

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note

Conversion of Rural Buildings



1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council has set out in its Local Development Plan (LDP) an intention to prepare a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPG). The purpose of each SPG is to:
- assist the preparation of planning proposals and guide pre-application discussions,
 - guide officers in handling, and officers and councillors in deciding, planning applications,
 - assist Inspectors in the determination of appeals,
 - improve the quality of new development,
 - facilitate a consistent and transparent approach to decision making.

2. The LDP and the need for SPG

- 2.1 The Welsh Government Development Management Manual advises in para 9.1.2 that 'Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the approved or adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise' ... The Flintshire LDP was adopted on 24th January 2023 and forms the basis for decision making alongside Future Wales: The National Plan. However, the LDP cannot provide all the detailed advice needed to guide development proposals. Therefore, SPG's can support the LDP by providing more detailed guidance on a range of topics and issues to help the interpretation and implementation of certain policies and proposals. The Development Plans Manual Edition 3 advises that 'Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) can be taken into account as a material planning consideration provided it is derived from and is consistent with the adopted development plan and has itself been the subject of consultation, which will carry more weight'. The intention of SPG's is not to set out 'policy' as that is the role of the LDP, but to provide more detailed advice and guidance which expands on a particular policy or allocation in the LDP.

3. Status / Preparation Process

- 3.1 The Council indicated in its Delivery Agreement (DA) for the LDP that it intends to prepare SPG. The DA explained that the Council will consult on any draft SPG and, following consideration of representations, and any necessary amendments, seek formal adoption. This approach accords with Welsh Government advice in Development Plans Manual (Edition 3).
- 3.2 This SPG was consulted on for a 6-week period commencing on XX/XX/XX and ending on YY/YY/YY. Representations and responses, together with any amendments to the draft document were considered by Cabinet at its meeting on ZZ/ZZ/ZZ who resolved to adopt this SPG. Consultation comments, responses and any amendments are set out in Appendix 1. This document should therefore be afforded considerable weight as a material planning consideration.

4. Introduction

- 4.1 This guidance note explains the approach that the Council will take when dealing with proposals for the change the use of and conversion of rural buildings. It offers additional guidance on the interpretation and application of policy HN4-B Residential Conversion of Rural Buildings but will also be applicable to policies including PE3 Employment Development Outside Allocated Sites and Principal Employment Areas, PE4 Farm Diversification, and PE12 Tourist Accommodation, Attractions and Facilities.
- 4.2 Many of the buildings in Flintshire's countryside form an important part of the County's rural heritage, but changing economic and social circumstances mean that some are no longer required for their original purposes. Amongst these are barns, outbuildings, schools, churches and chapels. In principle it is reasonable that new uses should be found for them, thus utilising an existing resource and reducing pressure for new greenfield development, whilst also assisting the rural economy. But such schemes of renovation and conversion must be undertaken in a manner which respects the character, appearance and features of the original building.
- 4.3 The commonest form of rural conversion tends to be the conversion of barns and other redundant rural buildings into residential use, which allowed many people to find homes in a quiet rural setting where they would not be allowed to build a new dwelling. However, from a sustainability and building conservation point of view, residential conversion is the least desirable. Welsh Government supports the conversion of buildings for employment purposes, Examples of business re-use which will be acceptable in principle include agriculture and forestry related activities, light industry, offices, storage and distribution, tourism, sport and recreation. Only where conversion for business purposes, part business-part residential or affordable housing is proven to be not feasible will conversion to residential use be considered.

5. Policy

- 5.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) (PPW) sets out national policy guidance in respect of the development and use of land. A key objective is the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings to minimise land take on greenfield sites. In para 5.6.8 of PPW Welsh Government advises that planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use.
- 5.2 Further guidance is contained in para 3.2.1 of Technical Advice Note 23 Economic Development (TAN23) which states 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, especially those buildings located within or adjoining farm building complexes, on this basis that:

- they are suitable for the specific re-use;
- conversion does not lead to dispersal of activity on such a 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 advantages 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’.

5.3 TAN23 also states in para 3.2.2 ‘Residential conversion of rural buildings which have ceased to be used for industrial or commercial purposes, including agriculture, need to be assessed on their impact including their impact on the fabric and character of historic buildings. In areas where the creation of local employment is a priority, local planning authorities may include policies within the development plan which prohibit residential re-use unless:

- The applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business re-use and the application is supported by a statement of the efforts which have been made; or
- Residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use; or
- The resulting housing will contribute to an identified need for affordable housing for local need.

5.4 Welsh Government guidance in para 3.2.3 is clear that ‘If the existing 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 relating to new house building in the open countryside will apply’.

5.5 The key policy in the LDP is HN4-B Residential Conversion of Rural Buildings and the wording of this and other relevant policies is set out in Appendix 1. Rather than looking at each policy in detail, this Note attempts to look at underlining principles and guidelines.

6. Preferences for the Re-use of Rural Buildings Business re-use



a) Business re-use

- 6.1 As explained above, the national and local policy context is that the preference for the re-use of rural buildings is for:
- business re-use; or
 - Residential conversion where a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use; or
 - affordable housing for local need.
- 6.2 In Flintshire the Council supports new rural business development or affordable housing taking place through the re-use of existing buildings, given the vital role of small rural enterprises in promoting a more diverse rural economy and the community benefits of bringing about affordable housing.
- 6.3 Acceptable uses in principle include offices, digital technology, light industry (including food and timber related business uses), storage and distribution, and tourism. In all cases it is important that:
- The conversion must be achieved without causing problems such as unacceptable disturbance, visual intrusion, noise, smell, excessive traffic generation or by detracting from highway safety;
 - The buildings must be suitable for the uses proposed, with prefabricated or temporary buildings unlikely to be considered suitable, except in very specific circumstances for a business re-use.
- 6.4 Farm diversification is needed to assist in maintaining the economic viability of farm enterprises. In addition to the above uses, small scale retailing clearly related to but ancillary to the farm, such as the sale of farm or local produce or value added food products may be acceptable. The inclusion of a “farm plan” explaining how the proposals fit into and support the operation of the farm will be useful in assessing the diversification proposal.

b) Combined business and residential use

- 6.5 In some cases a building may be capable of supporting a combined usage, and given the increasing trend for home working and family-based businesses, this would be acceptable in principle provided that the residential element is subordinate to the business use. This is often known as a 'live-work' unit and is more than just simply 'working from home'.

Such proposals should be supported by a business plan explaining the nature and operation of the business and why a residential element is necessary. Careful consideration will need to be given to the relative floorspace given over to the business and residential elements, and planning conditions may be imposed on any planning consent to control this.

c) Local Needs Housing

- 6.6 In some instances the re-use of a rural building for affordable housing to meet evidenced local needs may be appropriate. To be suitable, a building would need to be accessible to local public transport as well as local facilities and services in order to bring about sustainable development. The housing would need to have mechanisms in place to ensure that it is affordable both initially and in perpetuity. Further advice on affordable housing is set out in a separate SPG.

Evidencing the Intended Re-use

- 6.7 The LPA will require all applicants to submit a statement setting out the steps taken to determine the suitability or feasibility of using a property for business purposes, part business-part residential, or affordable housing, to include the points set out below.

Physical suitability of the building, site and surroundings

- The building should be of permanent and substantial traditional construction and materials,
- The building should be structurally sound and capable of re-use without substantial reconstruction,
- The building should be suitable in size to accommodate the proposed use, without significant extension,
- Extensions or modifications will only be considered where they are essential to a scheme proceeding and are of a scale and nature which do not detract from the character and appearance of the original building;
- Any features of architectural or historic interest are retained;
- The building should be capable of being converted without inappropriate alterations in terms of windows, doors etc
- A business re-use would not be harmful to the amenity of nearby residents through noise and emissions or excessive traffic generation;
- The access to the building and the local highway network are adequate to cater for the nature and volume of traffic likely to be generated;
- Sufficient parking and manoeuvring space is available within the site.

- 6.8 Further guidance in terms of whether a building is physically suitable for a residential use is set below. The policy approach is slightly more flexible in considering whether buildings are suitable for an employment use, as these typically involve less physical changes to a building in order to secure such a use. By contrast, a residential re-use tends to necessitate physical changes to a building to achieve arrangements of rooms and to achieve natural light and these works are more likely to harm the character and appearance of a traditional rural building.

Economic feasibility for re-use

- 6.9 Where the building is physically suitable for business re-use or for part residential / part business or affordable housing, the applicants should whether the use is financially feasible, allowing for the purchase and conversion costs and the likely sale or lease price. They should demonstrate that all possible sources of grant aid for the business reuse have been explored. In this respect, Business Wales <https://businesswales.gov.wales/> and the Development Bank of Wales www.developmentbank.wales may be able to assist. In respect of affordable housing, discussions should take place with the Council's Housing Strategy Team or with Housing Associations. Financial and personal information will be treated in confidence by the LPA.
- 6.10 In those cases where existing rural buildings are suitable for business re-use, applicants will need to demonstrate that every reasonable attempt has been made to find a business re-use, or the residential use is subordinate to business re-use, or alternatively the housing will contribute to an identified need for affordable housing in the locality. The Council will require that the property is marketed for sale or for lease at a reasonable price for a period of at least one year and a statement prepared of the genuine efforts taken to secure a business re-use. Further guidance on this aspect is set out in Appendix 2.

7. Residential re-use

- 7.1 As explained above additional considerations are necessary to determine whether a building is suitable for a residential use and these are set out below:
- the building should be a traditional rural building which makes a positive contribution to the locality;
 - The building should not have undergone radical extension or alteration such that it no longer makes a positive contribution to its surroundings;
 - The building should not be modern or utilitarian, either in construction or appearance, whereby it makes little visual contribution to their surroundings.
- 7.2 Only when a building is considered to be physically suitable for residential re-use, and the building has been marketed for business, part business-part residential or affordable housing, without success, will consideration be given to a residential re-use.

8. Conversion of community facilities

- 8.1 Planning Policy Wales highlights that the economic and social role of local shops and public houses should be taken into account when assessing proposals to change their use to residential, whereas a positive approach should be taken towards schemes for conversion to village shops, and to pubs in villages which have lost such provision. Policy PC12 Community Facilities seeks to retain such uses and further guidance on the requirements of this policy is set out in a separate SPG.

9. Redundancy of the building

- 9.1 Many rural buildings will have become redundant from their previous use, perhaps as a result of their size or unsuitability to accommodate and meet modern needs and practices. Where a replacement agricultural building is proposed, any replacement building should be carefully sited and designed so that it sits comfortably within the farm complex and countryside.

10. Design considerations

- 10.1 The re-use of rural buildings should retain the character which justifies their preservation in the first place and not give the appearance of new inappropriate or harmful development in the countryside. This represents a considerable challenge, particularly for residential conversions where it is necessary to ensure sufficient natural light to ensure adequate internal living conditions.
- 10.2 Sympathetic conversions can be difficult to achieve and require considerable design skills and experience. It is advisable to use the services of a qualified architect or surveyor.



The RIBA and the RICS can supply details of practices:

- Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London. W1B 1AD (Telephone 020 7307 3700)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, 12 Great George Street, Parliament Square, London SW1P 3AD (Telephone 020 7334 3781 or 020 7695 1618)

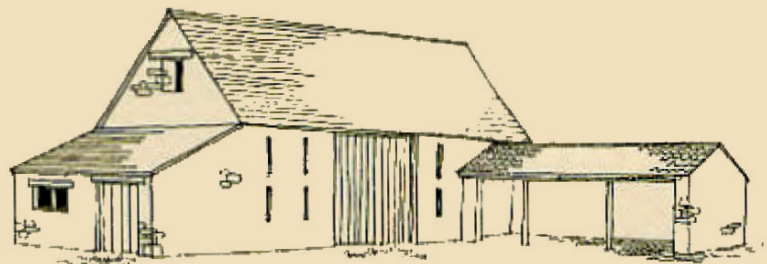
- 10.3 In addition, advice can be found in a best practice guide, “Converting Historic Farm Buildings in Wales”, which was produced jointly by Cadw, Welsh Government and Monmouthshire County Council in 2004 and available here https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-assets/listed-buildings/best-practice-guidance?_gl=1*brmnnz*_ga*NDk1MjczNzA1LjE2OTk4NzQyNzQ.*_ga_B2BCVKM874*MTcwMDAzNTgzNS4xLjEuMTcwMDAzNjcwNC42MC4wLjA.#section-caring-for-war-memorials-in-wales

The following diagram from that guidance note illustrates many of the key messages:

Alternative approaches to converting a typical barn

Top:

A typical unconverted barn, with tall doors to the threshing area, few openings for light, and no chimney.



Middle:

It is quite possible to create a standard modern house from such a building but the features of the barn have made no contribution to the final product.



Bottom:

An alternative design for conversion preserves the original openings and roofline. Plank doors have been retained and glazing kept to a minimum. Domestic requirements such as plumbing are hidden.



Existing Features

- 10.4 Traditional rural buildings tend to have historic and architectural features which are an integral part of their character and appearance. These can be external brick or stone detailing, ventilation slits, external shutters and simple boarded doors and machinery such as winches. It is important that these features are sympathetically retained as part of the scheme of conversion.

Roof

- Avoid raising the roof, altering the pitch, or installing windows in the roof.
- Dormers will almost always be inappropriate, particularly where the existing building has no dormers, unless there is a clear precedent for their use on buildings in the locality.
- Vent pipes and flues protruding from the roof should be avoided.
- Roof slates/tiles should be repaired and re-used where possible.
- The number of roof lights should be kept to a minimum and should be flush with the roof surface and not overly large in proportion in relation to the roof.
- The position, number and size of solar or photo-voltaic cells should not adversely affect the appearance of the building.

Walls

- Retain existing openings and if further openings are required old blocked up openings should be utilised.
- Minimise the use of new window and door openings - where they are essential, ensure they are sympathetic in terms of the overall proportions of the building as well as design, proportions and materials.
- Where openings need to be blocked up, sympathetic materials should be used to show where the original opening was located.
- Large barn doors should be retained, either by glazing or by using them for garaging.
- Avoid fussy, over-elaborate details.
- Any repointing should be done using traditional materials and methods to match existing.



Windows and Doors

- Traditional or vernacular windows and doors should be retained and repaired wherever possible.
- New or replacement windows and doors should match originals or reflect the character of the building or those used in buildings in the locality.
- New window and door frames should be recessed at least 10cm to give depth to a facade.
- Avoid the use of UPVC.
- Timber should be painted rather than stained although sustainably sourced local hardwoods may be left untreated.
- Modern up and over garage doors will not be acceptable.



Internal Features

- Internal character features such as exposed beams, roof timbers, original fittings and tiled, wooden or stone floors, should be retained and incorporated in the conversion.
- The subdivision of internal space where it forms an integral part of the building's character, will not be appropriate.

Extensions

- The emphasis in any conversion scheme is that the building in its present form is suitable for the intended use. At the time of considering a conversion scheme, minor extensions will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, where they are genuinely required to facilitate a residential conversion (rather than merely adding extra bedrooms) may be acceptable provided that it is ancillary in scale and in keeping with the character and appearance of the building.
- Large extensions will not be acceptable.
- Conservatories, porches, dormers, and other extensions that are inherently domestic in design will be resisted. (Porches, if required, should be provided internally).
- To avoid later extensions which are out of character the Council will remove permitted development rights for alterations to the building.
- In the case of residential conversions, garaging and storage requirements should be met through existing buildings or other structures on site.

Drainage and Waste

- Rainwater gutters and downpipes should be kept to a minimum, in black finished cast iron or aluminium.
- External pipework such as soil and vent pipes should be positioned internally and kept to a minimum.
- Sustainable methods of treatment and disposal of wastewater should be incorporated in the conversion wherever possible.
- Refuse storage and recycling facilities should be as unobtrusive as possible.
- Schemes for more than 1 unit of accommodation will require a sustainable drainage scheme (SuDS).

Heating and Ventilation

- Chimney stacks are unlikely to be acceptable.
- Heating system flues should have a minimal visual impact and be of appropriate material and colour.
- Consideration should be given to sustainable sources of heat such as ground / air source heat pumps, provided that the necessary equipment and machinery can be incorporated sensitively within the scheme of conversion.
- Underfloor heating can help avoid the clutter often associated with radiators.

External areas

- Curtilages should be kept to the minimum area required for the intended occupation and use of the building and should ideally follow existing boundary features.
- Boundaries are best hedged with species native to the locality, or constructed using stone/brick, or simple post and rail fences. Wherever possible existing boundaries should be retained and repaired or supplemented with new planting.
- The curtilage should be kept as uncluttered as possible, particularly in terms of residential paraphernalia such as sheds, gazebos, etc. In granting planning permission for residential conversions, the Council may remove permitted development rights for structures that would normally be permitted development.
- Use brick or stone setts or cobbles, retaining as much of these features, where existing, as possible.
- In the conversion of farm buildings, hard landscaping is appropriate to courtyards and soft landscaping elsewhere, retaining existing features where possible. Hard surfacing outside the original farmyard area should be minimised, and manicured lawns and gardens should also be avoided.
- External features of interest associated with the original use of the building should be retained and incorporated into the layout and design of the curtilage.
- Parking should be sensitively sited and designed and meet the Council's requirements in SPG Parking Standards.

- Vehicular access should be gained from an existing access onto the public highway and should avoid either the creation of new access points or driveways across open land.
- Services such as LP gas and oil tanks and septic tanks should be sited unobtrusively and screened.
- Storage areas which may be required for employment projects should be sensitively and unobtrusively sited or screened effectively.
- Lighting should be appropriately sited and designed and of a brightness which reduces light pollution yet provides adequate levels of security.

Sustainability

- Local materials, such as sustainably harvested timber, that require less transportation should be used where possible in order to reduce the carbon footprint of development.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that the carbon footprint of the building be reduced through the highest standards of insulation, energy and water efficiency and renewable energy.



Relationship to other buildings and uses

- 10.5 Consideration should be given to privacy and overlooking issues where dwellings are located nearby or where the proposed scheme of conversion involves more than one residential unit. SPG Space Around Dwellings provides advice on reasonable minimum separation distances as well as private garden space. Schemes of conversion should also have regard to nearby land uses and operations in terms of ensuring that occupants enjoy satisfactory living standards.

Protected species

- 10.6 Many old buildings may contain species such as barn owls and bats which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The applicant will need to undertake a survey before the application can be considered, and the LPA will consult the Natural Resource Wales (NRW) on its results and the mitigation measures required. To damage or destroy a bat site is an offence even if committed unknowingly. The County Ecologist will be happy to give advice.

Listed buildings and conservation areas

- 10.7 Some rural buildings being considered for conversion will be listed as being of architectural or historic interest. A separate application for listed building consent must be made for any alterations which would affect the special character of such buildings. The Councils Built Conservation Officer will be able to give advice.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 10.8 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on account of its landscape quality and scenic beauty. Proposals for conversions either in or close by the AONB will be judged against the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty. Particularly high standards of design and materials will be required in schemes. The retention and improvement of dark skies at night is an important objective for the AONB. New development should be designed to avoid or reduce light pollution and the SPG Dark Skies provides detailed practical guidance on achieving this.

Removal of permitted development rights

- 10.9 Permitted development (PD) rights are certain minor changes which can be made without needing to apply for planning permission. In order to avoid loss of the building's character, the Council will remove PD rights when granting permission for residential conversions through the imposition of a planning condition. This means that any subsequent additions or alterations, such as garages, sheds, extensions, conservatories and roof alterations, will require planning permission.

Making a planning application for a conversion

- 10.10 It is advisable to consult Development Management before submitting a planning application. The Council offers a pre-application service in order to secure advice on a proposed development, prior to the submission of a planning application. Details of the pre-application service can be found here <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Planning/Pre-application-Planning-Advice.aspx>. All planning applications should be made using the 1App standard planning application form or submitted on-line. Before submitting an application, reference should be made to the 'Planning Application Requirements' document, available on line or from the Planning Services Offices. Conversions will require an application for full planning permission and will specifically require:

- A design and access statement.
- Elevations and plan drawings, existing and proposed.
- Cross sections where relevant.
- Landscaping details showing existing and proposed, hard and soft landscaping.
- Report by a structural engineer/surveyor.
- Marketing report (for residential projects only) and a statement of the efforts made to secure a business re-use for the building.
- Ecology survey report.

Contacts

Planning Policy -	developmentplans@flintshire.gov.uk	01352 703213
Development Management	planningadmin@flintshire.gov.uk	01352 703331
Ecologist		
Built Conservation Officer -	conservation@flintshire.gov.uk	

Appendix 1 LDP Policies

PC1: The Relationship of Development to Settlement Boundaries

New development will be permitted within settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Maps, on allocations and within Principal Employment Areas subject to complying within other Plan policies.

Outside settlement boundaries new development will be permitted for:

- a. the specific forms of housing development as set out in policies HN4/HN4-A/HN4-B/HN4-C/HN4-D;
- b. the specific forms of employment development as set out in employment policies;
- c. development related to agriculture, minerals extraction, rural diversification, tourism, leisure and recreation, and existing educational and institutional establishments, provided there is no unacceptable impact on the social, natural and built environment and subject to complying with other Plan policies;
- d. other development which is appropriate to the open countryside and where it is essential to have an open countryside location, rather than being sited elsewhere.

PE3: Employment Development Outside Allocated Sites and Principal Employment Areas

New industrial, office and warehousing development proposals will be permitted within settlement boundaries where there are no suitable or available allocated sites or sites within Principal Employment Areas and which conform to Policies PC2, PC3 and PC4.

Outside settlement boundaries new industrial, office and warehousing development will be permitted through the:

- i. conversion of existing buildings provided that:
 - a. the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction, tantamount to the erection of a new building; and
 - b. the building is suitable for the specific re-use; and
 - c. any inherent traditional historic or architectural features of merit in the building are retained;
- ii. development of land on the edge of settlement boundaries of tier 2 local service centres, tier 3 sustainable settlements, and tier 4 defined villages provided that:
 - a. there are no more suitable sites or buildings available either within a nearby settlement boundary or on brownfield land; and
 - b. it is specifically for a rural activity which cannot be located elsewhere; and
 - c. the development is of an appropriate scale and well related to the form of the settlement and does not exacerbate ribbon development or result in a fragmented pattern of development; and
 - d. a logical new site boundary is formed, utilising existing features wherever possible, or suitable boundary treatment, supplemented by sensitive landscaping measures. In all cases the development should not involve external storage or operations which would be harmful to residential amenity or to the character and appearance of the area.

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PE4: Farm Diversification

Proposals for farm diversification comprising the conversion and / or the limited extension of existing buildings, or in exceptional circumstances sensitively located and designed new build, will be permitted where:

- a. the proposed diversification activity is run in conjunction with the main farm enterprise; and
- b. any retail proposals are small scale, and specifically related to the farm operation or farm diversification scheme, and do not unacceptably harm local shops or facilities; and
- c. the proposal does not involve external storage or operations which would be harmful to residential amenity or the character and appearance of the area; and

In the case of new build the buildings are of a scale, siting, design and materials appropriate to the site and surroundings and are well related to existing buildings in the main farm complex.

In the case of conversions the building is suitable for the specific re-use and an inherent traditional historic or architectural features of merit are retained.

PE12: Tourist Accommodation, Facilities and Attractions

The development of new or extensions to existing self-catering and serviced tourist accommodation and tourist attractions and facilities will be permitted within defined settlements where proportionate in scale to the site and its surroundings.

Outside defined settlement boundaries development will be permitted in the form of:

- a. the extension to existing tourist accommodation and facilities; or
- b. the conversion of existing buildings whereby in accordance with TAN6:
 - i. the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding, extension or alteration tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling;
 - ii. any traditional historic or architectural features of merit are retained; and
 - iii. any curtilage included to provide amenity space or associated parking or other facilities should not harm the character and appearance of the area;
- c. non-permanent accommodation such as chalets, pods, glamping and tent camping sites;
- d. new build tourist attractions and facilities outside settlement boundaries if:
 - i. an open countryside location is essential;
 - ii. the proposal cannot be accommodated within an existing building or within a defined settlement boundary;
 - iii. the development is based upon a geographically restricted resource or activity.

The occupancy of tourist accommodation will be restricted to holiday use only.

HN4: Housing in the Countryside

Proposals for housing development outside defined settlement boundaries will only be permitted where:

- a. it is for the purposes of agriculture, forestry or other rural enterprise as defined in TAN6,
- b. it involves the re placement of an existing dwelling (see policy HN4-A), or
- c. it involves the subdivision of an existing dwelling, provided the dwelling is capable of subdivision without major extensions tantamount to the erection of an additional dwelling or dwellings, or
- d. it involves the conversion of an existing non-residential building (see policy HN4-B), or
- e. it involves sensitive infill development within an appropriate group of dwellings in the countryside (see policy HN4-C)
- f. it is for affordable housing exception sites on land adjoining the settlement limits (see policy HN4-D), or
- g. it is for a One Planet Development as defined in TAN6.

HN4-B: Residential Conversion of Rural Buildings

The change of use to a dwelling of an existing non-residential building outside settlement boundaries will only be permitted where:

- a. if suitable for employment use, the building has been advertised at a reasonable price for sale or lease for an employment generating use, for a period of at least one year without success; or
- b. residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use; or
- c. the resultant housing would contribute to an identified need for affordable housing to meet local needs.

Provided that:

- i. the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without significant extension, extensive rebuilding, or external alteration, as evidenced by an independent structural survey;
- ii. the building has a traditional character due to its form, bulk and general design, in keeping with its surroundings, and is worthy of retention and re-use;
- iii. the scheme of conversion does not prejudice the character of the building or the rural character of the locality and retains any inherent traditional architectural and historic features which merit retention;
- iv. The creation of a residential curtilage does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside;
- v. reasonable standards of living conditions are provided by the proposal.

Appendix 2:

The marketing assessment

In cases where a building is considered to have potential for a business re-use it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that all reasonable efforts have been made to secure a business re-use. Conversions to residential use will not be allowed unless there is clear evidence that there is no demand for a business use. This must explain the attempts made to market the building for business use over a period of at least one year in North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside at a reasonable price for sale or lease. A planning application will need to be accompanied by a statement addressing the following points:

The marketing exercise must include:

- ▶ Marketing through a recognised and independent property agent.
- ▶ Continuous advertisement on the agents own website and publications.
- ▶ Regular advertising for at least a year in a local / regional newspaper / specialist publications / websites (for the first month this should be intensive advertisement and marketing).
- ▶ A 'for sale' and / or 'to let' board on the site frontage throughout the period (any decision to not have a display board must be sufficiently justified).
- ▶ Notification to Flintshire County Council's Economic Development Unit.

Evidence must include:

- ▶ Copies of the sales particulars.
- ▶ Copies of all advertisements with dates.
- ▶ Details of when and where the advertisement was displayed by the agent, and the latter's particulars.
- ▶ Details of the number of enquiries / viewings.
- ▶ Details of any offers received and an explanation of why they were not accepted.
- ▶ A short statement by the agent of the building's viability for business use in the light of the marketing exercise.

