

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Planning Committee: 7 June 2006

Subject: Scottish Planning Policy SPP 21 – Green Belts

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of new Scottish Planning Policy SPP 21 - Green Belts and Circular 1/2006.

2. Background

- 2.1** Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) provides statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use planning matters. This SPP follows the publication of the draft SPP in 2005, which was reported to the Committee in September 2005 (page 1884 of minutes refers). The Circular outlines new notification arrangements for development in the Green Belt.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Scottish Planning Policy 21 replaces Circular 24/1985 : Development in the Countryside and Greenbelts with regard to Green Belt matters. Policy for development in the countryside is covered by the existing SPP 3 - Planning for Housing and SPP 15 - Rural Development.
- 3.2** SPP 21 remains primarily an urban development tool with the key objectives listed as:-
- to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration;
 - to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of town and cities; and
 - to protect and give access to opportunities in open space within and around towns and cities, as part of the wider structure of green space.
- 3.3** A Green Belt therefore is designated for the purpose of managing the growth of towns and there remains a strong presumption against development in the green belt.
- 3.4** The SPP defines a Green Belt as:-
“.....an area of land designated for the purpose of managing the growth of a town or city in the long term. It should be used to direct development to suitable locations, not to prevent development from happening in general....”
- “Green Belt policy is not a designation to protect natural heritage or to safeguard land.....Only areas of land that help to deliver the objectives.....should be covered by Green Belt”.

- 3.5** It indicates that a Green Belt should have a timeframe of at least 20 years and that it should not be drawn too tightly around the urban edge. It should create an area between the current settlement boundary and the Green Belt. The area of land between the current settlement edge and the Green Belt should be identified in development plans as the broad extent of future growth.
- 3.6** The area between the current urban edge and the broad extent of future growth should be subject to a master plan, then adopted as supplementary planning guidance. "This is an effective way to ensure that development can be phased and co-ordinated appropriately". The master plan can be reviewed every 5 years with the local plan but the continuing relevance of the Green Belt boundary should only be reconsidered after 20 years.
- 3.7** Development plans will define the uses that are appropriate in individual green belts. These may include:-
- agricultural uses, including the re-use of historic agricultural buildings in keeping with their surrounding;
 - woodland and forestry, including community woodlands;
 - horticulture, including market gardening (but not retailing unconnected with or out of scale with this purpose); and
 - recreational uses which are compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.
- 3.8** Concurrent with the publication of SPP 21, Circular 1/2006 has been published concerning the notification of planning applications in the designated Green Belt. The Circular requires planning authorities to notify Scottish Ministers when they intend to approve an application for planning permission for development located within the Green Belt where that development is contrary to the Development Plan.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no financial implications.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** SPP 21 - Green Belts will now inform the Local Plan and a review of the land currently designated as Green Belt and other urban fringe land will require to be conducted to provide an up to date Green Belt boundary for the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (Finalised Draft). Revised notification procedures are now in place for development located within the Green Belt, where that development is contrary to the Development Plan.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is invited to note the content of this report.

David McMillan
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Date: 10 May 2006

Wards Affected:	8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21 and 22
Appendix:	None
Background Papers:	SPP 21 - Green Belt The Town & Country Planning (Notification of Applications) (Scotland) Amendment Direction 2006
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