



Housing in the Countryside Supplementary Guidance

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Introduction

In accordance with Scottish Planning Policy, Planning Advice Note 72: Housing in the Countryside, and Planning Advice Note 68: Design Statements, the Council's objective is to strike a balance between the need to protect the outstanding landscapes of the Perth & Kinross area, and encourage appropriate housing development in rural areas including the open countryside and outwith settlements. The Council seeks to encourage sustainable development in rural areas which means guiding development to places where existing communities and services can be supported, and the need to travel minimised. It also means encouraging the sympathetic reuse of existing traditional buildings of character and beauty and to ensure that new buildings are located correctly and constructed to the highest standards of design and finish.

Local Development Plan 2 Policy 19: Housing in the Countryside aims to: safeguard the character of the countryside; support the viability of communities; meet development needs in appropriate locations; and ensure that high standards of siting and design are achieved. Central to achieving this is harnessing the potential of the numerous redundant traditional rural buildings which contribute to the character and quality of the countryside. These buildings represent a significant resource both architecturally and from a sustainability point of view and have the potential to be reused and adapted to help meet present and future rural housing needs.

Policy 19 therefore supports proposals for the erection, or creation through conversion, of single houses and groups of houses in the countryside which fall into at least one of the following categories:

(1) Building Groups

(2) Infill sites

(3) New houses in the open countryside on defined categories of sites as set out in section 3 of the Supplementary Guidance

(4) Renovation or replacement of houses

(5) Conversion or replacement of redundant non-domestic buildings

(6) Development on rural brownfield land

The application of Policy 19 is limited within the Green Belt to proven economic need, conversions or replacement buildings (Categories 3.3, 4 and 5).

For All Proposals

Pre-application Discussions

The submission of a pre-application enquiry is recommended for all proposals.

The proposed development should not conflict with any other policy or proposal in Local Development Plan 2. In addition, proposals must meet all of the following criteria:

A Successful, Sustainable Place

- i) Proposals should comply with Policy 1: Placemaking and the guiding principles contained in the Council's Placemaking Guide.
- ii) Proposals should not encourage unsustainable travel patterns. Proposals in less sustainable locations will only be permitted where the benefits outweigh the disbenefits, for example, the provision of essential farm worker housing or bringing an empty traditional building back into use.
- iii) The scale, layout and design of the proposal must be appropriate to, and have a good fit with, the landscape character of the area in which it is located. It must demonstrate a specific design approach that not only integrates the development within its setting but also enhances the surrounding environment. Buildings should be sympathetic in terms of scale and proportion to other buildings in the locality. Open space and garden ground associated with the proposal should be considered as an integral part of the development. Suburban ranch-type fences and non-native fast

growing conifers should be avoided, and garden ground should be of an appropriate size for the scale and form of the proposal. Where new planting is considered to be in keeping with local landscape character, locally native trees and shrubs should be used to integrate developments with the surrounding landscape and to provide additional biodiversity benefits.

iv) The quality of the design and materials of the house(s) should be reflected in the design and finish of outbuildings, means of enclosure, access etc. Outbuildings such as workshops, garages and sheds should be of an appropriate scale, proportion and form, reflecting that of the house(s). The Planning Authority will consider whether permitted development rights in respect of extensions, outbuildings and means of enclosure should be removed to protect the rural character of both the building and its curtilage.

v) All proposals require to comply with Policy 5: Infrastructure Contributions, and the Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance.

vi) All proposals for 5 units or more will require 25% of the proposed development to be for affordable housing in line with Local Development Plan 2 Policy 20: Affordable Housing, and the Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance. For the purposes of this Supplementary Guidance the renovation or replacement of an occupied or recently occupied house (as opposed to a ruin) will not constitute the creation of a new unit.

vii) Encouragement will be given to the incorporation of measures to facilitate home working within new development.

viii) There will be a presumption against the demolition of Listed Buildings, or their restoration in a way which adversely affects the special architectural or historic interest of the original building.

A Low Carbon Place

i) Where possible, existing on-site materials, particularly stone and slate, should be re-used in the construction of new houses, extensions and/or boundary enclosures, in order to help reflect local character and contribute to sustainability. Where on-site materials cannot be reused the reasons for this should be explained.

A Natural, Resilient Place

i) It is the Council's policy to halt the loss of biodiversity. Proposals must demonstrate how they will make a positive contribution to the biodiversity of the site. Examples of how this could be achieved include: planting native boundary hedges and trees, building integrated nest boxes into stonework, or providing new nest boxes.

ii) Proposals which might impact on protected sites, or where protected habitats or species (for example, bats, barn owls, house martins, swallows, or swifts) might be present, will require the submission of a survey as part of the planning application to show their location. Proposals should include appropriate measures to avoid loss or disturbance to species. Failure to undertake a survey may mean the proposal contravenes the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and European Directives, and may lead to refusal of the application. Failure to undertake the relevant survey at the appropriate time of year may delay the planning application.

iii) Development proposals should not result in adverse effects, either individually or in combination, on the integrity of the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary, Loch Leven, South Tayside Goose Roosts and Forest of Clunie Special Protection Areas and Dunkeld-Blairgowrie Lochs and the River Tay Special Areas of Conservation.

iv) Proposals for houses adjacent to a working farm will only be permitted where a satisfactory residential environment can be created, and where the introduction of a dwelling will not compromise the continuation of legitimate agricultural and related activities, or the amenity of the residents.

v) In line with Policy 53B: Foul Drainage, a feasible foul drainage solution is a requirement of all development.

A Connected Place

i) Satisfactory access and services should be available, or capable of being provided, by the developer. Development should not exacerbate any existing access or connectivity issues. Appropriate mitigation measures should be included as part of the development.

Key Design Considerations checklist

Please note that not all of these will be relevant to every proposal:

- Have designations or constraints that may affect development in the area been considered?
- Does the design respond well to site topography? Is excessive underbuilding avoided?
- Does the proposal compliment and / or enhance the local vernacular? Are buildings sympathetic in terms of scale and proportion to other dwellings in the locality? Large, single storey, deep plan houses, for example, can appear out of scale in a countryside setting.
- Are roof heights and extensions appropriate in scale and do they avoid dominating the dwelling?
- Does the design and finish of outbuildings reflect the style of the main dwellings?
- Does the design and siting of the house facilitate energy efficiency in terms of solar gain and shelter?
- Are materials sourced responsibly? Are existing materials, particularly stone and slate, reused where possible?

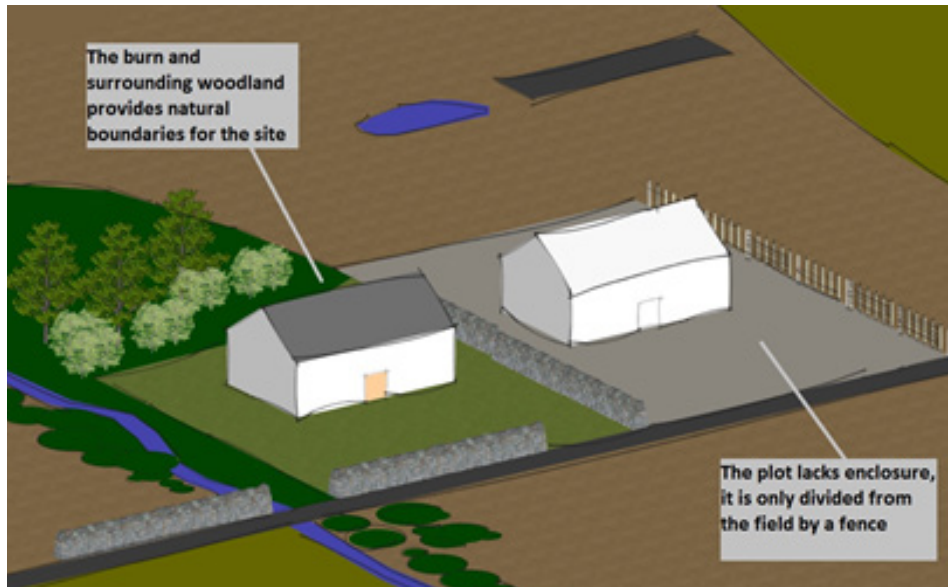
- Is the proposal well integrated with the existing landform and does it avoid dominating the landscape?



Example of a poorly sited dwelling in a prominent location without any natural boundaries (illustration by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority)

- Are the finish and materials appropriate for the context? Natural, contrasting colours, for example, can be strikingly effective and timber can be used to good effect.

- Does the site have long-established, identifiable boundaries and a level of enclosure provided by natural features?



- Are boundaries and entrances created through appropriate materials and planting, for example, locally native trees and shrubs? Does the design avoid overly elaborate and engineered solutions and non-native fast-growing conifers?
- Are surrounding natural features retained and integrated within the proposal?

- Have transport linkages been considered which provide a viable alternative to the private car?
- Are parking areas screened from the road and do they avoid dominating views over the site?



Category 1 - Building Groups

Building groups are those groups of buildings which do not have a defined settlement boundary in Local Development Plan 2. The size, layout and form of building groups vary widely across the Council area ranging from compact groups to areas which are characterised by a more dispersed building pattern.

Defining a Group

For the purposes of this Supplementary Guidance a building group is defined as 3 or more existing buildings of a size at least equivalent to a traditional cottage and which, when viewed within their landscape setting, appear as a group. The majority of the buildings in the group should be either residential or be suitable for conversion to residential under Category 5 of this guidance. Premises which are smaller than a traditional cottage, such as small domestic garages and outbuildings, will not count towards the requirement for at least 3 buildings.

As abovementioned, some areas are characterised by a more dispersed building pattern. Where buildings appear as an obvious group within their landscape setting permission will be granted for new houses subject to the requirements listed in 'Adding to a Group'. Where buildings are too dispersed to appear as a single group it may be possible to break them down into sections with each section treated as a separate group (see illustrations overleaf).

Adding to a Group

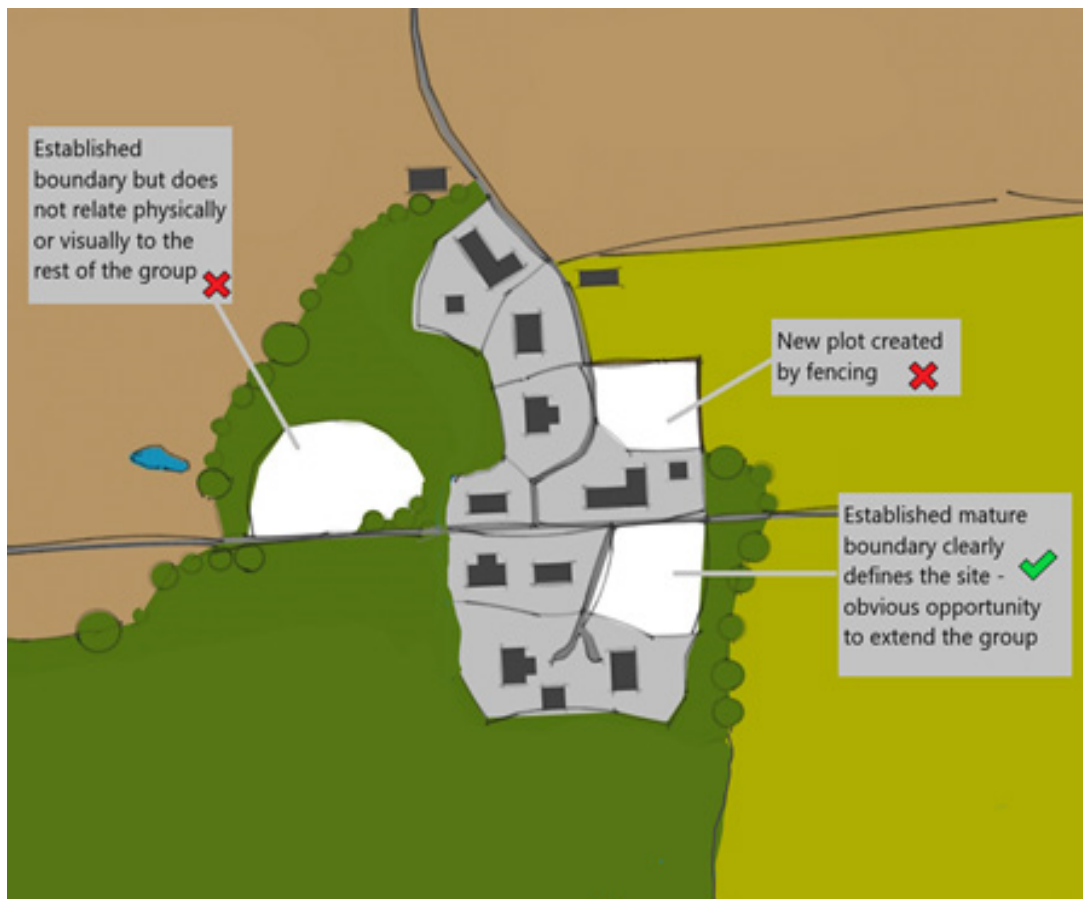
Permission will be granted for houses within building groups providing it can be demonstrated that:

- **New housing will respect the character, scale and form of the existing group, and will be integrated into the existing layout and building pattern.**
- **New housing will no detract from the visual amenity of the group when viewed from the wider landscape.**
- **A high standard of residential amenity will be provided for both existing and new housing.**

Permission may be granted, subject to the criteria above, for houses which extend the group into a readily definable adjacent site. This will be formed by existing topography, roads or well-established existing landscape features such as a watercourse or mature tree belt which will provide a suitable setting.

Fencing or young trees or hedging planted with the specific intention of creating a site will not be accepted as existing landscape features for the purposes of this Supplementary Guidance, nor will the felling of an area of woodland or orchard specifically to create a site.

Example of a compact building group



Example of a dispersed building group



Ribbon Development

Proposals which create or contribute towards ribbon development will not be supported. For the purposes of this policy, ribbon development is defined as a line of houses built along an existing road each served by an individual access. Each case will require to be assessed on its own merits, and it will depend on whether linear development is a character of the area, but in general terms proposals which will result in a continuous line of 5 or more houses will be considered as creating ribbon development and will not be supported. The extension of a linear building group – to create a continuous line of no more than 5 houses – will only be supported where the group is being extended into a readily definable site.

For the avoidance of doubt, proposals adjacent to and outwith a settlement which has an identified boundary in Local Development Plan 2 will be assessed under Policy 6: Settlement Boundaries and not Policy 19: Housing in the Countryside.

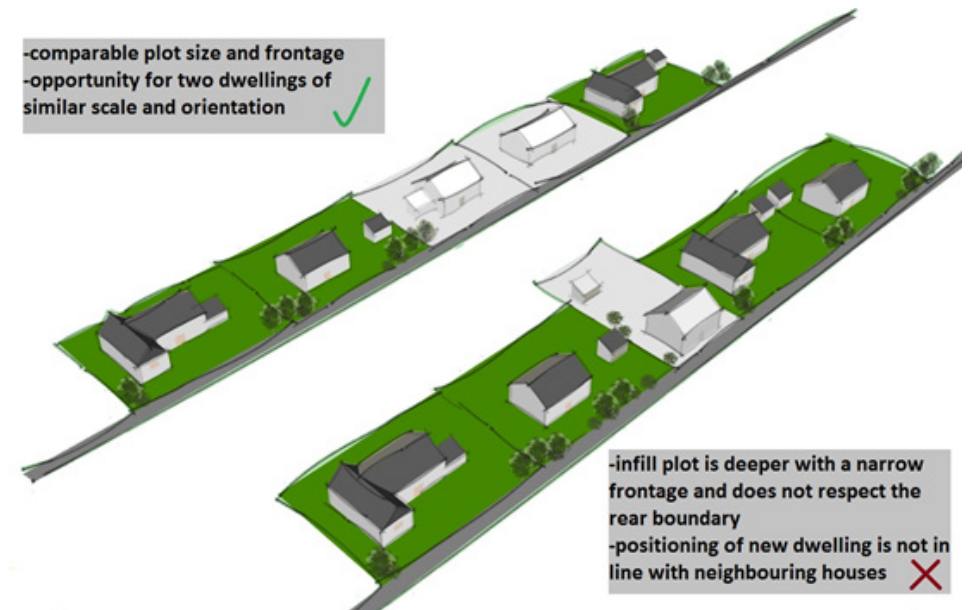
Category 2 - Infill Sites

The development of up to 2 new houses in gaps between established houses, or a house and another substantial building at least equivalent in size to a traditional cottage, may be acceptable where:

- The plot or plots created are comparable in size to the neighbouring plots and have a similar size of road frontage.
- The proportion of each plot occupied by the infill house or houses is no greater than that of the neighbouring plots.
- There are no uses in the vicinity which would prevent the achievement of an adequate standard of amenity for the infill house or houses, and the amenity of any existing neighbouring house is maintained.
- The size and design of the infill house or houses is sympathetic to the neighbouring buildings.
- The full extent of the gap is included within the infill plot or plots – for the avoidance of doubt, the retention of a field access within the infill plot or plots will not be permitted.

Each case will require to be assessed on its own merits, and it will depend on whether linear development is a character of the area, but in general terms proposals which will result in a continuous line of 5 or more houses will be considered as creating ribbon development and will not be supported.

For the avoidance of doubt, proposals adjacent to and outwith a settlement which has an identified boundary in Local Development Plan 2 will be assessed under Policy 6: Settlement Boundaries and not the Housing in the Countryside policy.



Examples of infill sites

Category 3 - New Houses in the Open Countryside

Usually the most sustainable option for new houses in the countryside will be within existing small settlements or building groups, or the re-use of existing buildings or sites. In some cases, however, there will be a genuine need for a new house or houses in the open countryside and proposals for these will be considered favourably where they fall into at least one of the following categories:

3.1 Existing Gardens

3.2 Houses in Areas of Flood Risk

3.3 Economic Activity

3.4 Houses for Local People

3.5 Houses for Sustainable Living

More guidance on each of these categories is given below. In addition to the specific criteria under each section, the following general siting criteria will apply in all cases together with the For All Proposals criteria on pages 4 & 5.

Siting Criteria

Proposals for a new house falling within Category 3 will, with the exception of 3.1 Existing Gardens, require to demonstrate that it meets all of the following criteria when viewed from surrounding vantage points:

- It blends sympathetically with land form.
- It uses existing trees, buildings, slopes or other natural features to provide a backdrop.
- It uses an identifiable site (except in the case of proposals for new country estates) with long established boundaries which separates the site naturally from the surrounding ground. For example a dry-stone dyke, a woodland or group of mature trees, or a slope forming an immediate backdrop to the site. The sub-division of a field or other land, for example by post and wire fence or newly planted hedge or tree belt specifically in order to create the site, will not be acceptable.
- It will make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape.

3.1 Existing Gardens:

a) Proposals for a new house or houses within the original garden ground associated with an existing country or estate house will be supported providing that there is an appropriate landscape setting and additional development will not fundamentally affect the qualities and integrity of the site, particularly where the house is a listed building or falls within a Historic Garden or Designed Landscape. A country or estate house is defined as a large house set within its own estate or extensive grounds. This section does not apply to domestic scale gardens or where gardens have been created at a later date, for example, by the change of use of agricultural land to garden ground.

b) Proposals for a new house or houses within a walled garden will be supported providing that development will not affect the integrity of the structure or the garden and will, where appropriate, assist in the preservation of the wall. Development may not be appropriate, however, if the walled garden is within a historically sensitive area, such as a Garden and Designed Landscape or is a Listed Building. Not all of the siting criteria will apply to proposals under this section; proposals will require to blend sympathetically with land form, and must not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape.

3.2 Houses in areas of Flood Risk:

a) Proposals for the relocation of an occupied house from within an identified flood risk area to the best and nearest alternative site will be supported. The flooding risk must relate to the house itself and not only to garden ground. The flood risk house must be demolished, the site made good, and any ad-hoc protection

measures associated with the at-risk property removed within one month of the occupation of the replacement house. If any additional ad-hoc protection measures are in or on the banks of a watercourse advice should be sought from SEPA on the opportunities for restoration and any regulatory requirements.

3.3 Economic Activity

In the past conditions have been used to restrict the occupancy of houses in the open countryside to agriculture workers or others associated with a rural business. In some cases this has allowed a proposal to go ahead which may otherwise have not fully complied with the Siting Criteria on page 12. Scottish Planning Policy now directs against the use of occupancy restrictions. As a result, more emphasis is now placed on the siting and design of houses in the open countryside; if a proposed house is in a good location and of a high quality design appropriate to that location, there will not normally be a need to restrict who occupies the house.

In all cases applicants must demonstrate that the site they have chosen is the best possible option in terms of the fit within the landscape and reflects the traditional pattern and character of the area. It must also be demonstrated that every possible effort has been made to meet the Siting Criteria and For All Proposals criteria. Where an alternative site is chosen by the applicant the reasons for this need to be clearly set out and justified. Applicants must also provide evidence that consideration has been given to the scope for renovating, converting or redeveloping any existing houses or non-domestic buildings within their landholding with an explanation as to why this option has not been pursued, for example, through the submission of a development viability statement.

Consideration of the various site options will normally be best done at [pre-application stage](#) in order that early agreement can be reached as to the preferred site. Work carried out by the applicant at this stage can then form the basis of a planning statement for any subsequent planning application. Applicants may be asked to display their entire landholding in order for the assessment to be completed. More advice on the siting of houses in rural areas can be found in the Council's Placemaking Guide.

New house to support an existing business

Farm workers – Applicants must provide evidence that a new house is essential to the continued operation of the farm for animal welfare reasons. Evidence should be in the form of a business appraisal, prepared by an independent expert, which demonstrates that the farm is financially sound and economically viable. The appraisal should be based on labour hours for the existing farming operation and must clearly set out the proportion of labour hours and the types of operations which require a full-time worker or workers to be on-site for the majority of the time.

Non-farming business – Where a new house is to be associated with an existing non-farming business, applicants must be able to satisfactorily demonstrate that the provision of a house is essential to the continued operation of the business. This will normally be through the submission of a business plan, prepared by an independent expert, which demonstrates that the business is financially sound and economically viable, that it genuinely contributes to the local economy and that there is a need for an additional worker to live on-site.

In considering proposals for new housing to support an existing rural business, the following will be taken into account:

- Changes in the business over the last 5 years – applicants may be required to confirm whether any houses or buildings associated with the business have been sold off which could instead have been renovated or converted to provide accommodation.
- Distance of the house from animals or livestock – it will generally be appropriate for a farm workers house to be located close to livestock for animal welfare reasons. Some other non-farming businesses, for example, a kennels or equestrian business may also require workers to live on-site. In line with Scottish Planning Policy the occupancy of the house will not normally be restricted. It must be recognised by the applicant, however, that should they subsequently seek to sell the house on the open market, the proximity to animals or livestock may increase the risk of complaints being raised by future occupants and this could in turn restrict the operation of the business.
- Whether the size of the house is appropriate – if the new house is to provide a second residential unit for the farm or business rather than being the main house, the scale should reflect this.
- Whilst each application has to be considered on its own merits it may, in some cases, be appropriate to consider the likelihood of further applications for new housing, for example, arising from the subdivision of a farming unit.

Applications for new houses to support an existing business will be assessed in accordance with the flowchart on page 16. Given the particular importance of siting and design for new houses under this section of the policy, applications In Principle will not normally be acceptable.

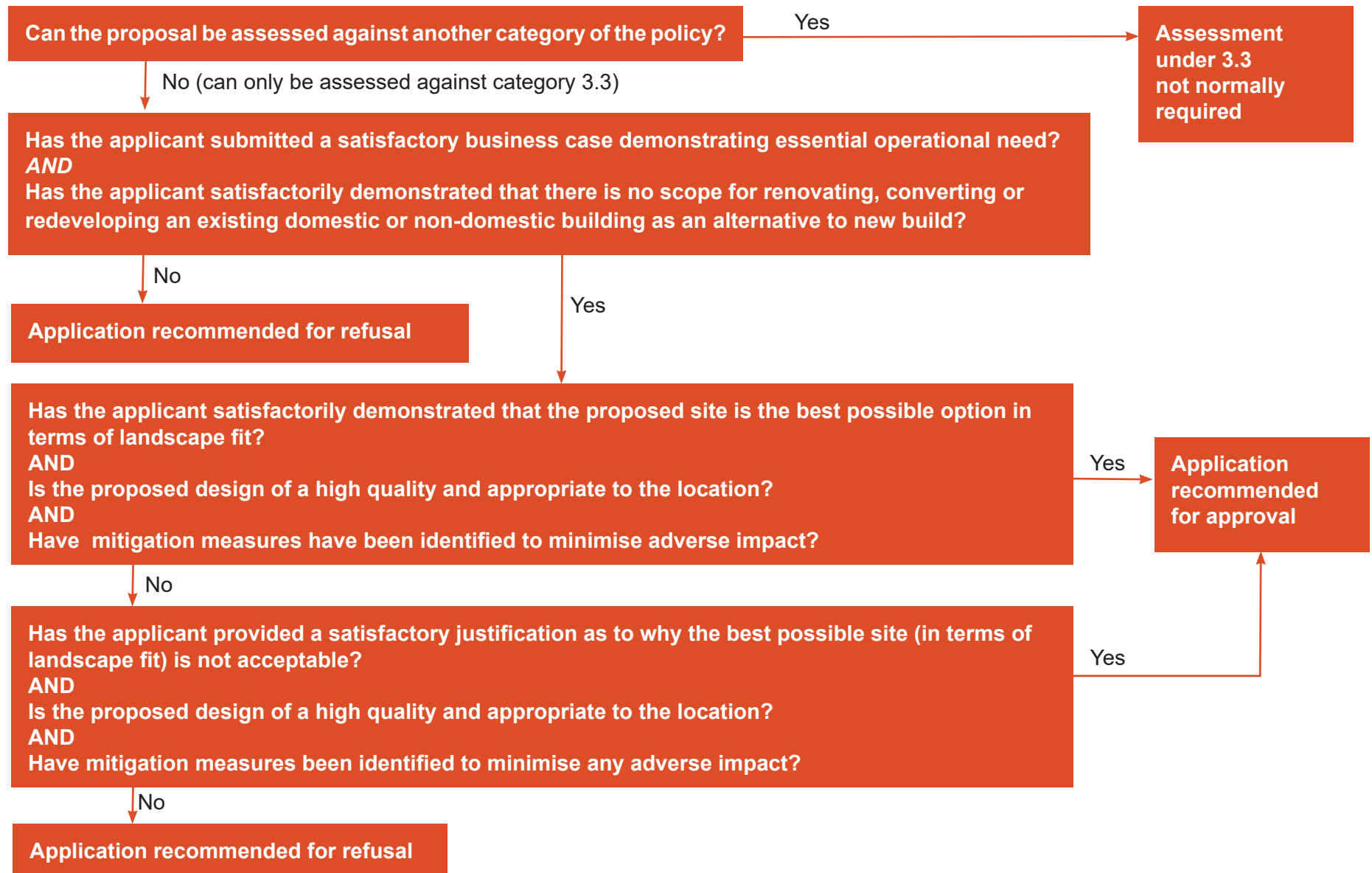
Workers' accommodation for new country estates

Proposals for new country estates with a main house and accommodation for workers may be permitted where they are of outstanding architectural quality and create a new designed landscape. In addition they must demonstrate that they will bring associated employment and long-term economic benefits to communities in the surrounding area.

New house to support a new or expanded business

Where the house is to be associated with an expanded or proposed economic activity, construction of the house will not be permitted in advance of the development or expansion of the business. The Council wishes to encourage the expansion of existing businesses and the creation of new ones in line with Policy 8: Rural Business and Diversification. There must be reasonable certainty, however, that the business will succeed before allowing a new house to be built in the countryside. Providing that the need for on-site accommodation is demonstrated it may be appropriate to allow some form of temporary accommodation, such as a mobile home, for a set period of time. Once the new or expanded business is established and can be demonstrated to be financially sound and economically viable, a planning application can be made to replace the temporary accommodation with a permanent house.

Assessing proposals relating to an existing business



3.4 Houses for Local People:

Proposals will be supported for a house for a local person or family who have lived and/or worked in the area for at least 3 years, and who are currently inadequately housed. Proof that the existing house is the sole residence and has been occupied on a permanent basis for the full 3 year period may be required. For the purposes of this Guidance, inadequately housed means a person or household who are currently living in:



Insecure housing – where a person or household can demonstrate that they are to lose their current tied, service or private rented accommodation within six months or their Private Residential Tenancy is coming to an end. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they cannot secure another tenancy within the area.

OR

Unsuitable accommodation – where the needs of someone within the household has changed and they now require a different type of accommodation, for example, a house which is suitable for a wheelchair user. Alternatively, where a household is living in overcrowded accommodation i.e. the accommodation lacks one or more bedrooms to meet the needs of the household. Each case will be assessed on its own merits but in calculating overcrowding the Council generally considers it reasonable for the following household members to share a double bedroom: couples; same sex household members; and two mixed sex household members under 10 years of age. In all cases the applicant will be required to demonstrate that no alternative accommodation is available to them within the local area.

3.5 Houses for Sustainable Living:

Proposals for a new house under this category are about more than the building itself. Sustainable living is a lifestyle approach where a person or household seek to reduce their carbon footprint by changing the ways in which they use energy and natural resources.

To be acceptable under this category it must firstly be demonstrated that a new house in a rural setting is essential as an integral part of an overall scheme for the management or use of land which will allow its occupants to be largely self-sufficient. Whilst there are some everyday goods which cannot be produced locally, proposals must include the cultivation of land to produce crops and rear livestock at a scale so as to ensure that the household will not be dependent on car travel elsewhere in order to meet the majority of their basic food shopping needs.

Proposals under this category will be for one-off, bespoke single houses which are at the forefront of sustainability. They will be low impact in terms of their scale, construction materials and methods, and sources of energy and heating. The use of renewable technologies such as solar panels, ground and air source heat pumps, and passive heating are now common place. To be acceptable under this category therefore, it must be demonstrated that the proposals go beyond those technologies which are widely available, and instead include new or innovative elements which are over and above what is already expected in modern building projects.

Detailed plans and full information are essential to making an informed assessment as to whether the proposal can be classed as a house for sustainable living. As such, applications in principle will not normally be acceptable under this category.

Brownfield Sites (Categories 4, 5 & 6)

Brownfield sites are those sites which have previously been developed in some way. This guidance splits brownfield into: sites which still contain buildings, and sites which used to have buildings but those buildings have been removed. Proposals for brownfield sites which still contain buildings will be considered under category 4 or 5. Proposals for brownfield sites where buildings have been removed will be considered under category 6.

As stated in the introduction to this guidance, harnessing the potential of traditional rural buildings which have become redundant is particularly important to achieving the aims of Policy 19. These buildings not only make a significant contribution to the character and quality of the rural landscape but are an important resource which should be reused wherever possible in the interest of sustainability and to help meet rural housing needs.

For the purposes of this Supplementary Guidance, 'traditional buildings' are defined as buildings usually constructed before 1919 of materials which would have been available in the local area at that time, largely stone (with or without harling) and slate.



Category 4 - Renovation or Replacement of Houses

In all cases, any alterations or extensions to an existing house should be in harmony with the existing building's form and proportion.

In all cases where the demolition of an existing house is permitted:

- **The replacement house must be of a high quality design appropriate to its setting and surrounding area.**
- **The scale of the new house will normally be similar to that of the existing building.**
- **The siting of the new house should be similar to that of the existing building in terms of orientation and distance from the road, unless individual site conditions suggest that another position would create a better landscape fit.**
- **If an alternative position is sought, or the proposed house is to be of a significantly different scale, this should be justified in a supporting planning and design statement.**

Traditional houses and houses of architectural merit

Many traditional buildings¹ make a significant contribution to the landscape and character of our rural areas as such there will be a presumption against the complete replacement of such buildings.

Permission will therefore be granted for the renovation of houses which are:

- of traditional form and construction, or
- are non-traditional but are otherwise of architectural merit, and which make a positive contribution to the landscape and character of the surrounding area.

Where a house under this section is proposed for substantial rebuilding or complete replacement, the applicant may be required to submit a Development Viability Statement, prepared by an independent expert, demonstrating that the house either:

- cannot readily be extended or improved to allow it to be brought up to modern standards, or
- is not capable of renovation at an economic cost.

¹ See definition on page 19

The Statement should set out the detailed costs of renovating the house and should demonstrate that all potential options for retaining it have been explored. Where a house has already been demolished, any subsequent planning application for a replacement house will be assessed under Category 6 rather than Category 4.

It will not normally be possible to agree the principle of demolition without having full details of what the existing house is going to be replaced with. As such, applications in principle will not normally be acceptable for the replacement of a traditional house or house of architectural merit.

Non-traditional houses

It is acknowledged that non-traditional houses, of poor quality or design, can have a negative effect on the countryside. Allowing the replacement of such houses can therefore, in some cases, have a positive impact. Permission will therefore be granted for the replacement of non-traditional houses where it can be demonstrated that the criteria on page 20 are met.

Ruinous houses

The replacement of a ruinous house will be permitted where all of the following criteria are met:

- i. there is substantial visible evidence of the structure of the original building above ground level to enable its size and form to be identified, and
- ii. it is an established site with a good setting and a good 'fit' in the landscape, and
- iii. the existing/established site boundaries are capable of providing a suitable enclosure for the new house.

Category 5 - Conversion or replacement of redundant traditional non-domestic buildings

Across Perth & Kinross there are traditional¹ farm buildings and building complexes, such as steadings, which make a valuable contribution to the rural landscape but which have fallen out of agricultural use as they no longer meet the needs of modern agricultural practices. The purpose of this category is to encourage the retention of such buildings by allowing them to be reused for housing if an alternative employment use cannot be found.

This category covers both individual buildings and building complexes such as farm steadings. In all cases a statement will be required evidencing that the buildings are redundant, and that there are no other pressing requirements for other uses, such as business or tourism, on the site. For the purposes of this policy 'redundant' is defined as buildings which:

- are no longer fit for purpose, or
- are surplus to the current or likely future operational requirements of the business

Where buildings are no longer fit for purpose and business operations require to be moved as a result, the reasons for this together with the details of any replacement building and where this will be located should be submitted along with the application.

Where an application for conversion to housing is approved on the grounds that the building is surplus to requirements, this will be taken into account in the assessment of any future application for new buildings associated with the business.

In all cases it must be demonstrated that the buildings are no longer in use, and that they cannot be sold or let on the open market for another employment use. Evidence will be required that the buildings have been marketed for sale or rent for employment use for at least 1 year.

Traditional non-domestic buildings

Permission will be granted for the change of use and alteration of redundant non-domestic buildings to form houses providing the buildings are:

- of traditional form and construction, or
- are non-traditional but are otherwise of architectural merit, and make a positive contribution to the landscape, and character of the surrounding area.

Any alterations or extensions should be in harmony with the existing building form and materials. It may also be appropriate in some cases to allow some limited new build accommodation associated with the conversion of traditional building complexes.

Replacement of traditional buildings will only be permitted in cases where there is objective evidence that the existing building(s) require to be reconstructed because of structural deficiencies which cannot be remedied at an economic cost. Evidence should be in the form of a Development Viability Statement, prepared by an independent expert, which sets out the detailed costs of converting the building(s).

¹ See definition on page 19

The Statement should also demonstrate that all potential options for retaining the building(s) have been explored. The replacement building(s) must be generally faithful to the design, form, scale, siting and materials of the existing building(s) but may incorporate non-original features which adapt it to modern space requirements and building standards or reflect a local architectural idiom.

It will not normally be possible to agree the principle of demolition without having full details of what the existing building is going to be replaced with. As such, applications in principle will not normally be acceptable where demolition is proposed.

Proposals for the conversion, extension or replacement of traditional non-domestic buildings will be subject to all of the following criteria:

- The development is in an accessible location i.e. in close proximity to a settlement or public transport links or in proximity to services for example schools, shops.
- The conversion / reconstruction has, as its core, the footprint and layout of the existing building(s) i.e. a steading or courtyard layout should not be replaced by detached units laid out in a group.
- The proposal will result in a development of high design quality and of a scale appropriate to its location, and there is a satisfactory composition of new and existing elements in terms of style, layout and materials.

- Extensions and new-build houses should only be contemplated where they reinforce the architectural integrity and external appearance of the original buildings and their grounds by, for example, infilling appropriate gaps in a group or rounding off a group. It is very unlikely that the entire 'brownfield' area of a site will be suitable for housing; in general, no more than 25% of the total units or footprint should comprise new build development.
- Those parts of the site not required for buildings or private gardens will require to be landscaped to a high standard. Landscaping plans demonstrating this, and how any other land outwith the application site but within the applicant's control will be used to provide landscape screening for the proposal, must be submitted and approved as part of the planning application.

Non-traditional non-domestic buildings

It is acknowledged that non-domestic buildings and structures constructed of modern materials such as steel, corrugated iron or concrete, can become unsightly if they fall out of use and / or are not properly maintained. Such buildings may offer an opportunity for an alternative employment use, and Policy 8: Rural Business and Diversification supports the expansion of existing business and the creation of new ones in rural areas. The reuse of traditional buildings for housing has the benefit of bringing valued buildings back into beneficial use. Allowing the replacement of non-traditional buildings, however, creates a residential use where one previously did not exist without this benefit. The Housing in the Countryside policy therefore does not support the replacement of these non-traditional buildings with housing.

Category 6 - Development on Rural Brownfield Land

Definition of Rural Brownfield Land

For the purposes of this Guidance 'Rural Brownfield Land' is defined as: Derelict land which was at one time occupied by buildings or structures but these have now been removed, or land directly linked to former buildings or structures which has been so damaged by a former use that it cannot be left to naturalise or be reused for another purpose without first being improved.

When will development be permitted?

Many sites which were formerly occupied by buildings have little or no environmental impact and can be left to return to a natural state over time. Even sites where some contamination is present may not require to be remediated if there is no significant risk to human health or the wider environment. This category of the policy is not intended to allow the redevelopment of sites like these, nor is it intended to permit the redevelopment of sites for housing where buildings have simply been allowed to fall into disrepair. This category is intended to allow small scale housing proposals on cleared sites which have been significantly degraded by a former use or activity, and where the redevelopment of the site for housing is the only means by which it is viable to remediate the site.

Alternatively, some sites may be located within, or impacting upon, a particularly sensitive landscape such as a Special Landscape Area or Designed Landscape where the present condition of the site is having a detrimental impact. On these sites it may be appropriate to allow housing development if it would result in a significant visual improvement.

Requirements

Proposals will be considered under this category for sites which have either been completely cleared of all buildings and structures, or where some foundations or substructures remain providing that buildings above ground level have been removed. Sites which have buildings remaining (including ruinous buildings) will be assessed under Category 4 or 5.

In most cases where contamination which requires remediation is present, a contaminated land investigation and remediation plan will be required to be submitted as part of any planning application. Detrimental impact on a sensitive landscape will require to be evidenced in a supporting statement to be submitted with any planning application.

The scale of the proposal should be commensurate with the scale of remediation works required, for example, if only a small area of the site requires remediation this will not justify the redevelopment of a much larger area for housing.

Prior to permitting a rural brownfield site to be redeveloped for housing, it must be demonstrated that there are no other pressing requirements for other uses on the site such as business or tourism. A statement of the planning history of the site, including the previous use and condition, must be provided to the planning authority.

Proposals should be small scale, up to maximum of 5 new houses, and must comply with the For All Proposals criteria on pages 4 & 5.

All land within the application site, including areas not required for housing or private gardens, must be the subject of landscaping and/or other remediation works.

Proposals for more than 5 new houses on rural brownfield land will only be permitted exceptionally where the planning authority is satisfied that a marginally larger development can be acceptably accommodated on the site. It must be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that there are social, economic or environmental reasons of overriding public interest requiring such a scale of development in a countryside location.

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