Policy Title:

LP3 - Residential Development in the Countryside

Existing Policies Which adopted Core Strategy or Policies Sites and Places (PSP) policy would eventually be replaced	**POLICY PSP40 – Residential Development in the Countryside**
Non-Strategic / Strategic	**Non-Strategic**

Purpose

Development Proposals for new dwellings in the open countryside, beyond settlement boundaries and away from any allocated or safeguarded sites for appropriate development, is generally strictly controlled by national policy to preserve both the character of the landscape and also to restrict unsustainable patterns of development.

This policy aims to reflect national guidance and provide a local interpretation of what type of development is considered to be acceptable to meet 'exception criteria' and therefore may constitute appropriate development in the countryside.

Criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework relating to paragraph, including 84e, will also apply to determination of applications in the open countryside, but are not repeated in this policy, to minimise duplication.

Policy wording

New Development within the Open Countryside

1. **Development proposals for new residential development in isolated and unsustainable locations within the open countryside will only be permitted for:**
   a. **Rural housing exception sites; and**
   b. **Essential rural workers dwellings; and**
   c. **The replacement of an existing single dwellinghouse where the new dwellinghouse is of a similar size, scale and is of a design that looks to enhance its immediate setting.**
2. **The replacement of residential caravans or mobile homes, which do not benefit from a permanent planning permission, with permanent buildings, will only be acceptable for rural workers dwellings. In addition, the replacement of residential caravans or mobile homes on traveller sites with permanent buildings will not be acceptable.**

Re-development of an existing building within the open countryside

3. **Development proposals for the conversion, subdivision and reuse of an existing building in the open countryside for residential use will only be acceptable where all the following criteria are met:**
   a. **The existing building is of a permanent and substantial construction; and**
   b. **The form, bulk and general design of the proposal, including any extensions, respects the rural character and design of the building; and**
   c. **The proposal, including curtilage and access, is in scale and sympathy with the immediate and surrounding wider landscape(s); and**
   d. **Prominent buildings, particularly those located within the Cotswolds National Landscape, or within the setting of designated heritage asset(s), must also consider design requirements related to new door and window openings, extensions, means of access, service provision and creation of any new residential garden curtilage; and**
   e. **Buildings of modern and or utilitarian construction, materials, buildings of substandard quality and incongruous appearance will not be considered appropriate for residential conversion; and**
   f. **Buildings have been used for their intended purpose for a significant period of time, as a minimum (10 years, in most circumstances); and**
   g. **The building is capable of providing adequate living space and meet adopted requirement for internal space standards (and ancillary space such as garaging) within the structure. Only very modest extensions will be allowed. The removal of permitted development rights will be considered to limit further extensions and ancillary buildings, depending on the sensitivity of the building in relation to landscape or historic context; and**

h. The conversion of buildings that are in employment and business uses to residential use, will not be acceptable unless the applicant can provide proportionate evidence which demonstrates significant efforts to secure suitable business use has been made, in line with relevant local plan policies on employment; and

i. The proposal would not adversely affect the operation of a rural business(es) or working farm(s); and

j. Where a conversion is being proposed for a building associated with a working farm, the redundancy of the building needs to be clearly evidenced to avoid a replacement being subsequently required to compensate for the loss of function the relevant building provides.

4. Where relevant, the above criteria will also be applied to proposals to extend buildings that have already been converted.

Supporting text

Application of the policy

Defining 'Isolated and Unsustainable Locations'

1. As set out within the policy wording criteria 1, where a proposal considers new residential development in the countryside on a site which is in an 'isolated' and/ or a 'unsustainable' location, the only acceptable forms of development are those listed in points a) – c).
2. 'Isolated' or 'unsustainable' proposals will be assessed against two separate assessments:
    a. Compliance with the requirements of Criteria 3 of saved Policy PSP11, which considers the availability of local services in the locality
    b. The isolation characteristics of a site will require a case-by-case judgement, but this need to consider to isolated nature of any development is based on a need to consider and potentially protect of the character of the existing rural area. This should not rely on a landscape assessment alone, as it may require a wider contextual analysis.
3. While it also may be that an isolated site is also an unsustainable one and so both factors can be considered intertwined, this is not always the case, as a new build within an existing hamlet may not be considered to be one of an "isolated" nature, it could be a development completely reliant on private car use and so unsustainable.
4. In relation to Criteria 1, point a) this policy must be read alongside Local Plan Policy LP17 - Rural Housing Exception Sites and Community-Led Development; in relation to point b), this policy must be read alongside Policy PSP41 - Rural Workers Dwellings.

Re-development of an existing building within the Open Countryside

5. Open countryside refers to land beyond settlement boundaries, site allocations and safeguarded sites, as show on the policies map. Policy LP2 provides detail on settlement boundaries.
6. The conversion and reuse of existing buildings is a component of the Council's overall approach to sustainable development in that it supports reuse of an existing resource. Conversion and reuse can be beneficial to the overall character and appearance of an area. The Council's supports re-use of rural buildings for employment purposes, however, conversion of buildings for recreational uses (including tourist attractions) or for holiday accommodation can help the rural economy and benefit the local community.
7. However, reuse or conversion can have an adverse impact on the character of the countryside and so in all circumstances, proposals will need to demonstrate that they will not lead to harm upon the character of the local countryside or surrounding amenities.
8. It is expected that conversion of a building will need to be of permanent construction.
9. The residential "exception" policy test for new residential development within the countryside as reflected in the criteria set out under criteria 1 of this policy is not

considered to apply to the conversion of existing buildings.

10. Any proposals for the re-use or conversion of buildings in the open countryside will therefore only be permitted where these conform to the criteria set out above and other relevant policies of the plan, particularly those which seek to minimise any detrimental effect on landscape value, environmental quality and amenity. Applicants are directed to the "Traditional Rural Buildings" Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted March 2021), which provides guidance on matters of design, scale and sympathy with the surrounding landscape, and materials, such as restricting the use of concrete block work and portal framed buildings clad in metal sheeting.
11. Changes to the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) introduced permitted development rights to convert agricultural buildings to residential uses. While subsequent further changes have also been made and it is anticipated that the permitted development right will see further evolution, these permitted development rights do not apply to listed buildings or in AONBs and conservation areas

Additions	
Key evidence	
Other relevant policies to cross-reference?	Policy LP17 - Rural Exception Sites and Community-Led Housing Saved Policy PSP41 - Rural Workers Dwellings