

## **We own land outside the settlement boundary - could we build an eco home on it?**

***We own five acres on which we'd love to build an eco home — but apparently the land is outside the settlement boundary. We use the land for our horses and have stables and a menage. Do we have any chance of obtaining planning permission?***

There are strict boundaries where local planning policies restrict development to preserve the countryside, thus ensuring that new developments are sustainable. If some of your land was located within the settlement boundary, then there may have been a possibility of self-building. However, outside of settlement boundaries there is little chance of any new build development.

Schemes such as affordable housing or agricultural workers' dwellings are sometimes built on the fringes of sustainable villages, but such developments are hard to achieve. The definition of agriculture does not extend to equestrian activities and, therefore, an agricultural worker's dwelling would not be applicable.

Whilst the use of modern sustainable design techniques and renewable technologies are all supported by the planning process, these on their own are not enough to overcome the fact that there is no planning policy support for the development of sites outside of the settlement boundary. It is therefore not possible to make a planning argument that will stand up to scrutiny.

Conversions of existing buildings such as barns or stables are sometimes possible, however they must be of sound construction e.g. brick or stone, and in a good condition. Other development control policies such as sustainability and access would also be applicable if the building was of a suitable size, scale and construction. Unless the stables are suitable for conversion, I would therefore suggest that it would be highly unlikely that any residential development upon the site would be permitted by the LPA.