

Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Housing Development in Villages

Supplementary Guidance - February 2020



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1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides detailed guidance in support of Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) adopted October 2019 on the criteria contained in Policy H2: Housing Development in Villages. The list of villages covered by this policy is contained in the table in Appendix 1.

1.2 The criteria in the policy should enable a village to grow incrementally, in the most viable and appropriate places, by allowing development opportunities to come forward at a scale in keeping with the size of the existing settlement. This flexibility will also be beneficial for the provision of affordable housing which needs a greater degree of responsiveness to local circumstances, being able to make use of development opportunities as and when they occur.

Small-scale development in villages can bring economic and social benefits by maintaining or enhancing the population and supporting any existing services and local employment.

1.3 New development should seek to reinforce the building pattern of the existing settlement and ensure that new buildings respect and contribute to the area's architectural and cultural heritage. Buildings in rural villages can often be seen over long distances and therefore careful design is essential. Traditional buildings can be an inspiration but new or imaginative re-interpretation of traditional features should not be excluded. The aim should be to develop high quality modern designs which maintain a sense of place and support local identity. The success of a place often depends on maintaining its distinctiveness. Development which does not undermine the identity of rural areas should be supported. Making development welcoming is also important, especially in the layout of new houses on the edge of settlements and at the gateways or entrances to villages. New development should make use of spare capacity in existing infrastructure and services, whilst also ensuring that it does not overload the capacity of these.

Policy H2: Housing Development in Villages The Council will support housing development proposals in villages, subject to other policies in the plan where:

- the number of units proposed relates to the scale and size of the existing village; and
- it does not on its own or in combination with other developments in the housing market area undermine the overall objective of the spatial strategy; and
- it relates to the layout, density and design of the character and form of the existing village; and
- it would not lead to ribbon development; and
- the proposal would not result in the loss of open space shown in the Open Space Supplementary Guidance.

Supplementary guidance sets out additional detail on the considerations set out above including ribbon development

1.4 All proposals will also need to meet the following criteria:

- The proposed development should comply with the relevant policies and overarching principles contained in the Plan.
- Proposals should comply with the Design Quality of New Development Supplementary Guidance and any subsequent design guidance.
- Proposals will be encouraged to incorporate measures to facilitate home working.
- Satisfactory access and services should be available or capable of being provided by the developer.

2 Policy Criteria

2.1 This section provides further explanation of each of the policy criteria and provides guidance on how they will be applied.

The number of units proposed relates to the scale and size of the existing village

2.2 Villages have evolved in response to the landscape, climate, available building materials, development of communications and economic and social factors. An awareness and understanding of these elements needs to be reflected in the development process. Each village has its own character which requires individual design solutions to ensure that new development appears to belong to the village, and not as a suburban style extension to it.

2.3 It is anticipated that development proposals in villages will be in scale in relation to both the number of units proposed and physical site area and will be in proportion to the size of the existing village and comply with other policies in the plan.

2.4 The aim of this policy is to provide long term sustainable opportunities for housing development in villages without them losing their character through inappropriate development. The policy will allow for proportionate amounts of growth that helps to support the local community but which does not encourage out of scale development which significantly adds to the population in locations where there are few existing services. The scale of development considered appropriate will vary from village to village; some villages currently only have around 10-20 houses and it may be the case that in the smallest villages, one or two dwellings may be all that is considered acceptable. In all cases, any new development must not be out of proportion to the size or character of the existing village. This is both in relation to increases in population and in seeking to avoid over-burdening existing infrastructure.

2.5 Notwithstanding this, it is also important that any development makes the most efficient use of the available land and does not compromise the ability to develop sites

further in the future. This is in line with other policies in the Plan, in particular overarching policy OP1. For example, proposals for single dwellings on disproportionately large plots of land (which could otherwise have accommodated a number of dwellings or which cuts off access to further potential development land) may not be acceptable, especially if this does not complement the current form of development in the village. This is especially important given the relative scarcity of available development sites, the principle of reducing as far as possible the loss of greenfield land and the need to provide for affordable rural housing.

2.6 Consideration of the cumulative effects of multiple proposals will also need to be taken into consideration. A decision will need to be taken whether to allow further development if several applications come forward, which on their own may not have any effect but if assessed in conjunction with the combined effects of all the new and proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the existing village. Monitoring of planning permissions granted over the plan period will need to take account of whether development is beginning to have a cumulative negative impact.

It does not on its own or in combination with other developments in the housing market area undermine the overall objective of the spatial strategy

2.7 The approach to housing in villages, along with small building groups and the wider rural area, must ensure that it provides opportunities for development in these places but does not undermine the spatial strategy (which is to develop and strengthen the regional capital and district and local centres). The number of units developed in villages should not be so considerable as to be out of proportion with those developed in the larger settlements.

2.8 The number of housing units granted planning permission through this approach will be closely monitored on an annual basis through the Housing Land Audit to assess how the policy and overall strategy of the plan is performing.

It is not expected that development in villages will be disproportionate within the plan period but if monitoring finds that completions in villages during the plan period significantly exceeds the housing land requirement figures contained in the Spatial Strategy section of LDP2, then a report will be taken to a Council Committee to decide on future action.

It relates to the layout, density and design of the character and form of the existing village

2.9 As well as the general points raised in the Introduction, the following section provides some specific guidance on how new development can be successfully integrated into the existing village. The general advice contained in Design Quality of New Development Supplementary Guidance should also be applied, as well as other local and national policy guidance on design. A list of useful publications is provided at the end of this document.

Location: Siting development within the landscape

2.10 It is important that the proposed location and siting of new housing in villages considers the impact on the immediate and wider landscape and views into and out of the site. In such areas, inappropriate development, however small, can have a significant impact. In the countryside, a building, farmstead or village seen from a distance has an impact on a broad landscape setting. The scale of many villages within the region is small enough for their overall shape and patterns to be integrated within the wider landscape. By adding to or adapting these patterns through the addition of new buildings, the relationship of the village to the landscape changes.

2.11 Sensitive location and design is needed to avoid development sprawl, new buildings on obtrusive sites, incongruous materials and house styles more characteristic of suburban than rural areas. A cumulative loss of landscape quality can occur if such suburban style housing estates often devised with little appreciation of local character or a sense of place are built on the fringes of villages.

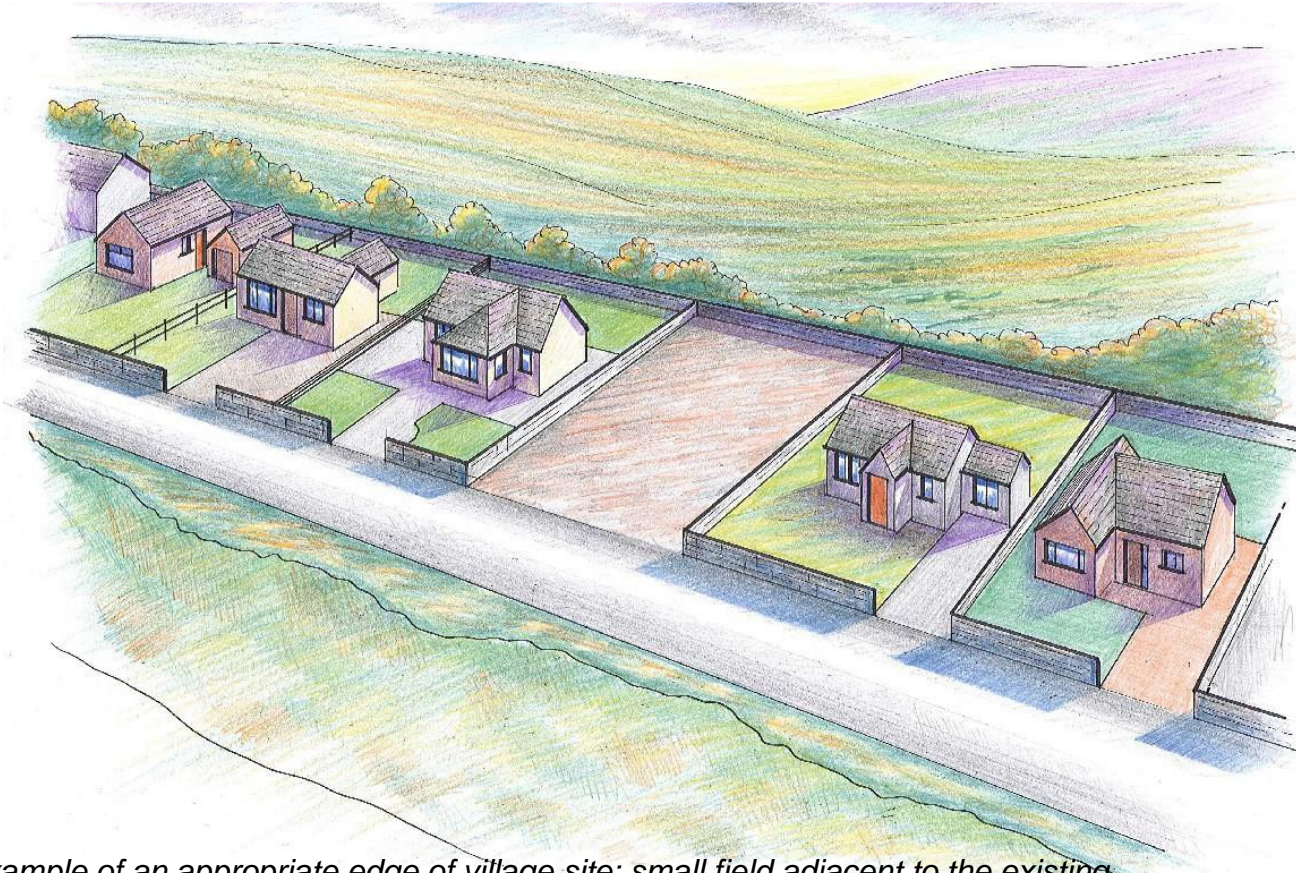
2.12 The process of design must begin with an acknowledgement of the elements of the existing landscape in order to identify opportunities for enhancement or the need to conserve existing features. Each site has an individual capacity to accept change. Some sites are already scenic, where it may simply be the case that this quality is preserved while others may be degraded and invite improvement and alteration.

2.13 Most new developments should try to fit into or nestle within the landscape and houses should be sited within the natural lie of the land. Skyline development should be avoided, as should heavily engineered platforms. This is to ensure that the building does not interrupt and conflict with the flow of the landform or appear out of scale. If a proper fit in the landscape is not achieved, then even well designed buildings can fail. Overall, a well designed house must reflect the landscape in which it is set. It must be informed by and respond to it, rather than being a house which is designed without regard to its context.

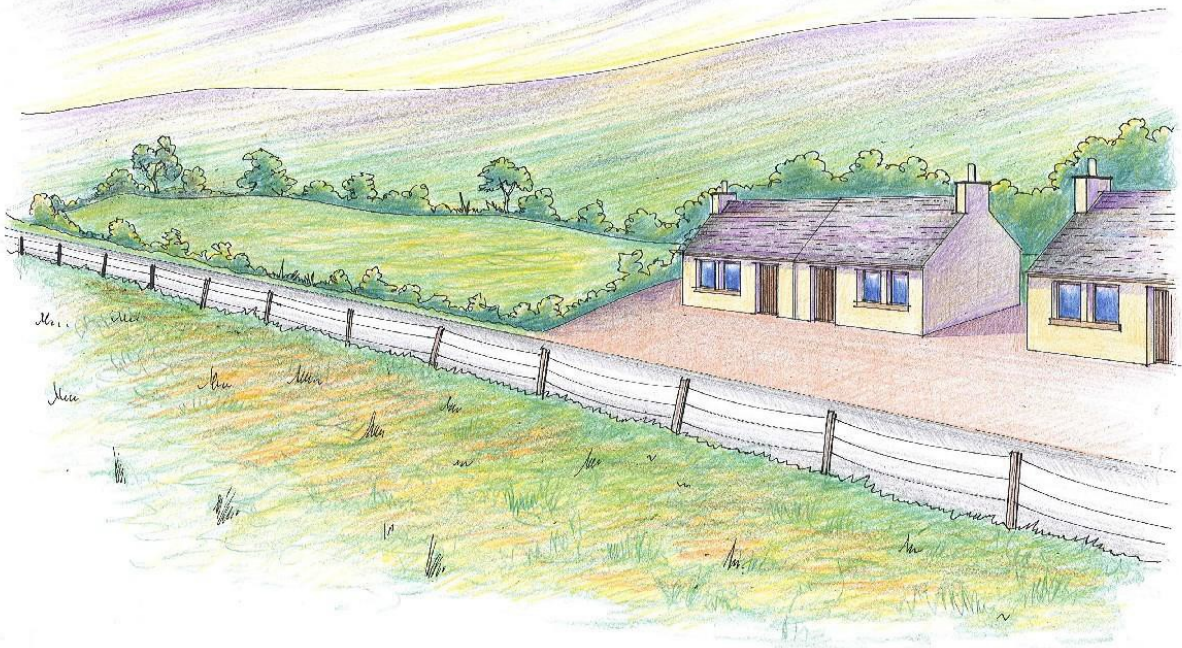
Physical characteristics of the site

2.14 Natural infill sites, unless they are identified as open space or are important for visual amenity, should be used as far as possible. An infill site can be defined as a small gap in a continuous line of built development where it is possible to locate one or two houses. Other sites which have existing natural boundaries could also be suitable. For example, small fields adjacent to the existing settlement edge which are naturally contained by established boundaries such as woodland, a hedge, a dry stone dyke or a change in the level of the land. It is important in these situations, however, to ensure that this does not lead to unacceptable ribbon development (see criteria below). The diagrams below illustrate where natural infill sites and other appropriate opportunities may be found, for example opposite existing buildings where new development will "round off" the building line; and where further development would not be acceptable.

Example of a suitable infill site



Example of an appropriate edge of village site: small field adjacent to the existing settlement edge naturally contained by an established boundary



Example of an appropriate “rounding off” site where new houses could complement existing buildings opposite



Trees

2.15 Setting development against a backdrop of trees, particularly natural or semi-natural varieties, is one means by which new development can blend well with the landscape. Any existing mature trees and/or landscaping should be maintained and incorporated into the development scheme in such a way that their long-term survival can be assured. If there is little existing planting, and limited scope for new or additional landscaping, particular care should be taken in the selection of sites and design of houses.

New planting

2.16 The purpose of new planting is not to screen or hide new development, but to help integration with the surrounding landscape. New trees and shrubs which are locally native will usually be easier to establish than non-native plants, and will be more in keeping with the character of the area. Planting with locally native species has the additional benefits of creating habitats for wildlife and potentially contributing to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

If new planting is proposed it should be considered at the outset when designing the site and not left as an afterthought.

Boundary treatments

2.17 High fencing defining the boundaries of new housing developments adjoining the countryside should be avoided as they have a stark external appearance. Any fenced edge that is felt to be necessary should be broken at regular intervals by well designed building and landscape "gateways" accessed from a perimeter footpath. An additional edge of planting between fence and footway would help to soften any appearance of starkness. Concrete block walls and the regimented use of non-native fast growing conifers, such as Leylandii, should also be avoided.

Scale and proportion and relationship with surrounding buildings

2.18 Neighbouring development is important in establishing the scale and mass of development, and architectural details such as the relationship of windows and roof pitches.

relationship of windows and roof pitches. This will help new development to blend into the landscape/ townscape setting. Even in small villages there can be distinctive features or landmarks that enable it to be immediately recognizable. These could be particular building details or materials, or simply a church spire. These special features are vulnerable unless they are acknowledged and respected, for example by ensuring that new development does not mask them.

2.19 Roof-scape and ridgeline heights can be an important aspect of the appearance of a village and new buildings should reflect the height of existing buildings. Where existing buildings are of a uniform height, new building should respect that height.

2.20 It is also useful to follow the established building lines this can be achieved by identifying the direction that front doors and main elevations face onto existing houses. As an added benefit, following the traditional lines for the positioning of houses in relationship to roads and buildings will often maximise solar gain and minimise wind-chill.

Roads, access and street lighting

2.21 Villages in rural areas need design solutions and road standards which are appropriate to their character and setting. The application of urban standards and materials, such as tarmac and concrete kerbs can result in development in the countryside looking too formal and over engineered. In addition, the adoption of suburban street lighting standards and design can look inappropriate and increase light pollution in the rural context. Effort should be made to adopt an approach which complies with safety standards and yet responds sensitively to the rural scene and local circumstances.

2.22 One of the challenges of new development is to respond to the traditional character of spaces in the village while accommodating modern transport. Where possible, access should be from existing entrance points on existing roads, modified as appropriate to improve sightlines. It may be

appropriate to develop small groups of roadside buildings, particularly where this follows a historical precedent. This would improve access, surveillance and outlook from the houses and provide a more attractive village edge.

Materials

2.23 Most rural contexts suit locally available materials which can provide an ideal solution for contextualising new development. Building with local materials should be considered an asset as it will make a development more acceptable and attractive in the long term. It is acknowledged that the availability, cost and suitability of such materials in modern construction can be an issue and there are many ways in which housing built with cheaper, modern materials can still fit well into their context and the local vernacular. For example, simply paying attention to details on buildings can make a considerable difference to their external appearance, and the ability to contribute to their context. Following local precedent in windows, chimneys, gables, door furniture, drainpipes, perimeter walls and fences can make a significant contribution to the design.

Site surveys

2.24 As well as the detailed considerations above, when assessing the character and identity of an area, the findings of a site survey can be used to inform the nature of the development as well as the final house design and site layout solutions. For example, the characteristics of the site such as ground levels, features to be retained or existing infrastructure, may contribute to how the buildings are oriented on the site and the overall layout.

2.25 The survey of the site showing all features is a useful starting point to determine the layout and indicate which features are to be retained as part of the development. The level of detail needed for a site survey will greatly depend upon the scale of the development but example considerations which relate to 'character' and 'identity' of an area include the following:

Landscape:

- The visual character and topography of the village and surrounding countryside e.g. is the village hidden within the folds of the landscape or visible from a wide surrounding area; the relationship between the surrounding countryside and the village edges;
- Natural features in the landscape such as trees and hedges which could be reflected within the landscaping of the development site;
- The relationship between the village and any special features, such as local landmarks, ancient monuments, woodlands or nature reserves;
- Other buildings seen in the landscape, e.g. farm buildings;
- Character and pattern of open spaces in the village and connections with the wider countryside;
- Settlement pattern character within the wider area;
- Change and village evolution.

Buildings:

- The height, scale and density of buildings;
- The mixture of sizes, styles and types of buildings;
- Spaciousness – plot widths and patterns of visual separation between buildings;
- Footprint and depths of building/s;
- Local building types, materials and typical building details e.g. architectural styles
- Roof forms;
- Window style and proportions;
- Existing orientation of buildings.

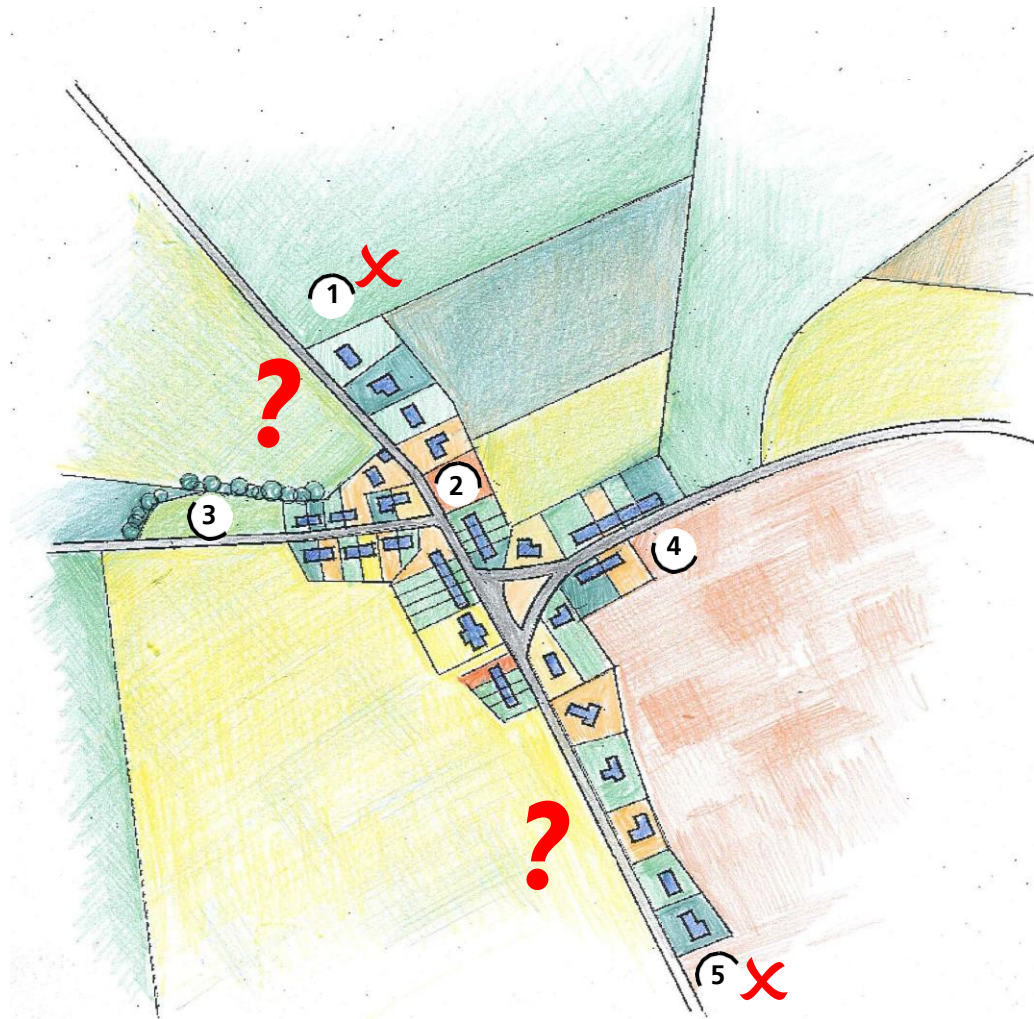
Streets and boundaries:

- Strong building lines;
- Patterns of existing access points and characteristics of streets and routes through the village;
- Footpaths, cycleways and parking;
- Street furniture, utilities and services;
- Uniform boundary treatments;
- Hedges, walls and fences.

It would not lead to ribbon development

2.26 Ribbon development is a line of buildings extending along a road, or private lane generally without accompanying development of the land to the rear and often served by individual accesses. A common feature of a village is groups of houses built using the road frontage edge of what were previously fields with side streets and blocks of buildings along streets forming over time. Whilst there will be opportunities to complete or “round off” these blocks (for example, by developing on sites that complement existing buildings on the opposite side of the road) ribbon development can become a problem when these well established groups are extended in a fashion unrelated to the traditional village pattern. This can result in the rural character being lost with development dominating otherwise rural views.

2.27 Typically development of this type occurs on the approach into a village and fundamentally alters the physical image and setting of a settlement. Continuous linear development leads to suburbanisation and a loss of rural character for example, through the introduction of pavements and street lighting. Buildings come to dominate the view, where narrow roads were once bounded by trees, hedgerows and dykes. It could also make access to farmland difficult or cause road safety problems. Incremental development along a roadside with no natural finish point should be avoided.



1. Large open field on edge of village with no natural, established boundaries; development of such a large site would not be in keeping with the scale and size of the existing village; incremental development here could also lead to unacceptable ribbon development as there is no natural finish point;
 2. Appropriate infill site between existing houses on either side;
 3. Small field adjacent to the existing settlement edge naturally contained by an established boundary which could be an appropriate site;
 4. Appropriate small scale "rounding off" site where new houses could complement existing buildings opposite;
 5. Unacceptable ribbon development: more development would mean the village becoming extended in a fashion unrelated to the traditional building pattern; continuous linear development could lead to loss of rural character.
- ?
- Not every potential "rounding off" opportunity will be suitable. Development of these types of sites would need to demonstrate that the proposal is considered appropriate in line with this guidance and other LDP2 policies and would complement existing houses opposite. For example, new development must be in proportion to the size or character of the existing village; location, siting and design must not have an unacceptable impact on immediate and wider landscape or on other parts of the village; the land should be developed efficiently e.g. single dwellings on disproportionately large plots may not be acceptable; houses should be along the roadside frontage and ensure an attractive village edge is maintained; the scale of the proposal, especially if other sites are also being developed or proposed nearby, must not have a cumulative impact on the existing village; development should fit into the landscape and be sited within the natural lie of the land; sensitive design is needed to avoid development sprawl and suburban style houses.

2.28 Policy CF3A: Protection of Open Space states that: *“Within settlements, there will be a presumption against the development of open space identified for protection on the inset maps. Supplementary guidance for the protection of open space in villages has been prepared. Development of open space for a purpose unrelated to use as open space will not be allowed unless:*

- *the open space can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site; or*
- *an adequate and acceptable replacement for the open space lost as a result of the development can be provided and/or paid for by the applicant in an equally convenient and accessible location within the locality; and*
- *alternative sites have been considered and no other appropriate site can be identified.*

Proposals to redevelop outdoor sports pitches should ensure that the conditions set out in the bullet points of paragraph 226 of Scottish Planning Policy have been met.”

Existing open space sites in villages have been identified and will be shown in Supplementary Guidance on Open Space.

3 Monitoring

3.1 Planning permissions relating to Policy H2 will be monitored through the annual Housing Land Audit and as part of the LDP2 monitoring process, to assess how the policy and overall strategy of the plan is performing.

4 Other useful publications

- Dumfries and Galloway Council *Historic Built Environment Supplementary Guidance;*
- Dumfries and Galloway Council *Design Quality and Placemaking Supplementary Guidance;*
- Dumfries and Galloway Council *Local Development Plan2;*
- Dumfries and Galloway Council *Open Space Supplementary Guidance;*
- Scottish Government *Designing Places;*
- Scottish Government *Designing Streets;*
- Scottish Government Planning Advice Note (PAN) 44 *Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape;*
- Scottish Government Planning Advice Note (PAN) 72 *Housing in the Countryside;*
- Scottish Government *Scottish Planning Policy.*

Appendix 1: Villages in Dumfries and Galloway's Housing Market Areas (HMAs)

Annan HMA	Eskdale HMA	Dumfries HMA	Stewartry HMA	Mid Galloway HMA	Stranraer HMA
Brydekirk	Bentpath	Ae	Balmaclellan	Bladnoch	Cairnryan
Chapelknowe	Eskdalemuir	Amisfield	Borgue	Carsluith	Castle Kennedy
Cummertrees	Evertown	Auldgirth	Bridge of Dee	Glentroll	Dunragit
Dornock		Bankend	Clarebrand	Isle of Whithorn	Lochans
Kirkpatrick Fleming		Bankshill	Colvend	Sorbie	New Luce
Kirtlebridge		Beeswing	Corsock	Whauphill	Port Logan
Powfoot		Boreland	Crocketford		Sandhead
		Carronbridge	Dundrennan		Stoneykirk
		Carrutherstown	Gelston		
		Carsethorn	Glenloch		
		Clarencefield	Hardgate / Haugh of Urr		
		Closeburn	Kippford		
		Collin	Kirkgunzeon		
		Corrie Common	Kirkpatrick Durham		
		Dalton	Laurieston		
		Hightae	Parton		
		Holywood	Rhonehouse		
		Islesteps	Ringford		
		Kirkbean	Rockcliffe		
		Kirkton			
		Lakehead (Closeburn)			
		Lochfoot			
		Middlebie			
		Mouswald			
		Shawhead			
		Southernness			
		Templand			
		Terregles			
		Torthorwald			
		Tynron			
		Wanlockhead			
		Waterbeck			