

Addasu Adeiladau Gwledig Traddodiadol Canllawiau Cynllunio Atodol Drafft Ymgynghori

Appendix A

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The Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance

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Swansea Council

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Preface

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides information, guidance and practical examples to support policies set out in the adopted Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP), including:

- Policy CV 2: Development in the Countryside
- Policy CV 4: Conversion of Rural Buildings

The draft SPG will be subject to a minimum 6 week consultation process. Any interested individual or organisation is invited to submit comments on this consultation draft version of the SPG during the public consultation period. Further details regarding the consultation, including information on key dates and how comments can be submitted, are available on the Council's website at www.swansea.gov.uk/spg

1.0 Introduction

Aims and Purpose

- 1.1 This document provides Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in support of the Council's development plan policies and placemaking objectives. This includes the specific aim of achieving the highest quality design standards for development within rural areas of the County.
- 1.2 The purpose of the document is to ensure applicants, consultees, residents and all other stakeholders involved in the development process have access to clear and consistent advice and guidance to inform planning proposals.
- 1.3 This Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPG (hereafter the 'Guidance') confirms the Council's commitment to safeguarding traditional rural buildings for particular purposes, namely those that will support the rural economy, provide affordable homes to meet local need and/or will contribute to the social well-being of the area. The definition of what constitutes a 'traditional' building in this context is set out in the Guidance. The SPG sets out placemaking and design principles that respond to the key threats that exist for such buildings. It provides important information for applicants to consider when proposals are formulated, to ensure development schemes accord with the requirements of national and local policy.
- 1.4 The Guidance will be an important material consideration in the determination of planning proposals submitted to the Local Planning Authority, at both pre-application and planning application stages. Following the Guidance will help avoid unnecessary delays when seeking planning permission, and provide more objectivity, certainty and consistency in decision making.
- 1.5 For proposals within the Gower AONB, there are additional requirements to be addressed, as set out in legislation, policy and guidance. The Council's adopted **Placemaking Guidance for the Gower AONB SPG** has a specific module on rural building conversions, providing guidance in relation to the designated landscape of the AONB. Both that document and this Guidance will be material considerations in making planning decisions on proposals to convert traditional rural buildings within the Gower AONB.
- 1.6 Matters relating to placemaking and design are clearly not the only considerations in the determination of planning applications. Applicants will need to demonstrate compliance with other policies in the LDP, and with national guidance and other material considerations, when applying for planning permission.

Placemaking in Rural Areas

- 1.7 Placemaking in its simplest form, is a 'people centred' approach to the planning, design and management of places and spaces. The importance of Placemaking has been embraced as a cornerstone of the national planning agenda in Wales and the sustainable development objectives that underpin it. All new development can contribute in some form to the making of places, and influence how that place will be experienced and enjoyed (i.e. its 'sense of place'), which will stand as a legacy for future generations of occupants and visitors. This Guidance, and the LDP policies that it supports, requires that a holistic Placemaking and 'Place Management' approach should be applied in all areas, and at a range of scales, in order to create a genuine sustainable legacy in accordance with the principles set out in the Swansea LDP and national policy. Crucially, this holistic approach to creating successful places and achieving positive changes in existing places, requires a range of disciplines and stakeholders to work collaboratively to agree appropriate solutions.
- 1.8 Throughout rural areas of the County there are numerous stone built barns, as well as other traditional rural buildings, which play an important role in creating locally distinctive places. These buildings are often integral elements of the countryside's attractiveness and appeal, and fundamentally make a positive contribution to the special character of the countryside. They also have an important role to play in meeting the future needs of rural areas and both national and local planning

policy supports their re-use for purposes that contribute to the local economy and the principles of sustainable development. These traditional buildings therefore merit safeguarding, in terms of their individual merits and collective resource.

- 1.9 Changes in the patterns and methods of farming have resulted in many traditional rural buildings becoming economically redundant or functionally ill-suited to modern agricultural practices. In addition, many rural buildings such as chapels and churches have become vacant. As a result, owners have looked for new economic uses which in many instances have involved conversion to alternative purposes, such as holiday accommodation. Furthermore, in order to obtain additional income streams, in recent years some occupiers of residential dwellings in rural areas are seeking to convert residential outbuildings, such as domestic garages and workshops, to holiday accommodation, however in many of these instances this guidance will not apply as it specifically relates to traditional rural buildings. Further guidance on this matter is provided at Section 3.

Key Terms and Definitions

- 1.10 This SPG is intended to inform decision making on proposals to convert **traditional rural buildings** specifically. If a building in the countryside that is the subject of a conversion proposal is not considered 'traditional', neither this Guidance nor the specific LDP Policy that it supplements would apply. Section 3 of this

SPG sets out further information and criteria that will apply in order to establish whether a structure is categorised as a 'traditional' rural building or not.

- 1.11 This SPG is intended to inform decision making on proposals within the **countryside** specifically. The LDP defines countryside as *'all the land that lies outside the defined settlement boundaries of the main urban area and Key Villages, as identified on the Proposals Map' (Swansea LDP paragraph 2.10.11)*. Any land in the County of Swansea that is outside the defined settlements (i.e. the urban area and Key Villages) is, by definition, countryside.



Above: Converted Farm Building, Gower

2.0 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

- 2.1 **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040**¹ is the national tier of the development plan to inform decision making and sets the direction for development at a strategic scale in Wales. The Plan states: *'A balance will be found between development and preserving the character of rural Wales' (p.54)* and that *'In areas designated for their landscape or ecological importance, protection against inappropriate development remains in place.'* (p.64). Future Wales Policies 4 and 5 highlight that rural areas should grow in an appropriate way, and set out the importance of supporting rural economies and services. In accordance with Policy 4, the Welsh Government emphasises that the future for rural areas is best planned at the regional and local level.
- 2.2 **Planning Policy Wales (PPW)**² sets the national planning policy framework under which local policies and guidance are produced. PPW highlights the importance of a placemaking approach for the planning and design of development. It emphasises that the countryside is a dynamic and multi-purpose resource. Furthermore it states that, in line with sustainable development and national planning principles and in contributing towards placemaking outcomes, the countryside must be

conserved and, where possible, enhanced for the sake of its ecological, geological, physiographic, historical, archaeological, cultural and agricultural value and for its landscape and natural resources. It highlights that the need to conserve these attributes should be balanced against the economic, social and recreational needs of local communities and visitors (para 3.38), and that a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business use is also needed (para 5.6.8).

- 2.3 Further national guidance on the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings is provided in **Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities** (2010)³. The TAN states:

'When assessing planning applications for the re-use or adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent of the new use proposed for the building is acceptable in planning terms. It should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes (although in the case of a tenanted agricultural building, the value in planning terms of the existing use should be taken into consideration). In circumstances where planning authorities have reasonable cause to believe that an applicant has attempted to abuse the system by constructing a new farm building with the benefit of permitted development rights, with the intention of early

¹ [Future Wales: the national plan 2040 | GOV.WALES](#)

² [Planning Policy Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

³ [Technical advice notes | GOV.WALES](#)

conversion to another use, it will be appropriate to investigate the history of the building to establish whether it was ever used for the purpose for which it was claimed to have been built.’ (para 3.2.1)

2.4 In accordance with achieving sustainable placemaking outcomes TAN 6 generally prefers business re-use over residential, highlighting that *‘The conversion of buildings which are currently in industrial or commercial use to dwellings may have an adverse impact on the local economy’* (para 3.5) and that *‘Whilst residential conversions have a minimal impact on the rural economy, conversions to holiday use can contribute more and may reduce pressure to use other houses in the area for holiday use’* (para 3.6).

2.5 TAN 6 also emphasises that:

‘Conversion proposals should respect the landscape and local building styles and materials. If a planning application is submitted for the re-use of a building which the planning authority considers has a significant adverse effect on the landscape in terms of visual amenity, it may be appropriate in connection with any proposed structural changes to impose conditions to secure an improvement in the external appearance of the building.’

2.6 **TAN 23: Economic Development (2014)**⁴ emphasises that the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings

has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, and tourism, sport and recreation. In recognising this, local planning authorities are expected to adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use, subject to a number of criteria (section 3.2).

2.7 TAN 23 emphasises that, if an existing rural building is unsuitable for conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension, or if the creation of a residential curtilage would have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside, the same considerations that relate to proposals for new house building in the open countryside should be applied to the consideration of proposals.

2.8 Extracts of other key national planning policies or guidance that may have a bearing on proposals for rural buildings are provided in Appendix A.

⁴ [Technical advice notes | GOV.WALES](#)

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Swansea Local Development Plan

- 2.9 All planning applications submitted to the Local Planning Authority must be considered against the relevant policies of the development plan, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Development Plan policies are set out in Future Wales (see above) and the adopted **Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP)**⁵.



- 2.10 The LDP puts placemaking at the heart of the Council's overarching planning strategy. The LDP contains a number of policies that highlight placemaking objectives, which are consistently used in the determination of planning proposals. **Policy PS2 Placemaking and Place Management** in particular highlights that all development should enhance the quality of places and spaces, and respond positively to aspects of local context and character that create a sense of place. The policy states that the design, layout and orientation of proposals should accord with the principles of placemaking and, depending on the nature of the

proposal, should consider relevant matters relating to: accessibility, green infrastructure (at all scales), biodiversity gain and enhancement, cultural heritage, climate change resilience, well-being, and landscape impact. Fundamentally **LDP policy PS2** requires that development creates quality places by ensuring proposals understand and respond to the context and character of the application site. It highlights that consideration must be given to not just the building but also the space around it.

- 2.11 In addition to the overarching placemaking Policy PS2 **Placemaking and Place Management**, the key LDP policies supported by this SPG are:
- **CV2: Development in the Countryside,**
 - **CV4: Conversion of Rural Buildings, and**
 - **TR5: Holiday Accommodation.**
- 2.12 The full policy wording and supporting amplification for each of the above LDP policies is set out in Appendix A. Their broad aims and requirements are described below.
- 2.13 Policies CV2 and CV4 set out the main planning framework against which applications for the conversion of traditional rural buildings will be assessed. Proposals for the conversion of non-traditional rural buildings are considered against CV2 but not CV4.
- 2.14 **Policy CV2 Development in the Countryside** sets out a presumption against development in the countryside,

⁵ www.swansea.gov.uk/ldp

except in particular circumstances, with the overall aim of ensuring the integrity of the countryside is conserved and enhanced. The 'exceptions' include development that relates to rural enterprises, the expansion of existing businesses, affordable housing to meet local needs, and uses that allow a small business to operate from home. Where appropriate, this could involve the conversion of a traditional rural building.

2.15 Policy CV4 Conversion of Rural Buildings sets out the criteria and principles that will be applied to proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings in the countryside. The policy specifically relates to development of traditional rural buildings and emphasises a positive approach to supporting proposals that will enable those buildings that merit safeguarding to positively contribute to the attractiveness of the area. It specifies a range of potentially permissible uses that can contribute to the rural economy, namely:

- Business uses,
- Community facilities
- Affordable home(s)
- Rural enterprise dwellings

The policy sets out a range of policy criteria that proposals need to address in order to be considered suitable. Section 3 of this Guidance provides further information to confirm how the criteria will be applied as part of determining whether a building is suitable for conversion.



Above: Area of countryside with converted barns, Cheriton.

2.16 Policy CV4 does not apply to proposals to convert buildings within the delineated boundaries of LDP Key Villages or the urban settlement. It remains the case however that proposals within settlements will still need to be appropriate to the local context and sensitively relate to existing development patterns in order to be acceptable. Proposals for the conversion of buildings within 'Key Villages', as defined by the LDP, will be assessed against Policy **CV1** and other relevant LDP policies. For the avoidance of doubt, proposals for the conversion, redevelopment or demolition of buildings within Key Villages are not covered by this SPG.

2.17 **LDP policy TR5 Holiday Accommodation** sets out criteria for considering proposals for holiday accommodation in the countryside, where such development is considered essential to be located outside settlement limits. Criteria i relates to proposals for the conversion of traditional rural buildings, which is amplified by paragraph 2.11.29 of the policy. The policy highlights that proposals for the re-use and adaption of traditional buildings in the countryside to holiday accommodation must consider policy CV 4 as well as TR 5. The supporting text to policy TR5 clarifies that new development must be of a high quality design and sensitively integrate into the landscape.

2.18 Additional LDP policies may also be relevant to a proposal for conversion of a traditional rural building,

which will be dependent upon the nature and location of the development. Likewise, not all of the above policies will be relevant in every case. The LDP Proposals Map⁶ will help to determine which policies are applicable to a particular site. Similarly, the LDP Constraints and Issues Map should be used to identify whether the proposed development is located within the AONB, Special Landscape Area, a flood zone or other area of constraint.

Other Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.19 LDP Policy is supported by a suite of SPG that are material considerations for decision making on planning applications⁷. A number of these have direct relevance to development in the countryside and the use of rural buildings, including the following:

- Placemaking Guidance for the Gower AONB (if proposal is located within or near the Gower AONB);
- Development and Biodiversity; and
- Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands.

2.20 It is important that the full range of relevant SPG documents are read and understood, in conjunction with this Guidance and related planning policies, to inform the preparation and submission of planning applications.

⁶ www.swansea.gov.uk/ldp

⁷ www.swansea.gov.uk/spg

3.0 Determining whether a proposed conversion is appropriate

Definition of a Traditional Rural Building

- 3.1 In order to determine whether a rural building within the countryside is considered traditional within the terms of this Guidance and the related LDP policy, the LPA will assess a range of features and aspects relating to the building. Each building will be considered on its own merits and in the context of the surrounding of the surrounding landscape. There are various key factors that will be considered in determining whether a structure is a traditional rural building.
- 3.2 Building materials are a key aspect to consider when assessing whether a building within the countryside is considered 'traditional' or not. Many traditional buildings will be constructed of local materials, often stone but in some instances can include masonry and timber frames. Occasionally metal structures can be present in a traditional building, however this would typically be in older buildings. Key issues for consideration in respect of materials is whether they are reflective of the wider area and landscape, whether they relate to the function of the building, and whether the materials are integral to the colour palette for the area. Another factor to consider in establishing whether a building is traditional is the age of the structure. Whilst there is no prescribed age for a traditional building, it is expected that they will be well

established in the rural landscape and not recently constructed. In terms of building form, most traditional buildings will have a pitched roof and have a modest footprint, which is important for a non-dominant presence in the landscape. There may be exceptions to this, for example traditional buildings that historically served as defence structures that typically have flat roofs. This example also reflects that the former or original use of the building is an important consideration. In order to be considered a traditional rural building it is expected that the structure will have been built, or used, for an activity that is typical of the rural landscape. An agricultural use is typical in this regard, however other examples could include the aforementioned defence buildings, as well as former schools and community buildings, industrial buildings and infrastructure buildings such as those associated with railways and water supply. The overall appearance and character of an existing building within the wider landscape is also important to understanding whether or not a structure can reasonably be considered a 'traditional rural building', which may require landscape visual assessment from a range of public view points.

- 3.3 The matters set out above are not an exhaustive account of all the factors that will be considered when deciding if a building is traditional. All relevant factors will need to be considered in combination, depending on the circumstances and characteristics of the site, and with reference to the wider context of the LDP and all relevant national policies.

- 3.4 Having regard to the types of buildings in the countryside that can be regarded as traditional, the amplification of LDP policy CV 4 highlights at para 2.10.35 that:

“Traditional rural buildings include stone built barns, stables, churches, chapels and schools which create locally distinctive development, contribute to the County’s attractive countryside scene and merit safeguarding.”

- 3.5 These examples listed in the policy serve to highlight the type of buildings that will be considered traditional, but it is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list. Throughout the countryside of Swansea there are other rural buildings that would require highly sympathetic conversion schemes to ensure they continued to create locally distinctive development. Redundant agricultural buildings are for example one of the most common building types to be converted.



Above: Example of a traditional rural building, former Gerazim Chapel, Felindre

- 3.6 Buildings that are considered to be traditional rural buildings but that cannot be converted to a proposed new use without significantly adversely affecting the surrounding landscape and locality will not be considered suitable for conversion. Buildings that were constructed via permitted development rights will be carefully assessed to ensure they were used for the right bestowed by permitted development for a minimum period of 10 years previous to the application for conversion. This is consistent with the LDP approach to resist proposals that would:
- involve the conversion of a ‘modern’ building of little or no rural character,
 - unacceptably alter the appearance and rural character of the original traditional building,
 - not be in keeping with the locality,

- involve major or complete reconstruction,
- include obtrusive access provision, or
- involve ancillary work that intrudes into the rural landscape.

3.7 By following the guidance in this section, potential applicants will be able to assess whether a building can be reasonably considered a traditional rural building that is suitable for conversion. ***If a building is not considered to be a traditional rural building that merits safeguarding and suitable for conversion, any proposal for a conversion of that building will not be considered against policy CV4 or against this SPG.***

Permitted Uses

3.8 Policy CV4 states that:

The conversion of traditional buildings in the countryside to new uses will be supported for the following beneficial uses:

- Business;
- Community facility near a defined settlement;
- Affordable Housing for Local Need;
- Rural enterprise dwelling to serve an evidenced essential need.

This section provides further guidance on the above types of uses that will be supported for conversion proposals, subject to other policy requirements and other relevant material considerations. If a development does

meet one the proposed uses, consideration will still need to be given as to whether the buildings itself is suitable for conversion.

i. Business

3.9 Business use is one that provides employment opportunities and contributes to the rural economy. It covers light industrial use (including small-scale or ancillary storage) and commercial sport, recreation and tourism development. Tourism use also includes holiday accommodation. The conversion of traditional rural buildings for holiday accommodation is also addressed in Policies **TR 1: Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Development** and **TR 5: Holiday Accommodation**. Any proposal for such a use must be accompanied and evidenced by a Tourism Needs and Development Impact Assessment (TNDIA) as required by TR 1.



Above: Conversion of former barns, Church Barns, Llanmadoc

3.10 Not all businesses are suitable for a ‘countryside’ location, with issues such as possible air and noise pollution; increased traffic generation and the suitability of the highway network; and potential blight on surrounding land all needing to be considered. LDP **policy RC 10** states that proposals for employment (B class) use at locations outside existing employment or industrial areas should demonstrate why the development cannot reasonably be located within an existing employment area, having particular regard to the nature and scale of the scheme.

3.11 Policy RC 10 is complemented by policy CV 2(iv) which states in paragraph 2.10.15:

‘...new employment uses will be permitted as rural exception sites. Employment uses in and adjoining an existing settlement boundary will need to be compatible to the location and neighbouring uses. Employment uses beyond the existing settlement will need to demonstrate that the nature of the business necessitates a rural location and mitigates against any harmful impacts on local amenity.’

3.12 Applicants for business use (excluding tourism accommodation) should therefore set out why the nature of the business necessitates a countryside location, including why existing employment areas are not suitable or available.

ii. Community Facility near a Defined Settlement

3.13 Community facilities are locally orientated services and amenities and may include a retail shop, social or sports club, place of worship, leisure or health facility as defined in LDP policy **SI 2: Providing and Safeguarding Community Facilities and Locally Important Uses**. Determining whether a proposed use can reasonably be described as a Community Facility will require consideration of the LDP definition and key factors such as the extent to which a proposed facility would be open and widely available for use by members of the community. In all cases, the scale of use must be appropriate for the re-use of the traditional rural building and in terms of its appearance in the rural landscape. Factors such as the location of the building, accessibility, highway infrastructure and parking provision will also be taken into account, in order to ensure that the proposed

community facility is in a sustainable location for the community it aims to serve as set out within LDP policies **PS 1, T 1** and **T 5**. Isolated rural buildings will rarely be considered as suitable to be used as a community facility.

iii. Affordable Housing for Local Need

- 3.14 Residential re-use of an existing rural building may be acceptable where it would contribute to an identified need for local needs affordable housing in the location concerned. This criterion of Policy CV 4 also links with Policy CV 2 which specifies the circumstances in which the provision of affordable housing in rural areas may be permitted.
- 3.15 Local need for housing and affordable housing in a locality must be proven by reference to latest local Housing Market/Needs Assessments and the prior opinion of the Director of Regeneration and Housing must also be sought. Any accommodation provided through a conversion scheme should remain affordable in perpetuity, be designed to meet the needs identified and be of an appropriate scale.
- 3.16 Affordable housing will be directed towards meeting the needs of the following categories of people, as identified in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2 (Planning and Affordable Housing, 2006):
- (i) Existing residents needing separate accommodation in the area, for example, married couples and people living in tied accommodation on retirement,
 - (ii) People whose work provides important services and who need to live closer to the local community,
 - (iii) People who are not necessarily resident locally but have long standing links with the local community, for example elderly people who need to move back to a village to be near relatives, and
 - (iv) People with the offer of a job in the locality, who cannot take up the offer because of lack of affordable housing
- 3.17 If a converted building is intended to be considered as an affordable dwelling, provided directly by the intended occupier, the initial and resale value of the affordable home must be capped at an affordable level linked either to a fixed multiple of local incomes, or a discount from market value. ***Given the very high market values of rural housing in the County compared to household incomes, the Council will determine affordable value using the fixed multiple of local incomes rather than a reduction of market value.*** The converted dwellings must be affordable to the community as a whole and planning applications to seek the removal of any occupancy condition and seek disposal on the open market will be resisted by the Council.
- 3.18 LDP Appendix 6 provides detail in order to support the interpretation of the Plan's affordable housing policies and the definition of Affordable Housing for Local Need, replicated in Appendix B of this document.

iv. Rural Enterprise Dwelling

3.19 Residential use of a building may be suitable where there is a justified and evidenced need to have a full time resident on the site of a rural enterprise. Furthermore, in some situations ancillary residential accommodation may be acceptable where it supports a business reuse of the building. Such applications will be required to be accompanied by objective information assessing:

- the functional need for a dwelling for a full time worker, (i.e. a functional and time test), and
- a business case demonstrating that the enterprise is likely be financially sustainable (i.e. a financial test), and
- evidence that the business needs to be established at the proposed location and that it cannot be accommodated at another suitable site where a dwelling is likely to be available (i.e. other dwellings test).
- other normal planning requirements test, to demonstrate that the dwelling is suitably located to fulfil its identified need and to minimise impact on the wider environment.

Further guidance on these tests is set out in Appendix C

3.20 Proposed business uses considered to fall within the scope of this policy are forestry, agriculture and related services, fishing, sustainable tourism and low impact recreational activity. This type of conversion may be particularly appropriate where a second dwelling is proposed on an established farm which is financially

sustainable to facilitate the handover of the management of the farm business to a younger farmer. A rural enterprise must obtain its primary input from the land. The use of a building as holiday accommodation does not for example, fall under this definition.

3.21 In order to ensure compliance with this criterion the grant of any planning permission will include a condition requiring the works necessary for the establishment of the enterprise to have been completed before the residential part is occupied. In addition, a condition tying occupation of the residential accommodation to the operation of the enterprise must be imposed in order to prevent this element being sold separately. Alternatively a planning obligation may be sought to link the residential use with the business.

Compliance Criteria

3.22 **LDP Policy CV 4** outlines several criteria that **must all be met** before a traditional rural building may be considered suitable for conversion and an acceptable form of development, including consideration of the associated ancillary works. Further details regarding key placemaking requirements, including design matters, are set out in Section 4 below. For proposals relating to buildings within and on the edge of the AONB, the **Placemaking Guidance for the Gower AONB SPG** also provides important guidance on placemaking requirements for development in such locations.

3.23 The following paragraphs provide guidance on how each of the criteria set out in Policy CV 4 should be applied.

(a) ***Proposals must ensure that... The building is largely intact, has a form, bulk and general design in keeping with its surroundings, and is capable of conversion without prejudicing the original character of the building or the rural character of the locality.***

3.24 A largely intact building is normally one with a structure that can be converted without significant change to its physical appearance. Surroundings refer to the countryside setting, and buildings in keeping with this are those which have a distinctly rural character, i.e. built from traditional materials with a simple but robust design. Most modern agricultural buildings, such as block built and steel framed buildings, do not fall into this category and would fail to comply with policy CV4. The ability to convert a building will largely depend on the extent of remedial work needed to stabilise the structure – strengthening the roof, underpinning, etc. This work must not have a negative impact upon the original fabric and character of the building or surrounding area. Even modest alterations can detract from the character of a rural building and will not necessarily be considered appropriate.

3.25 Some rural buildings may be unlisted but may be of historic significance with important architectural features, evidence of repairs/ evolution and features relating to original use. Therefore building recording before any

work can commence, during and after works may be required by planning condition. The record must be deposited by the applicant or agent in the West Glamorgan Archives and to GGAT for the Historic Environment Record.

3.26 A primary factor in assessing proposals for conversion will be that the original character, structure and architectural integrity of the building and its setting should be respected, and ultimately the original character enhanced, by the conversion. If necessary, the needs of the user should be adapted to suit the building, rather than the requirements of the conversion being imposed upon it.



Above: A photograph of a group of farm buildings suitable for conversion

Below: An illustration to indicate how the buildings could be converted to retain and enhance the existing character of the buildings.



(b) ***Proposals must ensure that... The design and scale of the proposed conversion (or extension) including new window and door openings, extensions, means of access, service provision and curtilage respects the rural character and design of the building and integrates with the surrounding landscape, and in protected landscapes will conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape***

3.27 Limiting the number of new window and door openings is important in retaining the character of the building, as is avoidance of new external brickwork. If the form of the building derives from its original use in agriculture it is normally expressed in large expanses of uninterrupted

tilled roof pitches, timber framing and mass brickwork/stonework that has mellowed over time. These elements give such buildings their character and should be retained as far as possible regardless of any change of use. Wherever possible existing blocked up openings should be reused. It is also important to respect the solid to void ratio of the building, i.e. the amount of solid wall in relation to openings. Any new openings should be kept to a minimum and be proportionate to the existing. Proposals that involve rebuilding in modern materials and/or cladding in stone to imitate invariably lose this character and should be avoided wherever possible.

3.28 Only very modest extensions will be allowed and must be sympathetic to the size and scale of the existing building. Normal permitted development rights to extend further or to construct ancillary buildings will be withdrawn.

3.29 The spaces surrounding rural buildings are generally restricted by the nature of their original use. Where a conversion requires the provision of amenity space associated with the accommodation, sufficient and unobtrusive provision must be made around the building without capturing the surrounding countryside or conflicting with the surrounding uses. The provision of adequate amenity space is particularly important for residential conversions. In instances where a residential reuse for affordable housing/rural enterprise dwelling is permitted, the creation of a suburban style curtilage, erection of outbuildings and other domestic paraphernalia including gates and fencing around the

building should be avoided, as should the subdivision of open courtyards, particularly where the courtyard serves a group of converted buildings.

- 3.30 Where a boundary treatment is necessary, natural boundaries, such as hedgerows are preferred. Fencing can be used alongside new hedgerows until the planting is sufficiently established for the fence to become redundant. Closeboard timber fencing should be avoided. Any fencing should provide gaps for wildlife to maintain biodiversity connectivity with the surrounding landscape. Boundary treatments should always complement the existing building and landscape character. Poorly designed boundary treatments or those considered of inappropriate materials will not be supported.

(c) Proposals must ensure that...Any ancillary works associated with the conversion will not unacceptably adversely affect the rural character of the locality.

- 3.32 Ancillary work is development associated with the conversion but not relating directly to the main building. Such work may include provision of amenity space, gates, fencing, car parking areas, hard surfacing, garages, outbuildings, external lighting and infrastructure related to supplying services such as electricity, water, gas and telephone lines. As with the main conversion work, it is important that ancillary work can be undertaken without unduly affecting the rural character of the area.

- 3.33 Certain minor works may be undertaken to a dwelling, including the development of ancillary works, without the need to apply for planning permission. Therefore, in the limited circumstances where planning permission is granted for conversion of a building to residential accommodation (including to use for holiday lets), permitted development rights will be removed by condition of the planning permission to avoid unacceptable adverse effects on the character of the original building and locality. This will require any owner to submit planning applications for future minor development proposals to ensure that they respect the original character of the building and the rural character of the locality.

- 3.34 The location of many rural buildings suitable for conversion may not be convenient for supplying services such as electricity, water and gas. The provision of these services, in particular associated storage containers, must have minimal visual intrusion and must be clearly addressed in any planning application. Electricity line or other services should be provided underground unless demonstrated to be impracticable. Provision of roof mounted solar hot water or PV panels should be fitted close to the roof and be in character with the building. Other forms of renewable or low carbon energy provision must not have a negative impact upon landscape character.

Below: unsympathetic external pipework and external timber decking detract from the integrity of this residential chapel conversion



Below: Stone walls providing enclosure for private space, converted barn Oxwich Green



(d) *Proposals must ensure that...The building is structurally suitable for conversion (or extension) without a major or complete reconstruction, as verified by a structural stability report.*

3.35 Any traditional building in the countryside that is in such a dilapidated condition where substantial parts of it would have to be replaced or that the building would have to be completely replaced, will not be suitable for conversion. The walls should be structurally sound and should be eaves level in height. This will ensure that the

special character and appearance of the building will not be damaged.

- 3.36 Proposals that involve the substantial reconstruction (**substantial reconstruction is considered to involve rebuilding more than 20% of the total of the external wall area when it is necessary to restore and replace the roof (i.e. no roof exists on the building), or more than 25% of the of the total external wall area if there is no need to restore and replace the roof**) of the original building is unlikely to be acceptable under policy **CV 4** as this invariably destroys the original fabric, features and integrity of the building and would be tantamount to allowing new development in the countryside. Any scheme submitted of this nature would be considered under **Policy CV 2** (Development in the Countryside) which generally presumes against development in the countryside, except where it is for specific uses as specified in the policy.
- 3.37 Great care must be taken to ensure that the building is genuinely capable of the conversion work proposed. For this reason applicants **must** submit evidence that the building is structurally sound during the planning application process, demonstrating that the building is sound and that development can be undertaken in accordance with the submitted plans without compromising the structural or architectural integrity of the original building. During the development works, if additional work is required (for example due to walls collapsing), resulting in rebuilding works not permitted under the original planning permission, the planning

permission granted for the conversion may no longer be valid. In such circumstances it is likely that a further grant of planning permission would be required for the additional works and that reconstruction of more than 20% or 25% of external walls would be resisted under the provisions of Policy CV4. Any such rebuild would be considered as a new building in the countryside and would be unlikely to be justified other than in exceptional circumstances outlined in policy CV2.

- 3.38 Consequently, each application **must** be accompanied by a structural stability report (also referred to as a structural appraisal report) that has been prepared by an independent professionally qualified structural engineer. The structural stability report should recognise the building's proposed use and the suitability of the building to that specific use. It must provide information on the existing condition of the building, demonstrate that the scheme can be implemented without substantial reconstruction (as defined above) and explain how the building fabric will be supported during construction. These support works must be undertaken/put in place prior to any work commencing on the conversion of the building. Because of the nature of the work that can be involved in the conversion of a traditional rural building early consultation with Building Control officers is strongly recommended.
- 3.39 Any reconstruction works to the main original building should be done in matching materials and result in a matching external appearance to this building.

- 3.40 Planning permission for a conversion does not allow for demolition of the original building and its replacement, even if the replacement is a replica of the original building. When undertaking conversion work, if sections of the original building are found to be structurally unsound and will prevent the conversion work, building works should cease until agreement can be reached with Planning Officers on the most appropriate way to proceed. The building should not intentionally be demolished and then rebuilt without firstly receiving the permission to undertake the work.
- 3.41 Some minor demolition works for example to remove modern extensions that detract from the historic and architectural character of the original building may be acceptable, and identified as part of the planning consent. However if a building is in such a poor state of repair that it would need to be taken down to ground level or below before it could be repaired then it is unlikely to be considered suitable for conversion.
- 3.42 In instances where the building that is being converted falls down during the process of conversion, building works should cease until discussions take place with the Local Planning Authority. The fact that sections of the building have collapsed may mean that the consented planning permission is no longer valid. In such circumstances, a new planning application will need to be submitted and it may be that the proposal no longer complies with the relevant development plan policies (as explained in 3.34 above).
- 3.43 The roof structures of some farm buildings can display varying degrees of decay and damage as a result of water ingress or structural failure or fatigue. Such potential problems should be inspected, assessed and reported upon by a qualified structural engineer with experience in inspecting old and historic buildings. There will always be a presumption in favour of retaining as much of the existing fabric as possible and any proposals for roof works should reflect this presumption. Detailed guidance on repairing roofs is set out in Section 4 (and criterion b above).
- (e) ***Proposals must ensure that... Safe access for pedestrians and vehicles can be provided without prejudicing the character and appearance of the area.***
- 3.44 Proposals for the conversion of rural buildings must make provision for safe vehicular and pedestrian access. Only buildings that can accommodate such provision without capturing surrounding countryside and/or having a detrimental impact on the appearance of the countryside will be considered suitable for conversion. In order to achieve this wherever possible existing access roads and pathways should be used. Development proposals that include requirements to set back improvement lines, remove hedgerows and provide new access or visibility splays will be resisted (Policy T5 Design Principles for Transport Measures refers). Additionally, proposals that include visually obtrusive access arrangements, such as long driveways across open fields and tarmac surfacing will not be viewed

favourably. The design of any necessary works should be appropriate to the character of the area and not detract from the landscape or suburbanise the area. Furthermore, the impact of any works should be mitigated through landscaping and indigenous planting.

- 3.45 All proposals must also include satisfactory parking provision within the curtilage of the site. Only buildings that can accommodate an appropriate or necessary parking area without detracting from the rural setting or architectural quality of the building will be considered suitable for conversion. New build garages will not usually be acceptable. Ideally vehicles should be parked within an existing enclosed area or outbuilding. Parking areas should be visually 'softened' as much as possible and should therefore avoid marked out bays or overly engineered solutions.

Below: Home Farm, Penrice. A commercial conversion which maintains the rural character of the area.



- (f) *Proposals must ensure that, ... In the case of buildings extended or constructed with the benefit of agricultural permitted development rights, these buildings have genuinely been used for the agricultural purposes they were constructed for.***

- 3.46 Certain farm and forestry buildings can be constructed and existing buildings extended without the benefit of planning permission under permitted development rights available to agricultural and forestry uses. Further details of this determination procedure are set out in Annex A of TAN 6. However, there must be a genuine agricultural or forestry justification for such development. Policy CV4 seeks to prevent the construction of new agricultural and

forestry buildings and extensions to existing farm and forestry buildings with the intention of early conversion to another use. Subject to the age of the original permission, a building may not be considered a traditional rural building as defined by policy CV4 and instead be considered against policy CV2.

- 3.47 The local planning authority has the power to require the removal of buildings and extensions constructed under permitted development rights which have permanently ceased to be used for agricultural or forestry purposes within 10 years from the date on which the development was substantially completed. Proposals for conversion of 'new' buildings, i.e. less than 10 years old, will therefore come under particular scrutiny. Without evidence the original building has been used for the intended purpose for a significant period of time, i.e. at least 10 years, proposals for the conversion and reuse will not normally be considered favourably. Permitted development rights should not be used in an attempt to avoid planning restrictions on new development in the countryside. The need to prevent this activity is also reflected in paragraphs 3.2.1 and 3.3.1 of TAN 6.

Below: Barn conversion for use as holiday accommodation, Glebe Farm Cheriton. Incorporating parking area and level access.



(g) Proposals must ensure that... There would be no significant adverse effect on natural heritage.

- 3.48 In addition to the requirements for protected species the Development Plan (compromising Future Wales and the Swansea LDP) places significant emphasis on the use of innovative, nature-based solutions to site planning and design of the built environment, and specifically highlights these as key elements for successful placemaking. The Council also has a legal duty under Part 1, Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 ('the S6 duty') to seek to ensure development within Swansea maintains and enhances the County's biodiversity and delivers long term ecosystem resilience. Future Wales Policy 9 requires all applications to demonstrate the actions that have been taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity, ecosystem resilience

and green infrastructure (GI) assets. This policy requirement is supported by the guidance in PPW that sets out the requirement for a 'stepwise approach' to considering biodiversity in the planning process and securing overall enhancement.

- 3.49 Traditional rural buildings can provide important habitat for wildlife, including roosting or breeding places for protected species such as bats, barn owls and breeding birds. Protected habitats and species are those protected under European and UK legislation, as identified in TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).
- 3.50 Any conversion scheme must abide by the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Part III of the CROW Act 2000 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Where habitats and species are likely to be disturbed or harmed, development proposals will be assessed in accordance with National Planning Policy and Guidance and local planning policy. Any proposal that may result in unmitigated harm to the species or its habitat is unlikely to be considered favourably.
- 3.51 For this reason, proposals for the conversion of rural building must be assessed against Policy ER 8 Habitats and Species. The Council's adopted **Biodiversity and Development SPG** should also be considered. Proposals are required to provide an ecological survey, which includes:
- species surveys undertaken at the correct time of year; and
 - an assessment of the likely impact of the proposal on the protected species and habitats; and
 - where necessary, outline appropriate provision to safeguard them through avoidance, mitigation and/or compensatory measures.
- 3.52 Biodiversity enhancement measures are also expected to be set out as part of a submitted proposal. Compensation and enhancement may take the form of the provision of bat and nest boxes to the creation of new habitat.
- 3.53 Future Wales makes clear that specific opportunities should be identified, including through GI Assessments, to ensure that GI is fully integrated into development schemes. The nature of rural and semi-rural environments are that opportunities are likely to exist in relation to important connectivity linkages to habitats and features within and outside development site boundaries, which should be explored and addressed as part of proposals. The GI solutions should fully embrace the health and wellbeing, placemaking and sustainability aspects of GI, as expected in national and local planning policy and not just focus on drainage and landscaping solutions within the site. Correct boundary treatments in order to integrate a site into the wider rural landscape will be particularly important.
- 3.51 All trees on site, including those on site boundaries that overhang the site, must be accurately plotted on

submitted plans. This includes all trees to be retained **and** proposed for removal. The application should be accompanied by a condition survey for all trees on site. **The Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands SPG** provides detailed guidance on this matter.

- 3.54 Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires that all proposed new developments that include at least 2 properties or developments over 100m² SuDS can be used to deliver multiple benefits, including: flood risk reduction, an improvement in water quality, and enhancing biodiversity. It is recommended that planning permission, building regulations and SuDS approval are applied for at the same time in order that any necessary changes can be made to the planning application.

4.0 Placemaking checklist for conversion of traditional rural buildings

Overview

4.1 This section of the Guidance provides a checklist of the general principles and detailed placemaking considerations that apply to development proposals for the conversion of traditional rural buildings.

These apply to proposals at any countryside location within the County boundary and are consistent with those set out within the Council's SPG on Placemaking Guidance for the Gower AONB. This approach ensures that conversion proposals within all rural areas of the County are dealt with in a consistent manner.

General Principles		
i.	STRUCTURALLY SUITABLE	<p><i>(CV4 d) The building must be structurally suitable for conversion as verified by a structural stability report.</i></p> <p>The report must be undertaken by suitably qualified personnel and submitted as part of the planning application.</p> <p>Proposals will need to ascertain the suitability of building to be converted for the proposed use and whether it is likely to need structural and/or remedial work to stabilise the structure e.g. underpinning foundations or before strengthening roof structure. Such work should not have a negative impact upon the character of the building.</p>
ii.	CAPABLE OF CONVERSION	<p>CV 4 a <i>The building should be capable of conversion without prejudicing the original character of the building or the rural character of the locality.</i></p> <p>It should remain largely intact, retain its form, and its design should be in keeping with its surroundings.</p> <p>It should not require substantial reconstruction (substantial reconstruction is considered to constitute rebuilding more than 20% of the total of the external wall area when it is necessary to restore and replace the roof, or more than 25% of the of the total external wall area if there is no need to restore and replace the roof)</p>

iii.	SCALE AND MASSING	The scale and massing of the existing building should be respected and external alterations kept to a minimum.
iv.	VOLUME	A sense of the building's original overall volume of the building should be retained internally as well as externally. The insertion of additional floors within the existing structure may not always be an acceptable approach, particularly if the building is listed. Any extension proposed to the building should be very modest and must be sympathetic to the existing building.
v	SETTING	A building's setting may be as important to the local character as the structure itself. If proposals include converting a group of buildings the scheme should retain existing relationships between the buildings and common spaces such as courtyards as well as significant natural features.
vi	ARCHAEOLOGY	Be aware that there may be a requirement for an archaeologist to record any groundworks. Where possible preserve original flooring and ensure that evidence of previous occupation remains undisturbed.

Detailed Considerations		
Openings		
i.	EXISTING OPENINGS	The existing openings should be used to accommodate new doors, windows and screens wherever possible, unless they detract from the character of the building (for example inappropriate additions/openings that have been added previously). Re-opening previously blocked up openings may also be an appropriate way of introducing more light into a building. Existing sources of light should be maximised.
ii.	NEW OPENINGS	New openings should be kept to a minimum and the proportions of existing and traditional openings should be used as a basis for design of new ones.
iii.	DEPTH OF REVEAL	Windows should have an appropriate depth of reveal (the distance set back in the wall). Reveals are generally relatively deep within older traditional buildings and provide attractive shadows which add interest to an elevation.

Roofs		
i.	ROOF STRUCTURE	The existing roof structure and shape should be retained where possible. Traditional roof pitches should not be altered as this can have a negative impact upon the building's form, however there may be opportunities to improve non-traditional roof forms.
ii.	NEW DORMERS	The introduction of new dormers will rarely be considered acceptable as these fundamentally alter form and character.
iii.	EXISTING TRADITIONAL ROOF COVERINGS	Existing traditional roof coverings should be kept and re-used where appropriate. Existing slates should be kept and re-used where possible. Replacements should match with existing, both in terms of colour, texture and pattern.
iv.	ALTERNATIVE ROOF FINISHES	Alternative roof finishes may be appropriate particularly on commercial schemes or more contemporary residential conversions, subject to detailing and context.
v.	REMOVAL OF EXISTING TRADITIONAL ROOF FEATURES	The removal of existing, traditional roof features such as chimneys, capping tiles etc. will be resisted.
Doors		
i.	DOORS	Doors in conversions should be limited to simple styles and detailing, and should fit the existing opening.
ii.	EXISTING OPENINGS	The infilling of an opening in order to fit a door should be avoided.
Windows		
i.	TO PROVIDE LIGHT TO UPPER FLOORS	If windows are required to light an upper floor, their design should be appropriate to the existing building. The incorporation of internal light wells and atria with ridge roof lighting can assist in getting natural light deep into the heart of a building.
ii.	DORMER WINDOWS	The introduction of dormer windows is rarely an acceptable approach when converting a building unless they are an existing feature, due to the impact upon the character and form of the original building.

		Rooflights should be considered as an alternative.
iii.	PROJECTION OF ROOFLIGHTS	The projection of rooflights above the roof plane should be minimised and preferably these should sit flush within the roof plane. For proposals on older buildings of architectural merit as well as any buildings within conservation areas, rooflights must be conservation style and generally sit flush within the roof plane (unless strong justification is provided for the need for an alternative approach)
iv.	WINDOW STYLE AND FIT	The choice of style of window should reflect the style and characteristics of the existing building. The window should fit the opening rather than vice versa, as such standard or 'off the shelf' windows will rarely be acceptable.
v.	uPVC WINDOWS	Timber is the preferred material for window frames. However the use of uPVC windows may be accepted in some circumstances depending on the quality and style of the uPVC. This should be clearly detailed on submitted drawings and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. uPVC may not be appropriate on many older, traditional properties which may be of some architectural or historic interest, even if not protected through being listed, as it may have a detrimental impact upon the buildings character.
vi.	SUBDIVISION	Care should be taken with the subdivision and proportions of windows, which should be appropriate to the building type rather than its new use.
vii.	LARGE WINDOWS	Large openings provide the opportunity for the inclusion of attractive/strong design elements. The detailing of such openings should aim to retain the openness of the original building and, as such, any sub-division by frames should be minimal.
viii.	LIGHTSPILL	Special consideration must be given to the issue of light spill resulting from the design of any building. Light spill from large window voids can in some instances result in impacts on tranquillity and biodiversity. The use of electrochromic or 'smart glass' will be encouraged in the design of conversions in order to reduce the level of light spill. For further details on light spill prevention refer to Module 5I of the Placemaking Guidance for the Gower AONB SPG, which provides guidance on mitigation and is relevant to all proposals across the County, not simply within the AONB.

Features and Services		
i.	DOMESTIC FEATURES	Buildings should not be 'domesticated' through the introduction of inappropriate detailing or features such as porches or conservatories.
ii.	CHIMENYS, FLUES, VENTILATION SYSTEMS	Considerable care needs to be given to both siting and detailing when incorporating chimneys, flues or ventilation systems. External masonry chimneys will rarely be an acceptable addition to any conversion. However where these are existing and original features, the repair or reinstatement of these will be supported. Insulated metal flues should be used instead as these can be housed within the building, minimising visual impact. Such flues should be finished in a dark recessive colour (typically black or dark grey). Flues should only project to the minimum requirement to meet current building regulations and care should be given to locating these where their visual impact is minimised. Excessively tall flues will not be supported.
iii.	BULKY PLANT	Any necessary bulky plant should be sited on the least visible side of the building or, preferably, within the building itself.
iv	EXTERNAL PIPEWORK	External pipework should be kept to a minimum. Generally, all foul water drainage should be incorporated within the building, with external soil vent pipes being in a dark/recessive colour (typically black or dark grey).
v	GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES	Gutters and down pipes should be of a style and material appropriate to the building, with existing/traditional fixing details being used.
vi	RIDGE AND EAVE DETAILS	Existing ridge and eaves detailing should be retained or reinstated where possible. The introduction of timber fascias and bargeboards will not be acceptable on agricultural conversions regardless of material, as they are not typical detailing.
vii	ARCHEOLOGICAL GROUNDWORKS	Be aware that there may be a requirement for an archaeologist to record any groundworks. Where possible preserve original flooring and ensure that evidence of previous occupation remains undisturbed.
External Detailing		
i	CURTILAGE	A defined curtilage will not be appropriate for every development. It will depend on the location of the building, the character of the building and the proposed use. For example when converting a building into holiday accommodation there is not always a requirement, and it may not be appropriate, to have a defined curtilage. It will however, be appropriate to have a defined curtilage for affordable housing or a rural enterprise dwelling, in order to provide private outdoor amenity space.

		The creation of a suburban style curtilage, erection of outbuildings and other domestic paraphernalia including gates and fencing around the building should be avoided as should the subdivision of open courtyards, particularly where the courtyard serves a group of converted buildings. (See LANDSCAPE SCHEMES below with regard to appropriate boundary treatments).
ii.	LANDSCAPE SCHEMES	Any landscape scheme should avoid domesticated detailing - simple planting schemes, traditional boundary treatments and hard surfaces will be most appropriate. If lawns and planting are to be incorporated, they should be simple and sensitive to the character of the building and wider landscape setting. Boundary treatments should complement the existing building and landscape character and be natural (hedgerows) wherever possible. The use of close boarded timber fencing will be resisted unless this is painted an appropriately recessive/natural colour and combined with sufficient screen planting/hedging.
iii.	CONVERSIONS CONSISTING OF MULTIPLE UNITS	Where a conversion consists of a number of units, a common treatment should be applied to external spaces in order that the building reads as a single entity.
iv.	SITING OF OUTBUILDINGS	The siting of outbuildings including garages and sheds will need to be controlled to respect the existing building's character. Wherever possible, such uses should be incorporated within the existing building. When not viable, these structures should be sited away from the building in the least visually obtrusive part of a site. Appropriate measures should be taken to screen any visually intrusive structures, preferably using planting, if appropriate, landform and natural materials.
	CAR PARKING	Only buildings that can accommodate an appropriate or necessary parking area without detracting from the rural setting or architectural quality of the building will be considered suitable for conversion. Car parking provision should be sensitively integrated and ideally vehicles should be parked within an existing enclosed area or outbuilding. The visual impact of which should be minimised through the use of appropriate screening to ensure parked cars do not dominated the plot or wider streetscene. Materials used should have regard to local landscape character and the character of the property. Marked out bays or overly engineered solutions should be avoided. If possible, parking in front of buildings should be avoided as this is likely to have a negative impact upon the streetscape and lane character. The integration of electric charging points should be considered and the Council supports their implementation subject to impact on landscape character.

		New build garages will not usually be acceptable.
	ACCESS AND DRIVEWAYS	Safe vehicular and pedestrian access must be provided using existing access roads and pathways. Buildings without such existing access arrangements will not be considered suitable for conversion. Surrounding countryside should not be captured to provide access if it does not already exist, as long driveways across open fields may have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the countryside and may be visually obtrusive. Development proposals that include requirements to set back improvement lines, remove hedgerows and provide new access or visibility splays will be resisted (LDP Policy T5 Design Principles for Transport Measures refers).
Utilities		
	SOLAR WATER OR PV ROOF PANELS	Solar heating panels, such as solar roof tiles may be more appropriate for use on historic buildings or ones in conservation areas. Roof mounted solar hot water panels and/or PV panels should be kept low on the roof and not positioned where they will be overshadowed. They should be designed to maintain the simplicity of the roof form. The surface of the panels should blend in with the roof materials (often dark colours)
	AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS	Cannot be installed within 3 metres of the property boundary or on a pitched roof. Cannot be installed on a wall which fronts a highway

5.0 Development Management Process and Application Requirements

Pre-Application Stage

- 5.1 Prior to the submission of a formal planning application for development, the Council welcomes the opportunity to discuss proposed schemes with prospective applicants. This approach helps to encourage and promote high quality development and improve the efficiency of the development management process. Potential applicants are encouraged to make use of the Council's Pre-Application Service⁸. Pre-application enquiry forms are available to download from the Council's website (<http://Swansea.gov.uk>).
- 5.2 The Pre-application stage provides an opportunity to resolve any significant planning issues prior to the submission of a formal application. Applicants will have the opportunity to consider any issues raised by the Council and, if necessary, can amend the proposal in line with comments received to help secure a favourable decision on the submitted planning application.

Planning Application Stage

- 5.3 Planning applications can be submitted either in hard copy format or electronically via the Planning Portal <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/>. Planning application

forms are available to download from the Council's website (<http://Swansea.gov.uk>) or hard copies are available from the Civic Centre, Oystermouth Road, Swansea SA1 3SN

- 5.4 Guidance notes explaining the information required to be submitted in support of the planning application are issued with the forms and are available to download from the above address.
- 5.5 A schedule of the specific information that will be required in support of submitted planning applications is provided in Appendix D of this Guidance.

⁸ [Swansea - Pre-planning application advice service](#)

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A - National Planning Policy Extracts

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities - Sustainable Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisals (pages 21-22):

“4.8 Functional test

4.8.1 A *functional test* is necessary to establish whether it is essential, for the proper functioning of the enterprise, for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. It should relate to unexpected situations that might arise, for which workers are needed to be on hand outside of normal working hours for the particular enterprise. Such requirements might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand night and day to deal with an emergency that would threaten the continued viability and existence of the enterprise without immediate attention. Where there are existing dwelling(s) on the enterprise then the need for additional workers to live on the site for the proper functioning of the enterprise must be demonstrated to be essential.

4.9 Time test

4.9.1 If a functional requirement is established, it will then be necessary to consider the number of workers needed to meet it, for which the scale and nature of the enterprise will be relevant. Where there is currently no dwelling associated with the rural enterprise the worker for whom there is a functional need for new accommodation must be a full-time worker. With the exception of second dwellings on established farms, it must not relate to a part-time requirement, or a requirement that does not relate to the enterprise. If this is a second (or

further) dwelling, all existing dwellings must also be occupied by full-time workers for whom it is essential that they also remain on site for functional reasons, or by workers and their dependents last employed in a rural enterprise. (See exceptions at paragraphs 4.5.1 - 4.5.3).

4.10 Financial test

4.10.1 The rural enterprise and the activity concerned should be financially sound and should have good prospects of remaining economically sustainable for a reasonable period of time, usually at least 5 years.

4.10.2 Evidence of actual or potential economic performance will be required. To assess economic sustainability it will be necessary to show the business has a reasonable prospect of providing a market return for all operators for the amount of management and manual labour inputs, including the job for which the rural enterprise dwelling is being sought, for at least five years from the anticipated completion of the proposed development. This should be assessed on the basis of what is a realistic income for the skills of the operator. A financial test is also necessary to assess the size of dwelling which the enterprise can afford to build and maintain. Dwellings which are unusually large in relation to the needs of the enterprise, or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income it can sustain in the long-term, should not be permitted. It is the requirements of the enterprise rather than of the owner or occupier which are relevant to determining the size of dwelling that is appropriate.

4.10.3 There may be some cases in which the planning circumstances of the site are such that, if a new permanent

dwelling is approved, it will be appropriate for the planning authority to consider making permission subject to a condition removing some of the permitted development rights for development within the curtilage of a dwelling house. For example, proposed extensions could result in a dwelling whose size exceeded what could be justified by the functional requirement, and affect the continued viability of maintaining the property for its intended use given the income which the enterprise can sustain. However, such conditions should only restrict or remove the availability of such specific permitted development rights as are relevant to the circumstances, rather than to be drafted in terms which withdraw all those in a Class.

4.11 Other dwelling test

4.11.1 Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that there is no other dwelling(s) or buildings suitable for conversion, which are available to meet the need. If there are existing dwelling(s) on the enterprise it needs to be shown why these cannot be used to meet the needs of the enterprise for a resident worker, and why labour or residential arrangements cannot be re-organised to ensure that the existing accommodation meets the needs of the enterprise without the need for a further dwelling.

4.11.2 In cases where the planning authority is particularly concerned about possible abuse, it may be helpful to investigate the history of the enterprise to establish the recent pattern of use of land and buildings and whether, for example, any dwellings or buildings suitable for conversion to dwellings have recently been sold. Such a sale could constitute evidence of lack of need.

4.12 Other planning requirements test

4.12.1 Rural enterprise dwellings should satisfy the usual planning requirements in terms of design, sustainability and access. The siting of the proposed dwelling should relate closely to the activities for which there is a need. In most cases this will mean that the new dwelling should be sited in close proximity to existing buildings and in the case of dwellings for agricultural enterprises, should not be isolated from the farmstead or in locations that could encourage farm fragmentation. Local planning authorities should resist planning applications for rural enterprise dwellings that are prominent in the landscape.

4.12.2 Careful consideration needs to be given to minimising the environmental effects of new rural enterprise dwellings. Opportunities to generate on site power and heat should be explored. Particular attention needs to be given to the avoidance of impacts on ground and surface water, as in most cases, it will not be possible to connect to mains drainage.”

TAN 23: Economic Development, 2014

3.2 Re-use and Adaptation of Existing Rural Buildings

3.2.1 The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, and tourism, sport and recreation. In recognising this, local planning authorities are expected to adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use, especially those

buildings located within or adjoining farm building complexes on the basis that:

- they are suitable for the specific use;
- conversion does not lead to dispersal of activity on such scale as to prejudice town and village vitality;
- their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;
- imposing conditions on a planning permission overcomes any planning objections, for example on environmental or traffic grounds, which would otherwise outweigh the advantage of re-use;
- if the buildings are in the open countryside, they are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- conversion does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the structure, form, character or setting where the building is of historic and / or architectural interest.

APPENDIX B

Definition of Affordable Housing for Local Need

The eligibility criteria for local needs affordable housing is set out in LDP Appendix 6: Affordable Housing as follows:

For affordable housing in the Gower and Gower Fringe SHPZ (Policy H3) and on 100% affordable housing exception sites (Policies H 6 and CV 2), all of the Council's eligibility criteria for Affordable Housing must be met along with the following additional 'local need' criteria. In the context of rural local needs housing, use of the word 'local' in describing a resident means:

- Applicants who are resident within the area⁹⁶ who have been resident for a continuous period of at least 5 years immediately before making an application;
- Applicants who have been resident within the area for any period of (or periods totalling) greater than 5 but less than 10 years within the previous 10 years immediately before making an application,
- Applicants who were previously resident in the area and who have an immediate family member(s) currently resident in the area and where the immediate family member(s) have been resident within the area for a continuous period of at least 10 years immediately before the housing application was made and intend to remain. 'Immediate family' means a parent or parents, a child or children, or a sibling or siblings;
- Applicants who need to move to the area to enable them to either give or receive support to or from an immediate family member. 'Immediate family' means a parent or parents, a child or children, or a sibling or siblings or other relationships where a genuine need to

give or receive support is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the City and County of Swansea;

- Applicants who currently live in the area needing separate accommodation, for example married couple and people living in tied accommodation on retirement;
- Applicants who work either full time or part time within the area. Part time employment in this case is defined as being a minimum of 10 hours each week; or
- Applicants who need to move into the area to take up full or part time work.

In the event that none of the above can be met by the applicants, the Authority may consider individuals from surrounding areas and communities that border the area. This will be defined on a site by site basis if necessary.

APPENDIX C - Further Technical Guidance

Converting Historic Farm Buildings in Wales – A Good Practice Guide [Cadw and Monmouthshire County Council (2004)^{3]} provides general guidance on the conversion of historic rural buildings in Wales. It sets out general design principles for achieving conversions without irreversible loss of the historic character of the original building. Of most relevance to this document is the section on ‘types of conversions’ which looks at what alternatives there may be, such as craft centre; volunteer base camp; outlet for farmers’ market; offices; galleries and workshops. Larger buildings may be suitable for educational uses by schools/ lectures/conferences, etc; gym facilities; theatre productions/travelling cinema; barn dances; wedding receptions; or even serve as a local church.

Where the rural building forms part of a complex, or the proposed conversion relates to a complex of buildings, particular attention must be given to the functional relationship between the conversion and associated buildings, including any farm on which they are situated. Conversions into separately owned/occupied units must respect this association and the collective character. Furthermore where a group of buildings is to be divided up careful consideration must be given to how amenity or car parking space is to be provided to avoid destroying the integrity and historic interest of the grouping. The courtyard around which buildings are grouped should still be perceived as an entity following conversion.

APPENDIX D - Information Required In Support Of A Planning Application

Information	Applicability	Content
Structural Stability Report	<p>All planning applications for the conversion of traditional rural buildings must be accompanied by a structural stability report.</p>	<p>This must be prepared by an independent structural engineer. The report should include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the existing condition of the building and - demonstrate that the proposed scheme is realistic and the rural building is capable of conversion without unacceptable rebuilding.
Design and Access Statement (DAS)	<p>Must be submitted for the following types of development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planning applications for ‘major’ development except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -mining operations, -waste developments, -relaxation of conditions (Section ‘73’ applications) -applications for a material change in use of land or buildings; • All planning applications for development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in a conservation area or World Heritage Site which consist of the provision of one or more dwellings or the creation of floorspace of 100sqm (gross) or more. • All works to a listed building (for works to the interior of a listed building, the access part of the DAS is not required). 	<p>Given the greater complexity and scrutiny of details of many conversion schemes, the submission of a DAS (or a similar Design Statement) is encouraged to explain the context and approach to the proposals. Such a statement will provide useful information and justification and can help to significantly speed up the determination process. There will be particular expectations of quality in areas of valued and distinctive character such as conservation areas, the Gower AONB and the Special Landscape Area.</p> <p>The DAS should be proportionate to the scale of development proposed.</p> <p>In the preparation of a DAS, reference should be made to guidance outlined within TAN 12: Design and the Welsh Government’s Design and Access Statements in Wales (2017) guidance.</p> <p>The scope of a DAS should be agreed wherever possible at the pre-application stage of development to ensure all relevant issues are covered.</p> <p>A DAS must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; -demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

Information	Applicability	Content
	<p>In accordance with LDP policy PS2: Placemaking and Place Management, a DAS will also be required in support of planning applications that are considered to have design implications, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -applications for new or extended buildings and new infrastructure, -changes to landscape appearance, and/or - those involving sensitive sites and locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -explain the policy or approach adopted takes development plan policies into account; and -explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed. <p>The Council will determine an application to be invalid if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a DAS is required but not submitted, or -if the content of the DAS does not properly address the required content.
Evidence of Agricultural Use	For all buildings constructed on the basis of agricultural permitted development rights within 10 years of the date of the application for conversion.	Provide evidence that the building has been used for the intended purpose for a significant period of time (i.e. 10 years).
Evidence of Use of Buildings Constructed Under Permitted Development Rights	For all buildings constructed on the basis of permitted development rights within 10 years of the date of the application for conversion.	Provide evidence that the building has been used for the use as permitted via permitted development for a significant period of time (i.e. 10 years).
Statement in Support of Residential Use for Rural	All applications for a rural enterprise dwelling must provide an appraisal in accordance with the tests set out in Section 3 above and TAN6.	<p>Applicants must submit the following as part of a rural enterprise dwelling appraisal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functional test to provide evidence of whether there is a need for a resident worker for the proper functioning of the enterprise

Information	Applicability	Content
Enterprise Dwelling		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time test to provide evidence of the labour requirement for the worker who is working on the justifying enterprise • The financial sustainability of the business enterprise it is to support • The other dwelling test to identify whether there is an existing dwelling or building suitable for conversion on the enterprise or dwelling in the locality that could meet the identified functional need • Other normal planning requirements test to demonstrate that the dwelling is suitably located to fulfil its identified need and to minimise impact on the wider environment.
Statement in Support of Residential Use for Affordable Housing for Local Needs	<p>All proposals for affordable housing for local needs must submit a statement a statement providing evidence of the need for the dwelling and an agreement to that the development will be retained as affordable housing for local needs in perpetuity.</p>	<p>The statement should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of proven affordable local need in the locality; and • Evidence of the cost price of the conversion of the dwelling and the estimated resale value linked to a calculation of a fixed multiple of local incomes rather than a 70-80% reduction of market value. The use of the fixed multiplier of local incomes is used due to the high market values in some areas of the County (further advice regarding the calculation can be obtained by contacting the planning section); and • A legal agreement ensuring the property will be retained as affordable housing in perpetuity.
Ecological Reports	<p>All proposals for conversions. The Council's ecologist should be sought before commencing any preparation work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pre-ecological appraisal to identify the likely presence of protected species and the need for further detailed surveys.
Arboricultural Reports	<p>All proposals where development affects trees within, or adjacent to, the site curtilage.</p>	<p>All trees on site, including those on site boundaries that overhang the site, must be accurately plotted on submitted plans</p>

Information	Applicability	Content
		This includes all trees to be retained and proposed for removal. The application should be accompanied by a condition survey for all trees on site. The Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands SPG provides detailed guidance on this matter.
Listed Building Consent	If the original building is listed or lies within the curtilage of a listed building	Listed Building Consent will be required for any conversion work
Archaeology	If the Council, on the advice of Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, believe that important remains exist at the site.	An archaeological and/or field investigation report may be required. This must be undertaken prior to the determination of any planning application.
Building Regulations	<p>The conversion of a rural building to a different use to which it was originally intended will in most cases require building regulations approval in addition to planning consent.</p> <p>Important note: Any works to the fabric of the building including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -demolition and rebuilding works, -insertion of windows, -insertion of roof lights, -insertion of flues/chimney stacks <p>required as part of building regulations approval which do not form part of the plans and conditions approved as part of any planning permission may be unauthorised and may be unacceptable in planning terms.</p>	<p>Building Regulations consent.</p> <p>The local planning authority must be consulted for any works which do not form part of the approved plans and conditions, and any necessary consent must be obtained before carrying out additional works required by building regulations.</p>

Information	Applicability	Content
Sustainable Drainage	All new development that includes a least 2 properties or developments over 100m ² .	Must include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
Lighting Strategy	All development within the AONB and SOME developments elsewhere in the County will require a strategy detailing the location and type of external lighting to be used.	A Lighting Assessment and Plan (Lighting Strategy) will be required for all developments within the AONB and some developments elsewhere in the County. The Plan should appraise the developments impact on the external environment due to light spill and external lighting and on biodiversity and ensure that habitats are not lit during construction or once built and bats and other nocturnal species are not disturbed by the building's external lighting. Avoidance and mitigation measures must be included. Further advice on Lighting Strategies can be found within the Placemaking Guidance for the Gower AONB SPG, Module 5I, which is applicable to developments throughout the County, not just the AONB.



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