

## 4 Housing in the Countryside

### Policy C 3

#### Design of Housing in the Countryside

The design of new housing, including rural exception housing sites, conversions, extensions and replacement dwellings, must have regard to the impact individually and collectively on the landscape character of the area and its sensitivity to change.

Development should be designed having regard to the character of the area in which it is located taking account of the local settlement and building character. It should also have regard to 'Quality Design' – West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document, Conservation Area Appraisals and community planning documents such as Parish Plans and Town and Village Design Statements, the design principles set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan and on the rural environment.

### Supporting Text

**4.24** It is essential that new development harmonises with any distinctive local characteristics. This does not prevent proposals for outstanding examples of modern design; the overriding consideration should be the impact on the landscape and on local character in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS14 and CS19.

**4.25** The NPPF (paragraphs 56 to 68) stresses the importance of good design and the need for Planning Authorities to provide clear guidance within their plans without being over prescriptive:

'...Should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.'

**4.26** In assessing the development's contribution to achieving high quality and inclusive design, the Council will take account of the 'Quality Design' - West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Documents<sup>(8)</sup> and Conservation Area Appraisals which are useful references for all applicants. There are also a number of town, village and parish design statements which have been adopted by the Council which should be used to inform proposals for development in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS19. The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan should inform proposals within the AONB.

**4.27** In assessing the potential impact on local landscape particular regard will be had to the sensitivity of the landscape to the particular type of development being proposed and the capacity of that landscape to be able to accommodate that type of development without significant effects on its overall landscape character.

## Supporting Evidence

**4.28** Applicants are encouraged to provide the following verifiable evidence to support relevant proposals:

- i. an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposals,
- ii. impact on the highway network both in terms of alterations to the existing highway and increase in all forms of traffic on the wider network,
- iii. measures proposed to provide for, or encourage, sustainable transport, pedestrian access to existing footpaths, and sources of sustainable energy,
- iv. impact on the need for all forms of supporting infrastructure including social, medical and educational needs,
- v. plot size, curtilage and boundary treatments,
- vi. the use of materials and detailing acceptable within the local architectural context,
- vii. impact on any protected species and the measures being taken to avoid and mitigate such impact, together with any measures to enhance biodiversity,
- viii. impact on any historical or archaeological interests and the measures being taken to mitigate such impact,
- ix. impact on quality of dark skies with mitigation measures where required,
- x. flood risk assessment and mitigation where required,
- xi. foul and surface water disposal,
- xii. use of porous materials for all hard surfaces,
- xiii. tree survey, measures to protect existing trees and important hedgerows during and after construction works,
- xiv. landscaping including species and a planting schedule,
- xv. groundmoulding, if any, with priority to retaining the natural slope.

**4.29** It is important to reiterate the significance attached to cumulative impacts. When assessing an application, consideration will be given to the impact of the scheme taking into account existing, approved and proposed development in the same locality.