

**DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**REGIONAL PLANNING AND  
TRANSPORTATION DIVISION**



**DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT**

**PPS 12**

**HOUSING IN SETTLEMENTS**

**November 2002**

## HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

You are invited to send your views on the Draft Planning Policy Statement 12 - Housing in Settlements to the Department by 3rd February 2003. Please note that your response may be made publicly available unless you specifically indicate that it is to be treated in confidence.

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# Preamble

1. On 20 September 2001, the Department for Regional Development (DRD) formulated *Shaping Our Future: the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025* (RDS). That strategy will guide the future development of the region over the next 25 years. Planning policies and development plans prepared by the Department of the Environment (DOE) and development schemes prepared by the Department for Social Development (DSD) must, at present, be consistent with the RDS.<sup>1</sup>
2. This Planning Policy Statement (PPS) has been prepared in accordance with the DRD's statutory function of providing policy guidance and advice under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. Its purpose is to provide guidance in the form of strategic planning policy to assist the implementation of the RDS. This PPS flows directly from the vision, spatial strategy and strategic planning guidelines contained in the RDS (See Figure 1). It is one of the key mechanisms for the implementation of the RDS.

Flow chart diagram was inserted here

3. This planning policy statement is a material planning consideration for DOE in preparing development plans and dealing with individual planning applications. Planning policies and development plans must, as previously stated, be consistent with the RDS. Also, it is of direct relevance to the public and those whose actions have a direct physical impact upon the natural or man-made environment. This includes landowners, developers, government departments and agencies, district councils, other statutory undertakers, voluntary and community organisations.
4. The policy guidance in this statement applies to all residential development proposals within cities, towns and villages in Northern Ireland (see glossary for definition). It also recognises that in order to achieve a balanced community, housing development within the rural area must also be taken into account, although this will be dealt with primarily in PPS14 – *A Guide to Development in the Countryside*<sup>2</sup>. The RDS also acknowledges that in order to achieve a sustainable and balanced community, housing within the rural area must also be taken into account. The RDS recognises the need to create and sustain a living countryside with a high quality of life, and to accommodate new housing developments to meet local housing needs, particularly in relation to social and affordable housing.
5. Nothing contained in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources would be provided for any specific project. All proposals for expenditure will be subject to economic, social, financial and environmental assessment and will also have to be considered having regard to the overall availability of resources.
6. This is one of a series of planning policy statements, produced by DRD and the DOE (see Appendix 5 for details). This statement should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the other prevailing planning policy statements, produced by DOE. In particular PPS 7, "Quality Residential Developments"<sup>3</sup>, and extant policies contained in the DOE's document "A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland."<sup>4</sup>

7. It should be noted that other policies of the Northern Ireland administration may affect the potential location of housing. Such examples include roads, transportation and infrastructure.

## Policy Context

### Regional Development Strategy

8. The availability of good housing in the right location makes a vital contribution to the key policy objectives of the devolved administration in Northern Ireland. It is a key consideration in promoting economic well being and social progress. New housing development can also stimulate urban and rural renewal. It is important that the public and private sectors work in partnership with key housing agencies to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home. The principles that underpin housing policy, outlined in the RDS, include the need to:
  - *widen opportunity and choice*
  - *improve the supply and quality of housing; and*
  - *promote sustainable development.*
9. The primacy of the RDS is recognised in the Programme for Government (PFG). It provides an overarching strategic framework for development plans and policies, guiding public and private investment decisions relating to land-use. It also provides a framework that both protects and enhances the physical, natural and man-made assets of the region.
10. Importantly, the spatial development strategy of the RDS has at its core a hub, corridor and gateway framework aimed at achieving balanced and sustainable development across the region. It contains six themes which:
  - *promote regional balance;*
  - *encourage sustainable patterns of development;*
  - *reflect regional distinctiveness;*
  - *strengthen economic opportunities and regional competitiveness;*
  - *enhance accessibility, and*
  - *make best use of the regional assets in the hubs, corridors and gateways.*

These themes apply to all development across the region and are embodied within this planning policy statement.
11. The RDS estimates that 160,000 additional dwellings will be required by 2015 with over 60% of these new households comprising one or two persons. It also estimates a need for approximately 250,000 additional dwellings by 2025.(SPG-HOU1) <sup>5</sup>
12. The strategy also sets an ambitious regional target effectively to double to 60%, for the period up to the first review in 2010, the recent level of achievement (25-30%) for the

location of urban housing growth within the existing urban areas of the cities and towns of over 5,000 population.<sup>6</sup> This target will be subject to monitoring and review in the light of the latest Census data on population growth. In addition, the RDS (SPG-HOU2) argues the value of providing more housing within the urban fabric of smaller towns and villages.

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13. The approach to the location of future housing development, set out in the RDS, is to:

- *achieve a balanced spread of housing across the region and a high degree of integration with the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) of road and rail corridors;*
- *make better use of resources and achieve more sustainable patterns of development by integrating housing with economic development, employment, health and education, other services, transport and the local environment; and*
- *promote a greater sense of community with a focus on place, the value of the individual, and high quality living environments.*

14. There are three key themes identified in Chapter 9 of the RDS which relate to housing:

- **Managing housing growth and distribution**  
(SPG-HOU 1 – SPGHOU 3)<sup>8</sup>

In managing housing growth and its distribution, a balance has to be struck between the need to ensure that the strategic objectives are met, particularly in relation to the drive to promote more housing within existing urban areas, and the need to be able to respond flexibly to unforeseen demand (and need) for additional housing land.

- **Supporting urban renaissance** (SPG-HOU 4 – SPG-HOU 5)<sup>9</sup>

The promotion of more sustainable forms of development by encouraging compact urban forms and increased housing within existing urban areas, supports the urban renaissance drive and investment in the hubs. It also helps conserve town settings and makes for more efficient use of resources.

- **Achieving balanced communities** (SPG-HOU 6)<sup>10</sup>

The strategy encourages the creation of more balanced local communities. These may be characterised by development patterns that contribute to greater community spirit, neighbourliness and a sense of belonging to a particular place. A variety of housing types offering choice is required to meet the different needs.

15. There are other policies and initiatives of the Northern Ireland administration that support the key principles of the RDS and complement this planning policy statement. For example, the town centre reinvigoration initiatives undertaken by the DSD and the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>11</sup> prepared by the DOE.

## Equality and Human Rights

16. This planning policy statement has been prepared in accordance with the Department's statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Section 75 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to

have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity within the range of social categories and community relations. In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation the Department must also, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

17. This planning policy statement is also subject to ongoing assessment in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) through Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998<sup>12</sup>. The policies contained in this PPS have been prepared in accordance with the Convention. In addition to this PPS, an Equality Impact Assessment document assessing the PPS has also been prepared separately.
18. Finally, the statement is consistent also with the strategic approach of New Targeting Social Need (NTSN) and includes provisions that will contribute to tackling poverty and social disadvantage and the regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These provisions and subsequent actions will complement and reinforce actions directly aimed at promoting equality of opportunity. In keeping with this, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is currently being prepared.

## **Policy Objectives**

19. The main purpose of this planning policy statement is to define the processes and policies in relation to housing in settlements that will deliver the key objectives of the RDS.

### **Meet the range of regional housing needs in relation to the supply of new housing**

20. A key aim of the planning system is to ensure the provision of good quality, well-located new housing consistent with national and local policies, particularly those in relation to sustainable development, social equity and integrated transport. This is important not only to enable everyone to have a home, but also to maintain the momentum of economic growth.
21. Housing is, of course, a basic human need. It is also the largest single urban land use. The varied needs of the whole community should be met through the provision of appropriate levels of housing, including affordable, social and supported housing. Emphasis is placed, therefore, on providing for an adequate choice of housing type and size to build balanced communities for the future.
22. The RDS (SPG- HOU 1)<sup>13</sup> argues that need can be met by providing a balanced supply of housing land throughout the region in a robust and flexible way, using a plan, monitor and manage approach.

### **Promote a plan, monitor and manage approach to the delivery of housing land**

23. The RDS (**SPG-HOU 1.1**)<sup>14</sup> recommends establishing long-term reserves of development land, through the development plan process, and the use of a plan, monitor and manage mechanism to ensure timely periodic releases of development land.
24. The plan, monitor and manage technique provides a more responsive and flexible approach than the 'predict and provide' model in dealing with the allocation and release of housing land in development plans. It provides for the management and periodic review of progress (including intervention) to ensure the plan meets its stated objectives. For example, it allows the order of release of sites to be influenced so that plan objectives, such as urban housing targets, can be achieved.

### **Encourage the development of balanced local communities.**

25. The RDS (**SPG-HOU 6**)<sup>15</sup> encourages the development of balanced local communities, emphasises development patterns that contribute to community spirit, neighbourliness and a sense of belonging to a particular place. More diverse, mixed residential communities, both in terms of tenure and land-use can help achieve that goal. A variety of housing types offering choice to meet different needs is therefore required. The RDS sets out Local Development Guidelines<sup>16</sup> (Appendix 3) that can be used in the housing development process to create attractive places in which people are happy to live, work and take their leisure.

### **Promote housing within urban areas and the re-use of previously developed land.**

26. A major thrust of the RDS (**SPG-HOU 2**)<sup>17</sup> and this planning policy statement is to make better use of a scarce resource and promote more sustainable patterns of development based on integration with transport, the encouragement of compact urban forms; more housing within urban areas and the sensitive use of the built heritage and natural environment.
27. The RDS (**SPG-HOU 4.1**)<sup>18</sup> prioritises more housing to be located within existing urban areas, thereby, helping to create more compact urban forms. It sets an ambitious regional 'brownfield' target of 60% in existing urban areas<sup>19</sup>. It is recognised that this approach is of particular importance to the Belfast Metropolitan Area and the successful regeneration and renaissance of the city core. This will result in more efficient and effective use of available land for housing. The use of inner urban locations for housing can promote re-use of vacant and run down buildings and stimulate successful urban regeneration. It is important, however, that new developments must respect the existing built and natural environment. The re-use and regeneration of the existing built fabric should, therefore, be encouraged.

### **Promote higher density urban housing.**

28. The RDS encourages an increase in the density of urban housing appropriate in scale and design to the cities and towns of Northern Ireland. The increase in the number of smaller households affords opportunities for higher density developments to be built as

part of the mix of house types in larger scale developments. The aim is to avoid the consumption of scarce greenfield land by achieving an increase in housing density, without 'cramming' or spoiling the environment.

## **Promote a mixed-use approach to new residential developments**

29. The RDS (**SPG-HOU 2.1**)<sup>20</sup> encourages a mix of uses to achieve more sustainable patterns of development. Such an approach encourages greater access to a full range of facilities, including employment, shopping, health, education and leisure activities, within walking distance of their homes, thereby, reducing the need to travel by car. There are many benefits to be gained from mixed use developments including:
- *increased accessibility and greater choice of facilities and locations;*
  - *reduced emphasis on the private car, which will free up space that would previously have been used for parking provision to be used for amenity or environmental improvement;*
  - *improved pedestrian environments;*
  - *healthier lifestyles; and*
  - *24-hour life to town centres.*
30. Although town and city centres offer the best potential location for maximising the benefits of the mixed use approach, other locations, such as local district centres, where there are existing linkages to a mix of uses may also benefit from this approach.

## **Encourage integration of residential development with public transport and modes of transport other than the private car.**

31. The RDS critically stresses the importance of integrating land use and transportation. In particular, the integration of housing with public transport is highlighted as a means of supporting more sustainable travel choices and reducing the need to travel.<sup>21</sup> By encouraging development that is integrated with public transport and where journey lengths are reduced and travel needs are more easily met by non-car transport options, energy and resources can be conserved. The general policy in relation to integrating the full range of land uses and transportation is contained in Chapter 11 of the RDS, supplemented by PPS 13 *Transportation and Land Use*.<sup>22</sup>

## **Maintaining and enhancing local character, sense of place and ensuring quality in the design and layout of new residential developments**

32. The RDS (**SPG-HOU 6.3**)<sup>23</sup> emphasises the importance of creating quality places through new residential development. It recommends promoting an imaginative and resource efficient quality of design, which respects existing rural and urban character, local tradition and human scale. The creation of attractive residential environments with a genuine sense of place is a prerequisite to achieving sustainability. Policy guidance to

achieve quality in the design and layout of residential development is contained within PPS7 *Quality Residential Developments*.<sup>24</sup> It is amplified by 'The Quality Initiative' sets out in the supplementary planning guidance 'Creating Places' published by the DOE and the DRD.<sup>25</sup>

## **To accommodate new housing development in the rural community to meet local housing needs**

33. While policy objectives within this planning policy statement focus on housing in settlements, the Department acknowledges that rural housing constitutes a 60% proportion of the housing stock in Northern Ireland and,<sup>26</sup> therefore warrants consideration. The Northern Ireland administration is concerned that there should be adequate housing provision in rural areas to meet the needs of local people. The planning authority, as part of its assessment of various housing needs in development plan areas, should ensure that sufficient land is available to meet that need. The Department recognises that promoting housing choice and affordable housing in rural areas will encourage the development of balanced rural communities. As is the case in urban areas, the greater proportion of rural housing should ideally be located within, or adjacent to, existing settlements. Settlements in the rural context may be defined as those which incorporate hamlets, clusters, cross-road settlements and dispersed settlements (see glossary for definition of settlements). However, it has to be acknowledged that provision for new housing in a rural location can contribute positively to the economic regeneration and environmental renewal of an area.
34. The general policy in relation to the countryside is contained in Chapter 8 of the RDS and will be supplemented by PPS 14 – *Guide to Development in the Countryside* (currently being prepared by the Department).<sup>27</sup> This planning policy statement will articulate the RDS vision of rural Northern Ireland and the aspirations for the countryside. The ethos of a balanced local community in a changing and dynamic rural region and the issues affecting the rural area will be addressed. The concept of the introduction of a rural policy, which reflects the differential pressures and demands on the range of localities across Northern Ireland and the contribution of those living in rural areas to the rural community will be examined. In the interim, social and affordable housing issues in respect of rural areas will be taken into account and appropriate processes and policies formulated through the development plan process. The scope for dealing with housing need in the rural area should be set out clearly in development plans and the resultant policies justified both in terms of equity, environment and infrastructure.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

35. Development plans are the main vehicle for assessing future housing land requirements and ensuring that the land required for each market segment is provided for in full. This planning policy statement looks at three inter-related elements of the plan designed to meet its objectives and those of the RDS. These are:

- *processes for allocating housing land*
- *measures to be contained in development plans*
- *implementing, monitoring and reviewing development plans*

## **The processes for allocating housing land**

36. In preparing development plans the following will be considered:

- housing growth indicators*
- urban capacity studies*
- sequential approach and identification of suitable sites for housing*
- assessment of local specialised housing need*
- allowance for windfall housing sites*
- allowance for existing commitments*
- local character assessment*
- social inclusion considerations*

### **a) Housing Growth Indicators**

37. The RDS provides a Housing Growth Indicator for each district council area. This indicator will be used in development plans as a basis for allocating housing growth across the plan area, including the rural areas. A development plan will, for each district, formulate a growth strategy on the basis of the RDS strategic guidelines (**SPG-HOU 3.1, HGI 3**).<sup>28</sup> The growth strategy should aim to strike an optimal balance between housing in the various towns, villages and dispersed small settlements, in order to maximise the effect of complementary relationships. Importantly, it must take account of the rural parts of the district.

38. In making judgements on the allocation of housing growth across a district, a broad evaluation framework should be used. The evaluation framework contained in the RDS is reproduced in Appendix 6.

### **b) Urban Capacity Studies**

39. Urban capacity studies will be undertaken as an integral part of development plan preparation. These studies will provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential for future housing growth within the existing urban areas of settlements. In any particular settlement, the study will indicate the broad capacity for housing within the existing urban area and the capacity for different types and densities of housing. It is an essential first step toward the sequential approach to site identification and the managed release of housing land.

40. As well as informing development plans, capacity studies will also be important in providing base data for the planned review of housing indicators and targets for the region. The urban capacity studies will be published along with the draft plan as a

technical supplement to the draft plan. A suggested methodology to be used, based on best practice from elsewhere, is set out in Appendix 1.

### **c) Sequential approach and identification of suitable sites for housing**

41. The development plan will identify sites for housing to meet the requirements for individual settlements taking into account the information obtained from the processes above. It will take account of local circumstances and other relevant material planning considerations, including the statutory obligations placed on DOE in respect of the RDS.
42. A sequential approach to the identification of sites will be adopted to maintain compact town and village forms, making efficient use of existing infrastructure. (SPG-HOU 4 – SPG-HOU 5 and SPG-ENV 6).<sup>29</sup> The diagram below sets out the search sequence.

#### **Search Sequence**

##### **Step 1**

Use previously developed and undeveloped land within urban areas, informed by urban capacity studies

##### **Step 2**

Extensions to cities and towns

##### **Step 3**

Exceptional major expansion of a village or small rural settlement

##### **Step 4**

New settlements

43. The following criteria will be taken into account in the identification of suitable sites:
- the need for urban expansion, including new settlements informed by allowances for existing commitments;
  - the physical and environmental constraints on the development of land including the need to protect environmental setting, character, natural and built heritage and constraints such as contamination, land stability and flood risk;
  - the degree of integration with centres of employment, services, other facilities, public transport and other non car modes (the latter two will be informed by local transport analyses required through PPS 13<sup>30</sup>);
  - the capacity of existing infrastructure including public transport, water, sewerage, other utilities, social and community facilities (such as education and health) to absorb development without adding further financial burden;

- the ability to unlock major strategic development opportunities such as those offering significant employment opportunities;
  - the need to manage the encroachment of housing on existing businesses to ensure that the operation and potential expansion of such enterprises, and the retention of jobs is not impeded by the juxtaposition of new housing areas;
  - the ability to integrate new development without detracting from the character and identity of the settlement, whilst maintaining a sense of place.  
(see *Local Development Guidelines for Urban and Rural Areas, SPG-ENV 4<sup>31</sup>*);
  - the need to ensure that there would be no detrimental effect on residential amenity or on the health of residents due to nearby land uses and activities; and
  - the strategic objectives for the plan area with direct relevance to the RDS.
44. It is not expected that every site identified will comply with all of the above criteria, however, the approach taken must be justifiable and reasonable having regard to the criteria.

#### **d) Assessments of local specialised housing needs**

45. While the housing growth indicators contained in the RDS provide the overall level of housing need for each district,<sup>32</sup> it is clearly important, when preparing a development plan, to consider the range of specialised housing needs across the district.
46. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) will provide an assessment of local housing need to inform development plans and will carry out regular monitoring and review. It will give a broad indication of the order of provision required for different categories of need within the context of the overall housing growth indicator. The assessment will be based on historical data, recent trends within the locality as well as informed estimates of future trends. The needs assessment will be made available as part of the technical documents supporting the development plan.
47. Information will be provided covering the following categories:
- *social housing*
  - *affordable housing*
  - *supported housing*
  - *other specialised housing*
48. Information may also be provided to cover a broad overview of likely future requirements for different types and sizes of housing across all tenures in a district.

### **Social Housing**

49. For the purposes of this planning policy statement, social housing is defined as housing of an adequate standard which is provided for rent below market cost for households in need by the NIHE or registered Housing Association (see Glossary). The need for social housing can exist in the urban or rural context. Where NIHE identify that there is a demonstrable need for social housing the assessment should identify the amount required.

## Affordable Housing

50. Affordable housing may be defined as housing of an adequate standard, which is relatively inexpensive, compared to that which is generally available in the local housing market (see Glossary). It includes the following categories of housing: subsidised rented housing, subsidised low cost home ownership and in some market situations, low cost housing for sale.
51. The needs assessment may, where information is available, consider the relationship between local income levels, interest rates and house prices or rents for different types of households. It will be necessary to consider and define the relevant housing markets within the locality. On the basis of this input it should be possible to define what is considered to be affordable for the settlement or area in question. Also, it will be helpful to compare the local situation with the average for the region. It will be important also to consider the wider impact of any 'hot spots' and whether or not they are so localised as not to cause a significant problem within the wider housing and labour market. Continued monitoring of affordable housing will be carried out both at the local and regional level.
52. Work already completed in the report 'Affordable Housing in the Private Sector'<sup>33</sup>, the 'Annual Review of the Northern Ireland Housing Market'<sup>34</sup>, and other relevant research will assist in the provision of information on affordable housing.
53. Affordable housing is also an issue within the rural area and, therefore, should be included in the housing needs assessment. Research in other parts of the UK, although it may not be wholly relevant to Northern Ireland, has shown that there is a limited supply of available housing. It looks likely that this trend will continue. Typical examples of housing in short supply include social and private rented and cheaper owner occupied properties. The housing needs assessment will identify rural areas where the demand for housing is creating problems (or is likely to create problems) in relation to affordable housing for local people. The assessment will also indicate the scale and nature of the problem.
54. The demand for second homes may be an influencing factor on the availability of affordable housing in a settlement or locality. This may arise primarily, although not exclusively, in key tourism areas and scenically attractive rural areas. Where there is a demand for second homes in such locations, the local house price can be substantially inflated thereby pricing local people, who may be on a more modest income, out of the housing market. The housing needs assessment will identify settlements, or areas, where the demand for second homes is causing (or is likely to cause such problems) in relation to affordable housing for local people. The assessment will also indicate the scale and nature of the problem.
55. The assessment, in particular, will consider the impact of second home pressures in relation to the overall supply of local housing and the supply of affordable housing.
56. Where an up-to-date housing needs assessment identifies a requirement for affordable housing, this will be a material consideration in the planning process. Both development plan policies and planning obligations are appropriate vehicles through which the planning authority, and key stakeholders, including the private sector, housing

associations and other relevant organisations, may seek to address the need for such provision.

## **Supported Housing**

57. Supported housing may be defined as provision to meet the full range of specialist housing needs (see Glossary). This will include those specific needs of the elderly or those who are vulnerable because of particular disabilities. The housing needs assessment will enable the identification of demonstrable local needs for supported housing.

## **Other Specialised Housing**

58. It will be important to assess the specialised housing requirements of specific groups: for example, students and the travelling community. The housing needs assessment will identify any such groups within the plan area.
59. The travelling community represent a sector of society whose needs are quite different to those of the settled community. The number of travellers living in a particular community or settlement will vary according to history and tradition. As part of the housing needs assessment it will be necessary, in the first instance, to ascertain the overall level of housing need for travellers in the locality. This will require liaison with local and regional traveller organisations as well as other statutory bodies such as NIHE and Social Services. The needs assessment will estimate the level of local provision needed for the period of the plan.

## **e) Allowance for windfall housing sites**

60. Windfall sites are those sites that have not been specifically identified as available for development in the urban capacity study but which become available over time for a variety of reasons.
61. Over the course of the plan period, windfall sites can make up an important part of the supply of housing. In line with the objectives of the RDS, it is necessary to make allowance for these when deciding the number of sites to identify for development in the plan to prevent excessive allocation of unnecessary housing land. The scale of the allowance for windfall sites will vary considerably from area to area and may depend on the approach taken in the urban capacity study. Allowance can be made on the basis of examining past trends in windfalls coming forward for development and estimating likely future windfall potential. For the purpose of making an allowance for windfall sites greenfield sites will not be included and therefore no allowance should be made for greenfield windfalls. Reference to the justification of the windfall allowance should be included in the technical documents supporting the development plan.

## **f) Allowance for existing commitments.**

62. In order to complete the calculation of the amount of new housing required for the settlements within the plan area, it is necessary to take into account, housing already constructed and existing housing approvals not yet constructed. The need, if any, for further identification of land beyond the existing urban area in a settlement will be that which is residual after taking account of the urban capacity yield, windfall allowance and dwellings already constructed or committed.

### **g) Local Character Assessment**

63. While the overall aim is to create higher densities and promote housing within the urban area, the plan will be expected to give consideration to the character of surrounding areas. Care will be taken to ensure that the individual and cumulative effects of infill development do not erode the character and amenity of existing residential areas through over-development. Although the majority of housing areas will not have the special or historic character of conservation or townscape character areas, it does not mean that the quality of the residential environment is unimportant. It will often be of great and legitimate concern to local residents. Therefore, development plans should seek to ensure that the effects of new development, redevelopment or infill development does not result in unacceptable damage to the local character, environmental quality or residential amenity.

### **h) Social Inclusion Considerations**

64. A community's need for social, affordable and special needs housing is a material planning consideration. It is also an essential element in contributing to community regeneration and social inclusion. Meeting rural housing need, in particular, is an important consideration. Development plans should seek to incorporate a reasonable mix and balance of housing tenures and types to cater for a range of housing needs. Such a mix should seek to encourage equality of access to all sections of the community and create more balanced communities and greater community cohesion.

## **Measures to be contained in Development Plans**

65. In order to address the areas set out above and achieve the objectives of this planning policy statement, a menu of measures are outlined below. It is envisaged that these will normally be accommodated in plan policies or proposals and development briefs for specific sites. Development plans will:
- a) set out the period of the plan and the overall housing provision for each settlement;
  - b) set development limits for all identified settlements;
  - c) zone sites for housing in larger settlements, to meet identified housing need in line with the objectives of the RDS and this PPS. In smaller settlements, plans may indicate where it is expected that the majority of housing will be located;
  - d) incorporate a phased approach to the release of sites, as outlined in Appendix 2;

- e) identify specific sites to meet any of the categories of need as may be identified in the housing needs assessment;
- f) identify specific sites or areas within settlements where a proportion of the housing capacity of the site is required to meet one or more category of need and clearly state the proportion required;
- g) identify settlements where the housing needs assessment has determined a pressure associated with second home development;
- h) allocate additional land in order to ameliorate any identified second home pressure throughout the plan period;
- i) where the pressure for second home development has adversely affected local character and environmental quality, set specific local design requirements in relation to townscape character, conservation areas, coastal and river settings;
- j) where justified, in the interests of balanced local communities, specify those sites or areas where the development of certain house types or a mix of house types will be required;
- k) introduce for sites or areas, a degree of flexibility in prevailing roads, layout, parking and amenity space requirements as espoused in other planning policy documents<sup>35</sup> (it is envisaged that this would be appropriate in a range of circumstances such as regeneration projects and to assist in the achievement of housing targets within urban centres)
- l) set minimum density levels for whole settlements or parts of settlements, appropriate to the character of the surrounding area and specify, where appropriate, individual sites where variance from this is desired and specify the level of variance required (see Appendix 1 Annex A). Particular attention should be paid to promoting higher density housing on sites that meet the following criteria:
  - inner urban locations;
  - linked to public transport and public transport corridors;
  - provide a good opportunity for integration with employment and other services;
  - appropriate locations on main distributor roads contributing to urban regeneration.
- m) set, maximum density levels for sites or defined areas. This may be necessary in areas where higher density developments would have a significant adverse impact on the established character, amenity or environmental quality of an area (see Appendix 1);
- n) in support of the 'town centre living' concept, identify areas within town centres where existing residential development will be protected.
- o) include requirements to favour higher density development in locations that maximise integration with public transport and modes of transport other than the private car;
- p) introduce a requirement for transport assessments to be provided with residential proposals for certain areas or sites, where it is regarded as necessary to achieve increased integration with public transport and modes of transport other than the private car<sup>36</sup>;
- q) where specific sites are identified for a mix of uses, set requirements for the housing elements of the site;

- r) include, where appropriate, specific policies for new housing which will ensure that the distinctive nature and character of settlements are maintained and enhanced;
  - s) identify, opportunity sites and specify the level of housing that is either required or is acceptable and design requirements that would apply to it;
  - t) identify, 'key sites' that are considered essential to the delivery of the plan strategy. It is likely that these would be important previously developed sites that have a significant positive impact on the implementation of plan objectives. For these sites development briefs would normally be prepared and these are likely to include requirements for higher density development;
  - u) careful consideration will be given to planning interventions in the operation of housing markets to deal with affordable housing, including any identified pressure arising from 'second homes'. While it is recognised that it is not possible for the planning system to control the use of a house as a second home, policies, nevertheless, may be put in place to help deal with the second home problem where it is considered necessary. Alternative, demand side measures, such as co-ownership and 'houses to rent' or 'home-buy' schemes may, however, be more appropriate and effective. Development plans will provide clear justification, where planning intervention is considered necessary.
66. In addition to the above requirements, it will also be necessary for plans to take into account the requirements that are contained in other prevailing planning policy statements (e.g. Planning Policy Statement 7 Quality Residential Environments).

## **Planning Obligations**

67. The UK Government, as part of its review of the planning process, is of the view that the current focus of the developer contribution system, essentially mitigating the impacts of development, limits its potential. In its view there exists the potential of using planning obligations to cater for a wider range of impacts arising from a development. For example, planning obligations would have the power to improve the wider infrastructure around a new development as opposed to a site specific basis. Planning obligations would therefore act as a positive planning tool to complement other proposals to reform the planning system. This broadened approach would also contribute to the ethos of sustainable development.
68. Given the legacy of decades of under-investment in Northern Ireland's infrastructure, this position, is supported by DRD. It is also investigating the feasibility of a wider-ranging approach to developer contributions (within its own statutory remit) in order to optimise the contribution from developers. The Department's investigation will look at both site specific issues (such as roads, water, sewerage and transportation) and infrastructure enhancements arising from additional demand created by new development. This investigation which is not expected to be completed until 2003 may point up the need to promote new legislation.
69. The DOE's, Planning Service as the planning authority in Northern Ireland, has the power to enter into an agreement with persons having an interest in land in their area for the purpose of restricting or regulating the use of that land (Section 40 of the Planning

(Northern Ireland) Order 1991).<sup>37</sup> DRD readily acknowledges that the planning law, at present, may not provide the basis upon which to prosecute a more rigorous approach to address more effectively the burden that new development places on the region's infrastructure. Nevertheless, it is of the view that the current law should be used, as far as is reasonably possible to do so, to address the issue of increasing developers costs to address the burden that new development places on the infrastructure.

## **Implementing, Monitoring and Reviewing the Development Plan**

In implementing, monitoring and reviewing plans the following key aspects need to be addressed in order to achieve the objectives of this PPS:

### **a) Manage the release of sites**

70. Managing the release of housing land provides an opportunity for development plans to influence the order and timing of housing site release as well as controlling the location and type of housing developments. The approach will ensure development plans are more responsive to housing need as they change over the course of the plan period. It will also enable the sequential approach to be implemented. The approach ensures that there is a tension in the provision of housing between existing urban areas and greenfield development, but with a clear preference in the provision of housing within existing urban areas in order to promote recycling of land and buildings. The site release mechanism can be adjusted to meet the different needs of settlements. Through this approach compact urban forms, more housing within existing urban areas and reduced lateral spread of towns is envisaged. (SPG-HOU 4)<sup>38</sup>
71. Appendix 2 contains a methodology to be agreed with DOE, which will be followed in the preparation and implementation of development plans.

### **b) Monitor the development of land and review the land release to ensure supply continues to be in balance with need and that plan objectives are being met.**

72. Effective and regular monitoring is key to the 'plan monitor and manage' approach to the provision of housing in settlements. It enables the required responsiveness and flexibility of the phasing and managed release mechanism. Monitoring will be an ongoing process with, ideally, annual reporting and regular opportunities for review.
73. Effective monitoring will depend on tracking residential development in relation to set objectives on average annual building rates, rates of building within existing urban areas and in adjoining greenfield locations, and estimated windfall rates. This will allow a clear view of overall performance and gaps in performance to be ascertained and indicate any

corrective measures that may need to be taken, such as amending the order of housing release.

74. It will also be necessary to monitor and assess housing within the rural area in order to sustain a living countryside, which contributes to a high quality of life for all residents.
75. As part of the monitoring process the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) will assess the extent to which the categories of housing need are being met. Where, for example, there is a demonstrable lack of social or supported housing to meet local needs, the planning authority will consider the implications of this for the timing of the release of housing sites. Such action should be in line with the development plan objectives and prevailing housing policies.
76. Where monitoring indicates that a persistent and significant gap exists between the housing objectives of the plan and what is occurring on the ground, remedial action will be required. This may mean re-assigning sites through amending their order of release.

## Regional Housing Policies

### Introduction

77. These specific Regional Housing Policies (RHPs) are to be taken into account in relation to decisions on planning applications and appeals for housing in settlements on sites additional to the provisions of future development plans prepared in the context of this PPS. These policies are also important in considering applications where there is not complete development plan coverage

### **RHP 1: On urban land, not subject to the provisions of future development plans, residential proposals will be assessed against the following key objectives of the PPS:**

- it meets specialised housing need;
- promotes the development of balanced local communities;
- promotes housing within urban areas and the re-use of previously developed sites;
- promotes higher density urban housing;
- promotes a mixed use approach to new residential developments;
- encourages integration of residential development with public transport and modes of transport other than the private car, and
- maintains and enhances local character and sense of place and ensure quality in the design and layout of new residential developments (see PPS 7 Quality Residential Developments).

## **In addition to the above objectives of the PPS, proposals will also be assessed against:**

- the physical and environmental constraints on development of land including the need to protect environmental setting, character, natural and built heritage and constraints such as contamination, land stability and flood risk;
- the need to manage the encroachment of housing on existing businesses to ensure that the operation and potential expansion of such enterprises and the retention of jobs is not impeded by the juxtaposition of new housing areas; and
- the need to ensure that there would be no detrimental effect on residential amenity or on the health of residents due to nearby land uses and activities.

In addition, any proposal must comply with other relevant prevailing planning policies, in particular PPS 7 Quality Residential Developments.

## **Justification and Amplification**

78. The justification for adopting the approach taken in this policy flows from the requirements of the RDS and is dealt with in detail in the objectives of this PPS. (see para 19-34)
79. This policy does not imply that all applications for residential development in settlements must meet every objective but rather that the more objectives that are met the more favourably a proposal will be judged. When sites within existing urban areas not covered by the provisions of a development plan emerge to be considered, it will be important that housing is the use that is encouraged. However, it may not always be appropriate for these sites to be developed for housing. Any such proposal will be assessed having regard to possible alternative sites, whether the site would be acceptable for housing and the requirements of the RDS (**SPG-HOU 4.2**).<sup>39</sup> This highlights the importance of the need to protect adequate supplies of land for other purposes such as open space, employment and services to help maintain viable local communities. The local development guidelines for urban and rural areas (see Appendix 3) will also be used to inform judgements on protecting sites for other uses to maintain viable local communities. It will be important to have regard to other prevailing planning policies, such as PPS 7 (Quality Residential Environments) and PPS 8 (Open Space, Sport, Recreation, Leisure and Community Facilities).<sup>40</sup>
80. Planning obligations will be an important tool in ensuring compliance with the requirements of this policy.

## **RHP 2: In considering planning applications for new accommodation for travellers, permission will only be granted where the all the following criteria are met:**

- there is reasonable, safe and direct access on to a public road and that measures have been introduced to provide access to public transport and non car modes of transport;

- the site is relatively flat and capable of development with landscaping and boundary definition;
- there is provision for workspace, off-pitch parking, grazing areas, play space and visitor parking; and
- there is provision of drinking water, electricity, sewage, refuse disposal and drainage and street lighting.

In addition, any proposal must comply with other relevant prevailing planning policies, in particular PPS 7 Quality Residential Developments.

## **Justification and Amplification**

81. Within the context of meeting local housing need and ensuring balanced communities it is important also to address the needs of the travelling community. Therefore, proposals for traveller's accommodation that meet identified local need should be encouraged, subject to meeting the above criteria. These proposals will be expected to demonstrate clearly how they meet identified local need and the planning authority will assess this in consultation with the NIHE.
82. In meeting the criteria above, peripheral sites for travellers accommodation on cut-off sections of road or waste areas are likely to be unacceptable. As with all development proposals, careful consideration will need to be given to the impact of the proposal on both surrounding land uses and the environment. Proposals that have a significant detrimental impact on surrounding land uses or the environment will be resisted.

### **RHP 3: Proposals for new residential development which incorporate a significantly higher density than the surrounding area, on sites not subject to the provisions of a development plan, will only be considered acceptable where the proposal:**

- meets one or more of the objectives of this PPS; and
- would not individually, or cumulatively, alter the overall density of the area to such an extent as to have a significantly adverse impact on the established character, amenity or environmental quality of that area.

## **Justification and Amplification**

83. The RDS encourages an increase in the density of urban housing appropriate in scale and design to the cities and towns of Northern Ireland. With the increase in the number of smaller households, there are opportunities for higher density developments to be built as part of the mix of house types in larger scale developments and on their own. The aim is to reduce the consumption of scarce greenfield land by achieving an increase in housing density, without 'cramming' or spoiling the environment. It is important to recognise, therefore, that a balance must be achieved between allowing high-density residential development in urban areas and protecting residential character and amenity.

84. Careful consideration will be given to the impact of increasing the density of a site on the character, amenity and environmental quality of the surrounding area. Where it is deemed that a proposal has a significant adverse impact it will be refused. When assessing the impact both the immediate and wider surrounding area should be considered. It is recognised that the impact of higher density development can be lessened by well-designed schemes following the principles of the quality initiative set out in PPS 7.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, regardless of design, eventually the residential character of an area can be changed if higher density development continues to be allowed. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that this does not occur.
85. In addition any proposal must also comply with other relevant prevailing planning policies, in particular PPS 7 Quality Residential Environments.

## **Monitoring and Review**

86. In order for any policy to remain appropriate over time it is essential to record and measure changes as well as the overall performance of the policy. This tracking and monitoring can be achieved by setting appropriate indicators and targets. As this PPS provides policy guidance and advice in relation to the RDS, it will be monitored through the procedures and mechanisms set up to implement, monitor and review the RDS.
87. There are three important principles that apply to the monitoring and review arrangements of the RDS and this PPS. The first principle is the importance of a partnership and participative approach to the implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy. The second principle emphasises the need for an outcome orientated implementation to deliver the aims and objectives of the strategy. The third principle stresses the need to learn the lessons from successful regional and inter-regional development in Europe and elsewhere.
88. Monitoring will provide an early warning of where policies are not implemented, not meeting objectives or are being overtaken by events. In relation to this PPS the recommended targets and indicators to be monitored are those to be agreed for the relevant Strategic Planning Guidelines of the RDS. They provide a benchmark against which progress can be measured towards achieving the objectives of the PPS.

## **Review Arrangements**

89. The RDS will be subject to a review after 10 years to consider if major changes of direction are required in the light of new trends and circumstances. After five years (2005/6) there will be a focused assessment to identify any aspects where 'in course' adjustments might be appropriate. This will also apply to the policy guidance contained in this PPS
90. The work of the Inter Departmental Steering Group will be important in advising the Minister for Regional Development whether, in the light of changing circumstances, there is a need to bring forward any adjustments to specific strategic guidelines or policy

guidance, such as this PPS. The NIHE are also acting on behalf of the Department by carrying out a monitoring and advisory role in relation to the housing needs assessment.

## **Glossary**

### **Accessibility Analysis:**

This assessment will identify appropriate sites where integration with public transport, cycling, walking and the responsible use of the private car can be best achieved. These sites should be capable of enhancing accessibility for local communities to the full range of activities and meet the needs of people with disabilities.

### **Affordable Housing:**

This may be defined, as housing of an adequate standard which is cheaper than that which is generally available in the local housing market. Affordable housing comprises of a number of different categories of housing: subsidised rented housing, low cost home ownership and in some market situations cheap housing for sale.

### **Brownfield Sites/Previously Developed Sites:**

These are normally sites which have previously been developed or used for some purpose which has ceased. They may encompass re-use of existing buildings by conversion; demolition and new build; clearance of vacant or derelict land and new build; infill and various other forms of intensification. It excludes private and public gardens, sports and recreation grounds, woodlands and amenity open spaces.

### **District Housing Growth Indicators:**

The RDS introduces the concept of having housing growth indicators applied to the Region. Their purpose is to guide the distribution of housing in the Region over the period to 2015, through the development plan process, in accordance with the Spatial Development Strategy.

### **Existing Urban Areas/Urban Footprint:**

These may be defined as the continuous built-up area of a settlement. The boundary is represented by an uninterrupted line, often lying inside the planned settlement limit. It contains land which has a formal urban use and, for example, gardens on the edge of the settlement will be included within the urban area as they form part of a curtilage of a building. Undeveloped zoned land at the edge of the settlement is excluded. Sites within the urban footprint which may count towards the regional target for housing within urban limits will be assessed through capacity studies as part of the development plan process.

### **Greenfield Sites:**

These are sites which have never been previously developed or used for an urban use outside urban footprints.

## **New TSN:**

New TSN (Targeting Social Need) is a government policy that aims to ensure that public resources are directed at those areas, groups and individuals who are most disadvantaged and excluded within Northern Ireland.

## **Settlements:**

Settlements may be defined as including cities, towns, villages and small settlements.

Cities encompass a limited number of highest order settlements which incorporate a wide range of administrative, retail, cultural, recreational and employment facilities and services.

Towns provide a second tier of settlements with a limited range of services. They vary in size across Northern Ireland.

Villages form the third level of the settlement hierarchy and have a range of size. They are more widespread and provide lower order retail and service centres. Within a village it is normal for a number of community facilities to be located.

Small settlements are the lowest tier of the settlement hierarchy. They incorporate hamlets, clusters, cross-road settlements and dispersed settlements. Generally these will be identified by having at least one community facility.

The precise definition of which category each settlement falls into, will be part of the development plan process for each locality.

## **Social Housing:**

This may be defined as housing of an adequate standard that is provided to rent below market cost for households in need by the NIHE or registered housing association.

## **Supported Housing:**

This may be defined as including the full range of specialist housing needs including those made vulnerable through age, mental illness or disability; housing unfitness and the specialist needs of students and travellers.

## **Windfall Sites:**

Windfall sites are those which have not been specifically identified as available in the development plan. They comprise previously used sites that have unexpectedly become available. These could include; for example, large sites such as might result from a factory, hospital or school closure.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Urban Housing Capacity Studies**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this appendix is to set out a broad methodology for carrying out urban capacity studies as part of development plan preparation in Northern Ireland. It sets out the main issues that should be dealt with when carrying out a study. The guidance is based on the principles expressed in the RDS and this PPS. The methodology has been formulated in co-operation with DOE Planning Service and following a joint DRD/DOE best practice seminar for planners on the implications of urban capacity studies for Northern Ireland.

It is important to recognise from the outset that urban capacity studies are an integral part of the development plan process and crucial to the identification of sites for future housing by a methodology which follows a sequential approach.

### **Why Assess Urban Capacity?**

The need for urban capacity studies is clear in light of the RDS. They are an essential tool in both ensuring a sequential approach to the identification of sites through the development plan process and managing the release of housing land. The studies will provide a full understanding of the potential for future housing growth within the existing urban fabric of settlements. Urban capacity studies undertaken during development plan preparation will also inform the review of the RDS, particularly in relation to housing indicators and targets for the region.

DOE Planning Service will only be required to undertake urban capacity studies as part of development plan preparation and not at any other regular or irregular intervals outside of this process.

### **Which settlements should be assessed?**

RDS sets a regional target of 60% for the period up to its first review in 2010, for the location of urban housing growth within the existing urban areas of the cities and towns of over 5000 population. It states that the potential for achieving the regional target will be determined through the development plan process using urban capacity studies to maximise the increased share of residential development that can be achieved within the urban footprint (see glossary) of a particular city or town.

With the threshold for this at 5000 population it would also appear a logical threshold above which an urban capacity study would be necessary to enable such determination of potential. In different parts of Northern Ireland, however, settlements of different sizes can be of relative importance within their own locality. For example a town of 3000 population may have a more important role and function in the rural west than one of equal size in the more urbanised east.

This guidance sets as a reasonable minimum requirement that urban capacity studies should in a development plan preparation be undertaken for the highest and second highest tiers of

settlement in each district. Variance from this should only occur in exceptional circumstances where clearly justifiable and in recognition of the urban footprint target as specified in RDS.

Additional urban capacity studies for lower tier settlements could also be included if considered appropriate in light of local circumstances and the sustainable development objectives of the RDS and the subject plan.

## **Urban Capacity Study Approach**

Generally, elsewhere in the UK, three alternative broad approaches to carrying out urban capacity studies are suggested.

1. Comprehensive surveys of the whole defined area.
2. Priority area studies.
3. Typical urban area studies.

In the context of Northern Ireland given the nature and scale of the main settlements and in the light of the strategic drive in the RDS for sustainable development and maximum focus within existing urban footprints, only the first approach involving comprehensive surveys of the whole defined area is considered to be generally appropriate. This will facilitate assessment of the entire area within the urban footprint by the definition of distinct character areas following an approach as outlined below (application of character assessment approach).

Only in exceptional circumstances and where clearly justifiable will an overall approach following either of the other two alternatives be considered acceptable. Instances where this might occur would usually be due to factors such as:

- urban area size;
- time or resources available;
- particular local circumstances.

Within an overall comprehensive approach, use of typical urban area studies for more specific aspects, such as within a town centre, may be appropriate.

## **Application of Character Assessment Approach**

This involves the classification of the entire study area into distinct character areas across four broad character types, through a comprehensive analysis which is heavily reliant on survey.

The four character area types are:

1. Distinct areas of vacant/under utilised land – urban capacity sites as a general rule should be of 0.1 hectares minimum size or with a potential of 10 dwellings minimum or less if local circumstances permit.
2. Areas of committed use:
  - (a) Non-residential: including important public open spaces, established industrial areas, educational and healthcare premises.

- (b) Residential: Comprising development currently under construction or with current planning approval.
3. Established residential areas, possibly with minor non-residential uses, having a broadly similar character.
  4. Areas with a relatively higher propensity for change - including town centres, mixed use areas, transitional areas.

The character areas should be identified and defined on the basis of a clear and transparent assessment, taking into account, as appropriate, relevant planning history, land use, housing density, physical character and any other relevant factors. This is a suggested approach and there may be other methods that will achieve the same objectives. However, it is an important element of the entire urban capacity study and this will be open to scrutiny in association with any consideration at the Public Inquiry following the publication of the draft plan.

This character assessment approach should be applied to the area within the urban footprint of every settlement for which urban capacity study is required inside the plan area, to inform the overall plan preparation.

## **Sequence of Study**

Having established the settlements to be assessed, the urban capacity study for each of these should follow the broad sequence of steps as shown in the table below and explanatory notes for each step.

1. Urban footprint boundary;
2. Identify recent dwelling completions;
3. Identify housing commitments;
4. Compile assets/constraints;
5. Site survey;
6. Planning history;
7. Select provisional urban capacity sites;
8. Define character areas;
9. Provisional windfall assessments;
10. Detailed consultation;
11. Potential yield summary and presentation.

In addition, Annex A sets out some additional guidelines for undertaking detail area studies applicable to the assessment of both Type 1 and Type 4 Character Areas (as defined earlier). This should be particularly considered in tandem with Steps 7 to 11 of the recommended sequence.

1. Ensure that the appropriate urban footprint boundary for the year 2001 has been established and identify this as the boundary of study. This is the important urban footprint reference point to coincide with the publication of the RDS which sets the base date for the 60% target.

2. Identify the number and location of dwellings built since the plan base date. These areas should be identified in the plan as part of residential zoning. Sources include the Northern Ireland housing land availability data.
3. Identify areas of housing currently under construction or with current planning approval. These form part of character area type 2 as being committed to use and consequently identified in the plan as part of the residential zoning. Sources include the Northern Ireland housing land availability data.
4. Compile assets/constraints information for each area from the data records and the consultation responses available. This may give preliminary assistance in the identification of character type 1 areas and character type 4 areas. Initial consultation with the key plan consultees will have been undertaken at the outset of the plan preparation.
5. Undertake a site survey to identify the urban capacity sites, to inform the analysis and to inform character area assessment. Reference to a 'standard survey sheet' is recommended to ensure consistency in the use of information and analysis. Key criteria in determining potential urban capacity sites include:
  - a vacant or occupied site, or part thereof, that is evidently not used or significantly underused;
  - a site conspicuously inappropriate (not just different to) amongst nearby uses;
  - a combination of separate possibly under-utilised areas which together comprise an area of potential.

All the above would of course be further subject to a size threshold (refer 'Application of character assessment approach' character area Type 1) and should be identified where considered appropriate for either residential or mixed use.

6. Undertake necessary planning history analysis including those for identified urban capacity sites from Step 5. This may provide further guidance towards identifying the site potential and character assessment.
7. Select the final urban capacity sites and make a provisional assessment of future potential, both of which will be subject to detailed consultation with key plan consultees. These will ultimately be further classified in the plan as one of:- plan zonings; plan opportunity sites (all or part thereof); or subsumed into the general character area as part of overall windfall potential, if appropriate.
8. Finalise the definition of all remaining character areas across the type range, following the approach as broadly outlined above (application of character assessment approach).
9. Undertake provisional character area housing windfall assessments. This is crucial to the allowance made within the plan for provision of housing through developments not specifically identified by 'zoning' and thus not definitively predicted. It is thus an 'anticipated' extra provision which if not 'allowed for' might prejudice compliance of the plan with the housing allocations of the RDS. Such development is generally referred to as 'windfall' and will be likely to comprise:-
  - Specific additional provision within Type 3 character areas;
    - established residential areas

- Provision arising from within Type 4 character areas;
  - areas with a relatively higher propensity for change
 This may include 'opportunity sites' as may be identified in the plan which have some level of housing potential but which are not clearly zoned residential;
- The cumulative potential of sites initially identified as 'urban capacity' but which remain 'unzoned' in the plan for reasons relating to for example size, constraints.

The windfall assessment is to establish the housing yield potential from such windfall, albeit in general terms and should be undertaken with various possible yield categories which might arise.

For Type 3 Character Areas (established residential areas) these categories would comprise:–

- Sub-division of existing housing;
- Empty homes (where in excess of average vacancy);
- Redevelopment potential;
- Infill;
- Intensification of existing residential (use of private open space);
- Conversion from non-residential;
- Smaller areas of vacant/under-utilised land (below urban capacity site threshold);
- Other unspecified.

For type 4 character areas (high propensity for change) these categories would comprise:–

- Sub-division of existing housing;
- Redevelopment potential (existing housing);
- Redevelopment potential (non-residential);
- Intensification of existing residential (use of private open space);
- Infill;
- Conversion from non-residential;
- Vacant non-residential;
- Car park redevelopment;
- Flats over shops;
- Opportunity sites (with residential option);
- Smaller areas of vacant/under-utilised land (below urban capacity site thresholds);
- Ancillary space associated with established/committed uses;
- Other unspecified.

The estimation of potential yield for respective character areas requires consideration of the nature and character of their built fabric and account should also be taken of existing planning standards. Additionally consultation with development control officers may be beneficial to such consideration.

Examination of past levels of windfall in recent housing developments will also be helpful in the justification of assumed future levels.

Overall, this assessment will assist in the selection of allowance for windfall provision in the plan for each settlement as required.

Clearly, there are many assumptions required in this type of assessment which reduce the accuracy and reliability of the conclusions. It is however crucial to the total housing allocation exercise in the plan preparation. These shortcomings are offset by the commitment to prepare an annual progress monitoring and plan review.

10. Further assessment, as necessary by plan consultees, of urban capacity sites and general areas of high anticipated windfall should be sought before finalising the estimated urban housing yield. This could, by agreement, be on a drip-feed basis to facilitate the respective individual work programmes of each body involved.
11. For each settlement, the assessment steps and resulting total anticipated yield across the various character areas should be clearly presented both in detail and summary form. It is inevitable that this analysis may be carefully scrutinised during the post draft plan publication stages of the plan preparation.

## **Monitoring**

The Northern Ireland Housing Land Availability Monitor is undertaken annually and this will permit the examination of housing developments progress, both in total terms and by particular area subject to the level of detail in the criteria measured. Appropriate classification of sites within the monitor will permit detailed examination of progress, including within categories associated with windfall. This will permit on-going 'testing' of plan assumptions in accordance with the plan/manage/monitor ethos of RDS and integral with the commitment for plan review as necessary.

## **ANNEX A**

### **Detail Area Studies**

Such an approach will apply to Type 1 and 4 character areas as identified in the 'application of character assessment approach'. It is possible to go into varying levels of detail with regard to these types of area and it will be a matter for the plan team to decide this and justify its decision. The design led approach would be the most labour intensive but also the most realistic. Alternatively, a density multiplier approach can be adopted, which is the crude tool for multiplying the total area of land identified through survey work by an average housing density.

A more design-led approach is generally preferable, however where plan teams consider that this is not appropriate, consideration could be given to adopting it for a number of representative case studies for subsequent extrapolation.

The following key elements should be taken into account in any detailed area studies.

### **Current and future policy considerations**

- Existing policy constraints that will be in place into the foreseeable future.
- Future policy directions such as expressed in the RDS and relevant planning policy statements. This includes taking into consideration sustainability principles, making efficient use of land and reducing the need to travel.

## Constraints to development

- Insurmountable constraints such as flood, contamination, instability, steep gradient, conservation issues etc.
- Surmountable constraints such as ownership, policy, economic/market factors (where known), adjacent land uses, need for a comprehensive development scheme, surmountable contamination etc.

It is important to consider sites in the light of the overall plan period and not to rule out sites that could readily be expected to come on stream within that period. Clear justification should be available for sites ruled out.

## Density levels

Estimating the appropriate density for the surveyed sites will require consideration of site size, characteristics, infrastructure requirements and policy context. For smaller sites and in design-led studies this may be relatively straightforward. However, it may be necessary to identify typical bands of density in line with local circumstances and policy objectives for the RDS and PPS's. Depending upon the general location within Northern Ireland varying ranges of density bands might be considered appropriate, the most extreme at either end being:–

<b>LOW</b>	<30 dwellings/ha		<b>LOW</b>	<15 dwellings/ha	
<b>MEDIUM</b>	30 – 50 dwellings/ha	or	<b>MEDIUM</b>	15 – 25 dwellings/ha	<b>HIGH</b> 50+
	dwellings/ha		<b>HIGH</b>	25+ dwellings/ha	

The density level to be applied will depend on local circumstances, site location in relation to policy objectives, such as distance from public transport nodes etc.

Development plan teams will be expected to clearly identify and justify the density levels and application criteria to be used in the urban capacity study for their area, which will be available for scrutiny following publication of the draft plan.

## **Appendix 2**

# **Managing the Release of Housing Land**

The purpose of this appendix is to set out a broad methodology for managing the release of housing land to inform those preparing development plans in Northern Ireland. It is intended as a guide which sets out the main issues that should be dealt with. The guidance is based on the principles expressed in the RDS and this PPS and draws on the Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions' (DTLGR) policy advice document: 'Planning To Deliver – The Managed Release Of Housing Sites: Towards Better Practice'<sup>42</sup>. The preparation of the methodology has also been informed by consultation with DOE Planning Service and through a joint best practice seminar on managing the release of housing sites. It should be used as a best practice guide.

This is a new and emerging area of planning, with limited examples of best practice available in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. The guide will therefore be reasonably flexible within the confines of the principles set out in the RDS.

## **Why manage the release of housing land?**

The RDS requires a balance to be struck between a robust approach, which seeks to ensure that the strategic objectives are met, particularly in relation to the drive to promote more housing within existing urban areas, and the flexibility to respond to unforeseen future circumstances.

To achieve this, the RDS sets out a new policy direction for the delivery of housing land through the planning system based upon 'plan, monitor and manage'. It advocates the establishment of long-term reserves of development land, through the development plan process, and using a plan, monitor and manage mechanism to ensure timely periodic releases of land for housing development.

The key reasons for adopting this approach are:

- to ensure sufficient supply of housing, to meet identified need.
- to achieve the 60% target for the location of urban housing growth within the existing urban areas.
- to ensure that housing land can be released in line with regional and local planning policies and objectives.

Managing the release of housing land provides an opportunity for area plans to influence the order and timing of housing site release as well as controlling site location and type. The approach allows plans to be more responsive to housing need as it changes through the course of the plan period. It will also enable the sequential approach to be implemented allowing previously used sites within existing urban areas to be developed before less sustainable greenfield sites. The approach ensures that there is an appropriate tension between greenfield housing development and the provision of housing within existing urban areas in order to achieve a balance between recycled land and greenfield land. The fundamental aim of managing the

release of land is to encourage compact urban forms, promote more housing within existing urban areas and reduce the speed and extent of lateral spread of towns.

## **Approaches to managing the release of sites**

The DTLGR guidance sets out three different approaches to managing the release of sites:

1. Criteria based release
2. Site release based on ranking
3. Phasing – releasing sites over time periods defined within the plan.

The DTLGR guidance recommends the use of phasing as the most likely to provide the certainty and flexibility required for the plan, monitor and manage approach. The recommendation in this guidance for Northern Ireland is similar, although there may be greater justification to use the criteria based approach more often due to the large number of smaller settlements. A criteria based approach should only be used in exceptional circumstances when:

- housing requirements are very low
- majority of housing requirements are taken up by existing permissions
- little or no greenfield development is anticipated

**If the criteria based approach is adopted the criteria to be used should be set out in the plan and should reflect the criteria and approach set out below, for site identification and order of release criteria.**

There is no hard and fast rule covering which settlements should or should not be covered by which approach. It would be envisaged that a managed release approach should be taken for all settlements covered by the urban capacity study. (See appendix 1)

## **Components of Phasing**

Managing the releases of land within settlements is an on-going dynamic process throughout the life of a plan and beyond. The successful operation of phasing will depend on the completion of an adequate urban capacity study as part of the plan making process (see Appendix 1). There is discretion in relation to the sequence of steps, however, the following is the suggested sequence:

## **Windfall consideration**

Windfall sites are those sites that have not been specifically identified as available for development in the urban capacity study but unexpectedly become available, (see glossary for definition).

Over the course of the plan period, windfall sites make up an important part of the supply of housing for the plan. Therefore, it is necessary to make allowance for these when deciding the number of sites to identify for development in the plan. The scale of the allowance for windfall sites may vary considerably from area to area. Based on the historical analysis it is likely, to be in the region of 30-40% but can be much higher or lower than this. Allowance should be made on the basis of examining past trends in windfalls coming forward for development and on the likely

future windfall potential. This should be assessed in an urban capacity study (see Appendix 1). **Windfalls do not include greenfield sites and therefore no allowance should be made for greenfield windfalls.**

## **Identifying suitable sites**

First the RDS housing growth indicators should be distributed throughout the district. Then an allowance should be made for windfalls. The development plan will identify sites for housing to meet the requirements for individual settlements taken into account the completed urban capacity study and housing needs assessment.

The identification of housing sites in settlements will reflect the objectives set out in the RDS, local circumstances and other relevant material planning considerations. Existing permissions and zonings will be taken into account.

## **Site selection criteria**

The following criteria will be taken into account in the identification of suitable sites:

- a sequential approach to the identification of sites and to contribute to maintaining compact town and village forms making efficient use of existing infrastructure. (SPG-HOU 4 – SPG-HOU 5 SPG-ENV 6)<sup>43</sup>;

### **Search Sequence**

#### **Step 1**

Use previously developed and undeveloped land within urban areas, informed by urban capacity studies\*

#### **Step 2**

Extensions to cities and towns

#### **Step 3**

Exceptional major expansion of a village or small rural settlement

#### **Step 4**

New settlements

\*Within step one preference will be given to previously developed land over undeveloped land within the urban footprint.

- the need and desirability for urban expansion, including new settlements.

- the degree of integration with centres of employment, community services and public transport and other non-car modes (**SPG-HOU 2**)<sup>44</sup>. This will be informed by local transport analysis required through PPS 13<sup>45</sup>;
- the capacity of existing infrastructure including public transport, water, sewerage, other utilities, social and community facilities (such as schools) to absorb further development without adding further financial burden (**SPG-ECON 5**)<sup>46</sup>;
- physical and environmental constraints on the development of land including the need to protect environmental setting, character, natural and built heritage and constraints such as contamination, land stability and flood risk (**SPG-ENV 6**)<sup>47</sup>;
- the ability to unlock major strategic development opportunities such as major employment opportunities (**SPG-ECON 4**)<sup>48</sup>;
- the need to manage the encroachment of housing on existing businesses to ensure the operation and potential expansion of such enterprises and the retention of jobs, is not impeded by the juxtaposition of new housing areas;
- the ability to integrate new development without detracting from the character and identity of the settlement, whilst maintaining a sense of place. (See also **Local Development Guidelines for Urban and Rural Areas, SPG-ENV 4**)<sup>49</sup>; and,
- the strategic objectives for the plan area (taking account of the RDS and local circumstances);

It is not expected that every site identified will comply with all of the above criteria; however, the approach taken will be justified in the plan.

## **Dividing Plans into Phases**

The division of the plan into a number of phases should reflect local circumstances and the overall plan period and objectives.

The first step will be to determine how many and how long each phase should be. The development plan team, in accordance with local circumstances will decide this, taking into account the following factors:

- the period of the plan;
- the expected level of windfall provision;<sup>50</sup> and
- the relationship to the monitoring cycle.

It is envisaged that for Northern Ireland two or three phases would be required. When introducing phasing, care should be taken to avoid interruptions in land supply. Where there is no existing plan, account can be taken of policies for the managed release of sites in the emerging development plan. The weight to be attached to such policies depends upon the stage of plan preparation or review and increases as successive stages are reached.

## **Deciding the order of release of identified sites**

The development plan must set out clear criteria for deciding the order in which sites are released. In the case of phasing, this will require assigning sites to particular phases. Enough sites should be assigned to each phase to accommodate the required overall housing allocation for the period of the plan for each settlement. In doing this, the windfall provision should be taken

into account, but there should be at least enough sites identified throughout all phases to meet the overall need for the first phase.

The criteria should reflect the objectives of the RDS, local circumstances and other relevant material planning considerations. Therefore, in addition to the RDS objectives, other factors to consider when drawing up the criteria should include:

- local strategic objectives for the future of the plan area (taking into account RDS and local circumstances);
- the sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing (see para 42);
- accommodation of local physical and environmental constraints e.g.; flooding, steep gradients town setting etc;
- maintenance and enhancement of local character;
- promotion of equity and equality of opportunity;
- the divided community. In Northern Ireland there needs to be recognition of the need to deal sensitively and appropriately with the 'divided community' issue within settlements;
- site readiness for development – it will be critical to ensure that only sites that are realistically going to be developed in a certain time frame are assigned to the relevant phase. For example, phase 1 sites will ideally already have permission; and
- other relevant material planning considerations e.g. infrastructure capacity.

All criteria should be clear and justifiable. It will be essential that plan teams work closely with local infrastructure providers and the development industry to ensure a realistic approach to drawing up criteria and in site assessment.

It should be recognised that some large sites may need to be assigned to more than one phase and released accordingly in line with the phases of the plan.

## **Strategic sites**

The DTLGR guidance suggests that it may be appropriate for a plan to highlight a number of strategic sites that are essential to the delivery of the plan strategy. This approach is also recommended for Northern Ireland as it provides some additional certainty to the process and allows the promotion of key sites.

It is likely that these would be important previously developed sites that would have a significant positive impact on the implementation of plan objectives. The plan should set out clear justification for the identification of these sites.

Strategic sites may be in any phase and may even bridge across two phases because of their scale and nature. At the review stage, they would be unlikely to be moved between phases.

## **Release of sites**

Site release is defined as being the point at which planning permission is granted. Sites will not normally be released outside of the designated phase. Lead in times prior to bringing developments on stream should be taken into account when deciding the order of release. Often land included in phase 1 will already have planning permission. Nevertheless, there may still be

situations when planning applications will need to be dealt with in the phase before the development is earmarked for completion. This situation should be avoided where possible and therefore, clear justification should be provided where this approach is found to be necessary.

## **Monitoring the release of sites**

Effective and regular monitoring is key to the 'plan monitoring and manage' approach. If this does not take place the required responsiveness and flexibility of the phasing and managed release mechanism will not be achievable. Monitoring should be an ongoing process with annual reporting and regular opportunities for review, ideally towards the end of each phase. When a current phase is coming towards its end it will be important to review the arrangement for the subsequent phase and any phases thereafter.

The purpose of the monitoring is to enable a detailed understanding of what is happening and why in a particular area. For this reason, close consultation with the development industry will be required. This should be viewed as an ongoing process, building on consultation developed during the urban capacity study and during plan preparation.

Effective monitoring will depend on tracking development on the ground in relation to set objectives on annual building rates, rates of building within existing urban areas and greenfield locations, and expected windfall rates. This will allow a clear view of overall performance and gaps in performance to be ascertained. It will also allow any corrective measures that may need to be taken, such as amending the order of release between phases.

The broader monitoring issues such as affordable housing should also be considered. For example, where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the planning authority might consider, when reviewing the arrangements for phasing set out in the plan, assigning for early release, sites which can be developed and which could make a substantial contribution to the provision of affordable housing. Any action should be in line with the area plan objectives and affordable housing policies set out in this policy statement.

## **Amending the order of release and rolling phase forward**

Where monitoring indicates that a **persistent and significant** gap exists between the objectives of the plan and the reality of what is occurring on the ground, remedial action will be required. With regard to managing the release of land through phasing this will mean re-assigning sites from one phase to another depending on the particular situation. Alternatively, if there is no significant gap between performance and expectation, the current phasing structure may simply be rolled forward without amendment.

Each local development plan should set out clearly how amendments to the order of release may take place and in what circumstances. Article 6 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991<sup>51</sup> allows for a short procedure for certain alterations to a development plan. It is envisaged that in the majority of circumstances amending the order of release of housing land by re-assigning sites to different phases would constitute circumstances where the short procedure would be triggered. This process merely changes the timing of site release it does not involve either de-zoning sites or identifying new sites. It is recommended that the proposed approach and justification for

amending the order of release of sites is included in the plan from the outset. This will allow the intention to use Article 6 to be subjected to full public scrutiny and the inquiry process.

In circumstances where monitoring reveals that a major departure from what was expected has taken place, it may be more appropriate to carry out a formal alteration under Article 5 of the Planning Order.<sup>52</sup> It would need to be demonstrated that the change is so radical as to require a fundamental change in the plan strategy rather than a modification within the existing plan strategy.

While it is anticipated that the phases within a 15 year plan could be rolled forward in this way, it is envisaged that a new plan will be commenced before the end of the final phase. The new plan would, of course, be subject to the full rigour and scrutiny expected for a new plan.

## **Appendix 3**

# **Local Development Guidelines for Urban and Rural Areas (SPG-ENV 4) <sup>53</sup>**

### **Identity:**

Encouraging community participation in the planning process. Reinforcing a sense of belonging and sense of place by maintaining distinctive places throughout local communities and in local landscape character areas, including places of public assembly and community interaction, focal points, landmarks and a continuity of urban and rural traditions.

### **Vitality:**

Continuously caring for, restoring and renewing the physical fabric of towns and villages by a strong emphasis on the imaginative re-use of older buildings and the use of previously developed land as a fundamental component of the regeneration process for towns, villages and rural areas.

### **Proximity:**

Providing compatible mixed-use developments extending local community choice and opportunity in relation to jobs, commercial facilities and services.

### **Accessibility:**

Developing multi-modal systems of urban and rural transport, which would enhance accessibility for local communities to the full range of urban activities and meet the needs of people with disabilities. This would be achieved by integrating public transport, cycling and walking with a more responsible use of the private car, whilst facilitating the movement of goods.

### **Amenity:**

Providing community greenways to establish connections with nature and the countryside, and local historic features, for residents in urban and rural areas by maintaining and building up an interlinked pattern of public open spaces, play facilities and landscaped areas, woodlands and wildlife habitats, pedestrian and cycle routes, linking to rivers, canals, coastal and inland waters, as well as respecting the rural setting of towns and villages.

### **Quality:**

Fostering an imaginative and resource efficient quality of design, which respects existing rural or urban character, local tradition and human scale.

## **Appendix 4**

# The RDS Strategic Planning Guidelines

## **Chapter 4     Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context**

- SPG-SRC 1     To strengthen and extend European and world-wide linkages;
- SPG-SRC 2     To increase links with neighbouring regions and capitalise on trans-regional development opportunities;
- SPG-SRC 3     To foster development, which contributes to better community relations, recognises cultural diversity, and reduces socio-economic differentials within Northern Ireland;

## **Chapter 6     The Belfast Metropolitan Area**

- SPG-BMA 1:     To create a thriving Metropolitan Area centred on a revitalised City of Belfast;
- SPG-BMA 2     To promote an urban renaissance throughout the Belfast Metropolitan Area;
- SPG-BMA 3     To develop and enhance the Metropolitan Transport Corridor Network;
- SPG-BMA 4     To improve the public transport service in the Belfast Metropolitan Area;
- SPG-BMA 5     To manage travel demand within the Belfast Metropolitan Area;

## **Chapter 7     Londonderry: Regional City for the North West**

- SPG-LNW 1     To develop a strong North West based on Londonderry;
- SPG-LNW 2     To strengthen the role of Londonderry as the Regional City and hub for the North West;

## **Chapter 8     Rural Northern Ireland**

- SPG-RNI 1     To maintain a working countryside with a strong mixed-use rural economy;
- SPG-RNI 2     To create and sustain a living countryside with a high quality of life for all its residents;
- SPG-RNI 3     To support the network of service centres based on main towns, small towns and villages in Rural Northern Ireland;
- SPG-RNI 4     To create an accessible countryside with a responsive transport network that meets the needs of the rural community;
- SPG-RNI 5     To continue to create and sustain an attractive and unique rural environment in the interests of the rural community and the Region as a whole;

## **Chapter 9 Meeting Housing Needs**

- SPG-HOU 1 To manage housing growth in response to changing housing need;
- SPG-HOU 2 To direct and manage future housing growth to achieve more sustainable patterns of residential development;
- SPG-HOU 3 To set housing growth indicators to guide the distribution of housing in the Region over the period to 2015 in accordance with the Spatial Development Strategy;
- SPG-HOU 4 To promote a drive to provide more housing within existing urban areas;
- SPG-HOU 5 To encourage an increase in the density of urban housing appropriate to the towns of Northern Ireland;
- SPG-HOU 6 To encourage the development of balanced local communities;

## **Chapter 10 Supporting Economic Development**

- SPG-ECON 1 To promote a balanced spread of economic development opportunities across the Region, focused on the Belfast Metropolitan Area, Londonderry, Craigavon and the urban hubs/ clusters, as the main centers for employment and services;
- SPG-ECON 2 To exploit the economic development potential of the key transport corridors;
- SPG-ECON 3 To promote the regional gateways as economic development opportunities;
- SPG-ECON 4 To create and maintain a regional portfolio of Strategic Employment Locations (SELs);
- SPG-ECON 5 To undertake or where appropriate, facilitate a programme of infrastructure improvements essential to business needs;
- SPG-ECON 6 To improve employability through lifelong learning and personal development;
- SPG-ECON 7 To promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure;
- SPG-ECON 8 To establish a world-wide image for Northern Ireland, based on positive images of progress, and attractive places to visit;
- SPG-ECON 9 To protect and enhance a varied range of tourism development opportunities;
- SPG-ECON 10 To identify major tourism development opportunities for the private sector to develop 'destination resort' complexes throughout Northern Ireland, based on distinctive tourism themes;

SPG-ECON 11 To promote the Region as a centre for cultural, business and sports tourism;

### **Chapter 11 Developing a Regional Transportation System**

SPG-TRAN 1 To develop a Regional Strategic Transport Network, based on key transport corridors, to enhance accessibility to regional facilities and services;

SPG-TRAN 2 To extend travel choice for all sections of the community by enhancing public transport;

SPG-TRAN 3 To integrate land use and transportation;

SPG-TRAN 4 To change the regional travel culture and contribute to healthier lifestyles;

### **Chapter 12 Caring for the Environment**

SPG-ENV 1 To conserve the natural environment;

SPG-ENV 2 To protect and manage the Northern Ireland coastline;

SPG-ENV 3 To conserve the built environment;

SPG-ENV 4 To foster a stronger community spirit and sense of place in relation to local development proposals in urban and rural areas by the use of Local Development Guidelines;

SPG-ENV 5 To promote more prudent and efficient use of energy and resources, and effective waste management;

SPG-ENV 6 To create healthier living environments and to support healthy lifestyles;

SPG-ENV 7 To facilitate access to a range of opportunities for recreational and cultural activities.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Schedule of Planning Policy Statements**

**A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland, HMSO,1993**

<b>PPS 1</b>	General Planning Principles
<b>PPS 2</b>	Planning and Nature Conservation
<b>PPS 3</b>	Development Control: Roads Considerations
<b>PPS 4</b>	Industrial Development
<b>PPS 5</b>	Retailing and Town Centres
<b>PPS 6</b>	Planning, Archaeology and Built Heritage
<b>PPS 7</b>	Quality Residential Environments
<b>PPS 8</b>	Open Space, Sport, Recreation, Leisure and Community Facilities
<b>PPS 9</b>	The Enforcement of Planning Control
<b>PPS 10</b>	Telecommunications
<b>PPS 11</b>	Planning and Waste Management

## **Appendix 6**

### **RDS Evaluation Framework** <sup>54</sup>

#### **Resource Test**

The existence of community assets and infrastructure, including spare capacity.

#### **Environmental Capacity Test**

The environmental setting of the settlement and its potential to accommodate future outward growth.

#### **Transport Test**

The potential for integrating land use and public transport to help reduce reliance on the private car. (see PPS 13)

#### **Economic Development Test**

The potential to facilitate an appropriate housing and jobs balance, and to unlock any major strategic development opportunities.

#### **Urban and Rural Character Test**

The potential to maintain a sense of place, and to integrate new development in a way that does not detract from the character and identity of the settlement.

#### **Community Services Test**

The potential to underpin and, where necessary, reinforce the community service role and function of the settlement.

#### **Social Equity Test**

The potential to improve equality of opportunity and equity of treatment.

