Policy Title:

LP17 - Rural Exception Sites and Community Led Development

Existing Policies Which adopted Core Strategy or Policies Sites and Places (PSP) policy would eventually be replaced	**Core Strategy Policy CS19 Rural Housing Exception Schemes**
Non-Strategic / Strategic	**Non-Strategic**

Purpose

We want to ensure our planning policies support all communities to investigate and bring forward sustainable growth in their local area, where it would help in meeting local and identified needs.

This policy is intended to assist communities of any size and place, take forward their own plans and ideas, primarily for new Affordable Homes. This policy supports new homes in addition to any allocations or existing development permissions in local communities.

The opportunities for new homes to meet locally identified needs for just Affordable or a primarily Affordable led scheme in rural areas are called ‘Rural Exception Schemes’. In addition, ‘Community Led Developments’ provide a pathway for local communities to bring forward new Affordable Homes, to meet local community needs, they can be brought forward in urban and rural areas.

This policy will support proposals by Affordable Housing providers, working with and in agreement with the local communities to bring forward rural Affordable schemes which are appropriate for the settlement. It will also support community land trusts, neighbourhood planning groups and other community led initiatives, to bring forward Affordable and mixed tenure schemes on land they own, either through a planning application or to inform preparation of a neighbourhood plan.

The Council, in partnership with others, will bring forward new guidance to illustrate how the policy requirements would be met by evidence particularly in relation to the proposed ‘local housing needs survey’.

Policy wording

Rural Exceptions Sites and Community Led Developments

1. **Within and around rural villages and settlements, development proposals for Rural Exception Sites or Community Led Development(s) will be acceptable where their primary purpose is to provide new Affordable Homes, provided:**
    a. **The number, tenure and size (bedroom number) of Affordable dwellings reflect an identified and genuine local need, as evidenced by an approved local housing needs survey; and**
    b. **Market housing is only be included to assist in making a rural exception scheme viable, with the number and size of market units proposed demonstrated through an appropriate viability assessment. Any market housing included must be integrated throughout the development so as to be indistinguishable in quality from the Affordable Housing; and**
    c. **The site is within, adjoins or is well-related to the existing village/ settlement and avoids a reliance on travel by private car to access services and facilities within the village or settlement; and take opportunities to enhance and provide Active Travel from within and surrounding the site; and**
    d. **Will avoid harm to key environmental, landscape and national policy designations and considerations, including flood risk, Green Belt and the Cotswolds National Landscape; and**
    e. **The placement, scale and design is appropriate to the nature of the village or settlement and will respect the character and setting of that place; and**
    f. **The overall scheme has the clear support from the local community through evidenced consultation and a local housing needs survey.**
2. **Development proposals for Community Led Development will need to meet all above criteria, with the exception of provision C when the proposal is in an urban area. Community Led Development will also clearly need to demonstrate that they meet the definition of Community Led Development as set out in National Policy. Community Led Development can take place in urban areas and within market towns, in addition to rural areas.**
3. **Proposals on Rural Exception Sites or Community Led Developments, which include plots for self and custom build Affordable Homes will be supported where they meet the above criteria and the Self and Custom Build Policy.**
4. **In all instances where Affordable Homes are provided through a Rural Exception Site or Community Led Development, proposals will be subject to conditions or legal obligation to ensure that Affordable Housing is reserved in perpetuity for those in local Affordable Housing need and the long-term occupancy restricted to those with a local connection.**

Supporting text

Local Housing Needs Assessment

1. Local housing needs survey – The council and partners will develop guidance on the suitable level of evidence and approach to collecting survey data for both Affordable, market and potential specialist housing local need. The current Guidance on Local Housing Need Assessments can be found here - 2633-Affordable-Housing-and-Extra-Care-Housing-SPD.pdf (southglos.gov.uk), and should be utilised until superseded.

Market Housing on Rural Exception Scheme Sites

2. Proposals containing an element of market housing, should be supported by a viability assessment which demonstrates that the proportion of market housing provided should be no greater than that required to deliver the agreed amount of Affordable Housing, identified in the approved local Affordable Housing needs survey. All viability assessments must be carried out following RICS guidance and will be independently verified by the Council with the developer liable for reasonable costs incurred. All viability assessments must be made publicly available.

Connectivity to Village or Settlement

3. Consideration of the existing settlement boundary, layout and character will need to inform appropriate proposals. Safe and high-quality walking links to the relevant rural village or settlement will need to be demonstrated to satisfy provision C. Currently adopted PSP11 sets out the appropriate level of service and facilities, including levels of public transport provision, proposals in location lacking any of the key services and facilities and minimum level of public transport will ordinarily be considered in conflict with provision C.

Development Proposal in the Green Belt

4. Green Belt 'Harm' proposals should consider Green Belt evidence as to which Green Belt 'purpose' that the area of Green Belt the site is within fulfils, along with the relative contribution and role of the area of Green Belt the proposal site is within will need to be considered. The level of harm to Green Belt should not undermine the overall purpose and role of Green Belt in which the sites is located. Requirement to create revised, defensible long-term boundary as set out in national policy will apply.

Landscape Character

5. Landscape character and the more detailed approaches to consideration of applications which may impact landscapes including the Cotswold National Landscape CNL are covered by currently adopted policy PSP2 Landscape.

Local Connection

6. Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites will be subject to a condition or legal obligation, which limits occupancy to those with a local connection (with guidance to be provided on the definition of local connection). Where no suitable applicants are identified in the parish of provision, a cascade approach to widen the area of local connection will operate on a priority basis The cascade approach will be defined in a

legal agreement, together with details of how the dwellings will be reserved as affordable in perpetuity.

First Homes on Exception Sites

7. The Council will support proposals for First Homes Exception sites where it can be demonstrated that the need for such homes is not being met elsewhere in South Gloucestershire.

Delivering Rural Exception and Community Led homes

8. Proposals for Rural Exception and Community Led homes will ordinarily be secured through planning applications. These would be in addition or outside of any Local Plan allocations. However, these schemes can also be progressed through neighbourhood plans, with sites allocated in those documents to focus on meeting locally identified and evidenced needs.

Additions	
Key evidence	
Other relevant policies to cross-reference?	LP3 - Residential Development in the Countryside LPS4 - Affordable Homes Saved Policy CS17 - Housing Diversity Saved Policy PSP2 - Landscape Saved Policy PSP11 - Transport Impact Management