

Learning Outcomes

- More background information prior to the Forum meeting would be desirable
- Summary sheet on Local Development Plan programme.
- Set out the existing South Ayrshire Local Plan policies on topic.
- Would have been helpful to hear of issues the Planning Service experiences with the operation of current policies.
- Extend meeting time to two hours
- Smaller group sizes to ensure greater participation and focus.
- Potentially split topic over two meetings as generally attendees thought the Discussion Groups were helpful and informative, however members would have liked the opportunity to discuss all topics.

What happens next?

The views expressed at the Forum meeting and in the feedback forms will be taken into consideration by the Planning Service and will assist us in preparing Local Development Plan Policies and Supplementary Guidance for housing in the countryside, within the context of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Scottish Planning Policy. There will be further opportunities to submit comments and representations through public consultations on the Proposed Local Development Plan and for each piece of Supplementary Guidance.

Further Planning Forum meetings to discuss Supplementary Guidance topics will be held in 2012. More information will be sent out to you once dates are confirmed.

SOUTH AYRSHIRE PLANNING SERVICE :

**BUILDING A PERFORMANCE
AND
CUSTOMER CULTURE**

Thank you to all Forum members who participated in the discussions on Guidance on Housing in the Countryside. At the Forum meeting on 26th October, Forum members debated what opportunities there should be for new houses in the countryside and what design criteria the Council should apply to these houses. The specific topics covered were: Council guidance on new housing within existing housing clusters, housing required to support rural businesses and design criteria for new houses in the countryside. Pictures of recent developments in South Ayrshire and other areas were circulated to facilitate discussion on what types of design might be appropriate and desirable in the countryside. The predominant opinion of the Forum was that current rural design guidance may be too inflexible and prescriptive.

Following the event, a feedback form was sent out to all Forum members, which gave the opportunity to comment on these and other issues (e.g. replacement houses, extensions and conversions).

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South Ayrshire Planning Forum Meeting 26th October 2011

Houses in the Countryside



Outcome Report



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Discussion Group 1 – Clusters Key Themes

- Clusters require upper limit as well as a lower limit or else they will become hamlets.
- Each application requires to be assessed on its own merits.
- Any additional housing in the countryside should be on or in close proximity of public transport routes.
- Avoid ribbon development.
- Applications should be treated more favourably if they help to create a sustainable community or provide an economic activity.
- The views of all existing residents within clusters should be taken into account in deciding new applications clusters.

Additional Comments from Feedback Forms

- Only allow infill development, not expansion of clusters.
- Majority thought farm steadings conversions should not be regarded as a clusters.
- Clusters should be a visibly connected group of buildings
- 50% expansion rule should apply.
- Holiday rentals properties should be allowed to developed as part of clusters.
- No extensions to existing clusters or individual houses allowed as new development should be focussed in towns and villages.

Discussion Group 2 – New Houses Associated with Rural Businesses Key Issues

- Focus business development on existing settlements and convert existing buildings before allowing new development which will mean more isolated dwellings.
- New houses should be allowed only where there is a genuine need for them e.g. for security, onsite worker presence, clear need and economic case, business is proven viable.
- Allow greater flexibility and have no occupancy restrictions.
- Tying properties have a negative impact on the rural economy and housing market.

Additional Comments from Feedback Forms

- Allow second tied homes for part time key workers in rural businesses.
- S75 should be allowed to be revoked if financial circumstances require –ties can cause financial and social difficulties.
- More positive approach required by Planning Service to promote rural development to retain populations and boost viability of countryside to live and work.
- Existing policy is too restrictive and stifles rural development.
- Key considerations should be need for house and design.
- New houses should be grouped with other buildings to form hubs rather than isolated buildings.

Session 2 – Design Criteria for New Houses in the Countryside Forum Discussion

- More innovative and contemporary designs which are energy efficient rather than recreating traditional style dwellings.
- New guidance should focus on design principles rather than being too prescriptive.
- Assess each design on their merit-e.g. landscape setting, relationship with existing properties, function.
- Detailed Design Statements should be included to justify design
- Use of natural and sustainable materials should be encouraged.
- Communities should have their opinions taken into account more as they are the ones living with the consequences of design.
- The language used by Planning Service in LDP and Supplementary Guidance must be in plain English and pictures/ illustrations would be helpful.
- Eco-homes should not get special treatment as a high quality of design should be sought across the board.
- All properties should be allowed to extend by 25% of what currently exists at the adoption of the new plan in 2013 without requiring planning permission

Additional Comments from Feedback Forms

- Quality modern design where it does not conflict with local context
- As well as house design, look at setting design, e.g. access, boundary treatments, gardens to ensure rural does not become suburban.
- Encourage good contemporary, sustainable and latest ecological designs
- High design quality and finishes should be mandatory requirement.

Conversions, Extensions and Replacement Houses

- Extension should be allowed with additional outbuildings to suit modern living, with no limits on size providing the landscape can accommodate the development.
- Any redundant building should be utilised for housing not just traditional buildings providing they are structurally stable. This could assist farm diversification and tourism.
- The siting of replacement houses should be more flexible to ensure building is in best site within the landscape.
- Greater flexibility in the use of alternative materials should be allowed.
- Visual impact should be primary consideration in decision making.
- Allow the conversion of historically and cultural important ruins to ensure their survival.
- No agricultural land should be lost for housing development in rural areas.
- Rather than the test being if a building is redundant it should focus on if converted would there be any economic loss or gain.
- There should be a separate policy for new built live-work developments in the countryside, as this could bring long term employment opportunities to rural areas.