
Statement of Consultation

The draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside was published for a four week consultation period from 30 April 2004 until 28 May 2004.

Over 550 consultees were contacted directly. These included some 480 local agents, all 62 parish and town councils, statutory and non-statutory consultees including neighbouring local authorities, the CPRE, The Environment Agency, The Countryside Agency and English Nature. In addition all consultees on the Council's Planning Policy electronic mailing list were informed of the consultation exercise.

Copies of the draft SPG were made available for inspection at the Council Offices at Market Street and at all public libraries in the district. The draft SPG was also available to view on the Council's web site.

Responses were received from:

1. Ashampstead Parish Council
2. Purley on Thames Parish Council
3. Cold Ash Parish Council
4. Thames Water Property Services
5. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
6. Martin F Winter
7. Tilehurst Parish Council
8. Thatcham Town Council
9. Holybrook Parish Council
10. Lambourn Parish Council
11. Theale Parish Council
12. Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
13. Compton Parish Council
14. Bucklebury parish Council
15. Pangbourne Parish Council
16. Dreweatt Neate
17. Colin Milsom
18. Dr J D Davies
19. Christopher Strang Associates

Summary of Comments with Council's Response

| Comment | Council's Response |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Comment (4, 5, 9, 16, 17, 18) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General support and favourable comments (2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14) | Support noted |

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| <p>General Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concern over developments leading to larger and higher value dwellings which further dilute the village stock of affordable housing. (1,3) ▪ Draft SPG does not consider the desirability of extensions (1) | <p>This SPG can only supplement policies in the adopted Local Plan. Policy ENV.24 seeks to prevent over-development of sites and material visual intrusion into the countryside. It is not a policy intended to deal primarily with social issues of housing affordability. Nevertheless, the reduction in the variety of accommodation in the rural areas is an issue of concern, and it is felt that this guidance will assist by providing guidance on the policies in the Local Plan</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At paragraph 2.3 there is reference to “concern that large scale modern replacement dwellings can lead to a reduction in the variety of housing available in the countryside”. No evidence is produced to substantiate this concern, nor does this concern appear in the current Local Plan and should therefore be deleted. (19) | <p>Paragraph 2.50.1 of the Local Plan states “There is concern that large scale modern replacement dwellingsare having a detrimental effect on the character of the rural area and will reduce the variety of accommodation.” Furthermore other respondents have expressed concern over this issue. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Much of the content applies more generally and perhaps these guidelines could be incorporated into one of the standard documents (15) | <p>These guidelines are intended to apply specifically to developments in the countryside, that is outside settlement boundaries. The primary purpose is to provide guidance on the criteria in the policies which seek to avoid dwellings which are disproportionate to the original . It was felt inappropriate to include this guidance in the more general SPG on House Extensions which is aimed more at householders. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some areas of agricultural land which are no longer being actively used for agricultural purposes will therefore revert to nature. This might adversely affect the visual quality of a landscape. How would this be dealt with? (15) | <p>This is outside the scope of the current SPG.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would like to see consideration for conversion or change of use for redundant or derelict farm buildings. These can become an eyesore and have a negative visual impact. (15) | <p>Policy ENV.23 applies to extensions to existing dwellings and Section 4.3 of the SPG refers to extensions to former agricultural barns or outbuildings. The reuse and adaptation of rural buildings is covered by Policy ENV.19 of the Local Plan. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request that criteria for replacement dwellings in the countryside also be applied to rural areas within, but on the | <p>The guidance is supplementary to Policy ENV.23 which only applies to dwellings outside the settlement boundaries. SPG</p> |

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| fringe of, the settlement boundary. | must be consistent with the policies set out in the adopted development plan. No amendment proposed. |
| <p>Comments on Size Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should be maximum permitted extension in % terms of overall volume (1) | It is not felt appropriate to lay down a maximum permitted percentage extension as there are many factors to consider, as outlined in the guidance, and each case will need to be considered on its merits. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would be helpful if guidelines on what is disproportionate can be incorporated into a planning policy in its own right, incorporating formal definitions rather than guidelines (3) | Supplementary Planning Guidance can only supplement policies in the Local Plan. When adopted, however, SPG carries substantial weight in decisions on planning applications |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines on size increase should also take account of the plot size, and equally be applied to sites within the settlement area (15) | Policy ENV.23 includes the criteria that the development is appropriate and sympathetic to the character and setting of adjoining buildings and spaces. The size guidelines are an indicator of what may be termed disproportionate but the policy makes clear that other factors are also likely to be key determinants. The policy can not apply within settlement boundaries – see response above. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is it still relevant to use 1948 as base date for extensions to be included as part of an original dwelling. Is there merit in making a later date? (15) | In planning legislation, the term ‘original house’ means the house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 and is used to calculate permitted development rights for extensions. Paragraph 3.3.2 of the guidance does allow for some flexibility in assessing what is disproportionate for properties with well-established but post-1948 extensions. No amendment proposed. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Percentage increases in size that might be considered ‘disproportionate’ are entirely arbitrary. No justification or support is provided for those figures – they should be deleted. If they remain, they will be used as a ‘knee-jerk’ response to applications for replacement dwellings with no regard to other, important considerations. Previous appeal decisions have granted permission on much larger increases where the Inspectors have concluded that, while the increases in question may have been | The guidance does point out that increase in size is only one factor in the assessment of what is ‘disproportionate, but that the percentage increase in size is a useful indicator of potential impact. This indicator has been based on examination of policies of other authorities and on past decisions in West Berkshire, particularly where cases have gone to appeal. Though several appeals have been allowed where the increase in size was over 50%, these have generally been cases where the harm due to the disproportionate increase is substantially mitigated by improved |

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| <p>disproportionate" ultimately no harm was caused to the dwelling or the surrounding countryside. (19)</p> | <p>design or appearance, and where there was felt to be little impact on the landscape. Where proposals would lead to more than doubling the size of the building, inspectors have stated that this would result in an extended dwelling clearly disproportionate to the original, contrary to WBDLP policy and similar in some respects to the creation of a new dwelling in the countryside without any of the justification required by national policy. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At paragraph 3.3.2 no definition of term 'long established' There should be, or it should be deleted. (19) | <p>This section has been added to provide some flexibility in how the size guidelines can be applied, depending on the merits of the case. Amendments have been made to this paragraph to clarify that this may apply in exceptional circumstances, where an extension is clearly well established in its setting..</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ References to 'relatively small' and 'relatively large' are too vague and will allow inexperienced planning officers to make arbitrary decisions.(19) | <p>See comments above. The larger percentage increase for smaller dwellings is primarily to enable dwellings to be brought up to modern living standards.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance states that additional volume will not be allowed for the removal of existing outbuildings. No justification is given for this and it should therefore be deleted (19) | <p>This section refers to outbuildings which are not classed as part of the "original" dwelling. This has been clarified in the document.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No reference to cases involving new basements. SPG should state that normally new floorspace created by the formation of basements will not be taken into account providing no visual harm is caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.(19) | <p>Any applications for basements would be treated on their merits in accordance with the guidelines and Local Plan policies. No amendment proposed.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft SPG has gone well beyond the requirements set out in the Statutory Local Plan, especially references to percentage increases in floor area. Such statements could be construed as policy ‘through the back door’ which has not gone through the Local Plan procedure, and is therefore open to High Court challenge. (19) | <p>The criteria that extensions and replacements in the countryside should not be disproportionate to the original dwelling are contained within policies in the adopted Local Plan. The SPG provides guidance on the criteria, not additional policy. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <p>Comments on Other Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3.4.1 appears to assume that replacement dwelling will be detrimental. A well designed house could complement the landscape – more likely to be a problem with a site within the settlement boundary. | <p>The siting of the dwelling may be important in relationship to the surrounding built form or landscape. The guidance does allow for circumstances where environmental or road safety benefits would indicate an alternative location within the curtilage. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No justification is given for the guidance that the replacement dwelling be located on the site of the existing dwelling. Requirement should therefore be deleted.(19) | <p>The siting of the existing dwelling is very often important to the character of the built form and its relationship to the surrounding development and rural area. See comment above. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detached garages. It is not always possible to locate a garage behind or adjacent to the property. Cars parked nearer to the road could be more intrusive than an appropriately designed car port or garage. (15) | <p>The guidance states that garages should be sited as unobtrusively as possible, to the side or rear of the dwelling <i>where possible</i>. No amendment proposed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposals for integral garages seem too restrictive. Do not see how “proposed integral garage” can be considered as an extension, unless it is part of an application for an extension or replacement dwelling. Preventing a later application for a garage, provided it meets all the other criteria would not seem reasonable.(15) | <p>The wording has been clarified and reference to conversion of integral garage to living accommodation and later application for a garage deleted.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negative paragraph on conservatories – any design would have to be assessed on its merits. (15) | <p>The paragraph does state that conservatories would be treated like any other extension but points out the likely problems where the dwelling is a former barn or other countryside outbuilding conversion. Final sentence referring to local building traditions and materials has been deleted.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New driveways – owners should be able to improve their standard of living whilst preserving the environment. | <p>Any change in access would need to be considered as part of the planning application. New driveways and</p> |

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| Consideration should be given to the location of any access as well as the surface material.(15) | hardstandings can usually be installed without requiring planning permission. This section was intended to point out that consideration should be given to the effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. No amendment proposed. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boundary Treatments – the material is perhaps more significant, as well as the scale of any boundary treatment. An application should be viewed in totality (15) | Comment noted. No amendment proposed. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In section on Protected Species substitute the word ‘must’ for ‘should’ (6) | This amendment has been made |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would wish to see section on provision for private amenity space as in SPG on House Extensions (8). | All the guidelines contained within the SPG on House Extensions are also applicable to extensions to dwellings in the countryside and need not, therefore be repeated. For replacement dwellings the criteria in Policy ENV.23 should ensure that development is appropriate to the rural character of the area and includes an acceptable landscape scheme. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would be improved by adding detailed list of references mentioned (11) | References have been added |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request that additional paragraphs in relation to sewerage infrastructure, development over public sewers and release of sewer atmosphere be included (4) | Issues relating to control of building over public sewers would be considered under the Building Regulations. It is not felt necessary to include details within this SPG. |