

Rural development has been reviewed with the new PPS21

After a considerable consultation period PPS14 has been superseded with the new policy Planning Policy Statement PPS21 which will be available in draft form within two weeks according to politicians! So what happens now?

PPS21 will be published in draft for now, and there will be a consultation period of a few weeks during which time the public will be invited to comment. At the end of the consultation phase there are likely to be some minor changes made before the policy is formally adopted in the spring of 2009.

It's taken nearly 3 years to address PPS14 which was a wholly unpopular policy. It is accepted that due to the abuse of the previous policies there was a need for a restriction of development in the countryside, however the very onerous conditions to achieve planning permission saw the limitation in the supply of building land force prices upward, which has subsequently contributed to the readjustment in property prices that we are all now experiencing.

Although the full detail of the changes are not agreed some of the main points of relaxation are listed below.

Headline Changes

- It is no longer necessary to have a large farm in order to qualify for a house. Even on small holdings there will be an opportunity to have one site approved every 10 years.
- The criteria applied to replacement dwelling applications have been relaxed, the old building does not need to even have a roof intact in some cases.
- Vernacular, non-residential buildings can, in some circumstances be converted into dwellings. Old stone sheds may now be approved, in certain circumstances.
- Dispersed Rural Communities are *back!* *There aren't presently many of these* in development plans, but there is now an incentive to argue for more. In each case Clusters of dwellings, business and community facilities will be allowable
- Personal circumstances will once again be considered in the assessment of applications. If the reasons are convincing, permission may be granted.
- Social housing groups of up to 14 dwellings will be permitted, and that has now been expanded to include affordable housing.



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- The infilling of gaps between houses could be allowed where no more than 2 houses are possible.
- Each application will need to be supported by a planning statement. Like planning appeal statements, these will have to be policy based, and persuasive.

What if I don't farm?

Alongside the public consultation period for draft PPS21 there will be a working party set up to consider a "social needs" test. This will consider whether an additional criterion should be added to the policy, which would allow key people in a community to win planning approval. For example someone who teaches in a local school, or a leader in a local sports club or community group may be allowed to build, even if they can't satisfy one of the other tests.

There are some omissions from this review, which are likely to affect some applicants. Those people, together with many current applications and others considering an application may well benefit from our experience.



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