

SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADOPTION OF RURAL CONVERSIONS TO A RESIDENTIAL OR TOURISM USE (POLICIES H4 & T2) SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
MEETING: PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE: 3 OCTOBER 2017
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is:

- 1.1 To inform Planning Committee of the results of the recent consultation exercise regarding the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use (Policies H4 and T2), produced to provide further details of policies contained within the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.
- 1.2 To seek Planning Committee's endorsement of the SPG, with a view to it being formally adopted as SPG in connection with the Monmouthshire LDP.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To endorse the Draft Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use (Policies H4 and T2) SPG (subject to the recommended amendments set out in Appendix 2), with a view to it being formally adopted as SPG in connection with the Monmouthshire LDP and to recommend it to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise accordingly.

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

Background

- 3.1 Planning Committee endorsed the Draft Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use (Policies H4 and T2) SPG that is the subject of this report on 4 April 2017, with a view to issuing it for consultation purposes. A copy of the Committee Report is attached as **Appendix 1**. Subsequently, on 26 April 2017, the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Enterprise and Leisure took the decision to issue the SPG for consultation.
- 3.2 The consultation took place for a period of 6 weeks between Thursday 1 June 2017 and Thursday 13 July 2017. A notice was placed in the Monmouthshire Free Press on 31 May 2017 and 427 individual notifications were sent out in a joint consultation with the Sustainable Tourism Accommodation SPG to the following:
 - Specific (including Town and Community Councils), General and Other consultees, as identified in the LDP Community Involvement Scheme;
 - Those considered to have an interest in the SPG topic;
 - Residents who were on the LDP consultation database and had specifically requested to be notified of the SPGs;
 - Agents/developers who work in the Council area.

Copies of the draft SPG and representation forms were made available at the Council's Community Hubs/libraries and on the Council's website for the duration of the consultation period. The consultation was also publicised via the Twitter Account @MCCPlanning.

3.3 A total of 8 replies were received, one of which was a late representation. These are summarised, together with the Council's response in the Report of Consultation provided as **Appendix 2**. Generally, no significant objections were received and only minor amendments to the SPG documents have been necessary. The only key change relates to additional detail to provide clarification on the minimum size of rural conversions for a residential use. It is recommended that the most appropriate approach would be to utilise the guidance set out in the Department for Communities and Local Government technical housing standards for a one bedroomed two person property. Paragraph 3.17 of the SPG has subsequently been updated to state the minimum size of a building suitable for rural conversion to a residential use is 50m². Smaller units may be suitable for tourism purposes, but are not considered big enough to accommodate permanent occupation. Full details are set out in the response to representation 3.2 in **Appendix 2**. The amended SPG, incorporating the minor changes arising from the consultation, is attached as **Appendix 3**. It is considered, therefore, that the document can be formally adopted as SPG to support the Monmouthshire LDP.

4. REASONS:

4.1 Under the Planning Act (2004) and associated Regulations, all local planning authorities are required to produce a LDP. The Monmouthshire LDP was adopted on 27 February 2014 and decisions on planning applications are now being taken in accordance with policies and proposals in the LDP. The Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use SPG provides further explanation and guidance on the way in which the Conversion/Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Open Countryside for a Residential Use and Visitor Accommodation policies of the LDP will be implemented.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Officer time and costs associated with the preparation of SPG documents and carrying out the required consultation exercises. Any costs will be met from the Planning Policy budget and carried out by existing staff.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 Under the Planning Act (2004), the LDP was required to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The role of the SA was to address the extent to which the emerging planning policies would help to achieve the wider environmental, economic and social objectives of the LDP. The LPA also produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC; requiring the 'environmental assessment' of certain plans and programmes prepared by local authorities, including LDP's. All stages of the LDP were subject to a SA/SEA, therefore and the findings of the SA/SEA were used to inform the development of the LDP policies and site allocations in order to ensure that the LDP would be promoting sustainable development. SPG is expanding and providing guidance on these existing LDP policies, which were prepared within a framework promoting sustainable development.

Equality

6.2 The LDP was also subjected to an Equality Challenge process and due consideration was given to the issues raised. As with the sustainable development implications considered above, SPG is expanding and providing guidance on these existing LDP policies, which were prepared within this framework.

6.3 In addition, a Future Generations Evaluation is attached. This includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments (attached as **Appendix 4**)

7. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Having assessed the consultation responses, the following options were considered:

- 1) Recommend the SPG for adoption without any changes;
- 2) Recommend the SPG for adoption with some changes based on an assessment of the feedback;
- 3) Recommend the SPG for adoption with changes to reflect every response;
- 4) Do not proceed with the SPG.

7.2 The SPG provides specific guidance on the interpretation/implementation of the LDP policy framework in relation to proposals for rural conversions to a residential or tourism use. The need for guidance was identified through colleague and applicant feedback. Option 4 is therefore discounted. The consultation responses are considered to raise a number of valid and constructive points, many (but not all) of which are considered to appropriately enhance the policy interpretation and guidance. Consequently, option 2 has been chosen.

8. HOW WILL SUCCESS BE MEASURED

8.1 The successful implementation of the SPG in determining proposals for rural conversions to a residential or tourism use which will be reflected in the quality of such conversions in accordance with the LDP policy framework. The effectiveness of the relevant policies in relation to visitor accommodation including rural conversions will be monitored on an annual basis in the LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

9. CONSULTEES

- Planning Committee
- SLT
- Public and stakeholder consultation as set out in the report

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Monmouthshire Adopted LDP (February 2014)
- Conversion of Agricultural Buildings Design Guide SPG April 2015
- LDP Policy H4 (g) Conversion/Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Open Countryside to Residential Use Assessment of Re-use for Business Purposes SPG April 2015

9. AUTHOR & 9. CONTACT DETAILS:

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