



3 PLANNING FOR HOUSING





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SPP 3

Planning for Housing

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PLANNING SERIES:

- **Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs)** provide statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters, supported where appropriate by a locational framework.
- **Circulars**, which also provide statements of Scottish Executive policy, contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change.
- **Planning Advice Notes (PANs)** provide advice on good practice and other relevant information.

Statements of Scottish Executive policy contained in SPPs and Circulars may be material considerations to be taken into account in development plan preparation and development control.

Existing National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) have continued relevance to decision making, until such time as they are replaced by a SPP. The term SPP should be interpreted as including NPPGs.

Statements of Scottish Executive location-specific planning policy, for example the West Edinburgh Planning Framework, have the same status in decision making as SPPs.

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STOP

SUMMARY

A key aim of planning is to provide well-located, high quality new housing. In meeting the requirements of housing markets across Scotland, planning authorities and housing providers should work closely together to:

- **create quality residential environments** - New housing should make a positive contribution to the built and rural environment, and should be designed and laid out to provide lasting benefits. The planning system has an important role in promoting good design, specifying the requirements for landscaping and open space, and indicating where higher densities will be suitable.
- **guide new housing developments to the right places** - New housing areas should be easily accessible by public transport and well integrated into walking and cycling networks. As part of a long-term settlement strategy, previously developed land and buildings will have a key role and should be reused where a viable and environmentally satisfactory development can be achieved. Extensions to cities, towns and villages or new settlements should be developed in a sustainable way.

In rural areas where possible new housing requirements should be met in towns and villages. To help sustain rural communities, planning authorities are encouraged to take account of local circumstances and needs and to indicate where new housing outwith existing settlements may be appropriate.

- **deliver housing land** - Planning authorities should meet the housing land requirement for each housing market area in full. The planning system can help to support a strategy to provide affordable housing in an area. The plan-led process of providing housing land should provide greater certainty and be more responsive, by :-
 - structure plans taking at least a 12-year and preferably a 20-year view of the pattern of future development, with less precise forecasts of land requirements for later periods;
 - ensuring that local plans provide a supply of effective land to meet requirements for at least 5 years;
 - careful and regular monitoring of completions, land availability and future requirements through a housing land audit, maintaining a supply of effective land for at least the next 5 years at all times;
 - regular review of plans, with alterations if necessary, to maintain a clear forecast and supply; and
 - taking steps to ensure that land is made available if there are delays in plan preparation.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Good housing in the right locations makes an important contribution to achieving Scottish Executive policy objectives. It supports economic competitiveness, social justice and sustainable development. New housing developments can also act as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration.
2. Planning policy for housing is part of a wider policy context. The aim of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is to support a vibrant housing market that provides sufficient good quality, affordable, warm housing in a variety of tenures, to meet individual and community needs and aspirations.
3. Ministers expect the planning system to play a major part in delivering development which is sustainable, both in new build and in the re-use of existing stock. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 1: *The Planning System* identifies five Executive priorities linked to sustainable development: economic competitiveness; social justice; environmental quality; design; and integrated transport.
4. A key aim of planning policy is to bring forward sufficient land to meet the requirement for new dwellings, but this is not simply a matter of arithmetic. The planning system should encourage the creation of attractive, sustainable residential environments. New residential development must make efficient use of resources, reusing previously developed land wherever possible, supporting the aim of reducing energy consumption, and being accessible by forms of transport other than the private car.
5. The planning system should therefore seek to:-
 - Create quality residential environments;
 - Guide development to the right places; and
 - Deliver an adequate supply of housing land.

These three key themes are addressed in the following sections.

CREATING A QUALITY RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

6. Housing is the largest single urban land use, and influences the appearance of urban and rural landscapes. It is a key factor in defining the character of our cities, towns and villages. Achieving quality is therefore important. The location, layout and design of new housing areas have long-term implications for energy consumption. It is therefore vital that sustainable development principles are considered early in the planning and design process. Planning authorities should consult with housing providers and other interested parties, in particular infrastructure providers and local communities, throughout the development process. The following paragraphs set out the issues to be considered in planning for housing.

DESIGN, LAYOUT AND ARCHITECTURE

7. Despite its lasting impact, the design of new housing is not always given sufficient priority by those involved in development. The environmental impact of housing needs to be given much greater importance, from land allocation through to the preparation of development briefs and design statements for planning applications. Attention to design improves residential amenity, and can therefore have marketing and commercial benefits. The overall design of development should be fully addressed, particularly matters such as microclimate; layout of roads, cycle routes and footpaths; the separation and collection of waste; links with local centres; and the relationship to existing development nearby.

Designing Places
Scottish Executive
November 2001

8. *Designing Places* and SPP1 stress the importance the Scottish Executive places on good design. The Executive has published a Planning Advice Note 67: *Housing Quality* prepared in association with Homes for Scotland and Communities Scotland, aimed at raising the standard of new housing.
9. Planning authorities should give clear guidance through development plans and supplementary guidance before proposals are drawn up, rather than simply waiting to react once these have been submitted. The development plan should set out the Council's vision for their area and contain clear policies to encourage good quality, well-designed development proposals. Policies should make clear where local distinctiveness is to be maintained, and where there are opportunities for more innovative architectural approaches.
10. Planning authorities should make use of design guides to influence the design of new housing development generally. For significant or sensitive sites, they should draw up a development brief, indicating any important natural or built features which are to be retained, and guiding developers in matters of density, layout, building heights and materials.
11. Working with architects and landscape architects, developers should aim to produce schemes which enrich the built environment. They should pay careful attention to siting, density, scale, massing, proportions, materials, landscape setting, access arrangements, and the characteristics of local design, adjacent buildings and the surrounding area. Developers may set out their approach on

A forthcoming
PAN will outline
good practice in
the use of design
statements.

these matters in a design statement as supporting material for a planning application.

ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING

Scottish Homes' *'Sustainable Housing Design Guide'* is a useful source of further detail on these issues

12. Energy efficiency is an important element of good design. When preparing the design brief for larger sites, planning authorities should indicate the potential for using energy more efficiently, for example, through siting and orientation. Better siting and orientation can complement improved insulation through Building Standards; these must be achieved in all new buildings, but the possibility of even higher standards should be considered. The cumulative effect of energy-saving initiatives will contribute to the Scottish Climate Change programme.

See PAN 63: *Waste Management Planning*

13. Efficient use of resources in construction is also important. Development plan policies should encourage developers to avoid waste, and to recycle material generated during demolition or on other construction sites.

FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

See NPPG 17: *Transport and Planning* and PAN 57: *Transport and Planning*

14. Good layout is at the heart of making residential environments safe and welcoming, and in helping people to find their way around. Pedestrian activity in a residential area adds vitality and increases the feeling of personal safety. Too many developments in recent years have given priority to car travel, both between the housing and other facilities, and within the development itself, and layouts have been dominated by access roads and parking areas. This disadvantages pedestrians, the disabled, and cyclists, and increases dependence on cars. NPPG 17 highlights the importance of attractive walking environments, and sets out principles for development layout.

See PAN 46: *Planning for Crime Prevention*

15. Roads standards should serve as a guide and starting point, but should not deprive developers and planning authorities of the flexibility to be innovative in promoting a high standard of urban design, and increasing the attractiveness of walking and cycling. Masterplans for larger scale housing developments must take account of the existing urban fabric and layout of streets, and aim to add to and enhance connections. There is great potential to create pedestrian links between new developments and surrounding urban areas, providing safer routes to schools and other facilities, and improving security and surveillance. Larger developments should anticipate and provide for access by public transport. Where good access to public transport exists or can be provided, planning authorities may set lower maximum parking standards.

See NPPG 14: *Natural Heritage* and PAN 60: *Planning for Natural Heritage* for guidance and advice on providing for natural heritage in new development.

LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

16. Landscape design can make a significant contribution to environmental quality, particularly when planting begins to mature, but it cannot compensate for poor layout and design. Developers should consider landscape as a part of the design and layout from the outset of the development process. Where land is allocated for future residential use, developers should consider advance structural planting to establish a landscape framework within which development can take place.

PAN 61: Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

See also PAN 65: Planning and Open Space.

17. New development should respect and where appropriate enhance existing vegetation and other natural features. Mature trees should be retained wherever possible and replanting should be undertaken where development involves their loss. Developments can enhance a site's wildlife value through retention, creation or management of natural features and wildlife habitats. Well-designed sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) can also add to the amenity, character and natural heritage interest of housing. PAN 61 contains further advice on this subject.
18. New housing development should not be located on open space which contributes to local community needs and enjoyment. NPPG 11: *Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space* expects planning authorities to set robust planning policies to safeguard networks of open space and recreation and sports facilities. Land disposal decisions by planning authorities should be based on a wider assessment of local provision and need.
19. NPPG 11 indicates that substantial new housing developments should include open space to meet local needs. Access to open space, preferably within walking distance, for relaxation, informal recreation and sport is important to the health and well being of communities. Developers and planning authorities should consider how open space can best be distributed and laid out, depending upon the type and density of housing. In some cases the emphasis may be on maximising private open space, in other situations developers may be asked for a contribution to upgrade existing open space rather than create new areas. Any requirement on a developer to provide open space should be related to the scale and nature of the development in question.
20. Planning authorities and developers should make sure that provision is made for the long-term management of open space, landscaping, drainage systems and other common facilities proposed as part of residential developments. Open space may be adopted by the local authority, owned in common by residents, or managed by a suitable third party. Arrangements tailored to circumstances can be secured by planning conditions and legal agreements.

DENSITY

21. The efficient use of land is an important planning aim. Through good design, high density development can be achieved without overcrowding, congestion or loss of residential amenity. Some infill housing on inner city brownfield sites has maintained traditional tenement form and existing higher densities. Further opportunities for intensive development can be expected on such sites, particularly those close to transport interchanges. But high density development is not always appropriate. Local plans should provide guidance on density appropriate to particular locations and sites. In particular, they should:
- specify suitable densities for new residential development;
 - identify any areas where it may be desirable to increase residential densities in order to achieve more intensive development;

- identify any areas where it is proposed to replace obsolete higher density housing with medium density housing in order to increase choice, particularly on peripheral estates;
 - identify areas where existing densities should not be exceeded; and
 - ensure that there is ready access to safe and attractive open space networks.
22. The most central and accessible locations should be developed at higher densities. Buildings of 5 storeys or more are likely to be appropriate only at a few urban locations. Planning authorities should identify any locations which they consider could support such forms of development. High density development should embody best practice from Scottish and wider European urban traditions.

PROVIDING A CHOICE OF RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

23. Local authorities, developers and other housing providers should consider the need to provide a choice of housing types. This may include opportunities for self-build housing at some locations. Not every site will be capable of satisfying the full range of housing requirements. Some central urban sites, for example, may provide opportunities for new flatted development, but be unsuitable for houses with gardens. Elsewhere, the redevelopment of some of the post-war peripheral schemes where high-density tenement housing has predominated, may provide opportunities for new family housing at lower densities.

MIXED COMMUNITIES

24. Scottish Executive policy encourages more diverse, attractive, mixed residential communities, both in terms of tenure and land use. To create mixed communities, a range of housing types is needed, providing for the needs of all in the community, and all segments of the market, from affordable housing and starter homes to executive housing, and including homes for families, older people, and people with special housing needs. In the past, much of the family accommodation in cities was in flats. There is now increasing demand for lower density housing with gardens, although there is also evidence of households without children seeking flatted accommodation.
25. Housing can complement other forms of new development and act as a catalyst for regeneration. There is scope for mixed use developments, where commercial, retail, leisure or other uses can form part of a development alongside housing, preferably including a variety of tenures. Development plan policies should support opportunities for mixed-use proposals on appropriate sites.
26. The needs of Gypsies/Travellers for appropriate accommodation will be set out in local housing strategies (see paragraph 72). Planning authorities should continue to play a role through development plans, by identifying suitable locations for Gypsies/Travellers' sites where need is demonstrated, and setting out policies for dealing with applications for small privately-owned sites.

Housing for varying needs: A design guide, published by Scottish Homes. Part 1 1998, Part 2 1999.

Guidance Notes on Site Provision for Travelling People, Advisory Committee on Scotland's Travelling People, 1997

GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TO THE RIGHT PLACES

SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENT STRATEGIES

Revised PAN 38: *Housing Land* provides advice on forecasting housing requirements.

27. Changes in demography and household structure indicate that there will be continued demand for new housing. The Scottish Executive's 2000-based *Household Projections for Scotland* anticipate an overall increase of 260,000 households from 2000 to 2014. The projected rate of growth in households varies across the country, and forecast requirements for new housing will be influenced by issues such as economic prospects and migration patterns.
28. Planning authorities should draw up long-term sustainable settlement strategies, to provide certainty and variety for housing providers and local communities. Key considerations should be:
- efficient use of land and existing buildings, energy and infrastructure;
 - co-ordination of housing land provision with improvements in infrastructure, including transport and educational investment, and with other major proposals such as business or industrial development;
 - the need to ensure that all sections of the community have good access to jobs and services; and
 - the protection and enhancement of the environment.

THE EFFICIENT USE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS

29. The existing fabric of settlements is the product of generations of investment in physical infrastructure, social and cultural facilities and public amenities. Planning authorities should therefore promote the re-use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield land, provided that a satisfactory residential environment can be created; potential constraints are discussed at paragraphs 41-43. It should be recognised that the marketability of sites can change over time. For example, better access to employment and environmental improvement can significantly alter the attractiveness of an area as a place to live.
30. Redevelopment in existing neighbourhoods can support the wider regeneration of these areas, by providing greater choice in terms of housing type and tenure, as well as high quality residential environments. *The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2000* shows over 11,500 hectares of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. A significant proportion of this could be re-used for housing.
31. Land identified for industrial or other development purposes may also provide opportunities for housing development where:
- there is now little prospect of development for the purposes originally envisaged,
 - there is access to a choice of transport, and
 - a satisfactory residential environment can be created.

32. Planning authorities should assess the contribution which vacant buildings can make to the supply of new housing. The conversion of commercial, industrial or institutional premises offers opportunities to create new residential environments with a distinctive character while retaining buildings of architectural or historical interest. The reuse of empty or underused floor-space above shops can provide living space for those who value proximity to a wide range of facilities.
33. The availability of previously developed sites varies across the country, so a national target for brownfield residential development is not appropriate. However, targets may have practical value at the development plan level. Where planning authorities set targets for housing on brownfield land, they should be realistic and should normally be supported by the findings of a survey such as an urban capacity study.
34. Infill sites can often make a useful contribution to the supply of housing land. Planning authorities should ensure that infill development respects the scale, form and density of its surroundings and enhances rather than detracts from the character and amenity of existing residential areas. Care should be taken that the individual and cumulative effects of infill can be sustained by the social and economic infrastructure and do not lead to over-development. These principles apply equally to development in the gardens or grounds of existing houses or on backland sites in urban, suburban or village locations.

Advice on urban capacity studies is contained in PAN 38: *Housing Land*

ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS

35. The planning of new residential development offers opportunities for reducing travel demand. To contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the Scottish Executive is committed to the effective integration of land use and transport. Patterns of development should seek to reduce the demand for travel and reliance on the private car, and help to reduce general energy consumption.
36. Access to jobs and facilities should be carefully considered by both planning authorities and developers. In planning the expansion of existing settlements or the development of new ones, preference should be given to locations which can be well integrated with existing and proposed public transport, walking and cycling networks. Such locations should be developed at higher densities (see also paragraphs 21-22). At central locations, integrating housing with commercial, community and leisure uses in mixed developments can give good access to jobs and a wide range of services.
37. Where there is a supply of previously developed land, planning authorities should normally give priority to its reuse, in preference to greenfield development. However, in seeking to locate new housing where it will be accessible by a range of forms of transport, planning authorities may conclude that the release of certain areas of greenfield land would result in a more sustainable pattern of development.

Further guidance on the integration of land use and transport is contained in NPPG 17: *Transport and Planning*.

Further guidance on safeguarding the natural environment is contained in NPPG 14: *Natural Heritage*.

SAFEGUARDING ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

38. Plans and proposals for residential development, should seek to minimise adverse effects on natural heritage, including landscape character and biodiversity. Care should be taken to safeguard national and international natural heritage designations. Development proposals need to be assessed for their effects on the resources which the designation is intended to protect. Specific notification requirements apply to proposals in National Scenic Areas (NSAs) and planning authorities should take care to safeguard the outstanding natural and cultural resources of existing and prospective National Parks.

NPPG 5: *Archaeology and Planning*

39. The potential impact of housing land allocations on archaeological sites and landscapes of historic importance must also be fully considered. Care must be taken to avoid impact on the site and setting of scheduled monuments which are safeguarded in the national interest. NPPG 5 gives detailed guidance on the treatment of archaeological sites and landscapes.

A statement of national policy on green belts is set out in SDD Circular 24/1985: *Development in the Countryside and Green Belts*.

40. The Scottish Executive looks to planning authorities to maintain the effectiveness of existing green belts, safeguard the character and amenity of the countryside, and protect the setting of Scotland's towns and cities. Green belt and 'countryside around towns' policies play an important role. In areas where there is a demonstrable requirement for additional housing, green belt boundaries will need to be reviewed as part of a long-term sustainable settlement strategy. Sites which no longer contribute significantly to the purpose of the green belt, and which can be readily accessed by a range of transport, may be released for housing development, provided this will not undermine the green belt's overall effectiveness and integrity. Before any green belt land is identified for development, there should be a realistic appraisal of the opportunities for development on sites within the existing urban area.

OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING THE LOCATION OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

41. Not all sites will be capable of providing good residential environments, mainly because of safety or amenity considerations. The following types of location are unlikely to be appropriate:

- safety exclusion zones around hazardous installations;
- some sites adjacent to busy trunk roads or rail lines;
- noise contours and public safety zones related to airports;
- some sites adjacent to waste management facilities and sewage treatment works;
- sites adjacent to noisy or polluting activities;
- existing or possible areas of mineral working – both to protect residential amenity and to avoid the sterilisation of mineral deposits with commercial potential.

See PAN 63: *Waste Management Planning*

NPPG 4: *Land for Mineral Working* and NPPG 16: *Opencast Coal and Related Minerals*

See PAN 66 on
*Planning
Applications
Affecting Trunk
Roads*

42. Proposals for new housing which would involve a new or altered access from a trunk road require careful consideration. Planning authorities should consult the Scottish Executive's Road Network Managers on suitable policies and land allocations in development plans and should seek early discussion on planning applications.

See NPPG 7:
*Planning and
Flooding*

43. Scottish Executive policy is to avoid unnecessarily increasing the number of areas that need artificial protection against flooding. Sites likely to be at significant risk from flooding including those on the functional flood plain should not be developed for new housing.

EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING SETTLEMENTS

44. Where brownfield and infill sites cannot meet the full range of housing requirements, it will be necessary to release greenfield land next to built-up areas. Meeting housing requirements through extensions to existing towns and villages has a number of advantages. Servicing costs can be reduced and new housing may benefit smaller communities by helping to sustain local schools, shops and services. But extensions should not be dependent solely or mainly on car access. Sustainable transport options should be considered as an integral part of the development process and the aim should be to provide opportunities for non car access before houses are occupied and patterns of travel established.

See PAN 44:
*Fitting New
Housing
Development into
the Landscape.*

45. Extensions to settlements need careful planning. The landscape settings of existing towns and villages must be respected, and building types, designs and materials should also respect local architectural styles. Attention should be given not only to the visual impact within a village or town, but also to its appearance from outside, for example from major roads, public transport routes or other vantage points. Care should be taken, particularly in smaller towns and villages, to ensure that the scale of new development is appropriate, and consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of a succession of developments over time. In larger developments, the internal road layout should allow easy access by buses.
46. Development plans should specify how the character and setting of a settlement is to be protected, guide new development to suitable sites and in some cases provide for the phased release of land. Development briefs can also help in setting out development principles (paragraphs 9-11). Paragraphs 84-85 give guidance on infrastructure delivery.

NEW SETTLEMENTS

47. A new settlement may have a part to play in meeting housing requirements as part of a long-term development strategy where:
- there are substantial physical, environmental or infrastructural constraints to the further growth of existing settlements, or it forms part of a strategy for promoting rural development and renewal;
 - it could assist in reducing development pressure on the greenbelt or areas of attractive countryside;

- it can be readily serviced by public transport;
- it will not have a significant adverse effect on any natural or built heritage interest safeguarded by a national or international designation; and
- it will not result in other significant environmental disbenefits.

Where a planning authority considers a new settlement a necessary part of their development strategy, the development plan should specify its scale and location. See paragraphs 84-85 for guidance on infrastructure delivery.

HOUSING IN RURAL AREAS

48. Rural areas across Scotland face a range of economic and environmental circumstances. Many areas close to large towns and city regions experience pressure for various forms of development, and planning policy will be concerned with managing these pressures. For other rural areas, planning policy will be concerned with enabling growing communities to expand, as well as sustaining fragile and in some cases dispersed communities.
49. Planning policies have traditionally sought to restrict the development of new houses in the countryside to maintain rural character and amenity and safeguard agricultural production. Where possible, most housing requirements should be met within or adjacent to existing settlements. This prevents the sprawl and coalescence of settlements, makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and public services and helps to conserve natural heritage and rural amenity. However, while environmental protection remains important in the context of sustainable development, the major changes taking place in farming and the rural economy mean that some aspects of policy on housing in the countryside need adjustment.
50. In some rural areas, particularly those categorised in NPPG 15 as intermediate and remote, new housing outwith existing settlements may have a part to play in economic regeneration and environmental renewal. In remote rural areas with substantial long-term depopulation, proactive planning measures to help increase the resident population could assist economic and social regeneration. A dispersed settlement pattern is already an established feature of the landscape and economy in crofting areas.
51. Country living continues to attract a steady demand for new houses in some rural areas, and in some areas there is a strong demand for second homes. It may be possible to harness these demands in ways which secure economic, social or environmental benefits. Where there is significant demand for second homes specific development plan provision could contribute to economic and social opportunities and reduce pressures on the general housing stock without damaging the environment.
52. Some rural areas in the Central Belt and Ayrshire have suffered environmental damage from past industries, and well designed new housing development can help in their rehabilitation and renewal. In West Lothian, for example, "lowland

NPPG 15: Rural Development - Research into the operation of NPPG 15 will be published in 2003 and will inform a review of the policy.

crofting” policies have secured improvements to landscape structure, the creation of new wildlife habitats, and improved public access as contributions to the development of the Central Scotland Forest.

53. NPPG 15 suggests that low-impact forms of housing development can provide both economic and environmental benefits. Proposals for sustainable residential development using innovative, energy-efficient technologies with particularly low impacts on the environment may be acceptable at locations where more conventional buildings would not. The control of innovative low impact uses through the planning system is best achieved by a plan-led approach. Proposals should be carefully assessed against specified sustainable development criteria and the wider policy objectives of the development plan.
54. Research indicates that many parts of rural Scotland have experienced, and are likely to go on experiencing, significant shortages in the supply of affordable housing. Not only are stocks of social rented, privately rented and cheaper owner-occupied houses relatively scarce, but also, particularly in social rented housing, turnover rates are low. Appropriate ways to support delivery of affordable housing may differ between rural and urban areas; guidance is given at paragraphs 74-83.
55. The aim should be to promote development that supports the rural economy and local services, promotes rural regeneration, embodies the principles of sustainable development, and enhances the rural environment. Development plans should show where new housing will be encouraged and set out criteria against which any new proposals not specifically provided for in the plan will be judged. PAN 36 encourages careful attention to siting and the adoption of house designs which reflect the variations in landscape and building character across Scotland. The approach towards design and quality in residential environments set out in this SPP should be applied in the rural context.
56. Buildings in the countryside no longer required for their original purposes can offer opportunities for conversion to dwellings. Residential and business conversions are a way of retaining buildings which contribute to local character and can result in distinctive assets to the local environment. Even where planning authorities operate a policy resisting new housing outwith settlements, they should look sympathetically at proposals for the sensitive re-use, conversion or rehabilitation of buildings which can be accessed safely and readily serviced. Some limited new housing along with converted or rehabilitated buildings may be acceptable where it results in a cohesive grouping well related to its landscape setting. However, redevelopment should not automatically extend to the replacement of wholly derelict buildings or development of a different scale or character from that which existed previously.

'Land supply for affordable housing in rural areas', Satsangi et al, Scottish Executive 2001

PAN 36: Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside

DELIVERING HOUSING LAND

INTRODUCTION

57. Development plans are the main vehicle for assessing future housing land requirements and ensuring that these are provided in full for each housing market area. The broader objective of development plan policies on housing is to enable the completion of quality dwellings and the creation of sustainable, mixed, residential environments.
58. Housing issues are also addressed in other council-led strategies. The view of housing requirements in development plans should be developed jointly between planning, housing and other departments and should be consistent with community plans and local housing strategies.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

59. Development plans should be prepared and reviewed within the timescales set out in SPP 1: *The Planning System* so that the plan-led system can provide greater certainty. This guidance will apply to future reviews of structure plans, and to local plans which will be prepared in line with structure plans.
60. Development plans should take an informed long-term view on the requirement for new housing. SPP 1: indicates that structure plans should look forward over a minimum of 10 years. Consultation responses on the draft SPP 3 confirm that it is desirable to take an even longer term view: the structure plan should set out a strategy for the location of new housing over a period of at least 12 years and preferably up to 20 years from the date of approval. Up to year 12, the structure plan should identify the scale of provision needed and indicate how and where it should be met. The local plan should convert this into effective site-specific allocations.
61. The structure plan should:
- identify the overall housing land requirement for a period of 12 years from the plan's expected date of approval
 - identify the scale of the existing effective land supply;
 - where there is a shortfall, identify how much additional land is required for the first 12 years and the settlements where this will be provided. This should be separated into two phases and should include a margin of flexibility to help avoid the need for an alteration to bring further land into the effective supply prior to the 5-yearly review;
 - provide a broad indication of the scale of the housing land requirement and the location of housing development beyond year 12, preferably up to year 20.

Structure plans are not expected to identify specific sites.

62. For the period up to year 12, structure plans should also contain an action plan setting out how implementation will be achieved and addressing any critical

See PAN 38:
Housing Land

issues of phasing, infrastructure provision, the removal of significant constraints, land acquisition and the preparation of development briefs.

63. For the period beyond year 12, structure plans should give a broad indication of where requirements will be met. This type of strategic decision can be made well ahead of land being required, informing infrastructure providers, allowing earlier consultation, and alerting communities to the probable future direction of development. Medium to long-term planning is needed to allow all parties to consider carefully how to accommodate future demand for growth where infill and brownfield opportunities cannot provide all the land necessary for new housing.
64. Local plans must conform to the structure plan and provide sufficient effective land to meet the housing land requirement for at least 5 years from the date of adoption. Local plans should also identify further sites to meet requirements in the medium term. The effectiveness and programming of sites will be monitored through the annual housing land audit, to maintain sufficient effective land for at least the following 5 years at all times.
65. Housing land requirements should be regularly monitored. In looking to the medium and longer term, development plans should identify the triggers for the release of future phases of housing land. These could include, for example, the provision of necessary infrastructure, increased completion rates or changes in land availability. Development plans should be capable of responding to changes in demand, and take account of up-to-date information on supply, through the housing land audit and other information such as capacity studies.
66. Alterations to the housing element of plans should be prepared where necessary to ensure that housing land requirements are met. But an alteration is not required if longer term allocations and releases are simply being brought forward earlier. If development plans do not keep pace with the need to maintain a supply of land, planning permission should be granted in advance of local plan adoption provided that the proposals comply with other policies of the development plan. The requirement assessed through the structure plan should also take account of the need for affordable housing, as identified in the authority's local housing strategy. In areas where there is little or no requirement for new affordable housing, it may not be necessary to include a specific allocation for such housing. In areas where there is a demonstrable need, the overall land requirements should reflect this.

HOUSING LAND AUDITS

67. Planning authorities should carry out regular monitoring of housing completions and availability of effective land by preparing a housing land audit. PAN 38 indicates the practical limitations of carrying out a detailed housing land audit and updating it each year in rural areas. For most planning authorities, however, the audit should be updated annually, working closely with housing providers. Homes for Scotland have drafted a procedure note setting out their views on good practice in the process. The aim of the audit process is to ensure that, at all times, sufficient effective land is available to meet the housing land

Advice on housing land audits, effective housing land and urban capacity studies is contained in revised PAN 38: *Housing Land*

requirement for at least the following 5 years. Each housing land audit should specify those sites (or proportion of sites) which can be programmed over a period of 5 years. The audit should also indicate sites which are likely to be programmed just beyond the 5-year horizon, including at least years 6 and 7, to illustrate that sites are available to continue to meet the housing land requirement.

68. Planning authorities should seek the views of house builders through Homes for Scotland, and small builders where relevant, to inform their consideration of the effectiveness of the land supply. The audit should also monitor the extent to which sites are being developed to deliver new housing.
69. Where monitoring indicates that availability of housing land and/or completions are not keeping pace with identified requirements, planning authorities may prepare an alteration or review as necessary.

HOUSING MARKET AREAS

70. Planning authorities should ensure that the housing land requirement for each housing market area is provided in full, in the context of a sustainable settlement strategy. The section on 'Guiding development to the right places' sets out more information on the elements of a sustainable settlement strategy. Exceptionally, where there are serious environmental or infrastructural constraints, planning authorities may consider whether a proportion of the requirement can be met satisfactorily elsewhere in the local authority area or in adjacent local authority areas. Where this is proposed, the planning authorities concerned should formally agree the proportion to be accommodated in each local authority area and reflect this in development plans.
71. Housing market areas can change in response to various factors including improved transport infrastructure or associated investment in mixed developments and planning authorities should monitor this change. Irrespective of how housing market areas are defined, structure plans must allocate all land requirements specifically to the areas of individual councils, as the basis for local plans and development control decisions.

LINKS WITH LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGIES

72. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to undertake an assessment of housing needs and conditions in their areas and produce a local housing strategy covering 5 years. This should view the housing market as a whole, covering all tenures and including any need for affordable housing. Local authorities will be expected to develop a comprehensive strategy involving registered social landlords and other housing providers and the local community. Communities Scotland have prepared online guidance on preparing the strategies, including methodologies for determining housing needs. Housing and planning departments should work together to ensure consistency between the development plan and the local housing strategy in identifying housing needs (see paragraphs 74-83).
73. As noted above, in major conurbations larger regional housing market areas are likely to cut across local authority administrative boundaries. A local authority's

Additional information on housing market areas is included in revised PAN 38: *Housing Land*

See publications menu at www.communities.scotland.gov.uk for online guidance on LHS.

local housing strategy must take account of these larger markets. Local authorities may therefore need to work with neighbouring authorities to define the wider housing market and its issues.

DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

74. Affordable housing is broadly defined as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. In some places the market can provide some or all of the affordable housing that is needed, but in other places it is necessary to make housing available at a cost below market value, to meet an identified need. The main ways through which this is achieved are:
- social rented accommodation;
 - low cost housing for sale, for example shared ownership, self-build or other subsidised or discounted housing for sale; and
 - some private sector rented accommodation, available at lower cost than market rents, and provided either by local landowners or commercial landlords.
75. The need for new affordable housing varies within Scotland. Some areas have an adequate supply or even a surplus. Other areas, especially those experiencing growth and some rural areas, have a shortage. This policy focuses on provision of new affordable housing, and is most relevant to those areas which have a shortfall, where the planning system may make a contribution to provision.
76. In the past, affordable housing was normally funded entirely from the public purse, and local authorities were the main providers. More recently, most new social rented housing and low cost home ownership have been provided by housing associations, with a proportion of costs being met by grants from Communities Scotland, and the remaining finance borrowed from commercial lenders. Some private sector housing, including self-build, contributes to the availability of affordable housing, and for some low-cost home ownership schemes, grant may be paid directly to developers or to private individuals. However in certain areas there is still a shortfall in the supply of new affordable housing, and even where subsidy is available, housing associations can have difficulty in obtaining land at an affordable price. As a result, in recent years there has been increasing interest in the use of the planning system to secure additional investment in affordable housing, as well as to ensure that sufficient land is available.
77. Development plans should allocate sufficient land overall to ensure land is available to meet requirements including affordable housing needs. As with market-led housing development, the requirement for affordable housing should where possible be met within the housing market area where the need has been identified. In due course, local housing strategies (LHS) will identify any need and set out how the council intends to address it. Where a housing needs assessment within a current LHS identifies a shortage of affordable housing, this

is a material consideration in planning processes, which should be addressed as the opportunity arises through reviews of structure and local plans. Where the planning authority believes that the planning system has a role to play in the provision of affordable housing locally, this should be signalled as soon as possible in the development plan with an outline of what is expected from prospective developers.

78. The ways in which the planning system can contribute to the provision of affordable housing will vary within and between local authorities. Advice on good practice in providing affordable housing through the planning system will follow in due course. In areas of development pressure and where land values are relatively high the private house building industry may be able to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing. In such areas the development plan should set out a policy and in consultation with house builders indicate how this can be achieved, including the role, if any, of planning agreements. The use of planning agreements should be in accordance with current policy (see paragraph 84).
79. The planned release of a substantial area of land for housing can provide the opportunity to create a development with a diversity of house types and tenures. Planning authorities should ensure that the local plan contains a policy seeking a range of house types to encourage creation of mixed communities. This should take account of any need for affordable housing identified in the local housing strategy. For significant sites, this may be supplemented by a development brief. Clarity in the development plan regarding the range of house types sought, as well as any anticipated use of planning agreements, will help ensure that the requirement to provide affordable housing can be factored in to the price that a developer will pay for land.
80. In areas where the market is less buoyant and land values are low, or where development is likely to take place on small infill sites, more innovative approaches may be required. For example, a council might wish to release a number of parcels of land simultaneously some of which will be developed for unsubsidised owner occupied housing with other sites developed for affordable housing, with or without public subsidy. In determining applications, planning authorities should give the appropriate weight to economic and social circumstances alongside environmental considerations. Particularly in rural areas, authorities should consider how proposals for self-built housing and other small scale developments may help to meet local affordable housing needs.
81. The development plan should give clarity on the expected scale of provision and the locations in which this will be sought. The provision of land for affordable housing in a particular local plan area need not relate to the specific requirements of households resident in that area. The aim is to help address the shortage of land for affordable housing in the housing market area as a whole.
82. It is essential that planning authorities liaise with Communities Scotland and their own housing colleagues to determine how the affordable housing is

actually to be delivered. In some cases it will involve the developer making a proportion of houses available at a discounted price. In other cases the development may be part-funded through public subsidy. The means of delivery should be indicated in local plans, bearing in mind that Communities Scotland, and local authorities (where the administration of development funding has been transferred to them), may make subsidy available only for sites which form part of a strategic programme.

83. Planning authorities should keep under review the requirement for affordable housing in their area, progress with provision and the scope for increasing supply through the planning system and other means.

PLANNING AGREEMENTS AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

84. Planning authorities have the power under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to enter into an agreement with persons having an interest in land in their area for the purpose of restricting or regulating the use of that land. Agreements can be used to overcome obstacles to the grant of planning permission, but planning authorities should not use an applicant's need for planning permission to obtain a benefit which is unrelated in nature, scale or kind to the proposed development.

85. Creating a new settlement or major extension will generally require partnership between the public sector, private developers and other interests. Development plans should be clear about the likely scale of developer contributions, which for some sites may include provision of all or most new infrastructure, road improvements and similar requirements. Such provisions should be drawn up in consultation with the relevant parties, and the cost of providing the necessary infrastructure should be commensurate with the scale of the development proposed.

DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS

86. A constructive dialogue between planning authorities and the private sector and wider community will be needed to enable development plans to be prepared and adopted within realistic timescales. Up-to-date development plans, where appropriate supported by supplementary guidance such as development briefs, should make the assessment of applications simpler, quicker and more consistent.

87. Speed and quality of decisions on planning applications are both important. The planning system should give confidence to developers as well as dealing efficiently with applications. Pre-application discussions can help to reduce the time taken to decide applications.

**SODD Circular
12/1996 *Planning
Agreements***

**See also SPP 1:
*The Planning
System***

CONCLUSION

88. This SPP conveys two key messages on planning for new housing in Scotland. First, the importance of good design in new housing development. As well as bringing forward land in the appropriate locations and fitting housing within broader settlement strategies, the planning system has a key role in promoting attractive, sustainable forms of development. The provision of good quality, well-located new housing to meet the requirements of housing markets across Scotland requires that planning authorities and housing providers work closely together.
89. Secondly, this SPP indicates ways in which the process of providing housing land can become more responsive and provide greater certainty to developers and local communities. Development planning has a central role in ensuring that land is available for housing development in the right quantities and in the right places. Clearly the pace at which plans are updated and adopted is of key importance in ensuring that this system works. The Scottish Executive believes that the system can be improved by ensuring plans identify sites with potential to meet requirements in the mid to long term; systematic monitoring of completions, land availability and future demand, in consultation with housing providers through housing land audits; regular review of plans, including a formal alteration if necessary; and measures to ensure that land continues to become available if there are delays in preparation and adoption of plans.

NOTES

90. This SPP sets out the matters which planning authorities should take into account when preparing development plan policies and determining planning applications. It replaces the revised NPPG 3: Land for Housing (1996). It sets out the matters the Scottish Ministers will take into account when assessing housing policies in development plans and planning applications which come before them. It is also expected that developers will have regard to these considerations when preparing proposals for new residential development.
91. Enquiries about the content of this SPP should be addressed to Helen Wood, SEDD Planning, Area 2-H, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ (0131 244 7535) or by e-mail to: helen.wood@scotland.gsi.gov.uk Further copies can be obtained by telephoning 0131 244 7543. This SPP and other SPPs, PANs and a list of Circulars can be viewed on the Scottish Executive web site: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning>.

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing: Broadly defined as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. In some places the market can provide some or all of the affordable housing that is needed, but in other places it is necessary to make housing available at a cost below market value to meet an identified need.

Brownfield land: Land which has previously been developed. The term may encompass vacant or derelict land; infill sites; land occupied by redundant or unused buildings; and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.

Constrained housing land supply: That part of the established housing land supply which at the time of any audit is not assessed as being effective.

Demand: The market expression of the desire for housing. It is a compound of needs and aspirations and can be satisfied either by existing housing or by new housing requiring additional land provision.

Effective housing stock: The permanently occupied housing stock after having made allowance for vacant and second homes. It therefore represents housing of an adequate standard occupied by permanently resident households.

Effective housing land supply: The part of the established housing land supply that is expected to be free of development constraints in the period under consideration, and will therefore be available for the construction of housing.

Established housing land supply: The total housing land supply – including both constrained and unconstrained sites. This will include the effective housing land supply, plus the remaining capacity of sites under construction; sites with planning consent; sites in adopted local plans; and other land and buildings with agreed potential for housing development.

Greenfield land: Land which has never previously been developed, or fully-restored formerly derelict land which has been brought back into active or beneficial use for agriculture, forestry, environmental purposes, or outdoor recreation.

Housing Land Audit: The mechanism for monitoring the housing land supply and identifying those sites within the established land supply which are expected to be effective within the period under consideration.

Housing Land Requirement: The difference between a figure arrived at by considering market demand, demographic need and other relevant factors, and the effective housing land supply.

Housing Market Area: A geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of housing demand; i.e. a large percentage of the people moving home or settling in the area will have sought a dwelling only in that area.

Need: A measure of the number of households which require to be housed. It encompasses the special needs of particular groups such as the elderly and the handicapped. Need takes no account of the exercise of choice or other market factors.

Private sector housing: Housing for sale or rent provided by private developers or other commercial organisations. The term "owner-occupied sector" excludes the private rented element.

Public sector housing: General and special needs housing provision by registered housing associations, local authorities and other social housing providers for rent.

Sustainable development: The Scottish Executive adheres to the Brundtland definition of sustainable development, i.e. 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Urban capacity study: An assessment of the potential for further housing development within settlement boundaries, particularly on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings.

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