

To: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 14 th SEPTEMBER 2005	Ref:	

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to clarify the current policy on housing in the countryside.

2. Background

2.1 The countryside outwith built up areas in North Lanarkshire Council is designated Greenbelt in accordance with National Policies and the Structure Plan which requires continued designation and safeguarding of the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Green Belt, or Countryside Around Towns through the local plans.

2.2 The purpose of Greenbelt is:

- To maintain the identity of settlements and prevent them from merging
- To provide countryside for recreation
- To maintain the landscape setting of towns and settlements
- It is also intended to protect agricultural land and enhance the landscape

The local plans covering North Lanarkshire, all include policies to safeguard the character and function of the greenbelt.

2.3 There is a presumption against new residential development unless for agriculture, forestry, recreation or other uses requiring a rural location. Applicants are asked to provide justification for their proposals by way of a report from an independent agricultural expert and/or the submission of a business plan. Where justification is sound, then the proposal would comply with the policy. However, the applicant would be asked to enter into an agreement in terms of section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, which would tie the house to the farm/business.

In circumstances where a business has still to become established, it is normal practice to permit temporary residential accommodation for a period, to enable the applicant to demonstrate that the business can be viable.

Where the principle of new residential development is acceptable, the design and setting should be in keeping with countryside and rural surroundings in accordance with National Planning Guidelines.

2.4 Conversion of Existing Buildings

Local Plan policies allow conversion of existing buildings to residential use, buildings to, where the building is worthy of preservation, is substantially complete and the proposed conversion does not result in a significant increase in floor-space. There is no operational justification required for this type of proposal and therefore a Section 75 Agreement is not applicable. Again the design of the conversion should be sympathetic to the rural location.

2.5 Review of Policies

The application of the above policies has assured the continued protection of the Greenbelt and has been reinforced by decisions of the Scottish Ministers at appeal or call in.

As committee is aware there are a number of local plans covering North Lanarkshire at present. As part of the new North Lanarkshire Local Plan these will be reviewed in light of any changes in national and strategic policy and included within the Consultative Draft Plan to be presented for the agreement of Committee in due course.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report.



David M. Porch
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
31st August 2005

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Shirley Linton on 01236 616405.