



DUMFRIES AND  
GALLOWAY COUNCIL

# Local Development Plan

Supplementary  
Guidance

Adopted 23rd July 2015



*Housing  
Development  
Immediately  
Outside Settlement  
Boundaries*



## **DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE**

### **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES**

#### **CONTENTS**

1. Introduction.....	3
Policy context .....	3
2. Guidance on policy criteria.....	4
Shortfall in the effective five year housing land supply.....	4
Identifying the effective five year housing land supply .....	4
Affordable housing.....	5
Other policy criteria .....	5



## 1. Introduction

1.1 Inset maps have been produced for the Regional Capital (Dumfries) and for the District and Local Centres identified in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The settlement boundaries defined on these inset maps indicate the extent to which each settlement should be allowed to develop during the Plan period. They also contain allocated development sites within them.

1.2 Policy H4 recognises that development associated with these settlements should be located within the defined boundaries but that there may be circumstances when there is not enough available effective land in the Housing Market Area (HMA) to achieve this (although given the generous supply of development land identified in the LDP, it is not anticipated that a shortfall in the effective supply is likely to arise). Development outside the settlement boundary should not be seen as an alternative to allocated sites where these are available and therefore should only be an 'exceptional' occurrence.

1.3 The purpose of the policy is to introduce a further element of flexibility into future housing land supply by enabling additional sites to be brought forward within the HMA should problems with the effectiveness of allocated sites arise.

1.4 Any proposed housing development which is outside but not immediately adjacent to a settlement boundary (i.e. would not form a contiguous extension to the existing built up area), and which is not within one of the identified villages, will be classed as housing in the countryside and will be dealt with under Policy H3.

1.5 The advice in this SG is supported by Scottish Government's Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Planning Advice Note (PAN) 44 which set out development management criteria for expansions to existing settlements and guidance on fitting new housing development into the landscape.

### Policy context

#### **Policy H4: Housing Development Immediately Outside Settlement Boundaries**

Settlement boundaries defined on the inset map indicate the extent to which the Regional Capital, District and Local Centres should be allowed to develop during the course of the LDP. Housing development should be contained within the settlement boundary and proposals for housing developments immediately outside the defined settlement boundaries will only be considered where a shortfall has been identified by the Council through the housing land audit with regard to the provision of an effective 5 year housing land supply in the Housing Market Area. Proposals will need to provide an element of affordable housing in line with Policy H5.

Proposals must:

- represent a logical extension to the built up area; and
- be of an appropriate scale in relation to the size of the settlement; and
- not prejudice the character or natural built up edge of the settlement; and
- not cause any significant adverse effect on the landscape setting of the settlement or the natural or cultural heritage of the surrounding area.



## 2. Guidance on policy criteria

### Shortfall in the effective five year housing land supply

2.1 The first crucial test for proposed housing development immediately outside a settlement boundary is whether it can be justified on the basis of there being a shortfall in the provision of an effective five year housing land supply in the HMA. If this shortfall cannot be demonstrated then development will not be approved, even if it meets the other criteria of the policy. The evidence to demonstrate a shortfall in effective land will come from the Council's annual Housing Land Audit. This is the established means for monitoring housing land and tracks housing completions and the progress of sites through the planning process. The audit is published annually and is available on the Council's website at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/LDP](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/LDP).

2.2 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requires that the LDP identifies a generous supply of land for each housing market area within the plan area to support the achievement of the housing land requirement across all tenures, maintaining at least a 5-year supply of effective housing land at all times. The Council therefore uses the information from the audit process to ensure that sufficient effective land is available at all times to meet the housing land requirement for at least the following 5 years.

2.3 The housing land audit contains information about the established and effective housing land supply for Dumfries and for each District Centre, Local Centre and village identified in each HMA, and includes:

- all land with planning permission for residential development, including the remaining capacity of sites under construction;
- land allocated for residential development (including the residential component of any mixed-use development) in the adopted LDP; and
- other land with agreed residential potential, such as land identified for housing in proposed LDPs.

2.4 It is recognised that not all of the sites in the audit will be effective, and therefore the audit distinguishes effective, i.e. unconstrained sites, from those which are affected by constraints which cannot be overcome in time to contribute to the housing land requirement. The effectiveness of individual sites is determined by applying the criteria set out in Planning Advice Note 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits (relating to ownership, physical characteristics of the site, contamination, need for deficit funding, marketability, infrastructure requirements and land use).

2.5 In order for an application to be determined under this policy, the applicant must demonstrate that the evidence in the Housing Land Audit (which is current at the time of the application) clearly shows that there is a shortfall in the effective housing land supply. This applies to the entire Housing Market Area, not for individual settlements. So, for example, even if an individual settlement has no remaining effective land within it (i.e. all the allocated sites have been developed and there is no additional capacity on other land), if there is no shortfall within the overall Housing Market Area, then development outwith the settlement boundary cannot be justified under this policy.

2.6 However, if any allocated sites are subsequently identified in the housing land audit to be ineffective in relation to the housing land supply and this leads to a demonstrable shortfall in the overall HMA, then development which accords with this policy (i.e. it is immediately adjacent to a settlement boundary) does not have to be adjacent to the settlement where the ineffective site is located.

### Identifying the effective five year housing land supply

2.7 The Housing Land Requirement for the six HMAs in the region can be found on page 19 of the LDP (Table 2). An explanation of how the figures in this table were calculated can be found in the Housing Land Requirement Technical Paper. This can be found on the Local Development Plan webpages at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/LDP](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/LDP).



2.8 The figures in LDP Table 2 are based on the housing supply targets identified in the Local Housing Strategy, plus a 20% generosity allowance. The table identifies a twelve year housing land requirement (2012-2024), so to calculate the five year housing target, the figure for each HMA must be divided by 12, then multiplied by 5. For example, the Annan HMA target for 2012-2024 is 1,450 so the five year housing land requirement will be  $(1450 \div 12) \times 5 = 604$ .

2.9 The five year target for each HMA can then be compared against the five year effective land supply identified in Summary Statements of the Housing Audit. The Council should always ensure that there is enough land identified in the five year effective land supply to meet the housing target. Only if the number of housing units identified as part of five year effective supply for an individual HMA is less than the housing land requirement figure, will development be able to be considered under policy H4.

#### **Affordable housing**

2.10 If any proposal under policy H4 would result in the development of 5 or more units (either individually or through phasing), a maximum of 20% of these will need to be affordable. Please refer to LDP policy H5 and Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing for more details.

#### **Other policy criteria**

2.11 There are important areas of open space (including outdoor sports facilities) immediately outside the settlement boundary. Development proposals which impact on these areas of open space will need to outline how the proposal complies with the relevant community facility policies and, if the development would affect outdoor sports facilities, with the relevant provisions of Scottish Planning Policy. Proposals must also comply with other relevant policies in the LDP. There are also various other related supplementary guidance documents that should be referred to, particularly Design Quality of New Development.

2.12 It is important that any development does not create an incongruous extension to the existing settlement edge. The scale of development considered appropriate will vary from settlement to settlement and will be dependent on the size and characteristics of the existing built up area. In all cases, any new development must not be out of proportion to the size or character of the existing settlement.

2.13 Proposals should create a positive relationship with the adjoining countryside, providing an appropriate transition between the built up area and the adjoining countryside. The settlement edge is the most visible part of the settlement acting as the transition between the town and countryside and therefore careful consideration of the treatment of this edge is essential.

2.14 To avoid prejudicing the character of the built up edge of the settlement, the development should seek to combine careful building design, orientation and provision of effective landscaped areas. This does not mean simply hiding the development with screen planting although landscape buffer planting may sometimes be appropriate. Depending on the scale of the development, a range of measures to ease the transition between urban and rural may be required. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- by positioning buildings so that they sit into the landscape, for instance by following contours;
- by aligning buildings so that they are informal and made up of smaller scale elements;
- by grading the density of development - reducing its scale and intensity towards its edges with the countryside, which allows for planting to create a featheredge to the settlement;
- layouts should be arranged so dwellings are orientated to be outward facing to address the countryside, rather than turning their back on it;



- by considering the boundary treatments themselves using softer boundaries such as hedges, so that the edge is 'green' and provides a soft transition between the edge of the development and the countryside;
- hard boundaries comprising walls or fences will normally be inappropriate unless they are designed to reflect the local character; high fencing should be avoided as it can have a very stark external appearance; any fenced edge that is felt to be necessary should be broken at regular intervals by well designed building and landscape "gateways" accessed from a perimeter footpath. An additional edge of planting between fence and footway would help to soften any appearance of starkness; concrete block walls and the regimented use of non-native fast growing conifers, such as Leylandii, should also be avoided;
- Off-site planting (i.e. planting some distance away from the site and in the foreground of important views) may be helpful to ameliorate the visual impact at the edge of settlements; it is important to assess carefully the character of the surrounding landscape to find clues for the design of new planting.