type 'Velux' rooflights that sit flush on the roof surface should be a requirement.* There may be instances where there is a desire by the applicant to have larger area of glazing within the roof structure, where this is the case a more 'agricultural' style of opening should be encouraged. Where this is a necessity, the opening should be placed on less prominent parts of the building.

Q: Are Dormers appropriate on steading conversions?

The insertion of new dormers will alter the appearance of a steading considerably and will be most obvious even from a distance. They tend to be rare on existing steadings with the exception of being on more formal elevations, whereas granary or hayloft loading doors are a relatively common feature. For that reason, new dormers should generally be avoided unless very well designed in the context of the building.

Q: How should proposed new Chimneystacks, Flues and Aerials be dealt with?

Chimneystacks generally are not found on steading buildings with the exception of those parts that were originally of residential use. For that reason *new chimneystacks on steading conversions should be avoided.* The use of a small metal flue on a low position would be more acceptable and should be located on the least prominent elevation or preferably within the building itself. Painting the flue a matt black or grey may minimise character change.

Aerials and satellite dishes should also be placed on low levels or preferably within the building. It may be that a discreetly located free-standing dish or aerial away from the building will be preferable. Where conversion is to more than one unit, communal dish/aerial should be considered to avoid proliferation.

Q: Where should new rainwater goods be located?

Many traditional rural buildings did not have a rainwater drainage system. Therefore new down pipes should be discreetly located and where possible on the least visible elevation. They should be bracket mounted as opposed to being on new fascia boards. Material should preferably be painted metal in a traditional design.

Q: Are new garages appropriate within the steading Development?

Buildings such as former cartsheds or granaries may provide an opportunity for garaging due to their large openings. Proposed new garages should be resisted. Parking should be allowed for discreetly on 'private' elevations.

Landscape

Whilst it is important that the detail of the steading conversion is carried out appropriately, it is equally important to ensure that the setting of the steading is not compromised. With any conversion, the impact on the setting of the building is a vital aspect of how successful the project is. A sensitive conversion will be to respect and bring together the building and its landscape setting. This will require some understanding of the features that characterise the setting and their relationship with the surrounding landscape.

Q: How should open spaces and courtyards be dealt within the development?

Open spaces such as court yards should be retained as open space. They should not be subdivided in any instance even where the steading is proposed to be converted into multiple residential units.

Q: How should the steading and garden curtilage, landscaping and fuel tanks be treated?

The curtilage of the overall steading conversion/development or garden should be defined by the use of a low hedge, timber post and rail fence or stone wall. Each case however, will require to be assessed individually.

Care should be taken not to over-domesticate an agricultural setting with new fences, walls and hedges particularly in new materials. Reference to existing boundary treatments should be considered and replicated where appropriate.

Oil or gas tanks may require to be sited within the garden or nearby the steading. This should preferably be located to the rear of the building or in

the least visible part of the garden. Access for servicing should be considered. Planting of hedgerows of native species may provide acceptable screening for tanks.

Q: How should the landscaping of the steading be treated?

A landscape scheme may be requested as part of the planning application. The garden space should be integral to and of a scale proportionate with the building.

Landscape design and specification should be appropriate to the context. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained and enhanced where necessary with native species. Traditional boundary walls where they exist should be retained or repaired where necessary. New boundary treatments should be simple in design – in most instances planting can be the most successful if sufficiently varied and understated.

Where a new fence is proposed a simple post and rail fence should be preferred. The dimensions for the posts should be approximately 1200mm in height (above ground) and 80mm x 80mm in section, while the rails should be approximately 1600mm in length and 80mm x 40 in section. All timber to be used must have the bark removed.

As noted above, traditional finishes such as cobbles or setts should be retained and repaired where necessary.

Where areas of the site are in common ownership - a management scheme should be put in place to ensure the regular maintenance is undertaken.

Development Management Officers should also refer to the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape and Development; and Trees and Development.

Access

Vehicular access can have minimal impact when a steading is converted with careful landscaping. Farm tracks can be retained and parking can be accommodated within cart-sheds or other outbuildings if they exist. Roads standards such as large visibility splays, turning circles and street lighting should be avoided if at all possible.

Q: How much change to allow suitable access into the steading is acceptable?

The means of access into a steading development should be appropriate in scale and design to the rural context. 'Over engineered' roads or drives should be avoided where possible, although it is appreciated that Technical Services and Building Standards may largely dictate the standard. Traditional track/drive finishes should be retained where possible. Modern 'street' finishes such as tarmac and kerbs should be avoided. Although perhaps more related to associated new build the requirement of an adoptable road in itself, may be reason to refuse an application due to the detrimental effect that, for example, associated lighting will have on the rural landscape.

Q: Is there likely to be a conflict of access through the courtyard between new residents and farm traffic?

Where there is likely to be a conflict of access through courtyard between new residents and farm traffic – Roads should be consulted. However, where there is a likelihood of this occurring re-routing the farming traffic should be encouraged, but subject to the principles set out in the question above.

Planning Control

The retention of planning control even after full planning approval has been issued can aid in retaining the character and setting of the steading development.

Q: Should any new build take place before the Steading Conversion is complete?

As a rule, no. However, if there is already an established building group (without the conversion), it will not be possible or reasonable to prevent this. In other cases, the use of a Suspensive Grampian Condition will prevent any new build from taking place before the Steading Conversion is complete, but this will only be appropriate where both conversion and new build form part of the same application, or are within the same ownership. In other situations, a Section 75 Agreement is likely to be required, but careful consideration will need to be given to whether this approach is

reasonable to the circumstances. This condition should be a “standard condition” for any steading conversion with associated new build.

However, such a condition cannot be used to justify new build: if a simultaneous proposal for conversion would need to be completed in order to establish a “building group”, the application for new build should be refused, or withdrawal invited. Only once the conversion is substantially complete could an application for new build be considered appropriate.

Q: Should Permitted Development Rights be removed?

Permitted Development Rights should be removed so as to discourage further extensions and alterations from taking place. In doing this, the Council can retain control of any future development which could potentially threaten the character of the steading. The following standard condition should be used on all applications:

PD11 Barn Conversion

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(Scotland) Order 1992 (or any subsequent Order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order);

- (i) There shall be no addition or extension to the dwellings (including the insertion of dormer windows or chimneys);
- (ii) There shall be no further building, structure or other enclosure constructed or placed on the site;
- (iii) No additional window or other opening shall be made in any elevation; unless an application for planning permission in that behalf has first been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority;
- (iv) No alteration to windows, doors or other opening shall be made.

Reason: To safeguard the character, appearance and setting of the building to be converted.

4 New Build Associated with Steading Conversions

Whilst it is important to ensure that all design details of a steading conversion are right, it defeats the entire purpose to then allow inappropriate new builds to take place that are associated with the steading conversion but have an adverse affect on the overall character of the setting. New ancillary development should only be accepted where it can be demonstrated as being achievable ***without adversely affecting the character and setting of the steading.***

Building Groups

The SPG on New Housing in the Borders Countryside defines a Building Group as: “The existence of a group which is identifiable by a sense of place which will be contributed to by natural boundaries such as water courses, trees or enclosing landform or manmade boundaries such as existing buildings, roads, plantations or means of enclosure. Normally a group will consist of residential buildings comprising at least three dwelling units, including existing buildings capable of conversion to residential uses.”

Q: Is the Steading Building Group a completed Building Group?

It should be emphasised that in relation to Building Groups, Policy D2: Housing in the Countryside states that consents for new build granted under this part of the policy should not exceed 100%. This does not mean that all Building Groups can increase by this amount. It may be that many Building Groups are already considered complete, and by adding further would result in detrimentally affecting the character and setting of that Building Group.

Sites that require the removal of attractive hedgerows and trees should be avoided.

Access & Roads

With the introduction of new residential units, access can have a minimal impact with careful landscaping however, multiple units can have greater impact, and the increase in vehicle numbers can trigger the need to upgrade both the access and local roads.

Q: Can the required roads standards be met on site without detrimentally affecting the character of the Steading?

The means of access into the steading development should be appropriate in scale and design to the rural context. ‘Over engineered’ roads or drives should be avoided where possible, although it is appreciated that Technical Services and Building Standards may largely dictate the standard. Traditional track/drive finishes should be retained where possible. Modern ‘street’ finishes such as tarmac should be avoided where possible. The requirement of an adoptable road in itself may be

reason to refuse an application due to the detrimental affect that for example associated lighting will have on the rural landscape.

Q: Is all of the land in the control of the developer that will be required to upgrade the local road infrastructure?

Where some new build is seen as acceptable alongside a steading conversion, loss of hedgerows may be inevitable to achieve junction visibility splays. Where this is to occur, new hedgerow planting setback from the original hedgerow line should be required and required to be maintained.

Passing places on the local road network may also be required; where this is the case loss of hedgerows will be inevitable however, replacement planting of native species setback of the original hedgerow line will be required. Conditions should be used to achieve this, but this is only normally appropriate where the area concerned falls within the application site, or is otherwise within the control of the applicant. If not, if there is still a reasonable prospect of the works being achieved, in exceptional circumstances a “Grampian” condition may be used.

Layout & Design

New build, be it in a contemporary, sympathetic or a design that mimics that of the steading itself, should be subordinate in scale and relate to the character of the steading. The new build should not compromise the setting and therefore careful thought needs to be given to their siting and layout.

Q: Does the layout of the new build proposed complement that of the existing steading layout?

Standard suburban layout and designs are inappropriate where associated new build is to take place. The layout of any proposed new build should therefore respect the form of the existing steading, *detached properties will not normally be acceptable* unless detached structures form the layout of the historic steading. As with any other site the simple basics should be applied - shelter, passive solar gain and privacy.

Issues such as safe access and drainage should also be considered. If at all possible, cars should be located out of sight - to the rear.

Q: What type of design is acceptable?

The shape of the new build should be simple, whilst the design particularly on the more prominent ‘front’ elevation should also follow this practice. The design of the new build should be developed to integrate the features of the locality; this includes being well proportioned, good quality materials

and absence of frills. None of these should inhibit the opportunity for quality modern design.

The Heritage and Design section should be consulted where the Development Management Officer considers they require further advice on this aspect.

Q: What materials finishes and colours are appropriate?

As above, to ensure a quality design it is essential that good quality materials are used, for example the proliferation of inappropriate white plastic particularly in windows and doors is not in keeping of the rural Borders. The use of materials such as local stone, harl and timber cladding should be encouraged.

Q: What size is acceptable for a proposed new build?

The site and the existing steading should inform shape and size of the new development. The existing steading should always remain integral to the overall site and any new development should therefore not be over dominant.

Planning Control

The retention of planning control even after full planning approval has been issued can aid in retaining the character and setting of the overall steading development.

Q: Should Permitted Development Rights be removed?

Permitted Development Rights should be removed so as to discourage further extensions and alterations from taking place. In doing this, the Council can retain control of any future development which could potentially threaten the character of the steading.

Appendice

Steading Checklist

Q: Is the building still capable of its original use?

If not - possibility for change of use to residential or business diversification?

Minor repairs, Possible alternatives, Diversification

Q: Is there an existing agricultural operation on the site? If so, is it intended that this operation will remain within the area?

Uses co-exist, Noise & smell, Water supply

Q: Is the structure capable of conversion?

Structurally sound, Capable of conversion, Retention of Features, Associated storage

Q: Is the steading listed?

Character and Appearance, Consultation with Historic Scotland?

Q: Can the steading accommodate an extension?

Secure restoration, Retaining character, Obviously new

Q: What materials finishes and colours are appropriate?

Retention & repair of existing materials, Salvaged, Mortar, Cobbles or Setts, Traditional, natural or earthy colours

Q: How do you deal with new and proposed Openings, Windows and Doors?

Retention of original openings, Like for like, No enlargement of openings, Cill, lintel & margin details, Retention of large unbroken masonry walls

Q: Can new rooflights be inserted and if so what type?

Vertical emphasis, Central astragal, "Agricultural" style

Q: Are Dormers appropriate on steading conversions?

Formal elevations

Q: How should proposed new Chimneystacks, Flues and Aerials be dealt with?

Small metal flues, Communal dishes & aerials

Q: Where should new rainwater goods be located?

Discreetly located, Bracket Mounted, Metal

Q: Are new garages appropriate within the steading Development?

Cartshed, Granaries, Parking on private elevations

Q: How should open spaces and courtyards be dealt within the development?

Not subdivided

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Q: How should the steading and garden curtilage, landscaping and fuel tanks be treated?

Low hedge, timber post & rail and stone walls, Screening of fuel tanks

Q: How should the landscaping of the steading be treated?

Integral, Proportion & scale, Retention of hedgerows, trees, & boundary walls, Traditional finishes, Management scheme

Q: How much change to allow suitable access into the steading is acceptable?

Scale & design to rural context, Keeping traditional tracks, Impact on rural setting

Q: Is there likely to be a conflict of access through the courtyard between new residents and farm traffic?

Re-routing farm traffic

Q: Should any new build take place before the Steading Conversion is complete?

Suspensive Grampian Condition

Q: Should Permitted Development Rights be removed?

PD11 Barn Conversion

New Housing in the Borders Countryside

New Build Associated with Steading Conversions

Q: Is the Steading Building Group a completed Building Group?

Not exceed 100%, Already complete?, Character & Setting

Q: Can the required roads standards be met on site without detrimentally affecting the character of the Steading?

Appropriate design & scale to rural context, 'Over engineered', Traditional track finishes, Impact on rural setting

Q: Is all of the land in the control of the developer that will be required to upgrade the local road infrastructure?

New hedgerow planting, Native species

Q: Does the layout of the new build proposed complements that of the existing steading layout?

Inappropriate 'standard suburban layout', Respect form of existing steading, Access & drainage, Discreet parking

Q: What type of design is acceptable?

Simple, features of locality, Quality materials

Q: What materials finishes and colours are appropriate?

Proliferation of white plastic, Local materials

Q: What size is acceptable for a proposed new build?

Existing steading integral to development

Q: Should Permitted Development Rights be removed?

Discourage further extensions, Character & setting

New Housing in the Borders Countryside

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