



Ice Climbing Area

Locker Room

Training & Instruction Area

Main Rock Climbing Area

Ice Cave

Articulated Wall

Coach Park

Bouldering Area

Lecture Theatre

Reception

Shop

Heritage Interpretation

Gear Hire

Entrance

# Addressing Issues of Accessibility, Infrastructure, Scale, Landscape and Design



*Sabhal Mór Ostaig, Sleat*

## Accessibility

**34.** Developments that involve home-working, employment close to the place of residence, or that employ a small number of local people are unlikely to give rise to significant transport concerns. However, development in rural areas and particularly in the open countryside can lead to increased commuting from towns, increased deliveries and higher levels of freight traffic. Visitor traffic can rise significantly, particularly in the case of tourism related businesses and attractions. As well as giving rise to unsustainable traffic patterns, in some cases the rural road network will not be designed to accommodate the increased volume or weight of traffic generated by a new business.

**35.** Greater reliance on the car is often inevitable in rural areas but measures to encourage bus travel, cycling and walking should always be encouraged. New enterprises can benefit from transport schemes already operating in the area and additional demand stemming from diversification can mean an improved public transport service becomes viable. Connections to existing pedestrian and cycle networks may be relatively straightforward.

**36.** Transport Assessments, Green Travel Plans, and consultations with the road or trunk road authority will be of particular importance in determining whether a development is appropriate for its location. Where the travel consequences of a development are regarded as unacceptable it may be necessary for the business to be located in a village or town better served by public transport. In very remote locations, or in areas with a pattern of dispersed settlement, it should be recognised that relocation may not be feasible or as necessary.

**37.** Even where a development is acceptable in terms of traffic generation there may be a need for additional parking, improved access arrangements, and new lighting or signage. The local authority will normally employ their adopted maximum parking standards (although there are

also national guidelines). Access improvements can include junction widening to improve sightlines, new surface treatments or re-surfacing, the provision of footpaths, stopping up of existing accesses, the creation of an entirely new access or even major road improvements. There can be significant, sometimes prohibitive, costs attached to these works and owners may also have responsibilities for future maintenance. In some instances a developer contribution or legal agreement may be required. It is therefore vital that any issues are highlighted as early as possible. Often there will be a number of solutions available and constructive dialogue between the applicant and road services or the trunk road authority should be encouraged. It is important that solutions are appropriate to the circumstances and that 'urban' solutions are not imposed in rural areas.



*Cyclist, Luss*

SPP17 sets out The Scottish Executive planning policies for transport and considers the implications for rural areas in detail.

The Scottish Executive publication 'Rural Community Transport – A guide to good practice' provides practical advice on setting up and running rural community transport schemes.

Further information on signage can be found in The Scottish Executive's Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy. Local Authorities produce their own signage policies for local roads.

## Case Study 8: Clachan and Loch Fyne Oysters



Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd first opened a shop at Clachan near Cairndow in 1987. From small beginnings in an old farm building the company has grown considerably in the last 15 years developing its production facilities and growing as a popular visitor attraction. It has even spawned a group of restaurants across the UK. At the Loch Fyne site, several phases of expansion were required to develop the smokehouse, restaurant, shop and offices which are now there. The Oyster Bar has also been joined by the Tree Shop, a retail outlet for local wood products, and 'Here We Are', a community resource providing information on the development, education and history of the area for the benefit of local people and visitors alike. This hub of activity has put the community of Cairndow on the map giving it a real identity and sense of place. It has also led to increased numbers of people working in and visiting the area.

Increasing visitor numbers began to give rise to road safety concerns as the number of traffic movements on to and off the A83 Trunk Road increased. When the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar added a conservatory to their restaurant in 1998 the Trunk Roads authority warned in advance that any further expansion would require a number of junction improvements, and when 'Here We Are' arrived in 2001 the old access to the site was stopped up and a new safer access formed.

Although the total population of Cairndow is only 165 around 200 people work in the area. Surprisingly, given its relatively isolated location, less than half of the workforce travels to work by car. A number of people walk and cycle to work and the regular bus service to Dunoon is also well used. In addition, the local shinty club allows its mini-bus to be used by workers coming to and from Inveraray, and in return the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar makes an annual donation to the club.

### Infrastructure

**38.** The location of development in rural areas is driven to a significant degree by the availability of infrastructure whether in relation to transport, water and drainage, energy or telecommunications. Developers should be directed to development sites where infrastructure is already available or can be provided at a reasonable cost. A range of such sites should be identified in the Local Plan. Care must be taken to ensure that development does not create unreasonable demands on water and drainage mains systems and the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) should be encouraged. Self-contained solutions are sometimes used to provide infrastructure in rural areas. Private water supplies and the use of septic tanks are commonplace; energy can be provided by a private generator or renewable energy source. In some

instances shared solutions will be possible with a single facility benefiting a number of developments. The views of statutory undertakers will be fundamental in determining a site's infrastructure capacity.

**39.** Broadband availability can be an important consideration for businesses choosing to locate in rural areas. Connecting rural businesses to the latest broadband communications is a major priority for the Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands networks and they will be able to provide information on broadband availability in your area (see: [www.broadbandforscotland.co.uk/](http://www.broadbandforscotland.co.uk/)). Many rural and remote parts of Scotland currently do not have access to mainstream terrestrial broadband access, but the use of alternative technologies, such as wireless and satellite, can be used to overcome this difficulty.

PAN61: Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems provides further details on sustainable drainage.

PAN62: Radio Telecommunications provides further advice on planning, mobile phone masts and telecommunications equipment.

### Case Study 9: Broadband in Aberfoyle

The Aberfoyle Broadband Community (ABC) project is a joint project involving both businesses and public agencies. The project will provide a wireless network which will connect businesses to two satellite dishes (one located in Aberfoyle, and the other three miles away in Kinlochard) and a wireless hotspot in Aberfoyle to provide visitors and business users with access to the internet and e-mail. The project is being funded from Lomond and Rural Stirling Leader+ programme with support from the Aberfoyle Traders' Association and Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley. ABC has been set up as a not-for-profit company that reinvests any surplus back into improving the service provided and into good works for the local community.

### Case Study 10: SuDs at Steven's Croft

This 40ha site near Lockerbie was originally intended for a single chipboard manufacturing company. The production facility required a large site and good distribution links for supplies of timber and raw materials and for transportation of the finished product.

The Steven's croft site, located in a wedge between the M74 and the west coast mainline, was ideal as it allowed for the possibility of both road and rail freight. Instead of a single user, three timber-related companies now operate from the site employing over 300 people.

The companies complement each other with two of the companies producing wood products and the third recycling the by-products. This not only minimises waste but also ensures that maximum value is added to the timber. The presence of three users on the site and the synergies this creates also makes the site less vulnerable to changes in economic circumstances.

Because of the solvents used on the site proper drainage is essential. As a group the companies strictly control the amount of discharge from the site. A third of the water is held on site, and one of the sawmills is gravity drained to ensure there is no run-off and that the wastewater can be recycled. Sustainable drainage systems are employed to treat the run off-from the site with surface water passing through reed beds and three ponds before it is finally discharged into the River Annan.



## Scale

**40.** Scale, whether in terms of physical size or level of activity, is one of the most important considerations when deciding whether a proposal is acceptable in a rural location. Small-scale businesses particularly those operating from home or using otherwise redundant buildings, or even with elements of new build, are more likely to be acceptable in rural areas. Larger businesses inappropriate to a rural location sometimes need to be directed to larger settlements and towns.

**41.** Assessing whether a new business is of a scale acceptable for its location is easier when the activity is new to the site. Making assessments of scale becomes more difficult when a business already operating from the site needs to expand. Businesses expand in different ways, a company branching out into new areas of activity or developing new methods or processes often requires new premises. An intensification of use can also require

improved infrastructure. A change of use will nearly always require planning permission, but in some cases, activities ancillary to the main use may not require planning permission.

**42.** Where there are likely to be material changes to the scale of a business, either physically or in the intensification of its use, detailed assessment of the impacts will be required. Just because a business already operates from a site does not automatically mean it should expand unchecked and there will be circumstances when on-site expansion is inappropriate.

**43.** It is always worthwhile to reflect on the potential for future development and expansion. Raising the issue of future development with applicants helps to avoid surprises or disappointment. It is often possible to design possibilities for future expansion into a proposal.

### Case Study 11: Williamson's Garden and Machinery Centre

In 1998, with help from the Scottish Executive's Rural Development Programme, Jim Williamson set up his own garden machinery business on the outskirts of Turriff. A steading once used for storing farm equipment, grain and fertilizer was converted to a shop selling mowers, hedge trimmers, and other garden equipment. To meet the increasing numbers of customers it soon became clear that additional facilities were needed. Foresight and preparation ensured that proposals to create a tearoom and later a soft play centre (Tons o' Fun) went through the planning process smoothly.

Mr Williamson approached Aberdeenshire Council with a clear set of proposals accompanied by a firm business plan supported by the bank. He had already established that his was the only facility of its type within 25 miles, drawing in visitors from Banff/Buchan, Huntly, Turriff, Keith and even Inverurie. The tea room and the play centre were likely to draw people from an even wider area.

An application to convert two further steadings was submitted, but conscious of the potential for a continued increase in visitor numbers, expansion areas were incorporated into the plans and ample parking and sewage capacity were also factored in. This meant that as business expanded there was no need to submit yet further applications. Williamson's now employs 20 people and was the winner of a National Farmer's Union Scotland Innovation Award in 2003. As well as farming 260 hectares of prime land, they have now hosted over 200 children's parties.



## Landscape

**44.** Scotland's landscape is one of its most valuable assets. Many rural businesses are attracted to rural areas precisely because of the quality of the environment it offers, and it is therefore essential that this quality is maintained and enhanced. Inappropriately sited buildings, or buildings of an inappropriate scale, can have negative visual impacts and cause damage to their landscape settings. On the other hand, developments that are sensitive to their surroundings, of appropriate scale, well sited, and of quality design can enhance our landscapes. It should be remembered that the activities associated with developments can have just as much impact as the development themselves.

**45.** Whether a development can be accommodated in its landscape setting will depend greatly on the sensitivity of the particular landscape and its capacity to absorb new development. The design and layout of the development are important. Key considerations will be the surrounding topography, impact on conservation designations, views in and out of the site and the development's relationship to existing structures and features. Existing woodlands, new

planting and boundary treatments can help buildings to sit better in their surroundings. New access tracks can raise significant landscape and heritage issues. Particular care should be taken to safeguard landscape quality in designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs) and National Scenic Areas (NSAs), and sites included in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes. As statutory consultees, the views of SNH or Historic Scotland should be given particular regard in these areas.

**46.** Development plans should also contain policies that seek to protect and enhance landscape quality. Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Land-use Assessments (where they have been prepared) provide broad guidelines for understanding, maintaining, restoring and enhancing landscape quality. Applying these broad policies and design principles at a site level can be complex, requiring knowledge of design issues and principles and an understanding of environmental, historical, visual and architectural contexts. Detailed assessment or surveys are often required and in many cases it will be necessary to draw on specialists with the appropriate skills.

### Case Study 12: Ardardan Estate Farm Shop, Cardross

The Montgomery family purchased the Ardardan Farm Estate complete with several derelict buildings and an overgrown historic walled garden. The farm sits on a prominent green belt site with views over the Clyde so when a farm shop and tearoom were proposed careful consideration had to be given to the landscape. To provide screening it was decided to locate the tearoom within the boundary of the walled garden and to maintain rural character an existing agricultural shed was used to house the farm shop. A section 75 agreement restricts the amount of retail floorspace and links the shop to the farm business to ensure the business continues to operate at a scale appropriate to its location. Providing public access to the countryside is one of the purposes of green belt, and the Ardardan Estate is popular with visitors from surrounding urban areas, including school parties and horticultural groups. To further improve access they are in the process of developing a number of woodland walks.



## Design

**47.** The physical form, shape and size of buildings will be important considerations in assessing proposals. Good design can help to address issues of scale. Appropriate use of materials can also help developments sit better in the landscape and attention to detail can be just as significant. Using local materials and applying local built forms helps to reflect an area's character and identity. The preparation of a design statement will help applicants focus on the key design issues relating to their development.

**48.** Diversification creates opportunities to maintain and enhance traditional rural buildings, but meeting the needs

of modern businesses can be challenging. Alterations are often required and in some cases extensions may be necessary. Sensitive conversions should retain the character of the building; new activities might even reflect former functions. In some cases redundant buildings in rural areas will lend themselves better to conversion for business uses than for housing. *'Rural Buildings of the Lothians'* published by Historic Scotland, provides detailed guidance on conservation and conversion, much of which is applicable to the whole of Scotland. Achieving sensitive conversions demands an eye for detail and an appreciation of the historic environment. It will often be necessary to call on professional advice.

### Case Study 13: New Business Units on the Atholl Estate



Tulliemet Property Development took a measured risk when they decided to develop three brownfield sites on the edges of Blair Atholl, Ballinluig and Dunkeld. Former industrial activities on the sites meant remediation was required before construction of 12 business units could proceed. The units themselves are of relatively simple construction but attention to detail has ensured a quality end result. Generous space standards have been applied to the flexible business spaces and care has been taken not to overdevelop the sites. Access roads and turning circles suitable for lorries were constructed and necessary power and drainage provided. Additional skip areas and wash facilities with dedicated soakaways were also incorporated into the designs. Careful attention to siting, the use of existing woodlands for screening and appropriate use of materials and finishes has helped the units to sit well in their settings making them attractive to both users and passers by.

The units have enjoyed almost 100% occupancy since opening and are home to an eclectic range of businesses ranging from a motorbike accessories firm, plumbers and car repair shop to medical suppliers, and even a showroom for Indonesian furniture. Most of the tenants are local companies that had previously operated from constrained or unsuitable sites. It was only with the creation of new premises in the area that they were able to consider expanding.

Further guidance on landscape issues and design are provided in NPPG14: Natural Heritage, PAN68: Design Statements, NPPG18: Planning and the Historic Environment. PAN 72 on Housing in the Countryside also establishes useful design principles for development in rural areas.



**49.** Traditional buildings can be an inspiration and catalyst for successful diversification, but the countryside is not a museum piece. Many rural landscapes have the capacity to absorb new development and accommodate considerable change in the coming years. But change needs to be guided to positive effect. Contemporary

developments, providing they are properly planned, sited and designed can contribute to the quality of the landscape and still maintain a sense of place. Opportunities can be taken to interpret and adapt traditional shapes and sizes into new modern designs.

### Case Study 14: The Birnam Institute – a Community Facility with Wide Appeal



The Birnam Institute has been in existence for more than 120 years, hosting events and providing a venue for local groups, but in 1999 it became clear that their facilities were in urgent need of repair and refurbishment. What has emerged is a first-class arts and leisure facility of bold design which provides a vibrant focus for the village and delivers a diverse range of services to the wider rural area and beyond. The new extended facility includes a large auditorium space, meeting rooms, flexible gallery spaces and a new café, and remains an important hub for local clubs and societies as well as a welcome place for visitors.

The building's contemporary design in the middle of a conservation area presented a number of challenges for Macmon Architects. Birnam's Victorian architecture is typical for the period with structures of mostly stone and slate construction. The architects were keen to respect these surroundings but also wanted to reflect the forested setting of Birnam and Dunkeld in their use of materials. The result is a building that incorporates stone and slate elements but which also makes extensive use of glass, steel and cedar cladding. The façade of the original institute building was retained and efforts were made to ensure that the extension was respectful in terms of height and scale.

The design was not without controversy but the final planning application was supported by both the National Trust for Scotland and the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. In 2003, the Institute won a Civic Trust Award. There is no doubt that the Institute has greatly enhanced the area and helped to ensure that Birnam-Dunkeld remains the attractive gateway to the Highlands it has been since Victorian times.

# Recognising Individual Circumstances

**50.** Increasingly, many businesses are choosing to locate in rural areas not because they need to be there but because they want to be there. Improvements in IT have made companies more footloose and many businesses are able to serve their national and international markets from almost anywhere. This has helped to connect local producers to global markets. Many businesses are attracted to our rural areas because of the quality environment it offers. New facilities for such businesses should be welcomed in rural areas provided they are appropriate in scale, design and location.



*BT and Manpower Offices, Thurso*

**51.** Planners should be sensitive to the fact that land ownership, financial considerations, and site availability can also constrain business location. New premises or modest expansion can be of great significance to the operation of a company, and proposals sometimes bring significant benefits to communities with only minor environmental implications. Council planners should be realistic about the opportunities available to a new or expanding business and be aware of the real constraints that they sometimes face.

### Business Location

**52.** A number of rural businesses have little choice in where they are located. Some are by their nature tied to the land they manage; obvious examples are farming and forestry but extractive industries also have little choice in their location. Renewable energy projects are more flexible in terms of location but they still need to be located where there is water or wind. There are some activities that cannot be easily located near to settlements, for example waste treatment works or landfill sites.

### Case Study 15: Small-scale Hydro in Highland Perthshire



The Camserney Burn runs down a steep hillside to the west of Aberfeldy. With regular flow rates and in close proximity to a grid connection it was the ideal location for a small-scale hydro-electric scheme, 'it was literally an asset running through the farm'. There were no designations such as SSSIs or NSAs but environmental considerations were still to the fore as Camserney Hydroscheme Ltd, a company formed by the farmer and his family, took forward their first ever hydro development.

Detailed habitat surveys were carried out to consider possible impacts on flora and fauna. The development also had to sit well in the landscape. Water abstraction levels and flow rates were modelled to ensure that the hydrology and ecology of the burn would not be adversely affected, and an archaeological survey and transport study were also carried out. All the information was collated in an Environmental Statement accompanying the planning application.

Nevertheless, the sensitivities of the site meant that further consultations had to be undertaken with SNH, SEPA and the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board. An otter survey was commissioned and a number of changes to the design of the weir were made to meet SEPA's requirements. Planning conditions had to be formed to place restrictions on abstraction rates and to agree a programme of construction. All of this took time, but delay is sometimes inevitable where there are particular environmental sensitivities to be resolved. It helped that the applicant was aware of this from the outset.

The Camserney Scheme was one of the first small-scale hydro developments in Highland Perthshire and all the parties involved learnt a great deal about the preparation, sharing and presentation of environmental information. Now completed, the development is virtually invisible and quietly producing enough electricity for over 3,000 people.

### Proximity to Suppliers or Raw Materials

**53.** As well as businesses that are tied to the land, there are a range of secondary industries where proximity to raw materials and suppliers is an important factor in their location, for example, a stonemasons in close proximity to a quarry, or a timber yard or a sawmill near a forest. Similarly, there are often benefits in having food processing or packaging facilities close to the farms that

supply them. Businesses sometimes cater for a specific rural demand, such as tractor and farm equipment repair services. In all of these instances the rural location of the business might actually help to keep vehicle traffic, and particularly heavy freight, to a minimum. Re-locating the operation to a settlement might give rise to increased volumes of traffic.

### Case Study 16: Hutton Stone Company



By combining traditional methods with modern machinery, stone is now being extracted from the Swinton Quarry near Berwick on Tweed for the first time since the 1930s. Marcus Paine realised that by employing techniques used at his family's limestone quarry in Dorset, this small sandstone quarry in the Borders could once more be made viable. Planning permission was granted for a modest expansion and the quarry re-opened in 1994. It is a small-scale operation with only two men working the quarry face at any one time. The stone from the quarry is transported three miles to a stonemason's yard where it is worked into a

wide range of stone products. It is essential for the stone-cutting machinery and yard to be located near to the quarry as transporting the stone any further would be uneconomical. The low number of vehicle movements associated with a quarry of this size has not created any difficulties for the local road network. As with all quarries and stone workings strict guidelines for dust and noise emissions must be adhered to, and a safety consultant is employed by the company to audit the sites twice a year.

Hutton Stone now employs 12 people, most of whom were previously involved in agriculture. They have learnt new skills that had been lost to the area for a lifetime and local builders have once again begun to use stone in their building construction. Stone from the Swinton Quarry has been used in restoration work at Edinburgh Castle, and many other projects from Newcastle to Perth.



*Glanbia Foods Ltd, Lockerbie Creamery, Lockerbie*

## Rural Character

**54.** There are some businesses whose livelihood depends on their rural setting, especially businesses related to tourism and countryside recreation. For some activities like golf courses and equestrian facilities, whilst a rural setting may be desirable, it might be possible for them to be located near to a settlement or in the urban hinterland. For other businesses such as outdoor activity centres or countryside retreats their remote location can be an essential part of the business.

**55.** Many businesses like to be located in the countryside. For some this can sit well with the rural flavour of their business, for example knitwear businesses or carpenters. Others, as already mentioned, are simply there because of the high quality environment. However, just because a business is operating from a site does not automatically mean it is necessarily located in the most appropriate site or that it needs to be there for operational reasons. A business serving local markets may be able to do this just as well from a site in a town or village. Having it in the countryside could draw large numbers of visitors, customers or deliveries, and could therefore be unacceptable.

### Case Study 17: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig



From small beginnings in a converted farm steading over 30 years ago, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic College in Sleat in the south of Skye, has developed into a unique learning centre fulfilling a pivotal role in the revitalisation of the Gaelic language and the economic and cultural regeneration of the Gaidhealtachd. The college enjoys an international reputation and attracts students from all over the world. The most recent addition to the college is Àrainn Chaluim Chille (the Saint Columbus Campus), a prominent development located on a previously deserted headland in the sound of Sleat.

In normal circumstances, development in such an isolated and sensitive location would not be permitted. However, the new buildings are consistent with the college philosophy of developing a creative new dynamic for Gaelic and a striking symbol of the re-birth of a language that, in the past, was pushed to the fringes.

The college has increased the population of the area dramatically and succeeded in creating a new vibrancy in a quiet corner of the island. The college is the largest employer in south Skye and provides a unique community resource for the area. It has also brought satellite broadband facilities to the area and acted as the catalyst for a number of spin-off companies, such as Cànan, a multimedia publishing company. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig won the Royal Institute of Architects and Surveyors (RIAS) regeneration of Scotland award in 2000.

*'Higher education has a key role to play in developing the knowledge economy in rural areas.'*

National Planning Framework (Scottish Executive 2004)



## Rural Retailing

**56.** Retailing should generally be directed to existing settlements. NPPG 8 sets out exceptional circumstances where retail facilities outside the development limits of settlements and beyond green belts could be acceptable. These are:

- a farm shop tied to an existing farm;
- a shop designed to serve tourist or recreational facilities (and secondary to the main use);
- a small-scale shop attached to an existing or approved craft workshop retailing the product direct to the public; and
- a small-scale shop designed to serve a dispersed rural community.



*The Green Welly Stop, Tyndrum*

## Case Study 18: Österåker Handelscenter



In Österåker, a rural area north-west of Stockholm, a new country shop centre (handelscenter) provides a single point for the delivery of goods and services to the area as well as a valuable meeting place for local people. Goods can be ordered on the internet and collected the following day. The centre aims to provide 65% of everyday commodities in the district and for 50% of this trade to be based on internet orders. Postal and medical services are also provided at the centre as well as a hairdressers and a cafeteria. It is hoped that the centre will halve the transport costs of the 175 households in the district.

The concept has been to combine the responsibility of the public sector, the efficiency of the commercial sector and the engagement of the non-profit-making sector. The centre is the result of a partnership between national companies (including a large supermarket chain, a bookmakers, and the state off-licence) public service providers such as the district health authority and the post office, as well as several smaller local companies. The scheme won a Leader+ award in 2002.

## Petrol Stations

**57.** Petrol stations in rural areas usually provide a variety of services, normally involve a retailing element, and in some cases are linked to a food store or small supermarket. It is important to consider these ancillary services when dealing with applications for new or expanding petrol stations. Financial assistance is

sometimes available to petrol stations in Rural Areas. Rannoch Petrol Station was purchased by the local community with money from the Scottish Land Fund. The Rural Petrol Stations Grant Scheme assists proprietors of rural petrol stations with the cost of replacing old fuel tanks and pumps and installing facilities for the supply of Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).

### Case Study 19: St Kielder Petrol Station

After the closure of the Kielder Petrol Station in a remote part of Northumberland, residents faced a 34-mile round trip to get petrol. With the help of grant aid from the Countryside Agency, Kielder Limited, a community enterprise owned by the residents of the village, purchased the derelict site and now sell petrol and diesel to residents, businesses and visitors. As a community enterprise run on a not-for-profit basis the prices can be maintained at a level comparable with those charged by supermarkets. In order to be self-sustaining, existing buildings on the garage site have been refurbished to provide an additional income stream from engineering, retailing and garage activities.

Further information can be found at  
[www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk).



## Farm Businesses

**58.** It should be borne in mind that farm diversification projects of all descriptions, including farm shops, are normally secondary to the operation of the farm. The continued operation of the farm is an important factor to

be taken into account and in some instances it will be impossible, or inadvisable, to separate it from the new enterprise.

### Case Study 20: Peel Farm – Building Links in the Community

In 1989 Frances Fleming of Peel Farm near Kirriemuir opened a small coffee shop with just a few tables. This was so successful that soon the farmhouse required an extension to allow the business to expand. As the farm business diversified further new shop facilities were provided in disused farm buildings with help from the Farm Business Development Scheme (FBDS). Today, Peel farm employs 11 people selling a wide range of products, many of which are produced in the local area.

Peel Farm has become much more than a farm shop, developing close links with surrounding businesses and the local community. Several local producers rent retail space in the farm shop to display and sell their goods. This provides a retail focus in the area, which in turn has led to increased sales and helped the viability of these local businesses. In addition, the farm runs regular craft workshops and demonstrations, which have proved very popular with the local community. The farm also serves as the local post office.

Together with other quality producers the farm is part of a local business network. The network encourages people to 'Make the Country Connection', a scheme aimed at highlighting the many activities and facilities available in the Angus Countryside. In an area with a limited market, networks like this are important to ensure that businesses complement each other.





## Land Ownership

**59.** A wide range of groups and individuals have land ownership interests in rural Scotland. Large estates account for a significant portion of Scotland's land area and are owned by both private individuals and organisations. There are, of course, many other smaller land holdings under diverse types of ownership. Communities themselves also have the ability to purchase land in their area. Most landowners take their stewardship responsibilities very seriously, recognising their duty of care to the environment, the need to invest to ensure long-term prosperity and the benefits of developing long-standing relationships with communities and businesses in an area. The delivery of projects often depends on the availability of land for new development and land owners are important stakeholders

in our rural areas. Their engagement in the development plan process and subsequent delivery of projects is essential if plan objectives are to be realised.

**60.** Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, communities have a right to buy when a landowner indicates that he wishes to sell land in which they have a registered interest. The Scottish Land Fund contributes to sustainable development in rural Scotland by assisting communities to acquire, develop and manage local land or land assets. Following a community buy-out, the construction of new homes on Gigha has helped to attract new people and new businesses to the Island. In only two years the Island's population has risen from less than 100 to over 120.

### Case Study 21: The Glenlivet Estate's Strategy for Diversification



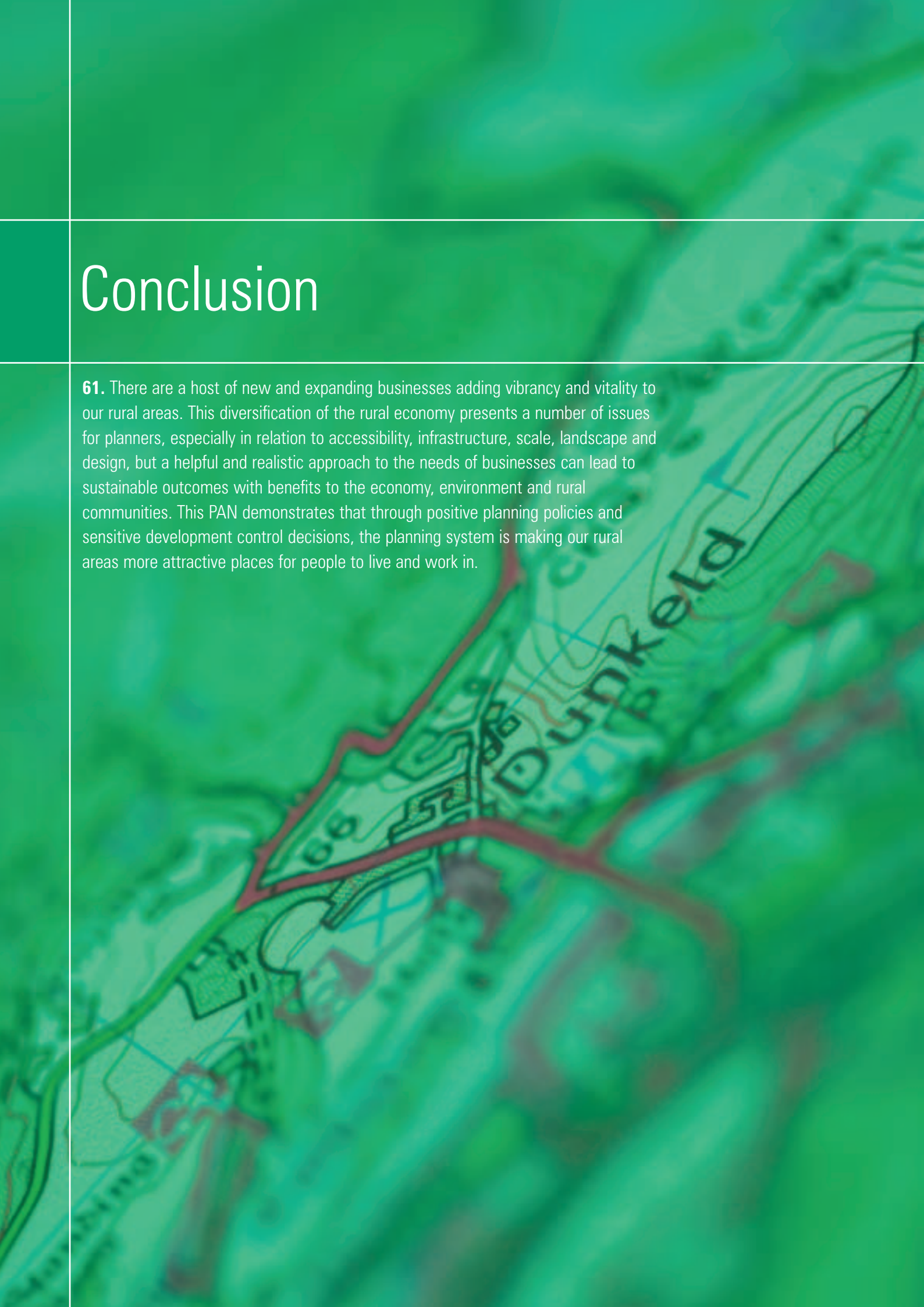
The Glenlivet Estate comprises over 30 let farms, 3,500 hectares of commercial forests and sporting interests including grouse moors, salmon fishing and deer stalking. It is managed by the Crown Estate who have a long-standing policy of encouraging new enterprises and activities. Since the late 80s the development of the Glenlivet Estate has been guided by a clear strategy giving high priority to the long-term development of the estate's community and its recreational, educational and other resources.

A non-statutory development plan sets out the estate's strategic development priorities of supporting farm and economic diversification, encouraging good forest management and improving provision for tourists in the area. The plan is reviewed every three years and great importance is placed on co-operation with the local community. Initially with the support of a dedicated development manager and latterly through the estate management team, consultations are undertaken with tenants, newsletters are circulated, and exhibitions and open days are arranged; ensuring that community associations, local groups and individual interests are all engaged in the development process.

The result is a strategy in line with the statutory development plan, sensitive to local circumstances and supportive of local business needs. The strategy has encouraged farm tenants and local people to develop a significant number of new or diversified businesses. These include an extension of the Cairngorm reindeer herd, a farm-based woodcutting enterprise, a country museum, birch woodland management schemes, a tourism marketing association, trout fishing ponds and a spring-water bottling plant. Several old agricultural buildings have been converted to holiday accommodation, and a network of walks and trails, car parks and picnic sites has also been developed.

# Conclusion

**61.** There are a host of new and expanding businesses adding vibrancy and vitality to our rural areas. This diversification of the rural economy presents a number of issues for planners, especially in relation to accessibility, infrastructure, scale, landscape and design, but a helpful and realistic approach to the needs of businesses can lead to sustainable outcomes with benefits to the economy, environment and rural communities. This PAN demonstrates that through positive planning policies and sensitive development control decisions, the planning system is making our rural areas more attractive places for people to live and work in.





# Contacts and References

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Further copies may be obtained by telephoning

0131 244 7543

A copy of this PAN is also available on the Scottish Executive planning website at

**[www.scotland.gov.uk/planning/](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning/)**

## Useful Contacts

### Crofter's Commission

Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ, tel: 01463 663450,  
www.crofterscommission.org.uk

### Federation of Small Businesses

74 Berkeley St, Glasgow G3 7DS, tel:0141 221 0775,  
www.fsb.org.uk

### Forestry Commission Scotland

Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT,  
tel: 0131 334 0303, www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland

### Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Cowan House, Inverness Retail and Business Park,  
Inverness IV2 7GF, tel: 01463 234171, www.hie.co.uk

### National Farmers Union

Head Office, Rural Centre – West Mains, Ingliston,  
Midlothian, EH28 8LT, tel: 0131 472 4000, www.nfus.org.uk

### Scottish Agricultural College

King's Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JG,  
tel: 0131 535 4000, www.sac.ac.uk

### Scottish Enterprise

5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow G2 8LU,  
tel: 0141 248 2700, www.scottish-enterprise.com

### Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department

Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh EH14 1TY,  
0131 556 8400, www.scotland.gov.uk

### Scottish Land Fund

Taigh Fearn, Auchtertyre, Balmacara,  
Kyle of Lochalsh, IV40 8EG, tel 01520 722988,  
www.hie.co.uk/scottishlandfund

### Scottish Natural Heritage

Head Office, 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 2AS,  
tel 0131 447 4784, www.snh.org.uk

### Scottish Rural Property and Business Association

Stuart House, Eskmills Business Park, Musselburgh EH21 7PB,  
tel: 0131 653 5400 www.srpba.com

### Visit Scotland

23 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh EH4 3TP,  
tel: 0131 332 2433, www.visitscotland.com

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