

**Tan 6:
Planning for
Sustainable Rural
Communities in
Wales**

DLP BRIEFING NOTE 26

Prepared by
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Briefing Note: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities in Wales

In July 2010 the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) published the final version of Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (TAN). Previous DLP Briefing Note 11 summarised the content of the consultation draft last year. This TAN compliments amendments to Planning Policy Wales (PPW) that are incorporated in Edition 3, which was also published in July.

The Rural Economy

An underlying principle is that planning authorities should support developments that would help to achieve a better balance between housing and employment and that encourage people to live and work in the same locality.

The TAN recognises that in some rural situations, development proposals intended to meet local needs may only be accessible by car; however other rural development (i.e. not specifically for local need) should be in locations accessible by public transport. This offers a pragmatic approach that differs from the usual principle of sustainable modes of transport and travel.

Strengthening and diversifying the rural economy is supported in the TAN, e.g. enhancing infrastructure, expanding broadband technologies, supporting existing enterprises (provided there is no impact on amenity or other issues) and farm diversification. Chapter 7 of PPW recognises the importance of new economic development in rural areas and advises that these do not necessarily need to be located in settlements.

The TAN also explains WAG's support for sustainable agriculture.

Affordable Housing

Chapter 4 of PPW now emphasises the importance of affordable housing in sustainable rural communities. The TAN encourages Local Authorities to plan proactively and innovatively to maximise the supply of affordable housing in rural areas, including the use of targets and thresholds in settlements large enough to be allocated new residential development, supplemented by an affordable housing exception site policy. In smaller settlements and clusters, the Local Authorities should engage with local communities and rural housing enablers to bring forward sites for genuine affordable housing to meet local need. Different methods of delivery are considered, using stakeholders that include Registered Social Landlords, community land trusts, private landlords or unsubsidised homes that are linked to local income levels or discounted from market value.

Rural Enterprise Dwellings

Both PPW (Chapter 9) and the TAN use the term Rural Enterprise Dwellings for dwellings associated with workers in the rural economy, encompassing agriculture,

forestry, minerals, land management, tourism and leisure. There are five factors that must be established if new permanent rural enterprise dwellings are proposed:-

- An existing functional need;
- The need relates to a full-time worker;
- The enterprise has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one year and there is a clear prospect for the business remaining financially sound;
- The functional need cannot be fulfilled by another dwelling, conversion of existing building or other accommodation locally; and
Other planning considerations are satisfied.

As WAG wish to encourage younger people to work in the rural economy, in some situations a second dwelling may be permitted on a rural enterprise, i.e. where there are legal arrangements in place to transfer a farm business to a younger person, or where there is a functional need for at least 0.5 equivalent of a full-time worker earning at least 50% of a Grade 2 Standard Worker salary.

In some circumstances, new dwellings may be permitted in conjunction with a new enterprise, however in most situations temporary accommodation only would be approved for example for the first three years. There are six criteria that apply:-

- Clear evidence of the intention to develop the enterprise concerned;
- Clear evidence that the enterprise needs to be established at the location and can't be sited elsewhere;
- Clear evidence of sound financial planning;
- There is a functional need relating to a full-time worker;
- The functional need cannot be fulfilled by another dwelling, conversion of existing building or other accommodation locally; and
- Other planning considerations are satisfied.

Planning applications must be accompanied by a rural enterprise dwelling appraisal that addresses five tests:-

- A 'functional' test (i.e. the need for a resident worker);
- A 'time' test (i.e. the labour requirement);
- A 'financial' test (i.e. the economic sustainability of the enterprise and the size of a dwelling necessary);
- An 'other dwellings' test (i.e. are there other dwellings or buildings suitable to house the worker?); and
- An 'other normal planning requirements' test (i.e. consideration of siting, amenity, access etc).

One Planet Development

Both PPW and the TAN support One Planet Development, which is *“development that through its low impact either enhances or does not significantly diminish environmental quality...should initially achieve an ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares per*

person or less in terms of consumption and demonstrate clear potential to move towards 1.88 global hectare target over time. They should be zero carbon in both construction and use.” Applications for these developments, which can be sited in the countryside as well as settlements and which can include single homes, co-operative communities or larger developments, must be supported by incredibly robust evidence covering a wide range of topics.

Rural Services

Local Authorities are encouraged to support rural services through the development plan and development management, particularly the retention and expansion of existing services and the identification of sustainable locations for new proposals to meet general need.

Should you wish to find out more about your opportunities for sustainable rural development in Wales, or discuss the situation in England, please contact your local DLP office.

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