

RURAL BUSINESS PROCEDURE NOTE

1. BACKGROUND – POLICIES OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In assessing proposals for any development, including new development in rural areas, the primary consideration is the Local Development Plan.

The Local Development has three policies that may be relevant to considering proposals for a rural business.

1. Spatial Strategy

The LDP has an overarching general presumption against development outwith settlement boundaries, except where there is a specific justification for the proposal - such as a specified area need, which brings wider economic benefits. LDP Policy: Spatial Strategy states: -

"We will assess all development against the priorities set out in the spatial strategy (as below) and LDP policy: sustainable development. We will not support development outwith the boundaries of settlements (towns and villages), except where we believe it can be justified because it will benefit the economy and there is a need for it in that particular area and in line with the spatial strategy."

2. Policy on Business and Industry

The LDP policy: Business and Industry states that we will support proposals for new business and industrial development outwith of settlements where there is economic benefit and the site has direct public access to road or rail.

3. Rural Diversification

The LDP also has a policy that supports rural diversification and tourism.

With the first two policies above, especially, it could be misunderstood that these two policies contradict each other and could lead to different assessments of a planning application for a new business in the rural area. This procedure note aims to explain how proposals for rural businesses will be assessed against the above mentioned policies

2. RURAL ENTERPRISES

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) directs most new development to existing towns and villages. This is to support sustainable economic development. However SPP also seeks to support economic activity in rural areas that is sustainable, doesn't encourage unnecessary car trips or run counter to the aim of encouraging development within existing towns and villages. SPP specifically encourages opportunities for home-working, live-work units, micro-businesses and community hubs.

The spatial strategy of the LDP reflects the intentions of SPP in directing new investment to existing towns and villages. However, the LDP also has policies that support sustainable economic opportunities that arise in rural areas.

It will often be the case that there are fewer costs involved in developing a rural location compared to a town location. It is equally recognised that, small starter businesses, especially, may only be viable if located within a rural area, often on land which the applicant owns. So as to prevent a

reversal of the intentions of the spatial strategy, which seeks to support existing towns and provide sustainable development opportunities within rural areas, it is important that new business development in rural areas supports these intentions rather than undermining them. Rural businesses will be supported where the type of business:

- does not significantly increase car trips either for employees or customers visiting the business and is best supported economically in a rural area; or
- relates to a business that is more appropriately located in the rural area (this may also be dealt with under the policy on rural diversification mentioned below)

Development proposals in rural areas that fall into one of the following categories will be supported:

- **Home Working** – businesses operated within a house. May involve a limited number of clients/deliveries to the premises.
- **Live Work** – business operated in the proximity of an associated house, but involving a separate premises for the operation of the business (i.e. workshop, studio). May involve a limited number of client visits/deliveries to the premises.
- **Micro businesses** – This is self starter business, employing fewer than 10 persons. May involve a limited number of clients/deliveries to the premises.
- **Community hubs** – not for profit, community facilities (e.g. sport centres, village hall) generally in the remote rural area.
- **Business not appropriate to the town area**– due to operational requirements e.g. kennels, horse riding establishment.

NOTE: Proposals for new retail premises will not be considered to be compliant with the terms of this note, but will require separate assessment against the LDP retail policies.

In determining applications for rural businesses in rural areas the acceptability of the proposal will depend on:

- **Whether the proposal supports the local economy, and**
- **Is otherwise sustainable in its operation; and**
- **has access to public road/rail and the proposal; and**
- **does not run counter to the aims of strategic LDP priorities for the Core or Carrick Investment areas.**

3. RURAL DIVERSIFICATION

The LDP Policy: Spatial Strategy sets out the priorities for the Core and Carrick Investment areas. In both areas, promotion of rural diversification and tourism is supported.

The LDP glossary defines rural diversification as: the use of rural land and buildings for non-agricultural or forestry purposes, such as industrial and commercial development, to meet the needs of rural areas and to support the local community.

In determining whether the proposal can constitute rural diversification and meet the terms of LDP Policy: Spatial Strategy, consideration must be given to Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), 2014, which was published following the conclusion of the LDP examination. SPP, paragraph 79, expresses the Scottish Government's expectations on how rural diversification is supported in development plans, as follows: -

"Plans should set out a spatial strategy which promotes economic activity and diversification, including, where appropriate, sustainable development linked to tourism and leisure, forestry, farm and craft diversification and aquaculture, nature conservation, and renewable energy developments, while ensuring that the distinctive character of the area, the service function of small towns and natural and cultural heritage are protected and enhanced".

In determining planning applications, rural diversification should be taken as rural development that can meet the terms of the definition of rural diversification in either the LDP or SPP. Other LDP policies (particularly LDP Policy: Sustainable Development) provide a policy framework for determining the acceptability of the details of the proposal.

4. DECISION MAKING FLOW DIAGRAM

