

new building in the countryside and encourage a healthy rural economy.

- 6.19 *Where bats and barn owls are present the developer will be required to submit a survey report together with proposals to mitigate and compensate for the effects of conversion and may include restrictions as to the time of year works can be carried out.*

Agriculture, Forestry and Farm Diversification

- 6.20 The Government considers food production and a competitive agricultural industry to be highly important, providing a basis for many other economic activities in rural areas. It sees agriculture remaining as the major user of rural land and the use that most influences the physical appearance and character of the countryside. However, agriculture is a rapidly changing industry. Farmers are diversifying into other activities either to supplement their farming incomes or move completely away from farming. This need to make the most effective economic use of their land involves activities such as the production of non-food crops, planting of more woodland, development of recreation, leisure and tourism enterprises.

RD7 - Agriculture, Forestry and Farm Diversification

Proposals for agriculture, forestry and farm diversification will be acceptable in principle provided that:

- i) the proposal does not conflict with the operational requirements of the agricultural or forestry enterprise;**

- ii) there is no adverse impact on high quality agricultural land;**
- iii) the proposal should, wherever possible, re-use existing farm buildings, or if new building is necessary, should be sited in, or adjacent to, an existing group of buildings and be of a design, scale and construction appropriate to its surroundings; and**
- iv) the likely level of traffic generated by the proposal is acceptable taking account of the suitability of existing access and approach roads; and**
- v) any parking associated with the proposal would not be visually intrusive.**

- 6.21 *PPG7 states that the priority in agriculture is to promote diversification of the rural economy so as to provide wide and varied employment opportunities for rural residents including those formerly employed in agriculture and related sectors. It is necessary to encourage activities, which can run satisfactorily alongside traditional farming. Proposals should form an integral part of, and be compatible with, the farming operation and may include such activities as tourist accommodation, farm shops, farm-based visitor centres, equestrian centres, food processing, specialist food preparation and sale and rural craft enterprises.*

- 6.22 *One aspect of rural diversification is the sale of produce from farm holdings. Farm shops can provide a valuable contribution to the rural economy because they widen the range of employment opportunities and provide*

additional income to farms. Some enterprises which sell small amounts of seasonal unprocessed food generated from the farm holding will be ancillary to the main farming activity and can be carried out without planning permission being required. However, it would be advisable for prospective operators to consult the local planning authority about the nature and level of their activities.

- 6.23 Horticultural nurseries, while principally devoted to the raising and wholesale distribution of plants, trees and shrubs, often include a limited provision for ancillary retail plant sales. Commercial garden centres on the other hand involve the large-scale importation of plant materials and a wide range of other goods. These will be regarded as commercial retail units and are covered by the Shopping policies.

RD8 – Farm Shops and Sales from Agricultural and Forestry Holdings

Proposals for the establishment of, or extension to, farm shops on existing agricultural, forestry, horticultural or nursery holdings will be permitted provided that:

- i) the sale of goods is limited to those which are generated from the holding or other holding in the locality. The sale of goods from outside the locality may be acceptable where it will enable the farm shop to provide a service throughout the year to overcome the problems of seasonality by providing continuity of employment and ensuring that a sufficiently wide**

selection of produce can be offered for sale.

- ii) the proposal involves the re-use of an existing rural building but if new building is necessary this should be small in scale and well related to existing buildings. Any new construction must respect the scale, appearance and design of nearby buildings and not harm the character of the landscape;**
- iii) the likely level of traffic generated by the proposal is acceptable taking account of the suitability of existing access and approach roads;**
- iv) any parking associated with the proposal would not be visually intrusive; and**
- v) there is no adverse impact on the viability of existing nearby village shops.**

- 6.24 Direct selling to the public from farm shops and nurseries is increasing in popularity. They are also a valuable source of local employment. The policy is consistent with advice contained in PPG7 Annex C and PPG6. It is however important to conserve the countryside for its own sake when encouraging diversity of employment and activity. This is particularly important in view of the environmental damage that can result from the activities of shops of these types such as increased traffic on unsuitable roads, parked vehicles, and a proliferation of advanced direction signs to catch the attention of passing motorists.