

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION – 29<sup>th</sup> October

### Consultation on Draft Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

#### Briefing Note

- Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) set out the Government's national land use planning policies for England. It is the Government's intention to review all of its PPGs, to be re-named as Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), which will set out national policy objectives and the proposed planning policies that will deliver them.
- The Government is currently seeking comments on a draft of a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS7), *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*. It is the government's intention that this PPS should, in due course, replace Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 (PPG7), *The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*, published in February 1997.
- The consultation document has been drafted following a review of PPG7 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This considered whether the document was needed; whether greater clarity was required; and the potential to remove advice on practical implementation that would be best expressed at the regional or local level.
- Sustainability is at the core of the government's policy objectives for rural areas in England. The policies are based on the principles of sustainable development and the need to protect the wider, largely undeveloped countryside for the benefit of all.
- The proposed alterations address the perceived earlier weaknesses of PPG7. In particular, much of the contextual and background text has been omitted. The role of sustainable tourism and leisure in rural areas has been considered in more depth, and well-conceived farm diversification schemes are encouraged. The draft guidance also recommends that local countryside designations are removed from policy.
- The Government's consultation period ends on 12 December. The Sustainability Commission are asked to note the changes and implications and to provide their comments on the draft guidance, in order that this can be incorporated into the recommendations to Environment Committee on 11 December.