



Member's Seminar:

**Reuse of redundant buildings
in the Countryside**

28th February 2006



Presentation

- **The Issues**
- **The Choices**
- **The Implications**
- **The Recommendations**





The Issue

- Perceptions
- The Facts
- The Problems



Perceptions

- Redundant buildings - wasted resource
- Could provide much needed housing
- Holiday occupancy condition being abused
- Other districts allow residential use
- Other uses not commercially viable
- Too many second homes!
- Over-supply of holiday accommodation
- Homes, holiday homes, second homes – what's the difference?





The Facts

- Existing Policy
- Definitions
- Numbers?



Policy 29

In the Countryside development proposals for the conversion of a building to an alternative use will only be permitted where:

- in the case of a conversion to residential use (excluding holiday accommodation), the building is adjacent to settlement boundary;
- the building is soundly built;
- the building does not have a substantially adverse landscape impact (or if impact, it's an improvement);
- if the building has significant architectural, historical or landscape value, the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the appearance, character, setting or fabric of the building;
- there would be no harm to any species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, or its habitat; and
- the proposal would not prejudice the safety or free flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network.



Definitions

Holiday Home

- a dwelling owned either locally or outside the local area and not permanently occupied but let to holiday makers solely on a commercial basis. i.e. a holiday investment property run as a business for short-term holiday lets

Second Home

- a dwelling used by its owner and possibly other visitors for leisure or holiday purposes and which is not the usual or permanent place of residence for the owner
- can apply to dwellings with and without holiday occupancy condition



Facts and Figures!

- **3,467 second residence/holiday accommodation** (7% of total stock) 2001 Census
- **3,724 second homes** (90% council tax Feb '06)
- **729 holiday let units** (Business rates)
- **591 holiday/second home units permitted** (Jan 98-Aug 05)
- **How many potential conversions are out there?**





The Problems with allowing Residential Use Everywhere

- Affordable Housing needs not met
- Hope value for residential undermines employment uses
- Sustainable Development
- Rural Service Provision
- “Urbanisation” of the countryside
- Asset stripping not in long term interests of farm businesses and diversification
- Biodiversity value of disused buildings
- Housing Numbers



The Choices

- Allow residential use
- Restrict to economic or community use (including holiday use – but with tight holiday occupancy conditions)
- Restrict to economic or community use, unless adjacent to town or rural service centre



The Implications:

Residential use allowed

- Can expect between 500-1,000 applications (removal of condition + new conversions)
- No/limited allocations available for towns and villages
- Unlikely to achieve affordable housing in significant numbers and not deliver houses for local people
- No chance of encouraging rural employment uses
- Reduces self-catering holiday units – impact on tourism
- Increases car-use and cost of rural service provision
- Urbanisation of countryside – noise, light and landscape impact



The Implications:

Residential use **not** allowed

- Significant allocations available for towns and villages
- Achieve affordable housing targets and deliver lower cost houses for local people
- encourages rural employment uses and maintains farm incomes in longer term
- supports self-catering holiday units – positive impact on tourism
- Will not increase cost of rural service provision
- Protection of countryside – key environmental asset for local economy



The Implications:

Residential use **allowed** adjacent to towns and large villages

- As above, but
- Allows for reuse of buildings where residents can access local services



The Officer's Recommendation

Proposed new policy approach will:

- Use location as primary criteria for suitability for residential use
- make a clear difference between short-stay “low-key” holiday lets (allowed in countryside) and treat second and permanent homes in same way (i.e. allowed adjacent to defined settlements)
- Policy approach reflects need to maximise affordable housing provision, encourage rural business and reduce impact on local services
- Policy designed to protect landscape character and nature conservation interests

