

**Appendix 2 - Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use (Policies H4 and T2) SPG Consultation Responses**

Representor Number	Representor	Object/Support/Comment	Comment	LPA Response	Recommendation
1.1	Mr Newman	Comment	There should be the presumption of refusal for conversion of any/all residential buildings for tourism use or occupation as holiday lets. If they are fit for occasional use as homes they can be made fit for permanent occupation.	Disagree. Policy T2 allows for exceptions to provide visitor accommodation. Any exceptions will do so in accordance with the criteria of Policy T2. Paragraph 4.5 of the SPG states clearly that they will be conditioned accordingly and will generally be expected to remain as visitor accommodation in perpetuity. Paragraph 4.10 also notes that as exceptions they would have not been considered suitable for general residential accommodation. Small buildings considered suitable for rural conversion to a tourism use are often better suited for such a use. The demands for both space and use of tourism accommodation are often distinct from those required for a day to day residence.	No change.
2.1	Aneurin Bevan Health Board (Mrs Hannah Capel)	Comment	When providing additional housing, ABHB requests that prior consultation be given in respect of the health needs of the population in the identified areas. A large increase in housing/population will have an impact on existing healthcare provision. This will need to be considered in the Health Board's future service planning.	Comment noted. Rural conversions will not amount to a significant increase in housing/population. There is subsequently no need to incorporate anything within the SPG in relation to healthcare provision. The health board will nevertheless be consulted on future stages in LDP revision in relation to any additional large housing sites.	No change.
3.1	Mr Brian Spencer	Comment	Paragraph 3.8 & 3.9: substantial rebuilding/reconstruction needs defining. Questions whether it relates to 50% or 80% wall area or a different figure. Suggests each Planning Officer has a different interpretation, based on the representor's experience since the Policy came into force in 1988.	Disagree. As paragraph 3.9 notes the building should be capable of conversion without the need for rebuilding/reconstruction works. It notes that if a small amount of rebuilding/reconstruction is necessary it will depend on the nature and extent of works and that any such works will be considered on a case by case basis.	No change.
3.2	Mr Brian Spencer	Comment	Paragraph 3.17: need guidance on size. Small barns can accommodate 1 or 2 people, similar sizes as affordable housing, around 40m <sup>2</sup> floorspace or so, and would be in demand in the countryside.	Comment noted. Additional detail will be added to paragraph 3.17 to clarify what the Council considers to be too small. The Welsh Government does not provide any guidance in relation to housing standards for market housing. However the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) produced 'Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard' in March 2015. The DCLG standards are considered to provide good practice and it is therefore the most appropriate approach for the LPA to take. A footnote will also be inserted to provide justification to the approach undertaken.	Insert additional wording to the end of paragraph 3.17: 'It is appreciated, however, that small barn conversions could sometimes accommodate 1 or 2 people satisfactorily, and in assessing a buildings suitability for conversion a minimum standard of 50m <sup>2</sup> will be adopted. Conversions of buildings below this size will not be approved. This 50m <sup>2</sup> standard relates to the internal floorspace (including storage space) and conversion of a property of this size will only be allowed on the basis of a one bedroomed property for two people. If a case is made for the conversion of a building of this size at the time of a planning application, it is very unlikely extensions will be permissible in future to allow for additional people to reside at the property.' The following wording will also be added as a footnote: 'The figure is adapted from Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard' (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015).
3.3	Mr Brian Spencer	Comment	Paragraph 3.19: Outbuildings - questions what is modest? 20m <sup>2</sup> ? 30m <sup>2</sup> ?	As noted in paragraph 3.19 new buildings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. It is therefore not considered appropriate to include a figure within the SPG in relation to size standards for ancillary buildings. The size and siting will be considered on a case by case basis, where new buildings are provided in exceptional circumstances.	No change.

3.4	Mr Brian Spencer	Object	Paragraph 3.41: Affordable Housing contribution - suggests it is fine if a developer sells the barn conversion, states a lot of barn conversions are done by the owners/farmers, not to sell, but to let to a Shorthold Tenant to provide an income, which provides prosperity to the area and provides local housing. The £20 -£25k Affordable Housing contribution is a definite barrier for owners wanting to convert a barn, which in itself is a very expensive process and they are not going to sell it. Some of the agents clients have refused to proceed, with the subsequent loss of future housing accommodation.	The requirement for affordable housing contributions is set out in Strategic Policy 54 relating to Affordable Housing provision and is not the subject of this consultation. Paragraphs 3.40 and 3.41 are provided within this SPG to ensure the link is made between rural conversions, Policy 54 and the Affordable Housing SPG. No changes will therefore be made in this respect.	No change.
3.5	Mr Brian Spencer	Comment	Paragraph 3.42: Zone C2 floodplain sites, suggests converting to residential depends totally on the design of the conversion and, if subscribing to the NRW flood warnings, which give adequate notice, proposes these applications should be allowed.	This paragraph refers to Policy SD3 and is in line with national planning policy guidance. Highly vulnerable uses such as residential and visitor accommodation uses would not be appropriate in Zone C2 floodplain as they would be contrary to both the LDP and national guidance. No change will therefore be made in this respect.	No change.
3.6	Mr Brian Spencer	Comment	Policy T2 Paragraph 4.6: Substantial rebuild - need to give guidance on how much is substantial.	Disagree. It is not considered practical or appropriate to provide a percentage to determine the amount of rebuild, this should be considered on a case by case basis. Specifying a percentage could open the Council up to rebuild when it isn't necessary to bring forward the conversion of rural buildings.	No change.
4.1	Cllr Louise Brown	Object	In order for business use to continue then the period of 6 months marketing for business use in paragraph 3.31 seems too short. A longer period of say 12 months would seem to be more appropriate.	Comment noted. The marketing exercise refers to buildings that are yet to be converted, it does not relate to existing businesses. The 6 month period was referred to in 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). This SPG related specifically to the assessment of business re-use. The 6 month period provides an established approach and is subsequently fit for purpose. It is not considered appropriate to lengthen this period any further without justification to prove it is not working.	No change.
4.1	Cllr Louise Brown	Comment	Paragraph 5.3 needs to be edited to remove the gaps in the text.	Agree, this is a publishing error. The intention was for the link to be available on one line.	Update paragraph 5.3 to disperse text across the two lines.
5.1	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Comment	Suggest additions to paragraph 3.43 to provide more emphasis and detail concerning bats and their presence in rural buildings. Suggest adding reference to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Also suggest adding in 'typically' in the last but one sentence as the County has some very significant rare bat roosts which in exceptional circumstances could preclude development of an individual building.	Comment noted, while it is considered sufficient emphasis is provided in relation to bats in this paragraph it is accepted that the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) covers nesting birds and other species not covered by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). The text will therefore be updated to incorporate this legislation. The suggestion to include 'typically' in the last but one sentence will also provide more clarity and will be inserted into paragraph 3.43.	Insert reference to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and 'typically' in last but one sentence of paragraph 3.43 before the wording 'preclude development'.
5.2	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Comment	Suggest additions to paragraph 3.44: 'integrated bat roost provision (e.g. bat boxes)' and 'and retention of adjacent existing wildlife habitats'.	Comment noted. The text will be updated to qualify what is meant by bat boxes. However it is not considered appropriate to add in reference to the retention of adjacent existing wildlife habitats as these may be outside the red line boundary of developments in different ownership.	Include 'roost provision (bat boxes)' in the wording of paragraph 3.44.

6.1	Powells Rural (Stuart Leaver)	Comment	<p>Refer to the type of building which is capable of being converted. Suggest enquiries are made about converting buildings that are not always of a traditional nature or which the LPA would consider capable of conversion for residential purposes. Suggest rather than specifically dealing with the exact materials and types, the age should be given more consideration. Suggest where buildings have been in place in excess of ten years, regardless of their build type and materials used it should be accepted by the LPA that there is a potential that the agricultural business which was originally using that building has changed significantly in light of the constraints and difficulties in the rural economy. State there are farms that could make use of existing buildings which have been there for ten plus years over which could be better used for a purpose and could generate some income for the agricultural/rural business rather than sitting there redundant. Request the LPA take the view and alter policy guidance to consider the age of the building as being more important than the construction type. Those buildings which are steel portal frame and blockwork built could be considered for ground floor accommodation.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Policy H4 criterion e) is explicit that buildings of modern construction will not be considered favourably for residential conversion. The SPG cannot amend adopted LDP Policy, paragraph 3.13 provides further detail in this respect but notes these buildings do have an important role in the economy of rural areas and may be suitable for conversion to alternative employment uses, subject to other detailed planning considerations. There is subsequently potential to generate income from modern rural buildings in other ways rather than residential accommodation.</p>	No change.
6.2	Powells Rural (Stuart Leaver)	Comment	<p>Refers to the English Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, Part 6 Class Q where there is a provision for the conversion of existing agricultural buildings into a residential use under permitted development. Suggest in Wales this would not be appropriate because the materials are classed as utilitarian and would not necessarily be suitable for conversion. Suggest it is evident that buildings of this nature are sometimes capable of conversion and suggest under the UDP the LPA was not specifically against the use of those kinds of buildings in order to convert for residential purposes.</p>	<p>Comment noted. As a point of clarity, UDP Policy H7 (e) was specifically against conversion of buildings of modern construction stating 'buildings of modern construction and materials such as concrete blockwork or portal framed buildings clad in metal sheeting will not be considered favourably for residential conversion'. This position is maintained in the LDP.</p>	No change.
6.3	Powells Rural (Stuart Leaver)	Comment	<p>The LPA should consider that not all farms have the benefit of stone barns for conversion and therefore the capacity of using any specific building to generate an alternative income is very limited. Encourage the LPA that if they wish to assist farms and rural businesses that this is specifically looked at on a case by case basis. Suggests the LPA should potentially consider whether well built, previously used steel portal frame buildings in a suitable location or within a location of minimal impact, would be considerable and sensible for conversion into residential tourism accommodation. If the LPA are concerned that this could be abused, they could consider that a S106 Agreement needs to be signed as part of the conversion works to ensure the buildings remain for a tourism use and no other use.</p>	<p>As noted above in relation to the conversion of modern rural buildings there are many ways farms can diversify; other sustainable tourism opportunities are encouraged. In addition to this steel portal framed buildings may be appropriate for a business use, subject to detailed planning considerations. Policy T2 does offer more flexibility than Policy H4 in relation to the conversion of modern buildings for tourism purposes but, as stated in paragraph 4.7, this is restricted to modern construction methods such as concrete block and/or rendered buildings, not the type of building referred to by the representor, although such buildings may be appropriate for other business uses.</p>	No change.
6.4	Powells Rural (Stuart Leaver)	Comment	<p>Refer to paragraphs 3.28 and 3.29 in relation to the marketing exercise. Suggest asking applicants to market their property with the basis of proving whether it is suitable for business use is potentially in breach of the law. Suggest the rules have changed within the last few years that if someone is marketing their property as part of a marketing exercise to prove whether there is a demand in the market without the true intention of selling the property is misleading. Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Regulations the LPA should not be encouraging the practice of a mock exercise for marketing the property to try and determine whether or not there is interest.</p>	<p>The SPG does not state that this should be a mock-exercise, a genuine marketing exercise is required for buildings the LPA considers are capable for a business use. If a building is deemed suitable for a business use this could assist in diversification rather than conversion to an alternative tourism/residential use. It is accepted that in certain cases a building may be incapable of being utilised for an employment use and it subsequently may be deemed by an estate agent that the property is not marketable for an business use. A statement in the form of a letter from the estate agent can be submitted to the LPA as part of an application to evidence this. The LPA would not expect a marketing exercise in such circumstances. The wording in paragraph 3.29 will be updated to provide more clarity.</p>	Update first sentence of paragraph 3.29 to read 'Where the Local Planning Authority considers that a building is suitable for business use'.

7.1	Natural Resources Wales	Comment	Refer to paragraph 3.37 and advise reference to the impacts of lighting on protected species is included in this section. Note insensitive lighting can cause harm to biodiversity, particularly bats.	Paragraph 3.37 relates specifically to the appearance of rural conversions in order to avoid over domestication. The impact on protected species is considered in paragraph 3.43, it is not considered necessary to include a reference to nature conservation in paragraph 3.37 as well.	No change.
7.2	Natural Resources Wales	Comment	Recommend reference to foul drainage requirements and policies EP2 and EP5 in Section 3.39. Suggest this type of development is often located in an area not served by the public foul sewer. State the SPG should refer to the requirement for appropriate foul drainage facilities, the first presumption should be to provide a system of foul drainage discharging into the public foul sewer.	Comment noted. However, it is not considered necessary to specifically refer to the requirement for appropriate foul drainage facilities in the SPG. This is a detailed matter to be considered on a case by case basis. As advised in the SPG, applicants are encouraged to engage in the Council's pre-planning application advice service to determine which key LDP policies apply and to gain general planning advice, including on such matters as drainage. However, in recognition of the fact that rural conversions could potentially be located in area not served by public sewers, policies EP2 (Protection of Water Sources and the Water Environment) and EP5 (Foul Sewage Disposal) will be added to the list of policies noted in 3.45 that may need to be considered in relation to rural conversions.	Include reference to LDP policies EP2 and EP5 in paragraph 3.45.
7.3	Natural Resources Wales	Comment	Suggest adding the following sentence to paragraph 3.42 'Applications within flood zones normally need to be supported by a Flood Consequences Assessment in line with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk'	Paragraph 3.42 clearly states residential and visitor accommodation schemes are highly vulnerable development and states rural conversions to vulnerable uses in areas of Zone C2 floodplain will not be supported. There would be no need for the applicant to produce a Flood Consequences Assessment as this type of use would not be supported.	No change.
7.4	Natural Resources Wales	Support	Welcome the recognition of the potential presence of bats in rural buildings in paragraph 3.43. State the Authority's ecologist should be involved in pre-application discussions to provide advice on any potential protected species survey requirements.	Support welcomed. This is further emphasised in paragraph 5.3 which refers to ecological surveys and recommends pre-application advice is sought in relation to such matters.	No change.
7.5	Natural Resources Wales	Comment	Note a licence will be required from NRW to disturb or move the protected species during the construction phase or to damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places.	Comment noted, this would be attached as an informative as necessary to any planning consent. There is no need to specify this separately within the SPG.	No change.
8.1	Mitchel Troy United (Late Representation)	Object	Suggest if this policy is enforced it will make things worse for affordable housing for young people in Monmouthshire. Suggests that there appears to be a firm line against residential housing in spite of the fact that some of these properties could be ideally suited for affordable housing for young people. Question if businesses do form the majority of the applications to convert in the future where will the workers they need come from as many young people have left Monmouthshire not because they could not find work, but because they could not find an affordable place to live. Suggest toning down the black and white approach and apply a little thought to the applications, especially whether the conversions will serve a local need for both businesses and local people to live and work in Monmouthshire and condition them appropriately.	Disagree with the suggestion that the SPG provides a firm line against residential development, the SPG clarifies the types of rural buildings that are appropriate for conversion and seeks to provide applicants and agents with additional information to assist them in the application process. Affordable Housing is a priority in the LDP. The Main Village allocation policy provides housing sites in locations that would not have previously been considered appropriate for general residential development in order to bring forward 60% affordable housing. The Rural Exceptions Sites Policy provides a further opportunity for 100% affordable housing sites and for local people to build their own affordable home in sustainable rural locations within Monmouthshire (adjacent Rural Secondary Settlements, Main and Minor Villages). In addition to this, the LPA disagree with the Community Council where they note some of the properties could be ideally suited for affordable housing for young people as barn conversions are often costly to convert and unlikely to be affordable. With regard to personal circumstances paragraph 3.1.6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9 November 2016) notes that while such considerations rarely outweigh the more general planning considerations, the personal circumstances of occupiers, personal hardship or the difficulties of businesses which are of value to the local community, may be material to the consideration of a planning application. It notes further that in such circumstances, permission may be granted subject to a condition that is personal to the applicant. Where this is a consideration it will be looked at on a case by case basis, there is no need to repeat this national guidance in the SPG.	No change.