

DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



POLICY REVIEW 12

Planning Policy Statement 12: Housing in Settlements

(May 2017)

This Document is one in a series, which builds up to form the 'evidence base' that informs the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

The afore-mentioned evidence base will be continually updated, to additionally include the latest information, input from public engagement, statutory consultees, stakeholder groups, Sustainability Appraisal and from other Departments within the Council, including Community Planning.

The Evidence Base is published as a 'supporting document' in accordance with Article 10(a) and 15(a) of the Planning (LDP) Regulations (NI) 2015.



Purpose: To consider existing planning policies relating to PPS 12- Housing in Settlements and to consider an alternative policy approach which will inform the forthcoming Preferred Options Paper (POP) as part of the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

Content: The paper will provide information on:

- (i) The Context of housing policy within Derry City and Strabane District and existing plan policies;
- (ii) Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) objectives for Housing within Settlements and the linkages between DCSDC objectives, Regional Planning Policy and Strategic Planning Policy objectives;
- (iii) Consider Findings of Councillor Workshop 2 (4th July 2016) and Workshop 4 (12th September 2016);
- (iv) Consider existing policies and consider preferred/alternative policy approach for within the Local Development Plan (LDP);
- (v) Conclusion which will summarise why there is a need to scope/tailor some, or all of the current PPS policies.

Recommendation: The findings shall be used to inform the Preferred Options Paper (POP) and strategic policies in the Local Development Plan (LDP).

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to consider current planning policies associated with PPS 12 - Housing in Settlements and to determine whether or not they are compatible with the Council's overall objectives for the District and whether they need to be amended to take account of local circumstances through the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

2.0 Legislative Context

- 2.1 Article 5 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that the creation of planning policy as part of the Plan Strategy must be done with the objective of furthering sustainable development and in doing so, must take account of policies and guidance issued by OFMDFM, DOE and DRD such as the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- 2.2 Section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 requires all NI Departments and District Councils in exercising their functions, to act in a way they consider to be best calculated to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

3.0 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) Review Parameters

- 3.1 In preparing the new LDP, the Council will have regard to several existing plans and documents that set out the main legal and policy context and considerations of what the LDP is required to do and can include, in relation to Housing in the District.
- 3.2 The new duty of **Community Planning** introduced in April 2015 requires the Council to lead the process of creating a long-term vision for the social, environmental and economic well-being of the area and its citizens. The Local Government Bill introduces a statutory link between the resultant Community Plan and the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP), in that the LDP must take account of the Community Plan in its preparation. Therefore it provides the key context at the local Council level for the preparation of the LDP.
- 3.2.1 It is intended that the LDP will be the spatial reflection of the Community Plan and that the two should work in tandem towards the same vision for the District and its communities setting out the long term social, economic and environmental objectives for an area. In practice, it is expected that the Community Plan will set higher level objectives to provide adequate and appropriate housing for its people – which the LDP will then help to deliver spatially.
- 3.2.2 The Draft Community Plan talks about people and place matters, and our sense of belonging and identity, of being rooted within our families, communities and our relationships and connections within them. It also comes from the physical places that we live in, from our places of work and from places for leisure and play. It is strongly connected with our access to quality public services, good health, our historic environment and our culture.
- 3.2.3 One of the Principle Actions arising from the Community Plan is to future proof our housing stock for extended life expectancy. One of the sub-actions is to provide circa 700 lifetime homes by 2019 and develop a policy to encourage universal design principles with lifetime adaptability. Another Sub Action is to install monitoring and sensing devices for use at home – where relevant and appropriate - to facilitate and support independent living in all new housing. This is to be provided through the NIHE/Housing Association providers and private sector.
- 3.2.4 A Principle Action from the *Environmental Wellbeing Delivery Plan* is to achieve a high quality of life for all citizens through the preparation and implementation of the Local Development Plan that will support the future sustainable growth and resilience of the city and district. Another Principle Action is to provide quality housing and sustainable urban and rural neighbourhoods that are attractive places to live and are within easy access to local services and amenities.

3.3 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS Launched 2012)

- 3.3.1 The RDS provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It addresses economic, social and environmental issues aimed at achieving sustainable development and social cohesion. In particular is **RG8 - Manage Housing Growth** to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development, also very relevant is the guidance on “achieving balanced communities and strengthening community cohesion” and requires the availability of good quality housing offering a variety of house types, sizes and tenures to suit varying social needs. RG8 of the RDS seeks to manage growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development stating that the varied housing needs of the whole community need to be met, including the availability of affordable and special housing needs.
- 3.3.2 A supporting action to strategic guideline RG8 seeks to ensure an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone. This action recommends that the planning authority take account of need identified in the Housing Needs Assessment / Housing Market Analysis when allocating housing land, including land for social and intermediate housing
- 3.3.3 The RDS recognises that there are significant opportunities for new housing on appropriate vacant and under utilised land, and sets a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located in appropriate ‘*brownfield*’ sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5,000 population.

3.4 Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) (September 2015)

- 3.4.1 The recent SPPS is the single most important document in guiding the requirements/content of the LDP. The SPPS recognises housing is a key driver of physical, economic and social change in both urban and rural areas.
- 3.4.2 The Regional Strategic Objectives of the SPPS for Housing in settlements, consistent with the regional guidance in the RDS, are to:
- Manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development;
 - Support urban and rural renaissance; and
 - Strengthen community cohesion.
- 3.4.3 The policy approach must be to facilitate an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone; promote more sustainable housing development within the existing urban areas; and the provision of mixed housing development with homes in a range of sizes and tenures. This approach to housing will support the need to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and services, and the creation of more balanced sustainable communities.

- 3.3.4 In preparing Local Development Plans (LDPs) councils shall bring forward a strategy for housing, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the policy approach of the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. Planning authorities must deliver:-
- 3.3.5 **Increased housing density without town cramming:** higher density housing developments should be promoted in town and city centres and in other locations that benefit from high accessibility to public transport facilities. Within established residential areas it is imperative to ensure that the proposed density of new housing development, together with its form, scale, massing and layout will respect local character and environmental quality as well as safeguarding the amenity of existing residents. In residential areas of distinctive townscape character an increase in density should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances;
- 3.3.6 **Sustainable forms of development:** the use of greenfield land for housing should be reduced and more urban housing accommodated through the recycling of land and buildings and the encouragement of compact town and village forms. More housing should also be promoted in city and town centres and mixed use development encouraged. Major housing development should be located in sustainable locations that facilitate a high degree of integration with centres of employment, community services and public transport, and take advantage of existing infrastructure. Local facilities, services and adequate infrastructure should be integrated into new housing development to meet the needs of the community.
- 3.3.7 A design concept should be sought from and agreed with the developer incorporating sustainable elements such as good linkage of housing with schools, community facilities and public transport; provision for cycling; adequate provision of open space and landscaping integrated with broader green and blue infrastructure systems; energy efficient design of housing units and use of sustainable drainage systems, where appropriate.
- 3.3.8 Within town centres, residential use above shops and other business premises should be facilitated, where appropriate, as this can promote sustainability through utilising underused space, maintaining the fabric of buildings and contributing to the vitality and viability of town centres;
- 3.3.9 **Good Design:** good design should be the aim of all those involved in housing development and will be encouraged everywhere. All new housing developments should demonstrate a high quality of design, layout (including road infrastructure considerations) and landscaping. Good design contributes to the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive and is also a key element in achieving sustainable development. Councils should bring forward local planning policy or guidance for achieving quality in residential development, including proposals for residential extensions or alterations;

3.3.10 **Balanced Communities:** achieving balanced communities and strengthening community cohesion is one of the major themes underpinning the RDS. The provision of good quality housing offering a variety of house types, sizes and tenures to meet different needs, and development that provides opportunities for the community to share in local employment, shopping, leisure and social facilities, is fundamental to the building of more balanced communities. Additional guidance is contained within Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland;

3.3.11 **Traveller Accommodation:** Travellers have distinctive needs which will be assessed as part of the local Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and Housing Market Analysis (HMA). Where the HNA/HMA identifies a demonstrable need for Travellers specific accommodation, planning permission will be granted for a suitable facility to meet this need. This may be provided through a grouped housing scheme, a serviced site or a transit site, subject to meeting the following criteria:

- Adequate landscaping being provided;
- The development being compatible with existing and proposed buildings and structures in the area paying particular regard to environmental amenity; and
- Where appropriate, the provision of workspace, play space and visitor parking being provided.

3.4 Derry Area Plan 2011 & Strabane Area Plan 2001

3.4.1 The Derry Area Plan was adopted in May 2000. Housing policies were aimed at ensuring that an adequate and continuous supply of housing land was identified to facilitate the provision of a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of the community. The DAP also designated a Greenbelt to protect the open countryside from urban sprawl and ribbon development. Similarly, Countryside Policy Areas were designated to protect those areas of countryside where any future development could adversely affect the rural character of their landscape.

3.4.2 Section 6 of the Derry Area Plan has the following proposal and policies:

Proposal H 1 Zoned Housing Land

Policy H 1 Housing Design and Layout

Policy H 2 Open Space Provision in New Housing Areas

Policy H 3 Infill Housing

Policy H 4 Housing for People with Special Needs

Policy H 5 Designated Flats Zones

Policy H 6 Conversions Outside the Designated Flats Zones

Policy H 7 Flats Development and Redevelopment Outside the Designated Flats Zones

3.4.3 **Strabane Area Plan 2001**

3.4.4 The Strabane Area Plan 2001 zoned 205 hectares of land for housing. Additionally, there was a considerable amount of unzoned 'white land' within the towns, villages and hamlets, much of which was also considered suitable for appropriate housing. Beyond the District and Local towns, new house building was also expected to take place not only within the villages and hamlets but also throughout the remainder of the rural area.

4.0 LDP Workshops and Members Input

4.1 In considering and assessing the policy approach to be taken in the DCSDC District in relation to PPS12 it was important to get the views of the elected members. A number of workshops were held including workshops on 'Policy Evaluation' and 'Housing in Settlement Hierarchy'. The main housing concerns were not related to PPS 12 but more with Housing Growth Figures however there were a couple of observational points raised namely:-

- There should be more guidance on the design of small housing developments in small settlements and hamlets that are located in the rural parts of the District. Previous approvals have seen housing developments designed that are very suburban in their design and a suggestion was made that there should be more recognition of the housing being in a rural part of the District albeit inside the settlements so that the house designs draw on the local traditions of the area;
- E.g. the Limavady Road has seen higher density schemes where the local character has not been taken account of and this has led to schemes that are uncharacteristic of the area. 'Cramming' is an issue;
- Concerned that there is no Brown field land available, a general belief that greenfield development was more suitable for residential development an example again was the perceived over development of Limavady Road;
- Concerns regarding cramming of social housing developments;
- Need to integrate housing development with infrastructure and community services.

4.2 At workshop 2 '*Policy Evaluation*' parties requested that they were afforded time to submit their comments in writing. Following the workshop, one formal response was submitted in relation to PPS 7 which contended that the Local Development Plan should have scope for re-zoning to counter land banks not being developed as originally planned with Skeoge being cited as an example.

5.0 Engagement Meeting with Development Management (March 2017)

- Suggested re-naming the Planning Control Principles to Policy;
- HS 1 - Living over the shop; retain but provide clarification for development within and without the Central Area;
- HS 2- Social Housing- retain but consider setting an upper and lower limit of social housing provision within residential developments;
- HS 3 - Traveler Accommodation- No use of the policy;
- HS 4 - House Types and Sizes- Suggest the use of a mixed tenure policy;
- Operationally it is difficult in Development Management to encourage developers to provide a mixture of house types and sizes as their objective is to maximize profits. A policy to this effect would place the onus on developers to provide a more sustainable form of housing development.

6.0 District Context

- 6.1 It is important to put in context the District wide housing situation in terms of type and tenure of housing the LDP needs to ensure that there is an adequate range of sites at suitable locations to provide a mix of house types and tenures to meet our future population needs. Housing Tenure data from the 2001 and 2011 Census would appear to mirror the House Condition Survey (HCS) findings in that there has been a slight decline in the proportion of owner occupation as well as social housing stock with an increase in private rented accommodation. The private housing market had been showing some signs of improvement with gradually increasing numbers of transactions. Private house building sector has been performing at a low and gradually decreasing level since 2012, with just under half of all new build being produced by housing associations for the social housing sector. The very low total of new build units in 2013/14 and 2014/15 is mainly due to the reduction in the numbers of social housing units being built. The failure of the private sector to develop the required level of new houses in DCSDCA has a critical impact on the ability to deliver sustainable mixed tenure, mixed income communities (Source: Housing Executive). The Private Rented Sector (PRS) continues to play a significant role in the local housing market. Local estate agents report that there is continuing strong demand for private rental accommodation across the DCSDC. The main areas of high demand include the Westbank of Derry/Londonderry, followed by the Waterside, Strabane Town and Eglinton where demand for rented properties outweighs supply.
- 6.2 The Housing Executive have stated that despite a small increase in house prices over the past year a number of imbalances in the housing market remain. The decline in private sector house development, low house prices, a lack of mixed tenure development, an undersupply of private rented accommodation and an increasing number of applicants in housing stress on the social housing waiting list all pose particular challenges.
- 6.3 The composition of house types has also changed slightly between 2001 and 2011. Strabane sits significantly higher than the NI average in terms of % of detached properties, while Derry sits significantly lower. This is partly due to the large proportion of housing in the countryside and partly due to the nature of post-war, private sector housing development in settlements. Overall the actual % numbers for detached properties between 2001 & 2011 remain relatively unchanged. By way of contrast the opposite is true for semi-detached properties with Derry ahead of the NI average and Strabane slightly below. Between 2001–11, both districts experienced slight increases in the proportion of flats and a slight decrease in terrace dwellings.
- 6.4 The availability of affordable housing (comprises the social rented sector, housing benefit funded private rented and that part of the low cost owner occupation market which can be purchased utilising 30% or less of gross household income) is one part of the drive to help create mixed and inclusive

communities. The DCSDCA records the second highest concentration of social housing stock compared to other districts in Northern Ireland. The 2011 census records 21% of all households in DCSDCA reside in the social housing tenure compared with the Northern Ireland average of 15%. Approximately 75% of the social housing waiting list comprises single households, and small families. The predominance of single and smaller family households will mean a high requirement for one and two bedroom dwellings.

- 6.5 NISRA published the NI Household Projections 2012, the key findings from these suggest that Derry City and Strabane is projected to an 8% rise in the number of households by 2037. The greatest projected growth can be found in the number of one and two adult households without children.
- 6.6 Population projections over a 10 year period from 2014-2024 predict that in the Derry City and Strabane district, the population aged 65 and over will increase by 27.7% which is above the NI average of 25.8%. The population aged 85 and over is predicted to increase to 42.4% which is above the NI average of 39.7% (NISRA Population projections 2014). These projections show the real impact of the marked increase in the size of the population at older ages with an associated increased need for sustainable/lifetime homes.

7.0 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 7.1 A Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process which must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Development Plan in order to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which an emerging plan will achieve required environmental, economic and social objectives. All LDP strategic planning policies will be subject to SA incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 7.2 DCSDC has commenced work on the preparation of the required Sustainability Appraisal and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment.

8.0 Consider existing policies and consider preferred/alternative policy approach within the Local Development Plan (LDP)

8.1 **Planning Policy Statement, PPS 12 - 'Housing in Settlements'**, sets out the Planning Control Principles to be applied to the planning and delivery of housing development in settlements. The four Planning Control Principles are; increased housing density without town cramming; Good design; Sustainable forms of development and balanced communities. These Planning Control Principles should be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and are also material to decisions on planning application.

8.1.1 Planning Control Principle 1 – 'Increased Housing Density without Town Cramming'

This Control Principle seeks to promote higher density in town and city centres and in other locations that benefit from high accessibility to public transport facilities, whilst respecting local character, maintaining environmental quality and safeguarding the amenity of existing residents within established residential areas. The planning policy for this planning control principle is set out in PPS 7 (including addendums) and PPS13. This strategic principle accords with the SPPS, with subtle changes in text, the word privacy has been substituted with amenity and safeguarding has been replaced by not significantly eroding.

8.2 Planning Control Principle 2 - 'Good Design'

8.2.1 This Control principle sets out that 'Good Design' should be the aim of all those involved in housing development and will be encouraged everywhere. All new housing developments should demonstrate a high quality of design layout and landscaping. This principle is translated into policy in PPS7 QD1 and both Addendums, these set the criteria for achieving quality residential developments reinforced by design guidance in Creating Places.

8.2.2 These good design principles accord with the SPPS. The SPPS has an additional requirement that roads infrastructure is to be considered in relation to good design. The SPPS recognises the contribution that good design can have to achieving sustainable development by providing safe and attractive places to live. It also calls on councils to bring forward local planning policy or guidance for achieving quality in residential development including residential extension and alterations.

8.3 Planning Control Principle 3 - 'Sustainable Forms of Development'

8.3.1 This Control principle promotes the use of brownfield land and in line with PCP1 it seeks to promote higher density in town and city centres but in addition it seeks to encourage mixed use-development. It sets out that housing developments should be concentrated in sustainable locations facilitating a high degree of

integration with centres of employment, community services and public transport and taking advantage of existing infrastructure. Local facilities, services and adequate infrastructure should be integrated into new housing development to meet the needs of the community. A clear design concept should be established for all housing schemes or mixed use development. Policy wording of the SPPS accords with this Principle but includes the additional line “the encouragement of compact town and village forms” and replaces “concentrated in sustainable locations” with “located in sustainable locations”.

- 8.3.2 The Planning Policy for Core Principle 3 is set out in PPS7 (and addendums), PPS13 and is supplemented by an additional policy within PPS 12 **Policy HS 1 - Living Over the Shops**. PPS13 promotes the integration of transportation and land use planning. It highlights that accessibility by modes of transport other than the private car should be a key consideration in both the location and design of development. PPS 7 provides that the community infrastructure and services that are necessary to enable new housing to be satisfactorily accommodated should be provided by developers as an integral part of the development. The integration of local facilities such as schools, crèches, surgeries, shops and play facilities with new residential development, is one means to increase vitality, provide a sense of community and enhance its social and economic sustainability. For zoned housing land development plans should identify what local neighborhood facilities will be required to meet the needs of the new community as part of the Key Site Requirements.
- 8.3.3 Developers should establish a clear design concept that provides sufficient information to allow an informed decision on design, sustainability and accessibility for new developments. The SPPS under sustainable form of development, provides a section on the use of a design concept statement and calls of PPS7 QD2 and PPS12 PCP3. The SPPS states that a design concept statement should be sought from the developer and incorporates sustainable element such as good linkage of housing with school, community facilities and public transport, provision for cycling, adequate provision of open space and landscaping integrated with broader green and blue infrastructure systems. Additionally energy efficient design of housing units and the use of sustainable drainage systems where appropriate (in line with LC3 of PPS7). Policy QD1 and QD2 of PPS7 states that ‘The Department will require the submission of a Design Concept Statement, or where appropriate a Concept Master Plan, to accompany all planning applications for residential development’. SPPS does not include any requirement for the production of a Masterplan for housing development over a certain area or unit number to corresponded with policy QD2 of PPS7

8.4 Planning Control Principle 4 - 'Balanced Communities'

- 8.4.1 This control principle sets out that “social housing should be provided by developers as an integral element of larger housing developments where a need is identified.” Where a need is identified for Travelers specific accommodation this should be facilitated at suitable sites. A mix of house types and sizes should be provided to promote choice and assist in meeting community needs.
- 8.4.2 In the amplification of this policy its sets out that diversity and social inclusion are distinguishing marks of well-balanced communities which embrace a mix of social groups and are able to accommodate people of different backgrounds who wish to live together. In terms of land use, a variety of housing types and tenures offering choice to meet different needs, supported by the opportunity to share in local employment, open space, community meeting places and local shopping and service facilities are required for the building of more balanced communities. The development plan process will be the primary vehicle to facilitate any identified need for social housing by zoning land or by indicating, through key site requirements, where a proportion of a site may be required for social housing.
- 8.4.3 This accords with the SPPS but additionally PCP 4 goes on to suggest the use of planning agreements to secure a portion of social housing in new developments, this is absent from the SPPS.
- 8.4.4 The Planning Policy for this principle is set out in PPS7 (and addendums) PPS 22 and supplemented by Policies HS 2 – HS 4 of PPS 12.
- 8.4.5 When published in final form, the policy provisions of this PPS 22 - Affordable Housing will supersede the following element of Planning Control Principle 4 'Balanced Communities' will also be superseded:

“Social housing should be provided by developers as an integral element of larger housing developments where need is identified”.

8.4.6 Recommendation

The Planning Control Principles of PPS 12 are delivered by Planning Policy Statements 7 (& addendums), PPS 8, PPS 13 and PPS 22, these are all subject to review. There is significant degree of overlap and potential conflicting priorities between these policies. As part of the policy review, it will be necessary to consider consolidating the existing suite of policy relating to housing and remove overlap and address areas of conflict within Local Policies.

The Policy approach of these Control Principles accord with regional guidance and were one of the key mechanism used by the Government for the implementation of the RDS 2025. The delivery of these Control

Principles/Regional Policy guidance requires consolidation and review of PPS 7, 8, 12, 13 and 22 to bring forward local planning policy which delivers sustainable housing development which meet local needs and address the local context.

8.5 Policy HS 1 Living over the Shop sets out that Planning Permission will be granted for residential use above shops and other business premises subject to the provision of:

- A suitable living environment; and
- Adequate refuse storage space (large enough to allow for the separation of recyclable waste).

8.5.1 A flexible approach will be applied to car parking provision having regard to the circumstances of each case.

8.5.2 This is a site specific policy requiring the use of the lower floors of the building as retail. This policy is locally specific and encourages a particular form of development which will see the upper floors of commercial/retail building being used as opposed to lying vacant.

8.5.3 **Recommendation**

Policy Approach 1: Retain policy as is.

Policy Approach 2: Retain policy but update to provide a more enabling policy in line with a City Centre strategy and provide clarification on applying this policy within the city centre and outside of the city centre.

Preferred Approach No 2

8.6 Policy HS 2 - Social Housing Sets out that In locations where a demonstrable housing need is identified by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, planning permission for housing proposals will only be granted where provision is made for a suitable mix of housing types and tenures to meet the range of market and social housing needs identified. The proportion of land or units to be set aside for social housing will be determined as part of the development control process.

8.6.1 Justification: this policy will be applied where a need for social housing is established through a local housing needs assessment and the development plan for the area has not provided for it

8.6.2 Recommendation:

Retain this policy, it is reflected in the SPPS under 'affordable housing' but should be updated to reflect local circumstances and consider the inclusion of specific targets or key residential zonings. When published in final form, the policy provisions of PPS 22-Affordable Housing will supersede policy 'HS2 Social Housing' contained in PPS12 'Housing in Settlements'. As a consequence, PPS12 paragraphs 50, 51 and 52 of the Development Plan section and the following element of Planning Control Principle 4 'Balanced Communities' will also be superseded.

Policy Approach 1: Retain existing policy.

Policy Approach 2: Retain and update policy to reflect specific local circumstances/areas of need.

Policy Approach 3: retain and update policy to include upper and lower limits for the provision of Social Housing.

Policy Approach 4: Await publication of PPS 22 and consider any amendments to the policy.

Preferred Policy Approach No. 2

8.7 Policy HS 3 - Travellers Accommodation sets out that where a local housing needs assessment identifies that there is a demonstrable need for Travellers specific accommodation, planning permission will be granted for a suitable facility which meets this need. This may be provided through either a grouped housing scheme, a serviced site or a transit site where the following criteria are met:-

- adequate landscaping is provided;
- the development is compatible with existing and proposed buildings and structures in the area paying particular regard to environmental amenity; and,
- where appropriate, the provision of workspace, play space and visitor parking is provided.

8.7.1 Where a need is identified for a transit site and this cannot be accommodated within a settlement, a site adjoining, or in close proximity to a settlement; other areas subject to policies of restraint, such as the Green Belt, should be considered. The exceptional release of land for such a facility should take full account of environmental considerations.

8.7.2 This Policy was superseded by Policy HS 3 (amended) **Travellers Accommodation (January 2013)** which sets out that where a local housing needs assessment identifies that there is a demonstrable need for Travellers

specific accommodation, planning permission will be granted for a suitable facility which meets this need. This may be provided through either a grouped housing scheme, a serviced site or a transit site where the following criteria are met:-

- adequate landscaping is provided;
- the development is compatible with existing and proposed buildings and structure in the area paying particular regard to environmental amenity; and,
- where appropriate, the provision of workspace, play space and visitor parking is provided.

8.7.3 Where a need is identified for a transit site or a serviced site, which cannot readily be met within an existing settlement in the locality, applications will be required to meet the policy requirements of Policy CTY 5 – ‘Social and Affordable Housing’ as set out in PPS 21.

8.7.4 Exceptionally, and without a requirement to demonstrate need, a single family traveller transit site or serviced site may be permitted in the countryside. Such proposals will be assessed on their merits.

8.7.5 In all cases planning authorities will take full account of planning, environmental and other material considerations – for example the availability of suitable infrastructure and services.

8.7.6 **Recommendation**

HS3 (amended) reflects the SPPS but with additional provision for of transit or serviced sites outside the development limits and for single family sites. The SPPS requires suitable sites to be identified as part of the Development Plan Process.

Policy Approach 1: Retain Policy

Policy Approach 2: Retain policy and update to address a broader range of local issues including access to community services, provision of infrastructure and utilities, land availability.

Preferred Policy Approach No. 2

8.8 Policy HS 4 - House Types and Size sets out that planning permission will only be granted for new residential development of 25 or more units, or on sites of one hectare or more, where a mix of house types and sizes is provided. In smaller schemes the need to provide greater variety in type and size will be considered on its individual merits.

8.8.1 The required mix of house types and sizes will be negotiated with developers, taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context.

8.8.2 In locations where apartment development of 25 or more units is considered acceptable, variety in the size of units will be required.

8.8.3 **Recommendation**

Retain Policy HS4, it is reflected in the SPPS but should be updated to reflect local circumstances and consider the inclusion of specific targets in relation to housing mix in terms of size, type and tenure. Consideration should also be given to the provision of housing to accommodate the diverse needs of the population, for example the need for specialist housing for older people and for people of all abilities.

Policy Approach 1: Retain policy

Policy Approach 2: Retain and update policy to be more prescriptive including targets in relation to the provision of housing units in terms of size, type and tenure/ mixed tenure policy.

Preferred Policy Approach No. 2

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 Housing is recognized as a key driver of physical, economic and social change in both urban and rural areas. Good quality housing that supports the creation of more balanced communities is a fundamental human need that plays a significant role in shaping our lives and our communities. A home is a vital part of people's lives and contributes to creating a safe, healthy and prosperous society. Policy approach must facilitate an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone; promote more sustainable housing development within existing urban areas; and the provision of mixed housing development with homes in a range of sizes and tenures. This approach to housing supports the need to maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and services and the creation of more sustainable balanced communities.
- 9.2 It is important that the LDP develops a robust and comprehensive policy to ensure quality housing in the District. The existing policies in PPS12 can be largely retained within the LDP. The strategic direction and principle of the four policies in PPS12 will not require significant change. The preferred options accord with the SPPS but will create a policy which is responsive and will deliver housing to meet local needs and circumstances.
- 9.3 It is not anticipated that there would any significant implications which would impact on the operational application of these changes.