

## How to use the Inspector Training Manual

The Inspector Training Manual provides practical advice to new Inspectors and serves as a source of continuing professional development for existing Inspectors.

This training material does not constitute Government policy or guidance; nor does it seek to interpret Government policy. In addressing policy issues, you will be expected to have regard to the most up-to-date policy and guidance produced by the relevant Government department. In the event that there appears to be a discrepancy between this material and national policy / guidance, any national policy and guidance will be conclusive.

The Inspector Training Manual is made up of 'living documents'. Please always ensure that you are referring to the most up-to-date version.

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### Casework

150. Common concerns expressed by LPAs are that new housing would be located outside existing settlements and would conflict with development plan policy regarding development in the countryside. This often arises in cases where the appeal site is located at or near the edge of a settlement - whether or not defined by a settlement boundary.
151. Depending on the cases advanced by the parties - questions to consider could include:
- What is the underlying concern behind the reason for refusal? What are the objectives of the relevant development plan policies? For example, is the aim of policy to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and rural settlements, to ensure that car-reliant development is avoided or to focus development where it would support the vitality of settlements? Do any of those issues arise in your case?
  - What is the relationship between the site and the settlement – visually, physically and functionally? What is the relationship between the site and open countryside surrounding the settlement? Is the site more closely related to the settlement or to the surrounding countryside?
  - Is there evidence that the proposal would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities? Are there existing services, such as a shop, pub or school, in the settlement or in a nearby village, which residents of the new housing could reasonably be expected to use and thereby support?
  - Would occupants be reliant on the use of a car? What options would there be to travel without using a car? What services are there within walking distance? Would they meet some everyday needs? Would the walk feel safe to users? Is there a bus service? Where does it go and how often? What about options for cycling?

152. In considering the issues in this last bullet point, you will need to be mindful of the guidance in Framework paragraph 29:

*... The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.*

153. Evidently you would not expect the same level of bus service, for example, in a village as in an urban area. It will be a matter for your judgment in each case whether there are realistic alternatives to the car for any of the journeys that future residents of the development are likely to make. Even if there are no evening bus services, for example, it may be possible to travel to and from the nearest town by bus for work or shopping. In cases where there are few or no alternatives to the car, you will need to consider the extent of any negative consequences, for example in terms of increased traffic levels or isolation for those without a car.