



Rural Affordable Housing Project

Final Report

July 2010



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Project

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Final Report July 2010

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For the Rural Affordable Housing Project – a joint initiative between Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Homes and Communities Agency

With many thanks to all those who took the time to engage with the project. A special thanks to the local authorities, housing associations and other partner organisations the project team visited. The advice and support of the steering group - Helen Kelly, Tim Adey and Matt Dodd - is duly acknowledged.

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At the time of writing, we are experiencing a changing political and economic environment. This, though, does not affect the report's main principle: to support local authorities, their partners and communities help enable and maintain sustainable rural communities – which includes access to decent, affordable homes. In rural areas we see some of the widest affordability gaps with regard to house prices and wages. The Government highlights affordable housing in the Policy Green Paper [Open Source Planning](#), and will introduce incentivisation mechanisms to encourage communities and local authorities help ensure an affordable and sustainable future.

The 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' means it is essential for local authorities and their partners to have the evidenced examples of the link between affordable homes and enabling and maintaining sustainability. Collaboration, enabling communities to have all relevant information so as to make informed decisions, and a focus on 'bottom up' planning all point to the 'localism' agenda the Government is enabling. These three aspects have been highlighted throughout this report – good practice examples showing how local communities' aspirations and needs is the bedrock of strategic and policy thinking. Furthermore, collaborative working between agencies and organisations help enable communities to become empowered, so as to facilitate them enabling and maintaining their own sustainability into the future – internal and external joint working being a central tenet to the evaluative conclusions.

The report is an interactive document. It highlights procedural and policy good practice examples, all related to issues identified throughout the research stage of the Rural Affordable Housing Project. The pilot good practice website mirrors the way the report has been presented, employing the issues identified for the way professionals and stakeholders involved in planning for and enabling rural affordable housing can search for good practice examples – so as to help overcome barriers and blockages.

Dan Berlin

June 2010

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 After the Taylor Review

1.1.1 There is a substantial directory of independent research and Government reports focusing on affordable housing. The main thrust of this body of work highlights the key issues of aspiration and need; scarcity; and affordability - which all sit within the context of sustainability. Furthermore, when focusing on themes surrounding affordable housing in rural areas, we see more acute expressions of each of these issues.

✚ Matthew Taylor tells us that 90% of those living in the countryside said that they would prefer to stay, whereas half those in urban areas say that they would like to move into the countryside – [Taylor Review](#), p9

figure 1: Ratio of ave lower quartile house price to ave lower quartile income

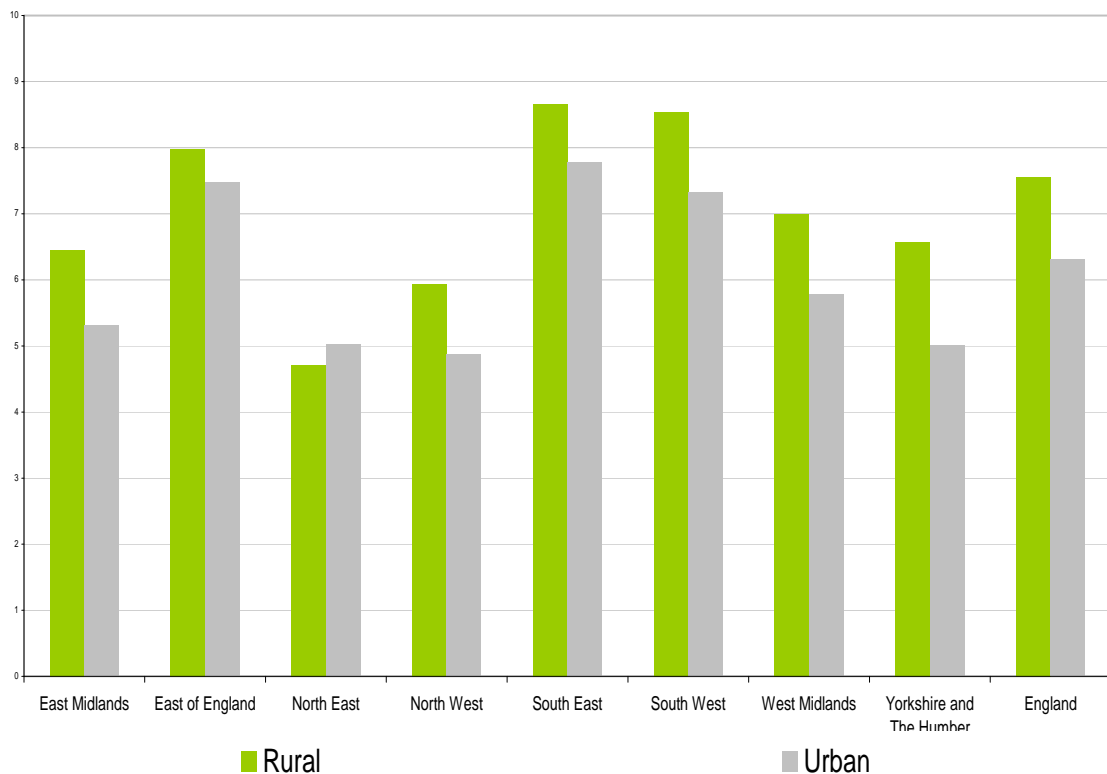
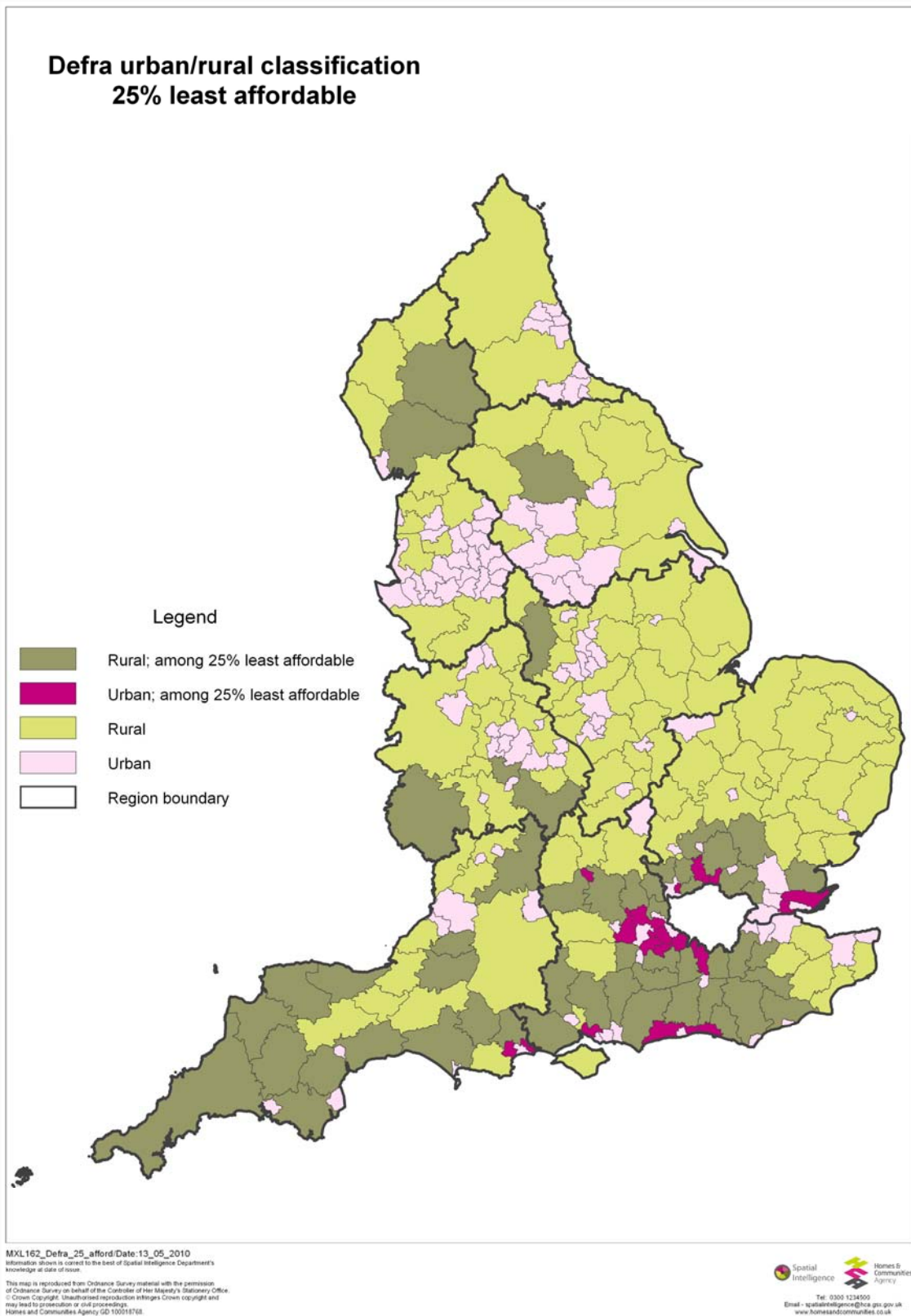


figure 2: Affordability map



- 1.1.2 Following the Affordable Rural Housing Commission report, which considerably raised the profile of the need for affordable housing in rural areas¹, Matthew Taylor's review '*Living, Working Countryside*' moved toward a solutions-focused approach for Government, local authorities and communities.
It stated: "We need a can-do system that asks the question of each development proposal 'how will this development add to or diminish the sustainability of this community?' and includes social, economic and environmental factors in the answer."²
- 1.1.3 Taylor's recommendations can be linked to the three themes referred to in 1.1.1. This linkage should be recognised by using methods that address their various interconnections.
- 1.1.4 It is not for this report to present new evidence that points to the importance of affordable housing across rural settlements. The existence of this report, partly as an outcome of the plethora of studies and government reviews on the issue, demonstrates this as a given. This report is intended to build on the 'solutions approach' and provide mechanisms and tools that help local authorities and their partners accelerate delivery of affordable housing. The long-term aim is to address the need to 'firefight' the negative social outcomes of scarcity, wide affordability gaps, unmet need and aspirations and, ultimately, unsustainable communities.
- 1.1.5 Within the context of affordable housing provision, there is much good work taking place across the country - providing people with opportunities for positive engagement and outcomes. This report, and related outputs of the Rural Affordable Housing Project, highlights that good work, with the aim to enable a more proactive response to the issues facing rural communities, ensuring positive sustainable outcomes.

¹ As well as highlighting the need for more affordable housing in small rural settlements, the report recommended positive planning and better finance and supply of sites as integral to delivery. It also identified the need to embrace wider interests, understand different positions, and enable consensus across rural communities, in order to help to achieve this. See Affordable Rural Housing Commission (2006), page 5.

² Taylor, M (2008), page 9.

1.2 Rural Affordable Housing Project: *background, aims and objectives*

1.2.1 The Rural Affordable Housing Project is a joint initiative between Defra and the HCA.

1.2.2 The project has the overarching objective of supporting communities, local authorities and their partners' efforts to enable and increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas – focussing on settlements with a population fewer than 3,000 people.

- ✚ Settlements with a population fewer than 3,000 reflect the smaller villages and hamlets that the 'challenges of unaffordable homes, low wages and declining services are at their greatest' – *Taylor Review, page 12.*
- ✚ All settlements with a population fewer than 3,000 can be identified via the Rural Settlement Gazetteer. There are 16,100 such settlements, with a total population of 5.8 million

1.2.3 The above objective (1.2.2) is within the context of helping to set up future delivery, help local authorities to have policies that have full regard to the housing aspirations across small rural communities, inform 'rural proofing' of HCA and partner policies related to investment in and delivery of affordable housing and ensuring long-term stewardship of the project's aims.

- ✚ The Rural Affordable Housing Project has engaged with 65 local authorities, partner organisations and stakeholders, identifying ways that support can be provided and objectives achieved (1.2.3).
- ✚ Independent studies have been commissioned to support the project's objectives. The topics of study identified by local authority officers and partners as areas that they would benefit from further research, knowledge and guidance are detailed on pages 58-60
- ✚ To ensure long-term stewardship, which involves continually updating and revising ways to overcome barriers to delivery, a Rural Enabling Guide has been devised - supporting a solutions-focused approach to future delivery (see Appendix 1 for summary)

- 1.2.4 In 2008, the Rural Housing Advisory Group recommended that a project should be initiated that raises awareness of the issues concerned, investigates delivery challenges, implements solutions and identifies, collates and disseminates good practice across the country.
- 1.2.5 Delivery challenges which local authorities need to address have also been well documented throughout the past decade. The overarching issues relate to: (i) community engagement; (ii) local authority policy and practice; (iii) rural affordable housing as a strategic priority; and (iv) considerations related to finance. Without proper regard to these issues, the evidence suggests that successful delivery cannot be achieved.
- 1.2.6 Good practice can be defined as policy and procedure which helps to overcome challenges and barriers. With that in mind, it is apparent that there is a great deal of good practice taking place across the country – clearly evidenced by the fact we can see delivery of affordable housing across rural communities. It is clear, however, that delivery needs to increase and accelerate if our aims and objectives surrounding sustainability of small rural settlements are to be met. The challenge of affordable housing scarcity set against projected population rises will escalate unless we can increase the deliverability of affordable homes.³ Sharing existing good practice across the country is an important step towards achieving this.

- ✚ The Rural Affordable Housing Project has identified existing policies and procedures across the country that can help address the negative impact associated with the issues detailed in this report.
- ✚ The examples of good practice have been applied to a *solutions-focused* approach that provides options for local authority officers, development managers, partnership co-ordinators, Rural Housing Enablers, senior management and political leaders, and local people to unblock schemes and deliver housing in a strategic and proactive manner.

³ Holmans, A. *et al* (2008)

1.3 Report structure

Supporting professionals and communities to narrow the gap between policy and delivery

1.3.1 This report covers three key areas: commentary surrounding the identified issues and related barriers and solutions (*chapters 1–3*); summarised accounts of independent research and supporting information (*chapter 4*); and evaluative conclusions and recommendations for ongoing and future support (*chapter 5*).

1.4 Methodological approach

***Research methods are informed by the underlying issues the study has the aim to examine.*⁴**

1.4.1 The issues central to this study are: the barriers to delivery, the ways to help overcome these and enabling a practicable way of implementing solutions. With that in mind, a mixed method approach has been used that simultaneously employs statistical and interpretive data to ensure the project has full regard to the situational and contextual aspects of issues and their related barriers and solutions – appreciating that one size does not fit all.

1.4.2 Data was sourced through a combination of face-to-face dialogue with housing and planning professionals and other stakeholders, a review of secondary data sources and attendance at forums and conferences.

1.5 Research design: *the sample*

1.5.1 The sample was taken from the 50 local authorities with the highest amount of settlements with a population fewer than 3,000, relative to the numbers of such settlements within the eight regions outside London. This approach ensured that a representative sample was gleaned. *See figures 3, 4 & 5*

1.5.2 Of the 326 English local authorities, 244 have settlements with populations of fewer than 3,000. Nationally, there are 16,100 such settlements outside London. *See figure 3*

⁴ Mills, C W, (1959)

figure 3: Number of settlements with a population fewer than 3000 by region

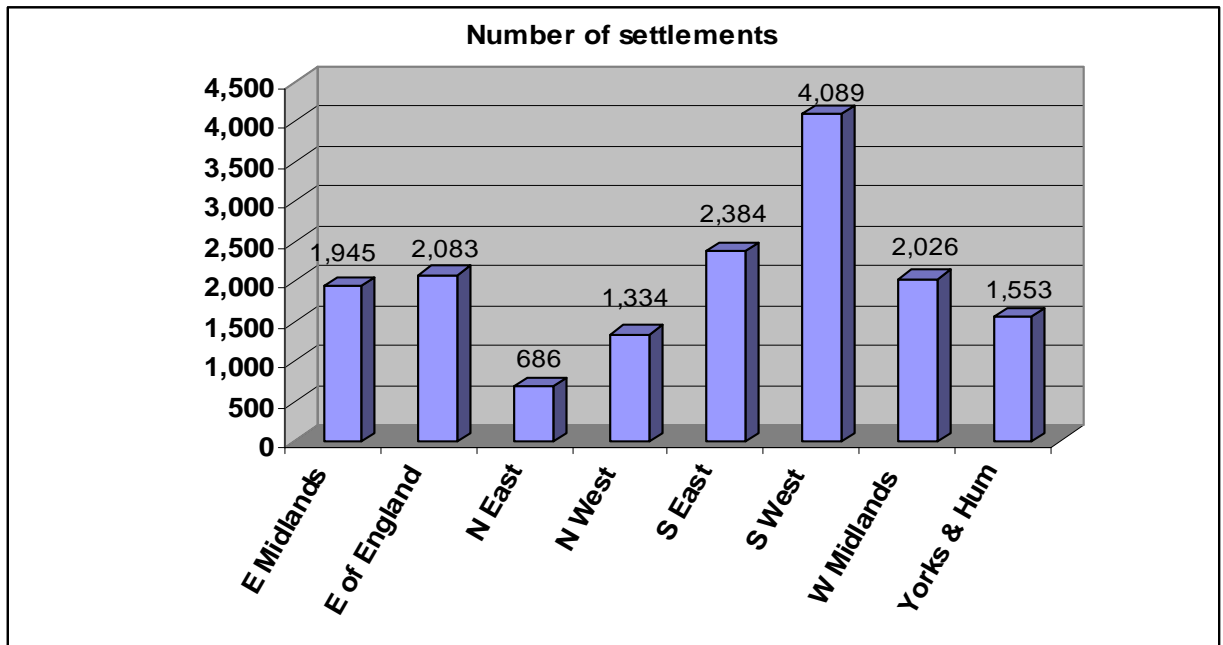


figure 4: Proportion of settlements with a population fewer than 3000 by region

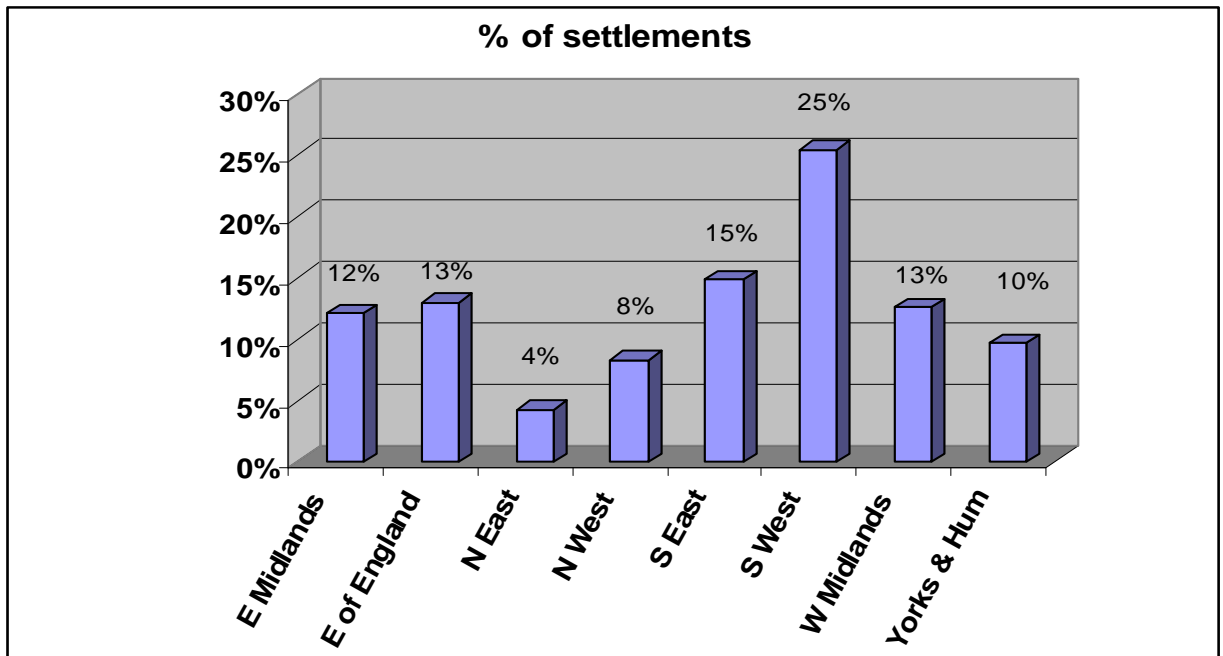
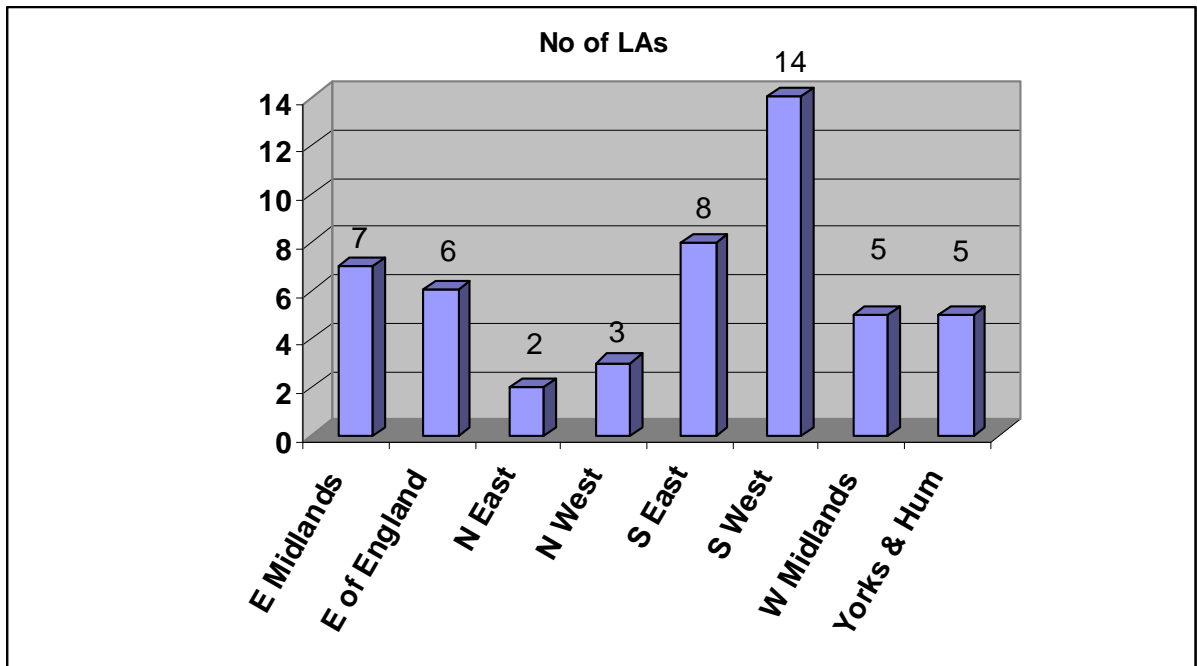


figure 5: Number of local authorities within an initial sample of 50, based on the data in figures 3 & 4



The actual sample is detailed in Appendix 2. Local authorities that held project dialogues are detailed in figures 6-13

- 1.5.3 The sample did not preclude organisations that wished to engage with the project from doing so. Project dialogues were also held with a number of Registered Providers, rural stakeholders and partners and Rural Housing Enablers networks.

Figure 6: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the North West

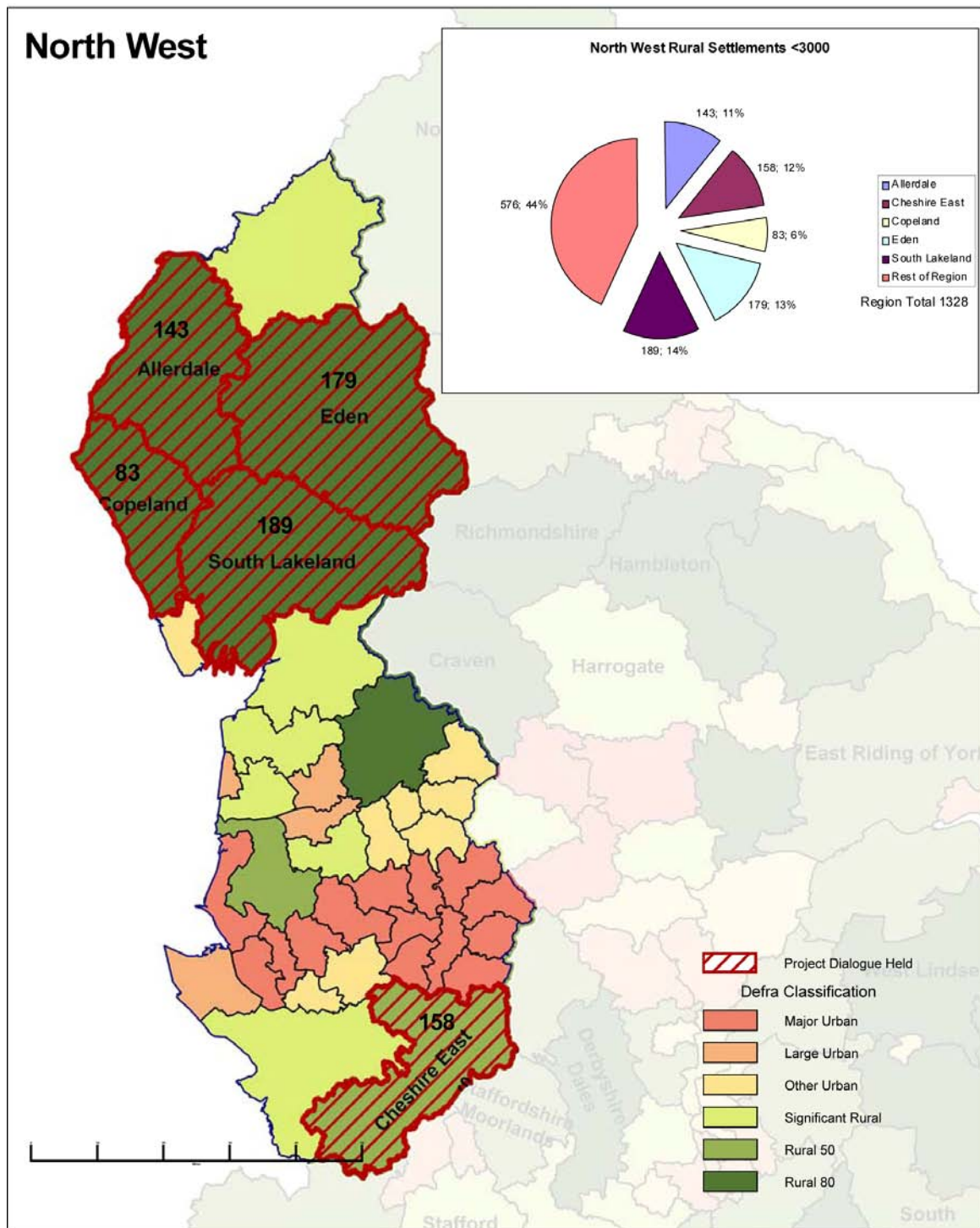


Figure 7: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the North East

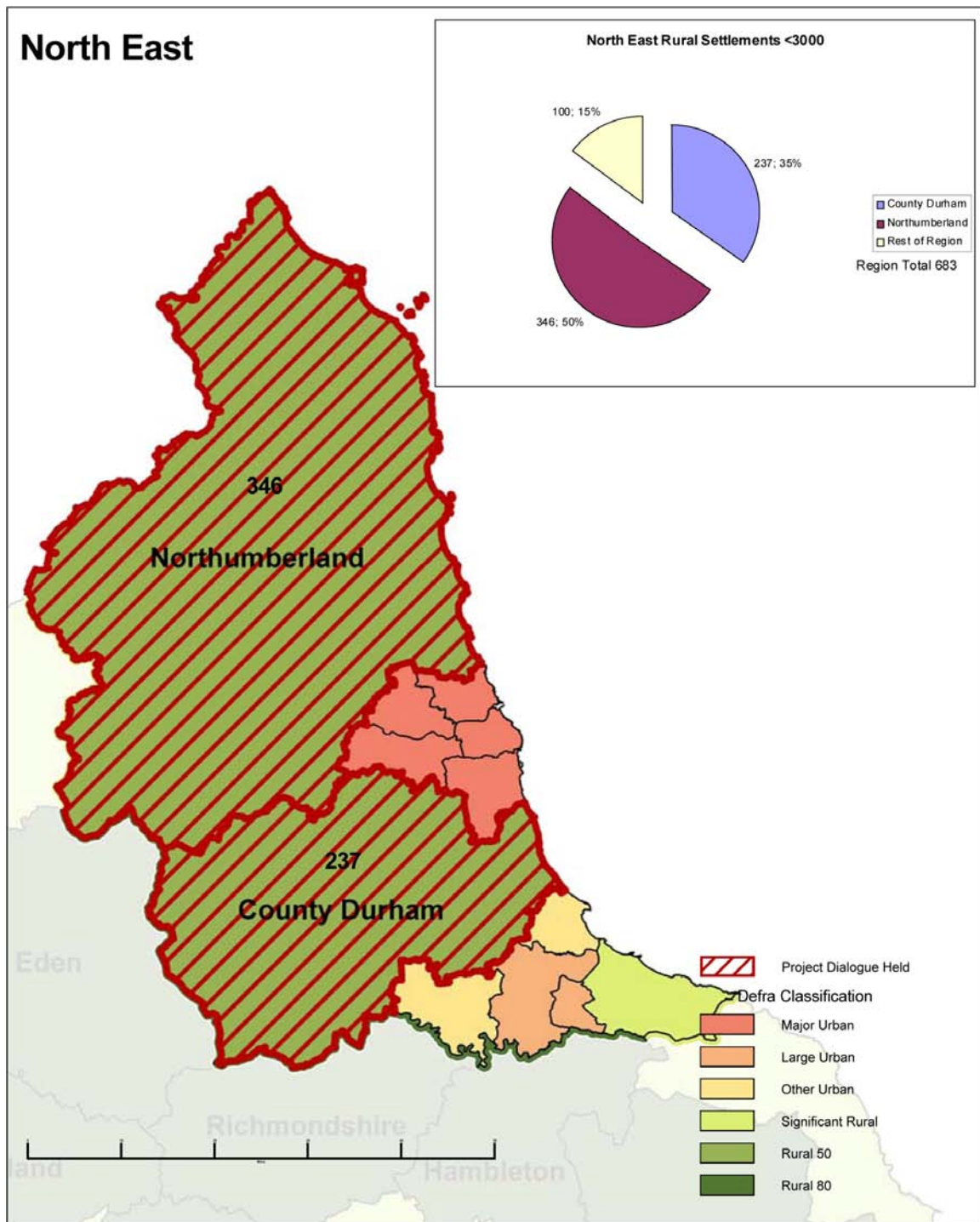


Figure 8: Project dialogues held with local authorities in Yorkshire & The Humber

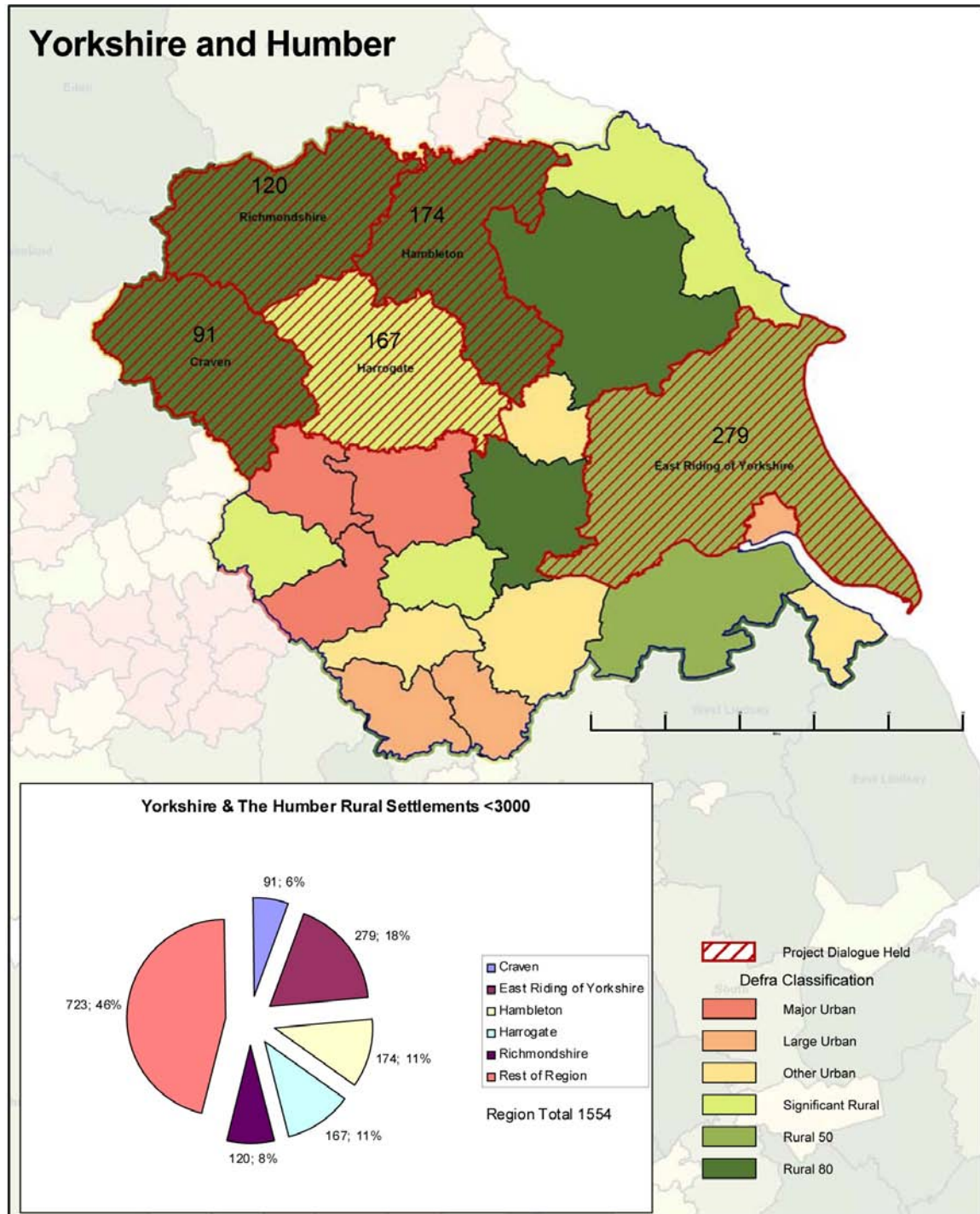


Figure 9: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the West Midlands

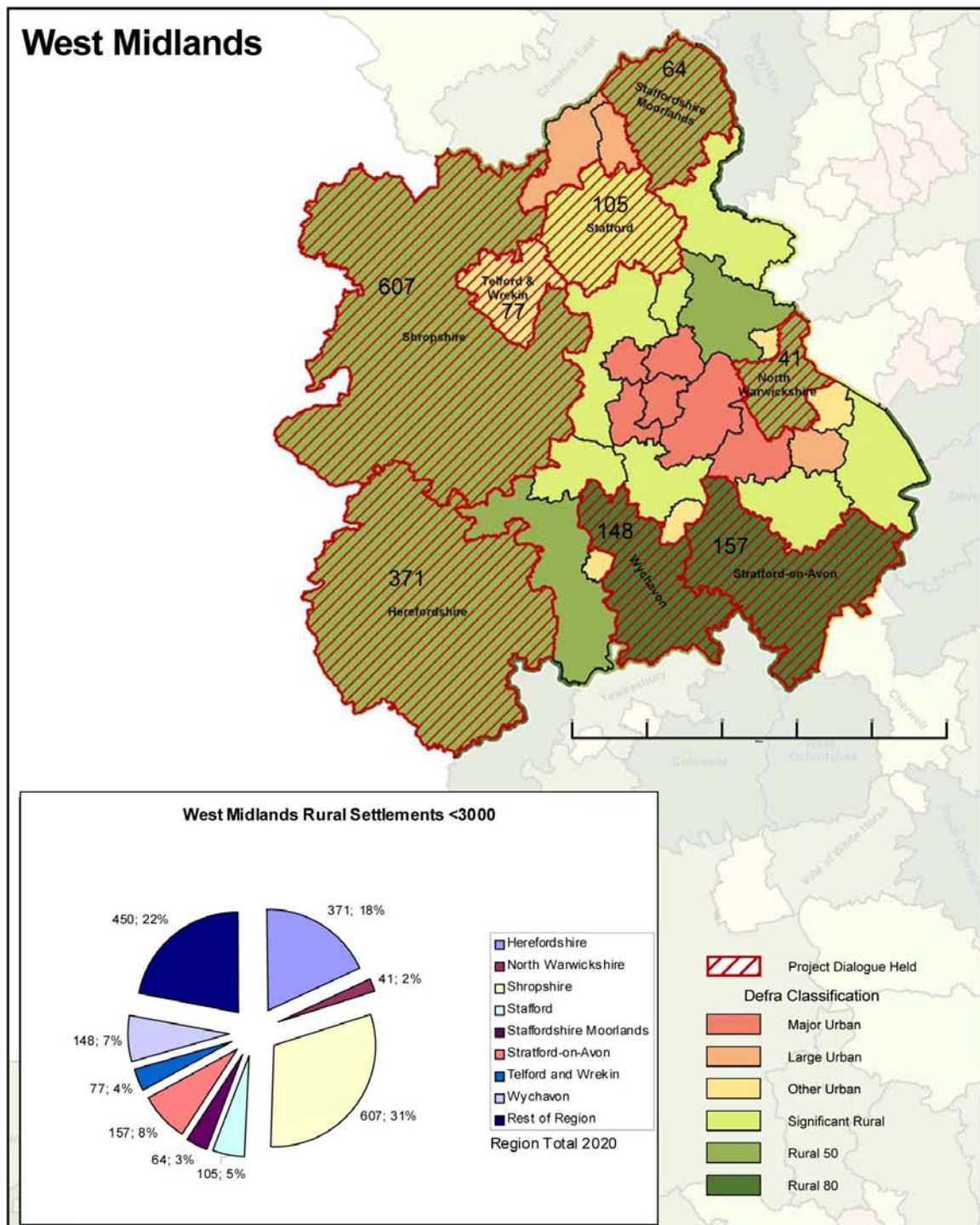


Figure 10: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the East Midlands

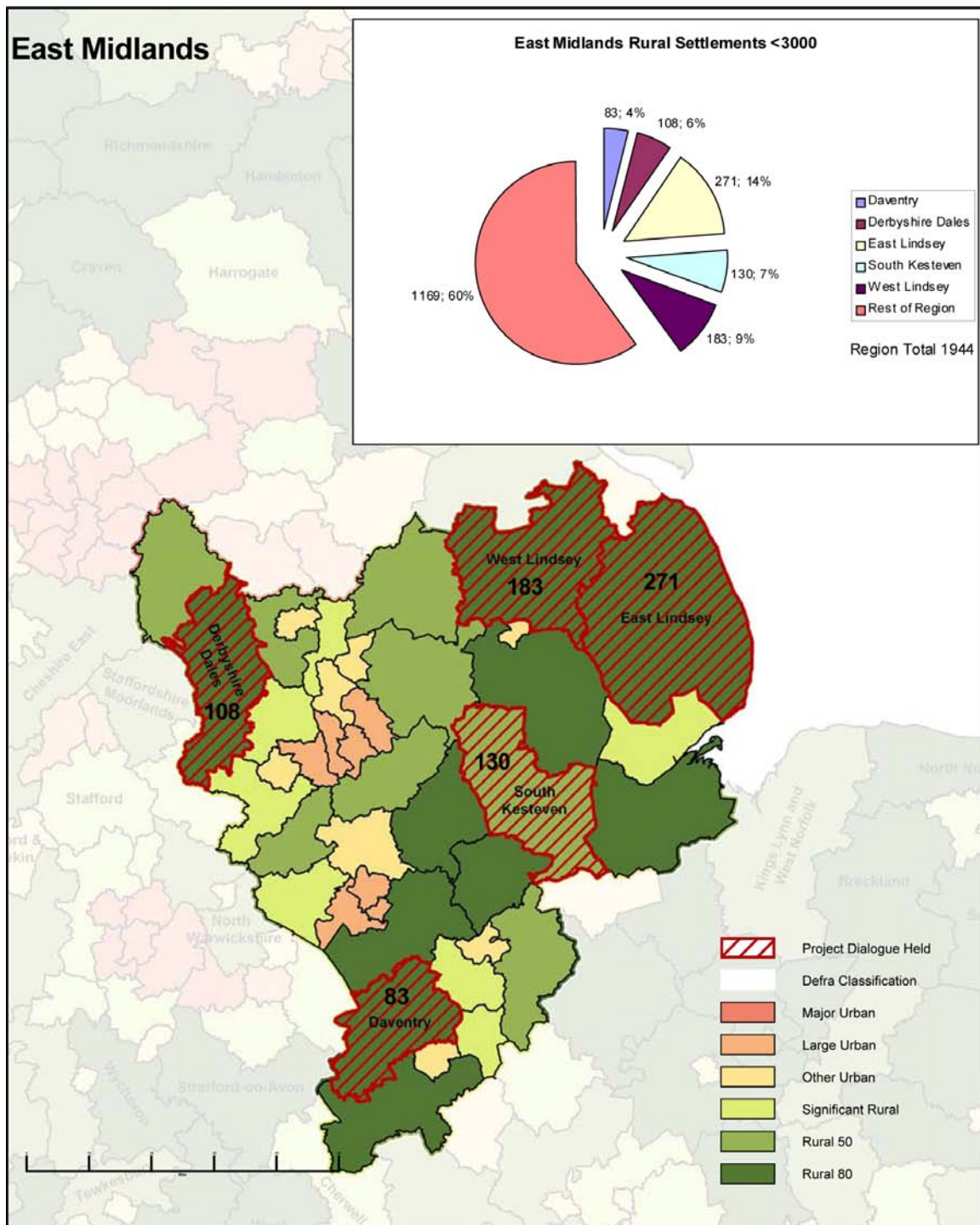


Figure 11: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the East of England

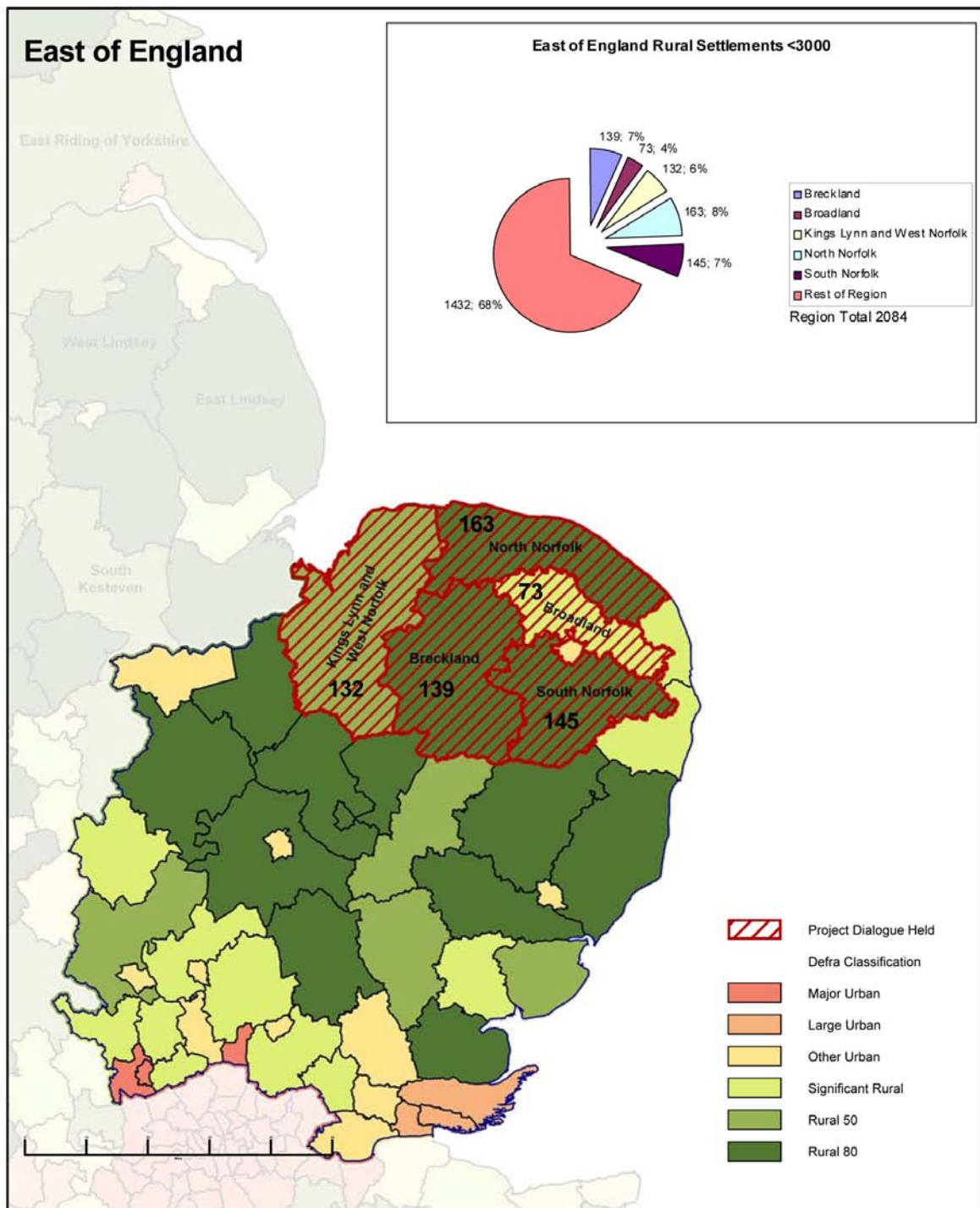


Figure 12: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the South East

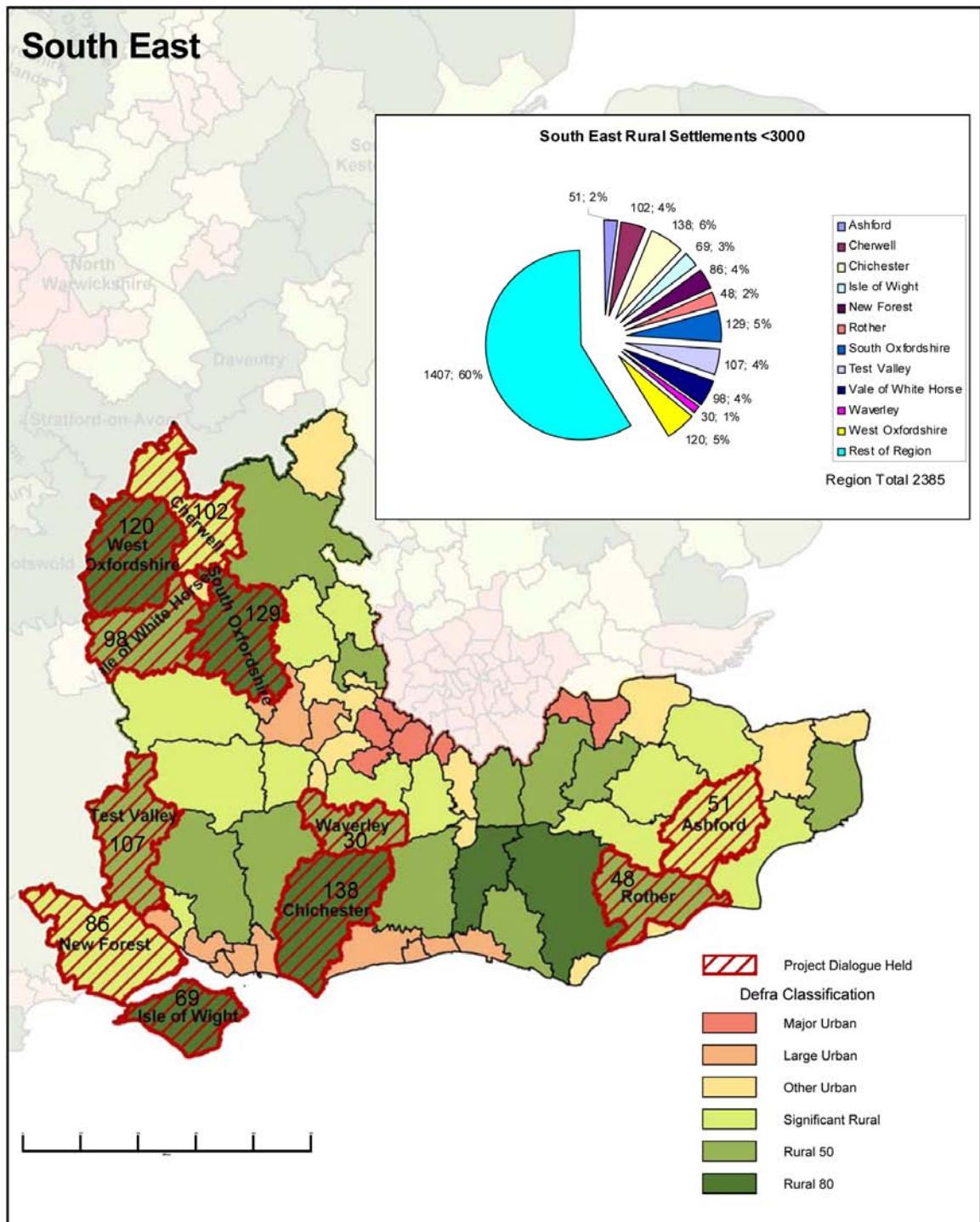
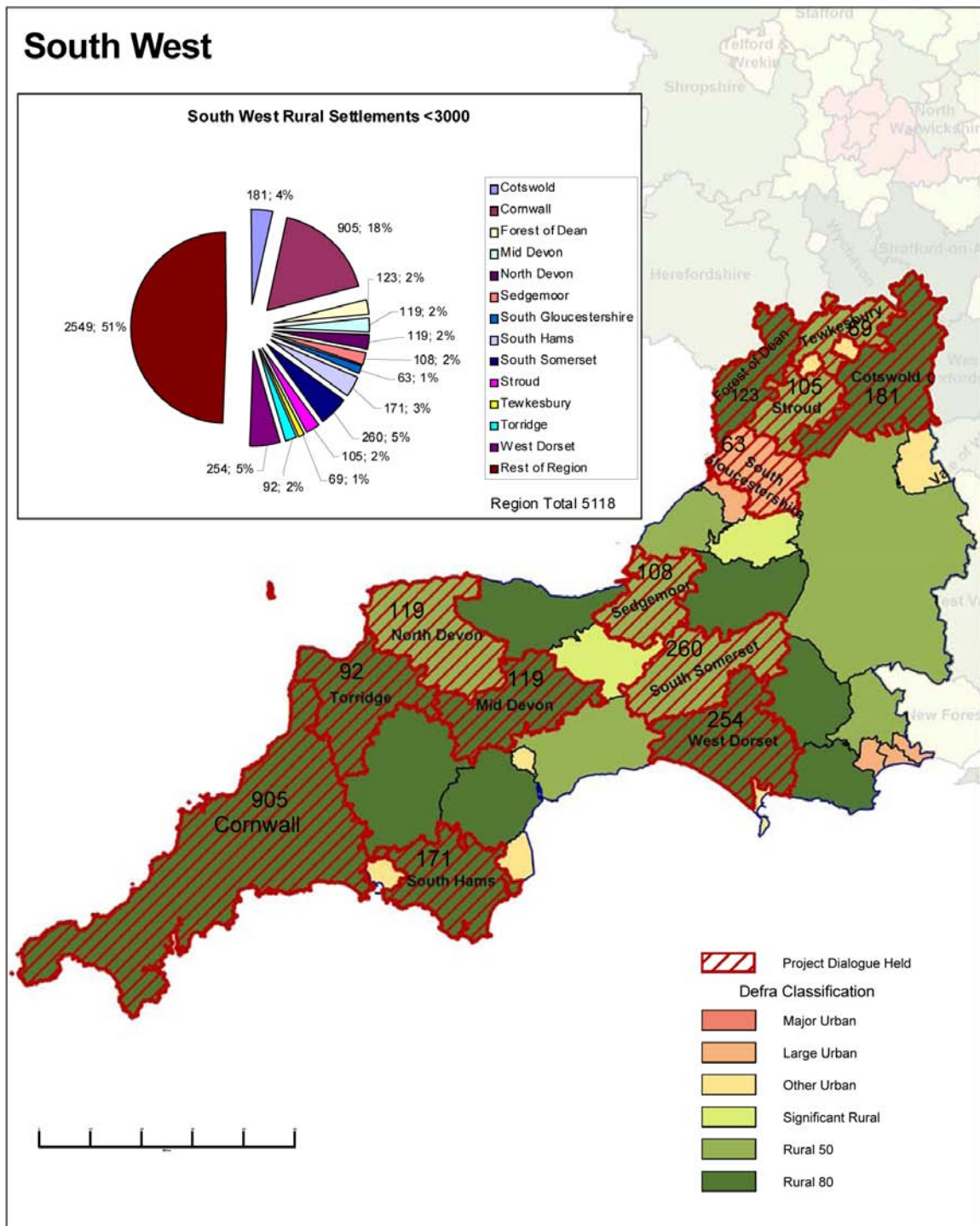


Figure 13: Project dialogues held with local authorities in the South West



1.6 Research design: *the dialogues*

1.6.1 The project team held 54 face-to-face semi-structured interviews focusing on issues, challenges and solutions related to rural affordable housing delivery.

1.6.2 Dialogue is the preferred term, due to the discussion-focused aspect of the interviews. These dialogues produced questions and debate as well as identifying issues, related barriers and solutions.

1.7 Research design: *further engagement*

1.7.1 The project team, as part of the strategy to provide continual outputs, has attended many forums and conferences, delivered presentations, provided workshop events, and engaged partnership meetings around the country.

Chapter 2

The rural housing debate

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following discussion surrounding research relating to rural affordable housing, with reference to specific policy documents is provided to emphasise the wider, related issues - thereby asserting the need for an enhanced approach⁵ to uncover solutions. For barriers to delivery to be overcome, a reflective and 'joined up' approach is essential.

2.2 Affordable housing and sustainable communities

2.2.1 The response to the issues of need and demand in rural areas where prices are high and land scarce is what Buchanan calls the 'nub of the rural housing debate.'⁶ Public policy, discourse, professional implementation and culture affect our response. The '*nub of the rural housing debate*' is therefore a good starting point to discuss the issues, perspectives and facts relating to delivery challenges.

2.2.2 Taylor states that the planning system has a 'crucial role to promote and deliver sustainable communities'.⁷ Buchanan points out that evidence is needed to demonstrate the link between homes and sustainability.⁸ Without this evidenced connection, development of affordable housing cannot be justified as being of social and economic value, let alone environmental significance. The relationship between housing and facilities such as schools, shops and pubs is a quantifiable way of providing this evidence. A village 'protected' from affordable housing development may become an exclusive community of the retired and wealthy, for example.⁹ This has measurable ramifications on the provision of services that are essential for a sustainable community. If access to facilities across rural communities is a factor of a 'sustainable community',¹⁰ then it is clear this 'protection from development' can produce communities that are unsustainable in the future.

⁵ The usage of an 'enhanced' approach is based on Professor Gavin Parker's work in the field of community-led planning and more recently the intersections with housing enabling. See Parker, G. (2008); Parker, G & Lynn, T (2010). The concept of an enhanced rural enabling approach further borrows and builds from the introduction of an enhanced housing options approach in 2008 – which encourages local authorities to take a holistic approach when giving housing advice. This means taking into consideration the 'wider causes of housing need, and links to other types of advice and support' so as to offer housing solutions and to prevent homelessness - see Communities and Local Government, (2008a,) page 4. Therefore, 'enhanced' describes a holistic approach, where joined-up working between agencies is an integral aspect of policies and procedures.

⁶ See Buchanan, C (2010)

⁷ Taylor, M (2008), page 7

⁸ See Buchanan, C (2010)

⁹ Taylor, M (2008), page 6

¹⁰ Monk, S *et al* (2006), page 72

2.2.3 To emphasise the point further, the generational aspect and social balance of a rural settlement demonstrates how housing is related to sustainability. A lack of affordable housing is one factor that drives young people out of rural communities and prevents return. Without more affordable housing, those on lower incomes will increasingly be excluded from living in many parts of the countryside, offering 'the next generation' little choice but to move away to find homes.¹¹ This disrupts social networks, family ties and education.¹²

2.3 Aspiration and need, affordability, and scarcity: a constant thread

2.3.1 The balance, intersections and relationships between (i) need and aspiration, (ii) scarcity, and (iii) affordability is where the thrust of public policy and research surrounding rural affordable housing is most acute. The way this information is interpreted and disseminated has an identifiable effect on public discourse, perception and implementation of rural affordable housing strategy and planning policy. Analysis of existing statistics relating to aspects of the need and provision of affordable homes highlight disparities between what is required and what will be made available in the future.¹³

2.3.2 The issues related to the themes above are complex, and demand focused and joined-up responses. The following paragraphs summarise research and public policy related to rural affordable housing, identifying these themes as a constant thread; one that informs the future direction of rural affordable housing delivery and what constitutes rural sustainable communities.

2.4 Aspiration and need, affordability, and scarcity: social balance

2.4.1 Hoggart and Henderson¹⁴ stated that the social balance, composition and vitality of rural communities are adversely affected by the supply and demand factors across rural markets. Following this, the Affordable Rural Housing Commission highlights the correlation between the effects of rural markets and that of rural communities becoming fractured and unsustainable.¹⁵

2.4.2 Housing market conditions across rural areas - resulting in lack of affordability - perpetuate a fragmentation of social and family networks.¹⁶

¹¹ See Affordable Rural Housing Commission (2006).

¹² Monk *et al* (2006), page 68; see also Affordable Rural Housing Commission (2006); Shaw, J (2007), page 4.

¹³ Commission for Rural Communities (2010), page 26.

¹⁴ Cited in Buchanan (2010)

¹⁵ See Affordable Rural Housing Commission (2006)

¹⁶ Affordable Rural Housing Commission (2006), page 1

This is emphasised by Monk *et al*¹⁷, who cite young people moving away and an inward migration ‘forcing ‘locals’ out’ as evidenced effects.

2.4.3 Moreover, the ‘hidden homeless’ is an acute issue in rural areas, with those on the lowest incomes and vulnerable groups such as care leavers, refugees, and people with mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependencies being most affected.¹⁸

2.5 Aspiration and need, affordability, and scarcity: economic and environmental

2.5.1 In terms of economic sustainability, the problems associated with an ageing population across rural communities are well documented.¹⁹ Taylor highlights how ‘age-related migration’ has constituted much of the migration to rural areas, with ‘a net outflow of people aged between 15 and 30, and inflow of people aged between 30 and 45 often with families and those aged between 45 and 65, as younger people seek employment and housing in urban areas, and wealthier people and retirees seek to move to the countryside.’²⁰

2.5.2 This contributes to what Taylor calls an ‘artificially inflated’ picture of rural wealth²¹ and impacts on the relationship between economic activity and community sustainability, with issues of commuting workforces²² and housing provision central to rural services and employment being maintained. For example, Monk *et al* cites businesses being unable to expand across rural areas and an increased level of economically inactive people as being directly related to housing need²³, due to the coterminous nature of scarcity and lack of affordability.

2.6 Aspiration and need, affordability, and scarcity: sustainability

2.6.1 A direct correlation can be made from the above effects of scarcity and lack of affordability with an unsustainable future by applying the components of sustainable communities.²⁴ The main ingredients that enable and maintain a sustainable community are themed around fairness, links to services, environmental sensitivity, quality design and build, opportunity and inclusivity. The negative impact on sustainability

¹⁷ See Monk *et al* (2006)

¹⁸ Monk *et al* (2006), page 6

¹⁹ See Cabinet Office - Social Exclusion Task Force (2009); Monk *et al* (2006); Housing Learning and Improvement Network (2005)

²⁰ Taylor (2008) page 34

²¹ Taylor (2008), page 120

²² See Monk *et al* (2006)

²³ See Monk *et al* (2006)

²⁴ The Bristol Accord was signed in 2005 between European Member states. It sets out eight key characteristics that define a sustainable community: active, inclusive and safe; well run; well served; well connected; environmentally sensitive; thriving; well designed and built; fair for everyone

associated with restrictive housing markets across rural areas, as reviewed above, provide clarity that, unmitigated, these ingredients are unobtainable.

- 2.6.2 There is a simple dichotomy at the heart of the sustainability issue: links to services and employment opportunities are components of sustainable development, although with inaccessible housing these aspects quickly retreat. When planning for sustainable development, these boxes cannot be 'ticked' - thereby rendering a swathe of villages and hamlets 'unsustainable'.
- 2.6.3 Interpretation of planning policy is an issue, with differing approaches to sustainability within core strategies across the country. There is much debate regarding the links between accessible housing markets, jobs and services in rural areas, reminding us of the 'nub of the rural housing debate' – namely, the allocation of land for affordable housing in areas previously deemed 'unsustainable'.
- 2.6.4 Following Taylor's assertion that a flexible planning system is needed for communities to escape the 'sustainability trap',²⁵ Buchanan calls for a better understanding of the link between housing affordability and access and the nature of sustainable rural communities. This implies that a strong evidence base - which enables understanding of how rural markets work, and how this affects social capital, networks, employment opportunities and, indeed, facilities - can inform planning to ensure it is 'ahead of the game, making appropriate development decisions.'²⁶ Furthermore, allocations policies cannot be separated from planning decisions. Buchanan points out that if the economic sustainability of a rural area is linked to 'local priority', then this should be clearly stated in planning policy.²⁷
- 2.6.5 There is much literature tackling the problem of defining a connection to a rural area, which is necessarily tied to notions of what a rural community actually is (as opposed to urban) - including identification, social construction, and socio-political concepts of what makes a rural settlement *rural*.²⁸ Furthermore, the debate surrounding 'what is local' persists, with the applicable legislation allowing interpretation.²⁹

²⁵ Taylor (2008), page 8

²⁶ See Buchanan (2010)

²⁷ This helping to properly justify local connection policies, based on economic and social sustainability of communities, rather than simply based on 'ancestral rights' and 'exclusionary protection from external influence.' See Buchanan (2010)

²⁸ See Housing Corporation (2007), page 26; Defra (2005); Defra (2009); Office for National Statistics (2010); Rural Evidence Research Centre (2010a); Rural Evidence Research Centre (2010b); Buchanan (2010)

²⁹ *Local connection* is defined in the Housing Act 1996, amended in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

- 2.6.6 Balances between need and aspiration are particularly nuanced when applied to rural affordable housing. Allocating homes, and the way affordable housing is presented to rural communities, demand finely tuned sensitivity and flexibility. The statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England³⁰ highlights local lettings policies³¹ as mechanisms to deal sensitively with allocations across rural communities.
- 2.6.7 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) advocates the employment of rural exception site policy to help address the heightened scarcity of land across rural settlements, together with enabling a 'local needs approach'.³² This approach can mitigate lack of affordability, but the definition of 'need' is problematic: having compelling evidence of local people with a 'pressing need' to live locally is cited as an overarching view of 'community representatives' by Buchanan, over and above reasons of affordability. Furthermore, being charged with prioritising 'need' becomes a 'matter of power and responsibility' – reinforcing the necessity of enabling communities to make properly informed decisions.³³
- 2.6.8 Monk *et al* found that neighbouring villages can be seen as 'substitutes' for people aspiring to live in a specific rural location. This means that across a cluster of villages a reasonable response could be to allocate affordable housing within this 'network'.³⁴
- 2.6.9 The following chapter discusses the issues related to delivery challenges and suggested ways to overcome them, providing examples of local authorities putting theory into practice. The identified issues all relate in some way to the themes discussed above, demonstrating how theoretical perspectives and policy design and implementation have an impact on professionals' day to day activities.

³⁰ CLG (2009a), page 28

³¹ Statutory basis for Local Lettings Policies can be found in S.167(2E) of the 1996 Act – it enables local authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of s.167

³² CLG (2006a), page 11

³³ See Buchanan (2006)

³⁴ Monk *et al* (2006), page 79

Chapter 3

Data analysis: issues

3.1 Barriers and solutions

3.1.1 The responses to the question ‘what are the main issues associated with barriers to delivery?’ can be categorised into four themes: *(i)* community; *(ii)* local authority; *(iii)* strategy; and *(iv)* finance.

3.1.2 This chapter approaches each theme within the context of the information gleaned from the project dialogues and other research methods.³⁵ This will unravel the underlying specific issues that, in some cases, are linked to barriers. Importantly, we will see that the same issues have also been approached in ways that enable successful delivery, illustrated in the ‘solution boxes.’ These good practice examples are reproduced, alongside further examples, in the Rural Enabling Guide.³⁶

³⁵ All quotations and summarised accounts of dialogues are anonymous. This is due to the ethical duty to the officers and other key individuals, the dialogues being an information gathering tool, and not part of an audit process or evaluation of individual achievement or judgement of views.

³⁶ The Rural Enabling Guide can be found within Rural Affordable Housing Project Online Resource (www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk); and summarised in Appendix 1

3.2 Theme 1: Community

- 3.2.1 The community empowerment agenda is well documented, and points to a strong understanding within local authorities regarding their 'duty to involve'.³⁷ Many local authorities have regard to Parish Plans, complimenting the policy to help 'people up and down the country to set and meet their own priorities'.³⁸ Without the regard to housing need as part of the sustainability agenda within local priorities, any affordable housing proposal may be met with suspicion. Even so, few local authorities have a strategy to attempt to reconcile affordable housing strategic aims within the context of tackling rural housing need together with promoting rural sustainable communities at a local level.
- 3.2.2 There is, therefore, a need to highlight community engagement and empowerment that focuses on housing, and issues surrounding the rural housing debate, with a further emphasis on collaborative planning via a 'Duty to Co-operate' that may be given to local authorities in the future.³⁹ Community engagement *per se* is not enough if housing is left out as '*too difficult*' or '*too contentious*.' An important element of housing delivery should involve working with Parish Councils and local communities to ensure priorities are sustainable and decisions are properly informed.
- 3.2.3 There are two overarching issues that inform the debate within the theme 'community': (i) engagement and empowerment; and (ii) parish councillors.

³⁷ See CLG (2008b)

³⁸ CLG (2008b), page i

³⁹ Open Source Planning Green Paper (2010), page 3



3.3 Issue 1: Engagement and empowerment

- 3.3.1 A number of local authorities told us that one of their biggest challenges was *'getting communities on board'*. Issues such as capacity are seen as contributory factors to the lack of good community engagement. One council told us: *"The district has a huge amount of parishes, and we're a small team...we have other priorities."*

Rother District Council, working in partnership with Lewes and Wealden district councils, has developed a new [communications plan](#) that includes engaging the community with the use of a short film at public events.

Such mechanisms for community engagement across districts help to mitigate associated capacity issues, as well as sending a joined up positive message across borders and boundaries.

The [Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership's](#) charter includes a statement committing the partnership to proactive community engagement, having an objective that rural housing issues and the success of rural housing projects are better understood across the county. Capacity is freed up to adhere to this ambition thanks to the joint funding of a partnership led Rural Housing Enabler.

- 3.3.2 Many local authority housing strategy and enabling functions admit to not having a clear rural community engagement strategy. Teams say they are affected by issues of capacity, how functions across the local authority are joined up and how they work with external agencies such as rural community councils. One local authority employee told us: *“The local community council does community planning, which is good, but they don’t get involved in housing.”*

Lake District National Park Authority, in partnership with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust and Action for Communities in Cumbria, has established the [‘Investing in Communities’](#) project. The authority has used the project to better integrate community-led action plans into policy and associated delivery.

A ‘community enabling’ role has developed, encouraging local communities to be proactive by engaging with the housing needs survey and to find land suitable for development in their community.

Shropshire Council used the [‘Rural Toolkit’ approach](#) to engage rural communities. This involves using a variety of sources, including Parish Plans, to inform the Council about community need and aspiration

The nexus of community led planning and rural affordable housing: towards an enhanced process

University of Reading and Community Council Berkshire concluded that through closer working between development workers, parish councils and strategic housing professionals at the local authority level, there is good potential for housing related issues to be highlighted at the local level.

Click on the hexagon to access the report and case studies:



- 3.3.3 Negative perceptions of affordable housing are highlighted as barriers. There is a constant thread, throughout the dialogues, of a strong focus on the need to tackle ‘myths’ and ‘stigma’ related to affordable housing.

Eden District Council’s arrangement with the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust has enabled a community engagement strategy that the council otherwise did not have the capacity to pursue. This [working agreement](#), which includes a policy to raise public awareness of the enabling process, has helped to overcome negative perceptions.

Development of a tool to demonstrate the contribution of affordable housing on the sustainability of rural communities

This research and development project will report in March 2011. It has the aim to evidence benefits of affordable housing to rural communities’ sustainability, and will develop a policy tool to gain support into the future.

Click on the hexagon to access further information about the project:



- 3.3.4 Issues surrounding allocation policies are linked to barriers by many local authorities. Some responses to the question of the relationship between allocations policies and barriers highlight the need for better partnership working with providers. An officer pointed out that if the properties are not advertised properly, this *can 'undermine support for affordable housing.'* This point stretches the debate to acknowledge the need for an enhanced approach to joint working, externally (with Registered Providers and HomeBuy agents) and internally (Housing Options and Choice Based Lettings teams).

Chichester District Council works with parish councils to hold '[local connection registration events](#)'. The event - usually held six months before completion - is an opportunity to raise the profile of affordable housing and for people to register their intent and local connection credentials in advance. All the information is therefore ready to implement when allocating, helping with capacity and ensuring there are fewer hold ups. These events have been very successful in building relationships with parish councils and communities.



3.4 Issue 2: Parish councillors

- 3.4.1 The way parish councillors are approached is identified as a standalone issue within the 'community' theme. This is due the fact they speak on behalf of, and make decisions affecting, their communities. It is therefore imperative that parish councillors are engaged and properly informed, because as one local authority officer stated: *"The need to develop in villages with disinterested Parish Councillors is a major challenge."* This reflects the views of most local authorities that we spoke with.

Breckland District Council has established a ['Parish council peer mentoring'](#) approach, where experiences and good practice can be shared across parish councils.

This approach, developed out of the parish clustering policy, has been beneficial within the context of engaging Parish Councillors with the issues surrounding affordable housing development.

Test Valley Borough Council provides [training for parish councils](#) to ensure heightened awareness of housing related issues, including local need, affordability, consultation, surveys, parish plans, and planning policies.

The council utilises a film produced by Hampshire Alliance of Rural Affordable Housing which outlines the enabling process and spells out the key themes.

- 3.4.2 Some respondents pointed to political issues which impacted on the delivery of rural housing, sometimes at the expense of need. Pragmatism is highlighted as the catch word, with many local authorities putting across the point that there is need in most areas, so *'pushing open doors is a sensible approach'*. Within this debate though, the issue of 'hidden need' is raised. One officer told us: *"The most isolated are in the small villages where it's hard to get support or [suitable] land."*

South Hams District Council holds parish council [affordable housing surgeries](#). These provide the opportunity for discussions about affordable housing to take place on an informal basis and, in turn, feed into their programme of housing needs surveys.

The overarching aim is to help to dispel myths and eventually lead to a shared sense of purpose; enabling doors to open.

3.5 Theme 2: local authorities

- 3.5.1 Political leadership and joint working is highlighted by the Audit Commission as important in enabling effective approaches to address housing need and attributed challenges. An integrated approach to housing and planning is an important element of measuring successful local delivery.
- 3.5.2 Adhering to the above approach is of particular relevance when focusing on rural delivery. This is because, without such an approach, rural strategy becomes easily marginalised due to the relative time consuming nature of the rural enabling process, and the specialist planning, community engagement, legal and environmental aspects it demands.
- 3.5.3 Examples around the country clearly demonstrate that leadership related to rural priorities, together with the management of communication and procedures, are directly related to organisational culture and the ability to achieve set goals. Put simply, leadership enables good working across a local authority and, in turn, facilitates a 'can do' attitude and helps build capacity. These can be stultified with procedures that produce an environment where 'the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing'
- 3.5.4 There are two overarching issues that inform the debate within the theme local authority: *(i)* local authority functions; and *(ii)* elected members.



3.6 Issue 3: Local authority functions

- 3.6.1 Although local authority structure can assist more co-operation and joint working, planning and housing sitting in the same directorate is not always essential for this. . One local authority, which has a demonstrably joint focus between functions, stated that this is '*due to the culture, not the structure*'. That said, there are examples of service structure, and physical proximity of teams that help ensure the culture is one of joined up 'inter-departmental' thinking.

Shropshire Council has implemented a structure where enabling is a core component of the Strategy and Policy team. In practice, the Enabling and Implementation team plays host to Planners who use their expertise of the planning system to bring sites forward and track implementation of projects, as well as managing the resources of the S106 monies for affordable housing.

Similarly, the policy team hosts a housing strategy expert. This '[hosting approach](#)' has helped forge positive links to the core strategy, as well as engendering the 'joint ownership of the problem of housing affordability and the solutions.'

- 3.6.2 Statements such as *'housing and planning still need to work more together'* reflect the general mood across local authorities. A significant number represented the view that there are *'more blockages with planners and other departments than external problems.'* This can have many reasons, including personality, interpretation and views. It is only via changing culture and working practices that it can be addressed, enabling unblocking and moving onto solutions.

New Forest District Council has a [designated planner](#) for rural schemes. This provides for the need for consistency of approach and understanding of rural specific issues.

This mechanism further ensures rural affordable housing is not marginalised, and remains a priority across the functions. The planner works directly with the enabling team, also engaging with communities – this providing heightened expertise to ensure expectations are realistic regarding identified sites. Furthermore, the links between the strategic housing team and the planning department have strengthened significantly with greater understanding of opportunities and constraints.

The ['development team approach'](#) at Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Council involves planning, housing, public open space, the police architectural liaison officer and highways departments attending meetings to discuss planning applications which are likely to be contentious.

Meetings occur at the pre-application stage, where clarification is sought and issues that may arise in the planning process are highlighted. This helps speed to up the whole planning process. Applications are likely to be processed more quickly due to all of the key issues being raised at the pre-application stage.



3.7 Issue 4: Elected members

- 3.7.1 Elected members (councillors) provide policy; paid employees (officers) implement them. Putting policy into action demands a thoughtful and efficient process that ensures interpretations are unified and delivery reflects the policy intentions. The previous issue ensures proper regard to this; elected members highlighted as an issue recognises that delivery, and its enabling attributes, is facilitated in the first place by the decisions made in cabinet, committees and other council decision making forums.

North Dorset District Council uses its [member and officer group](#) to discuss politically sensitive issues, and take an overview of the affordable housing programme as a whole. This group provides an opportunity for elected members to be fully engaged with the challenges within the enabling process, with attendance also providing a positive message of leadership and engagement.

- 3.7.2 Member support for rural affordable housing is identified as essential, with one person telling us that a lack of political will is ‘...a *significant barrier.*’ With ‘political will’ comes a variety of measures and mechanisms that can heighten and accelerate delivery. One officer explained: “*We have very interested and involved ward members who often go to parish council meetings to argue the case for affordable housing.*”

The Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) has produced a [Councillor’s Guide](#). Although it has no specific housing focus, this is a useful resource for elected members to gain a good understanding of the role, including community engagement.

Click on the hexagon to access further resources and links related to rural housing enabling:



- 3.7.3 Member support for rural affordable housing is generally good, although has scope to improve. The case made by officers for affordable housing can garner support, although many local authorities would seem to support the view that more support should be given by Government to raise awareness of the issues.

At Breckland District Council, regular briefing sessions and [training for members](#) is undertaken on specific areas, including rural housing. This training is carried out by officers and other partners such as Registered Providers, and gypsy and traveller liaison officers.

The ‘Elected Member Support programme for rural affordable housing’ is being developed as a collaboration between the HCA and IDeA. The programme, which will be rolled out in 2010, will provide a forum for elected members to share experiences, good practice and learn from each other; and to be properly informed about the issues surrounding rural affordable housing.

3.8 Theme 3: Strategy

- 3.8.1 It is the strategic decision making process that informs the relevant policies and procedures that, in turn, affect delivery.
- 3.8.2 Every organisation has a strategy, which informs the policies and mechanisms used to achieve priorities and objectives. Strategy has been identified as a theme due to its important role in decision making, prioritising and employment of policy and procedure.
- 3.8.3 A constructive strategy is a good measuring tool to monitor the value of policies and procedures. The value of a *policy in action*, when referenced to the organisation's strategy, can be measured as having 'strategic fit'. Similarly, this is how the value of a strategy is measured: if the policy or procedure associated with delivery challenges has a 'strategic fit', then the strategy may need further evaluation.
- 3.8.4 There are four issues that are highlighted within the theme strategy: (i) priorities; (ii) need; (iii) land identification; and (iv) planning policy.



3.9 Issue 5: Priorities

- 3.9.1 Priorities are based on national and sub-regional objectives, as well as local identified needs and aspirations. Key priorities influence the culture and working practices of a local authority, as well as how it invokes policies to deal with the issues affecting service delivery (including enabling of affordable housing). Contextual aspects, informed by the local evidence base, will mean in some cases rural enabling may be marginalised. An officer informed us: *“The main priority for the Council is the regeneration of towns...we don’t have a separate rural programme or policy.”* It is clear, though, that regard to national and sub-regional priorities can have an effect in this area.

Ashford Borough Council’s housing strategy has a key priority to ‘develop sustainable communities’. This encompasses the priority to ensure that ‘the housing and related needs of people in rural areas are assessed and addressed’ and to work ‘closely with parish councils, building relationships and enabling a positive approach to development where a significant need for affordable homes is revealed’. The strategy highlights partnership working with the third sector to help identify the evidenced need. Ashford was awarded Beacon Status for promoting sustainable communities through the planning process.

- 3.9.2 Having rural affordable housing as a priority positively affects internal procedural policy and culture in relation to having a 'rural focus', and enables the gap between policy and delivery to be narrowed. A strong message is sent to communities and delivery partners highlighting the importance of rural affordable housing within the context of the wider strategic aims. This can help mitigate mistrust and opposition, whilst also developing relationships that enables a greater and more robust evidence base at a lower level. The theme of 'community' has related issues that are, of course, affected by priorities. The statement that *'problems are caused when targets [are only] top down'* is indicative of the necessity for priorities to reflect local needs and aspirations.

Shropshire Council's use of the 'Rural Toolkit', highlighted within the theme of 'community', has been flagged in the council's most recent Corporate Plan as a primary element of community engagement. This strategy of identifying community needs informs the Local Development Framework. Early buy in from the Shropshire Partnership has influenced strategic priorities via an evidence base that feeds into the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Shropshire's Housing Strategy "Foundations for the Future" identifies rural sustainability as a key issue to which the emerging planning policy could make a positive contribution.



3.10 Issue 6: Need

- 3.10.1 Understanding housing markets, need and aspiration is a particular challenge in small rural communities, due to issues linked to sensitivity and capacity. Rolling parish surveys have been identified by the Audit Commission as a measure of performing adequately in relation to ensuring the strategic housing function has this understanding in place. Parish level Housing Needs Surveys (HNS) can polarise the debate across local authorities surrounding a rural evidence base. The fact that many local authorities view parish surveys as, for example, ‘a major task...[with] no added value’ and carrying ‘a significant [unmanageable] cost’ means the way data on need is collected and used should be carefully looked at. Furthermore, these surveys need to be sensitively managed, due to many local authorities suggesting that they can raise expectations to unrealistically high levels, which can negatively impact on future development.

Herefordshire integrates parish level [Housing Needs Surveys into their parish engagement strategy](#). Events are held throughout the year, in conjunction with Housing Options and CBL teams, where information is disseminated to communities, enabling discussion surrounding affordable housing and use of empty homes. On average 10 events are undertaken each year, to coincide with the housing need survey programme. There is a part time officer responsible for the entire process of the housing needs surveys from distribution to analysis and producing the report.

Ashford Borough Council has a [‘joint scheme’](#) policy across parish boundaries. This provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes that are closely related to each other, to develop a joint local needs housing scheme where by working alone would be unlikely to identify sufficient need to justify a viable development.

- 3.10.2 The other side of the coin sees many local authorities viewing rural Housing Needs Surveys as indispensable. One respondent said: *“Only parish surveys can provide information good enough to bring sites forward...finding out the true feeling and needs that wider assessments can’t.”*⁴⁰ The issue of ‘hidden need’ is brought up many times, with many officers expressing the view that the most vulnerable and isolated are being missed due to the practical and cost issues related to lower level surveys. This, though, is balanced with pragmatism when faced with issues of capacity and financing. One officer told us: *“Although a programme of surveys would be great, who’s going to do the work?”* Another said: *“We need support with collecting evidence. We use the list [housing register], but sometimes this isn’t enough to convince [parish councils and elected members].”*

East Lindsey District Council has a strategy of having [full ownership of the HNS process](#). This enables the surveys to be proactive, ensuring that opportunities are not delayed or missed. The surveys highlight any hidden need for affordable housing in small settlements. They can also be used to justify planning development in a particular location with the local planning authority. The surveys do affect internal officer resource, but it is felt that this is balanced against the benefits because of the improved response rate and improved relationship with the parish councils.

⁴⁰ ‘Wider assessments’ in this context means Strategic Housing Market Assessments and District wide Housing Needs Surveys.

[Eden District Council has an arrangement with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust to carry out parish housing needs surveys.](#) The purpose of this arrangement is to assess the housing needs of each parish and to engage with local Parish councils and community groups. This arrangement is in response to the Council's corporate objectives to improve the housing need evidence base and to increase the supply of affordable housing to meet the identified need.

The Trust is working to an agreed programme of surveys which will ensure that all Parishes within the District will have a housing needs assessment within 3 years. On completion of the final report Parish councils are given the opportunity to meet with the Council's enablers and other key staff to take forward an agreed course of action.



3.11 Issue 7: Land identification

- 3.11.1 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3), emphasises the inclusion of rural areas within the aim to improve affordability and supply of homes in all communities via a ‘more responsive approach to land supply at a local level’⁴¹. Land identification across rural communities, employing the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) methodology⁴² has been problematic for some local authorities. An officer offered the suggestion that County Councils should appreciate more that ‘*county staff, teachers, care workers and others, are the district’s customers for affordable housing.*’

Rother DC’s [Exception Site Project](#) proactively identifies sites within the context of the parish engagement and HNS strategies. The project, which is a corporate priority, has a team that consists of a partnership between Housing Development, Planning Development Control, Legal, Action in Rural Sussex Rural Housing Enabler, Hastoe Housing Association and English Rural Housing Association.

Cornwall Council has developed a [toolkit](#), incorporating the SHLAA guidance, working with parishes to promote comprehensive site identification in high need rural priority parishes. This approach also employs the media and targeted mail to landowners, and uses a dedicated planning resource for assessment.

⁴¹ CLG (2006a), page 5

⁴² See CLG (2007)

- 3.11.2 The challenges surrounding scarcity of land are well documented, and are highlighted as a standalone issue within this document. Planning policy is obviously linked to this issue, and most local authorities use the rural exception site policy as the main mechanism to bring forward the proportion of rural schemes, although this can happen mostly in a reactive manner by waiting for landowners or partners to approach them with proposals.

Vale of White Horse DC hold [periodic meetings with Oxfordshire Diocese](#), which enables exchange of information on sites that the Church may be looking to dispose of and a review of these sites in relation to the potential need for rural affordable housing. As the Diocese is generally aware of the reduced land values of rural exception sites, constraints of economic viability are more easily understood. This procedural policy has resulted in glebe land being used for affordable housing.



3.12 Issue 8: Planning policy

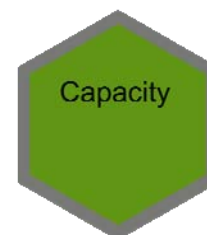
- 3.12.1 The issue of planning policy intersects the rural housing debate in many ways. The project dialogues highlight it as one issue, together with community engagement, that poses both the greatest challenges and the most effective enabling mechanisms to rural delivery. The discussion of planning policy inevitably focuses on sustainability, with doubts expressed on the issue of whether *'it's too late to save some settlements'* due to a lack of employment and facilities or links to any. However, a major concern among housing enabling officers is the impact of sustainability-based hierarchy criteria on planning and development management decisions. One representative said: *"Planners are precluding some sites, even when the parish council is keen."*

Shropshire Council has rural community focus within its strategic planning policy. It has developed a strategy that employs ['community clusters' and 'hubs'](#) that work within a context of incorporating planning policy with community engagement, as a 'bottom up' approach.

North Kesteven District Council has 72 local councils organised into 10 [cluster areas](#). The clusters help to translate council priorities into action at the local level, having full regard to local aspiration and need. The parishes within clusters defined as hamlets in the Local Plan would not normally be where affordable housing would be provided, and so would inordinarily, in planning terms, be overlooked. Clusters have helped shape the future direction of policy and strategy at North Kesteven, for example, informing the Local Development Framework.

3.13 Theme 4: Finance

- 3.13.1 Financial considerations are far reaching with regard to enabling affordable housing in rural areas. It is now a theme of increased significance, due to the increasingly constrained availability of public resources, which have an impact on the ways issues related to finance will need to be approached.
- 3.13.2 Within the theme 'finance' there are four issues: *(i)* capacity; *(ii)* economies of scale; *(iii)* land value; and *(iv)* economic viability.



3.14 Issue 9: Capacity

- 3.14.1 *'Time intensive'* was a term used by many officers to describe the main challenge related to resourcing rural enabling. In relation to other work an officer can be engaged in, outputs are measurably lower (although not relatively). Specific funding for enablers dedicated to rural areas is a popular request, many local authorities preferring the employment of externally based Rural Housing Enablers (RHE), with others seeing the role as best carried out 'in house'. Either way, it is clear that many officers perceive rural enabling as an under-resourced role.

The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership created the [North Yorkshire Rural Housing Enabler programme](#), with Hambleton District Council acting as the lead employer of seven RHE's across North Yorkshire. The project provides a sub regional enabling resource, capable of being flexibly deployed where needed. RHE's are embedded within each local authority housing or planning department, and benefit from support and guidance from a senior RHE.

[Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership](#) (GRHP) comprises of the four rural local authorities, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and six registered providers. All partners work towards meeting targets as set out in national, regional and local strategies and policies in addition to meeting individually identified corporate priorities. The local authorities and the RPs jointly fund the RHE post; this is felt to be worthwhile for the local authorities as this helps build capacity so as to be able to pursue rural exceptions site development. From the RP perspective, funding of the RHE, and membership of the GRHP brings development opportunities.

- 3.14.2 Whilst it is clear the proportion of local authorities perceive rural enabling as under resourced, there is not a uniformity of thought when looking at how to improve the situation. This reflects different situations and contexts that councils find themselves in: one size does not fit all. Some local authorities value the ‘independence’ of externally based rural enablers, whereas many prefer an enabling role that is based on the council’s values and priorities, and represents the strategic housing and planning functions’ objectives. A local authority officer said: *“We have found that parish councils and the public don’t care who employs the RHEs so the idea of an ‘independent honest broker’ is outdated.”* A different representation of the situation from another local authority, based not too far away was that the (independent) RHE *“can get the community on board better”* because they had *“more time than the council.”*

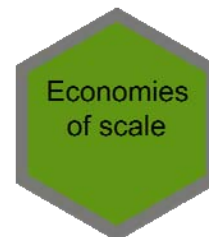
The [Chichester Rural Housing Partnership](#) was created in response to an identified high need for affordable housing in rural areas. The partnership employs a Rural Housing Enabler in-house at Chichester DC (but funded via the partnership). The RHE is responsible for identifying areas of need and available sites. The partnership also has the resources of a Rural Development Officer based within the development partner. The RHE conducts all the preliminary work, establishing the housing need via surveys, consults with local residents, contacts local landowners, liaises with planning colleagues and conducts in-depth site assessments.

- 3.14.3 Sharing resources, good working practices and building structures that support individual local authorities across wider areas are ways officers have addressed the time intensive nature of rural enabling. This level of working was also cited as helping to *‘keep rural on our agenda’*, illustrating that building capacity intersects with maintaining priorities.

The [Devon Rural Housing Partnership](#) (part of the Devon Strategic Housing Group), delivers rural housing programmes, managed by the Community Council of Devon. The partnership employs a team of Rural Housing Enablers (RHE). The RHEs are focused on delivering a pipeline of affordable rural housing schemes at various stages within the development process, targeting priority communities agreed with the local authority.

Most of their work focuses primarily on the front-end of the development process; determining local affordable housing needs, identifying development sites, raising awareness and support at a community level, and tackling NIMBYism.

Northamptonshire has a [countywide protocol](#) to highlight the roles of key stakeholders throughout the process of delivering affordable housing on exception sites. It has been drawn up by Midlands Rural Housing Association (MRHA), in partnership with the local authorities of Northamptonshire. It highlights the roles and responsibilities of the key players involved in affordable housing in rural areas. The protocol assists with local authority capacity as no additional officer time will be necessary as HNSs and community consultation is undertaken by MRHA at no cost to the local authority.



3.15 Issue 10: Economies of scale

- 3.15.1 The cost of building in rural areas is a topic that demanded much attention during the dialogues. Many different perspectives were aired, focusing on whether costs hold up or prevent development, and how challenges related to these can be addressed. The main body of this debate is outlined within the issue 'economic viability', below. When putting across the view that rural development is more expensive, the reasoning that produced unanimous agreement was that higher costs is due to the fact that rural development is generally smaller in scale. This, although very closely linked to the issue of 'economic viability', is identified as a standalone issue due to its rural-specific nature. The issue of economies of scale is one that officers spoke of as directly linked to barriers, preventing development in small settlements even when there is external and internal support: One officer said: *"We had everything in place [for an exception site scheme in a small settlement], but the housing association needed more [houses as part of the scheme] for it to stack up."* This statement was mirrored in different ways throughout the research.

The [Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership](#) includes a contracted development partner and four dedicated RPs in the area. Two Rural Housing Enablers, employed by the Rural Community Council, work within the framework of the local authority led partnership.

There are established supply chains and framework architects and consultants. The economies of scale produced through the dedicated supply chain enable the Registered Providers to provide better value for money on these partnership schemes.



3.16 Issue 11: Land value

- 3.16.1 Like the previous issue, land value can be discussed within the context of economic viability, and is obviously closely associated with land identification (and availability). With regard to rural development, and especially focusing on exception sites, the issue of land value is one that demands individual attention. *“We have issues with landowners’ expectations with value”* is a comment indicative of many local authorities’ experiences. Many officers point out most landowners aren’t selling (or do not need to sell) for financial gain.

In Oxfordshire there are many landowners who are able because of the size of their portfolio to take a long-term view of the management of their assets. These include (but are not limited to); ecclesiastical, academic and titled owners. To incentivise these, Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership has adopted a strategy of exploring the feasibility of [offering a limited provision of nominations to employees of landowners](#) (providing they meet the local connection and housing need criteria)

[Council owned land at Test Valley Borough Council](#) has been disposed of at below market value to enable the development to progress. A particular example provided 9 affordable homes, and was brought forward under 2 phases: utilising both exception site policy and land within the village boundary. The land for the entire site was disposed of at a reduced rate based upon costs per plot for exception sites.

- 3.16.2 The ability to deliver market housing on exception sites is brought up many times as a way to mitigate barriers related to exception site land value. This though is problematic, with many officers putting across the view that this will increase hope value and make land for exception sites harder to bring forward into the future. This issue has produced some innovative ways of approaching planning policy, but they are yet to be properly tested. The subject of public sector assets is one that is seen as a positive way of mitigating barriers associated with value.

Disposal of public assets for affordable housing in rural areas should have full regard to HM Treasury guidance related to value for money and the valuation of public sector assets (*subject to change*):

'the public sector pursues value for money, defined as optimising net social costs and benefits. This public assessment of value is based upon the interests of society as a whole and is not an assessment of value to the public sector alone'

See HM Treasury guidance (Lowe, 2008)

Click on the hexagon to access further resources and links related to rural housing enabling:





3.17 Issue 12: Economic viability

- 3.17.1 As well as the view that *'the cost of development is higher in rural areas'*, officers cite many different factors on the enabling process that points to this assertion. Many officers see challenges related to viability as ones that they do not have much control of. One comment that *'the RSL told us it's no longer viable, so we just need to look elsewhere,'* highlights the need for better understanding of, and engagement with, rural viability challenges. As well as the examples cited above which help to overcome challenges associated with economies of scale and land value, some local authorities have sound and innovative mechanisms to help mitigate overarching economic viability related barriers.

Cornwall Council has set up a [revolving development fund](#) for the umbrella Cornwall Community Land Trust. The fund is replenished as each scheme is completed.

The fund helps to bridge the funding gap left by mainstream lenders at the initiation and planning stages of development; and so assists the CLT to become more self sustaining

North Warwickshire District Council work closely with developing partners to help [address and overcome viability challenges](#) and achieve value for money. Open book accounting, enables the council to incorporate transparent information regarding costs and viability into strategic planning including land identification for rural schemes.

The process can also help to negotiate with planning colleagues when looking at issues such as conservation or design if the costs are increasing due to planning requirements.

- 3.17.2 Factors affecting economic viability are far reaching, with many of the issues discussed above affecting it. One of many officers to reflect on the issue said: *“We need to better understand the costs RSLs face...like specific design and planning issues.”*

Rural Housing Economic Viability Toolkit

The toolkit provides local authorities and partnerships with guidance and support with identifying and overcoming economic viability challenges on rural schemes.

The development of the toolkit involved an analysis of rural specific costs of building, identification of good practice and recommendations of ways local authorities and partnerships can work in order to mitigate some of these challenges into the future.

Click on the hexagon to access the report and toolkit:



3.18 Data analysis: *summing up*

- 3.18.1 The above examples demonstrate experiences, views and perceptions of officers within local authorities. They illustrate that there is much positive work across the country, which goes some way to overcome the challenges that are associated with the identified issues. It is a narrative of good practice being used to mitigate blockages to delivery. The analysis clearly shows that issues linked to barriers, by employment of different working practices and policies, can be transformed into issues that support successful delivery.

- 3.18.2 The issues listed above are by no means definitive. They are a product of a simple methodology of classification based on a thematic mapping exercise. Each theme has been identified based on this exercise, thereby portraying the main themes officers chose to discuss. The way the data from the dialogues has been analysed (within the identified categorised issues) is the basis of the Rural Enabling Guide, which is the practical expression of this analysis.

- 3.18.3 The guide lists all 12 issues that a local authority should address to achieve the required outcomes for successful delivery. Any issue that is linked to a barrier can be transformed into one that supports successful delivery via the enabling examples which have been illustrated above.
- 3.18.4 The above analysis is evaluated in Chapter 5, alongside the further support and guidance identified to compliment the good practice. The next chapter details this further support, demonstrating the ongoing strategic activities of the HCA, introducing the signposting element of the guide, as well as the rural affordable housing website resource which will ensure the continual focus and ongoing reflections of the challenges faced.

Chapter 4

Further support

4.1 Support to compliment the good practice

- 4.1.1 The Rural Affordable Housing Project has framed its overarching objectives around identifying and disseminating good practice. This has involved working with, as well as local authorities, government departments and agencies, partnerships, registered providers, third sector organisations, local councils and others.
- 4.1.2 The information learned from the partner organisations and other rural stakeholders has been collated and inputted into the Rural Enabling Guide. These resources compliment the good practice examples, some of which are in the previous chapter.
- 4.1.3 This chapter summarises the further support the project has identified so as to ensure the project's objectives are properly met.
- 4.1.4 Support to compliment the good practice examples is focussed on existing toolkits, guidance and examples of good practice in the public domain, and toolkits and guidance as outcomes of the independent research commissioned by the Rural Affordable Housing Project.
- 4.1.5 The chapter will then provide detail of how the information will be accessed and continually updated, via the online resource, helping to ensure the sustainability and ongoing stewardship of the support.
- 4.1.6 The strategic aims of the HCA, the national housing and regeneration agency, is a factor that affects all professionals involved in rural housing enabling. How the Rural Affordable Housing Project intersects with this is an important aspect of further support, and so how rural enabling fits within the Local Investment Plan process (the HCA's business model) and what rural activity the HCA is involved in around the country, is explained within this chapter.

4.2 Existing toolkits, guidance and examples of good practice

- 4.2.1 The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) is a key partner for the Rural Affordable Housing Project. The project team has worked closely with IDeA throughout the research period. This collaboration has provided the basis to move forward with the development of an 'elected member support programme'. The project team has also worked extremely closely with the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), with broadcast journalist Elinor Goodman sitting on the question time panel at the mid-project event in Reading. Housing in rural areas has been a driver of CRC becoming an investment partner in the independent study to develop a tool to demonstrate the contribution of affordable housing on the sustainability of rural communities (see page 60)

The Rural Excellence Programme aimed to bring together politicians and officers at all levels of government, including parish councils, local authorities and regional government. The [phase 2 evaluation](#) focused on the positive achievement of successful 'relationship building' helping with sharing information and assisting with capacity issues.

Click on the hexagon to access further resources and links related to rural housing enabling:



The second success was the ability to enable 'doors to be opened'. That is, the programme helped to open up lines of communication between local government and parishes. The case studies (project reviews) detail the aims, activities and outcomes, which all can be utilised for future learning and development.

To enable a focused approach to rural housing enabling, local authority policies should be 'rural proofed' and so have proper regard to all rural related issues. The Commission for Rural Communities has devised a [rural proofing toolkit](#) and guidance. The toolkit aims to enable users to 'think rural' on issues including provision, resources, delivery costs, accessibility, communication and disadvantage.

Click on the hexagon to access further resources and links related to rural housing enabling:



- 4.2.2 The National Housing Federation (NHF) has worked with the Rural Affordable Housing Project to help improve partnership working with Registered Providers. The NHF has helped raise the profile of affordable housing in rural areas, highlighting the issue within its Save Our Village campaign. Helen Williams, Director of Neighbourhoods, chaired the question time panel at the mid-project events in October 2009. These events, in York and Reading, were forums to learn, network, and share good practice. Each day saw around 100 delegates attend 12 different workshops.
- 4.2.3 Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national umbrella body of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), which operates at national, regional and local level across the country. The Rural Affordable Housing Project team delivered presentations at ACRE's Rural Housing Enabler training event.

The [mid-project events](#), held in York and Reading in October 2009, were framed around 12 workshops based on topics local authority officers highlighted as key issues they would like further support with.

The topics included: allocations; community engagement; capacity; planning ; viability; land; local authority functions; low cost home ownership; the Single Conversation and partnership working. During the events, delegates were also updated on the work of the Homes and Communities Agency and the Department of Communities and Local Government in response to some of the challenges. www.homesandcommunities.co.uk

The Rural Affordable Housing Project supports the National Housing Federation's aim to ensure the long-term sustainability of villages.

The [Save Our Villages campaign](#) highlights the issues discussed in the rural housing debate.

www.housing.org.uk

ACRE has produced a [toolkit](#) referring to the community led planning process, which is useful with regard to awareness and knowledge building – with a view to ensuring structures, groups and procedures can work together in a focused and joined up manner.

www.acre.org.uk



4.3 Independent research and development

4.3.1 Three independent research and development studies were commissioned to support the aims of the project. All three reports can be access via the Rural Affordable Housing Project's online resource: www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk

4.3.2 The topics of studies were identified by local authority officers and partners as areas that they needed further support and would like to see development in. For this reason, the three studies are practical in focus, based on new research and examination of the issues.

4.4 [Research project 1: The nexus of community-led planning and rural affordable housing: towards an enhanced process](#)

This study has been carried out by the University of Reading in partnership with the Community Council for Berkshire (CCB). The intention was to reveal existing practices, outcomes and possibilities for utilising the Community-Led Planning (CLP) process to encourage the consideration of affordable housing at the community level. The project looks at areas the relationship between the local authority strategic housing function and Community-Led Planning – an area that has not been subject to any real examination in the past.

The report concentrates on housing issues and the Community-Led Planning process and how wider partnerships can work well with engaging with communities. This is set in the context of an increased emphasis on partnership working and the central role of local authorities in enabling housing. This includes developing a shared recognition of the limits, tensions and potential in enhancing the role of Community-Led Planning in housing delivery.

The results of the project demonstrate that there are benefits already emerging from Community-Led Planning, particularly in relation to increased awareness of housing need and supporting the delivery of rural affordable housing. There are also clear actions emerging from Community-Led Plans and evidence of good practice and partnership working (as demonstrated with illustrative national case studies). But it is also clear that more could be done. This work has revealed that there is potential for the issues to be further highlighted through even closer working between development workers, parish councils and strategic housing professionals at the local authority level.

4.5 [Research project 2: Rural housing economic viability toolkit](#)

Scott Wilson, supported by Celandine Strategic Housing and English Rural Housing Association, was commissioned to analyse costs associated with rural affordable housing, and to develop a rural specific 'viability toolkit'. During the Rural Affordable Housing Project engagement process, a number of local authorities expressed a need for support with economic viability and raised concerns in this area. The study reviewed these concerns and analysed the evidence gathered by the Rural Affordable Housing Project alongside further research findings.

The purpose of this study is to enable a consistent approach to measuring and understanding the economic viability of affordable housing schemes in settlements with a population fewer than 3,000, when identifying potential programmes of delivery and windfall sites. The analysis, as detailed in the 'stage 1' report, points to a number of factors that regularly occur in relation to rural housing schemes which can often result in increased development costs. These factors, including design, infrastructure and code for sustainable homes, are discussed, with recommendations to counter these costs put forward. The report also discusses wider issues related to strategic housing and enabling that impact on the economic viability of rural development in some detail, making recommendations to counter any negative impact. Among the key recommendation is the reference to local authorities and registered providers, that they should review the potential to improve delivery through partnership and procurement processes throughout the supply chain to enable risks associated with innovation to be shared and economies of scale and continuity of supply to be achieved.

The rural viability toolkit has been developed, based on the analysis, reported upon in the 'stage 1' report, as well as a consultation process with local authority officers and other stakeholders closely involved in the delivery of affordable housing. It is comprised of four elements:

1. **'Viability of rural affordable housing delivery – an overview'** - explanatory guidance regarding different delivery routes for rural affordable housing and the roles and processes involved. This section includes a rural housing development flowchart;
2. **'Affordable housing costs specific to rural areas'** - a summary of the rural specific costs to development;
3. **'Assessing viability – the mechanics'** - a step by step guide to economic viability and elements of an appraisal for both s106 and exception sites – including an illustrative case study;
4. **'Improving viability through partnership working'** - provides a detailed overview of different types of partnerships and how partnership working is an important mechanism for improving value for money and quality in the delivery of affordable housing.

4.6 [Research project 3: Development of a tool to demonstrate the contribution of affordable housing on the sustainability of rural communities](#)

The initial engagement process of the Rural Affordable Housing Project highlighted progressive strategic and policy thinking with regard to sustainability criteria. However it has also identified that some councillors and planning officers continue to define some villages as 'unsustainable' as a result of lack of certain services or access to public transport. There is a need for evidence-based policy to moderate this position, and so adhere to the principles as set out in Matthew Taylor report: *Living, Working Countryside*, that planning decisions should be made based on a recognition of 'how our rural communities can be rather than writing them off as unsustainable' (Para 22).

This project aims to develop a model to be used to demonstrate the contribution of affordable housing to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of communities. The intent is to develop a tool which can be used by local authorities to develop and apply planning policies for affordable housing which will help enable and maintain their rural communities as sustainable into the future.

The model will also enable local authorities and partnerships gain leverage over issues surrounding local opposition, due to evidenced correlation between affordable housing and availability of key services such as schools, pubs, community hubs and public transport in the parish and/or in neighbouring and surrounding areas.

The project commenced in March 2010 and will report in March 2011. Consultants Rural Innovation are currently researching the connection between affordable housing and the sustainability of small rural settlements. The project will be developed within a web based Community of Practice. This will enable practitioners to provide their views and to shape the development of the project.

The Community of Practice has been operational since June 2010.

4.7 Parish council experience

- 4.7.1 Understanding more the perceptions and experiences of rural communities in relation to the enabling process as a whole is something local authorities would benefit from. The data analysis demonstrates that the relationship between parish councils and local authorities is integral to garnering support and enabling development; with many good examples of engagement and empowerment strategies and policies.
- 4.7.1 The Rural Affordable Housing Project has worked closely with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to help inform ways of further improving communication and understanding - so enabling parish councils and communities themselves to be a full partner within an enhanced rural enabling process.
- 4.7.3 As a result of this collaboration, we have three accounts of Parish Council experience of the process of enabling affordable housing. These accounts can be used as a learning tool to help build better understanding, communication and co-operation between local authorities, rural housing partnerships and communities.
- 4.7.4 Below are summarised versions of the parish council experience pieces. Full copy is available at www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk or by [clicking here](#).
- 4.7.5 NALC asked the 3 Parish Councils a series of questions relating to rural affordable housing in their parish, including the roles of the parties involved and the impact on the village. This is not framed as a robust data for analysis, but can be used as a snapshot of how 3 local councils view the process and so use as a learning tool to build on. The three summarised accounts consist of quotations that are the parish council's own views and perceptions.

1. Cawthorne Parish Council.

Cawthorne is five miles to the west of Barnsley.

Response to questions about the process and impact of a rural exception site in Cawthorne:

- “Cawthorne Parish Council has been the initiator and driver for this housing project.”
- “Whilst there has been little financial investment apart from the costs of the Housing Needs Survey, the Village Design Statement and the Parish Plan, there has been considerable investment in terms of [parish] councillor’s time... Without the will and drive of the [parish] council this project would neither have proceeded, nor come to fruition”
- “[There was] positive, constructive liaison and negotiation continued with Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council... [the] allocation criteria was set by the partnership, this was after full consultation with Cawthorne Parish Council. All of Cawthorne’s recommendations were accepted”
- “Without affordable housing in the village then people leave the area and therefore whatever local services are there suffer and decline. This has already been happening. However the local museum, farms, local bus services and public houses in the village continue to thrive at least in part to the construction of local affordable rural housing.”
- “Yes we would [consider future exception sites] but...the logistics of site identification, geographical space and possible number of housing units are real barriers. So up to now we have not identified any new areas”

2. Slayley Parish Council.

Slayley is a large rural parish six miles south of Hexham in Northumberland.

Response to questions about the process and impact of a rural exception site in Slayley:

“One of the identified needs in the Parish Plan was affordable housing for young people of the parish to remain living and working in the parish. I personally know the landowner and a Parish Council letter was sent asking for possible interest in providing green belt land for affordable houses for local young people to remain in the parish.”

“The Planning Department [Tynedale Council] played an important role to steer the idea through a green belt planning application. The landowner and the Parish Council met several Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and were given a presentation on strengths and weaknesses. The landowners made the final decision of their preferred RSL”

“Many were in favour of the application having family who needed accommodation. A very small minority were against affordable housing and thought such houses unnecessary in an affluent area. There were feelings that the houses would become homes for unemployed non-locals.”

“Affordable housing was needed to keep young families in the area, Slayley could not become a dormitory village with wealthy people living in Slayley but working and schooling their children elsewhere.”

“The Parish Council worked very hard with the planning department on producing a Local Letting Policy and a 106 agreement. Unfortunately lettings are still governed by the points system within District Councils; which meant that many of the young people because they were in work, not married or had 2.5 children had no points and were not considered eligible”

3. Wingham Parish Council.

Wingham lies between Canterbury and Sandwich.

Response to questions about the process and impact of a rural exception site in Wingham:

- “The Rural Housing Trust and the Parish Council held an Information Day at the Village Hall and residents were invited to comment on the proposed plans for the development. The overwhelming majority of responses was positive and were also keen that the housing was for local people.”
- “Yes it has [contributed to sustaining local services]. Facilities as wide ranging as the local fire station and local bakery have been kept open and are thriving because of local people staying to live in the area.”
- “Yes [we consider Wingham sustainable] because it has a plethora of services and attractions for people to connect to in the local area.”
- “Yes [we would consider another exception site]. The Council [Dover District Council] and the Rural Housing Enabler are in negotiations and discussions [with us] on how to get another ... exception site in the village.”

4.8 Homes and Communities Agency: Rural policy and delivery

- 4.8.1 The Homes and Communities Agency is the national housing and regeneration agency and operates to deliver local priorities as decided upon by local authorities. The key business tool employed to do this is the Single Conversation.
- 4.8.2 The Local Investment Plan process brings together all the investment that goes into addressing the housing and regeneration needs of an area in a Local Investment Plan. In an area with a significant need for affordable rural housing, we would expect to see this reflected in the Local Investment Plan.
- 4.8.3 To ensure that the small size and often scattered nature of rural schemes do not represent a disadvantage in the prioritisation process, we propose that areas should identify programmes of rural investment, bringing together a number of sites over an identified period of time. Programmes could cover the whole of a Local Investment Plan Area (LIPA) or more tightly defined geographical areas within the LIPA.
- 4.8.4 Programmes of investment will allow rural areas to benefit from a more strategic approach to addressing the affordable housing problem, and, once agreed, allow registered providers and local authorities a higher degree of certainty over the funding available from the HCA. There should also be some economies of scale realised, and eventually areas will have more flexibility over where funding is targeted. This flexibility should also allow some of the more opportunistic rural sites to be part of the programme.
- 4.8.5 The HCA would expect that some sort of architecture is in place to drive a rural programme. This could be a rural housing partnership that feeds into a wider strategic partnership leading on the Local Investment Plan process. This group may also lead on the commissioning of a programme's activities and eventually on appraisal of schemes.

4.9 HCA's rural approach across the country: *delivering locally***West Midlands**

- The West Midlands region has prioritised rural affordable housing, affordable and accessible rural housing featuring as one of the five themes within the emerging Business Plan.
- Work to provide a comprehensive delivery strategy for rural affordable housing across the West Midlands is being progressed through the Local Investment Plan with authorities that have rural areas within their boundaries. This is the basis upon which the commissioning approach to providing affordable housing is now based.
- The team is considering a range of new models including the recent funding of Bishops Castle CLT (Shropshire) consideration of new co-investment models using HCA funding, Local Authority land and the consideration of new models for delivery self-build products in rural locations.

South West

- As part of our approach to delivering affordable rural housing we are developing a programme approach to investment.
- Through the Local Investment Plans we will agree with a local authority/or groups of local authorities a package or programme of delivery. By taking a more strategic approach to investment we hope that some economies of scale will be realised to challenge the perception of rural housing costing more than non rural housing.
- The Region has also agreed to fund the first Community Land Trust via the HCA's regeneration budget. This has meant the Community Land Trust has not had to undergo the qualifying process as in investment partner for the National Affordable Housing Programme.

East Midlands

- Our approach is to work with local authorities, registered providers and enablers, through partnerships and strategic frameworks. Examples include the East Lindsey District Council Programme Delivery Group (see www.e-lindsey.gov.uk); the Trent Valley Partnership and the Leicestershire Rural Affordable Housing Strategic Framework (for both see www.midlandsruralhousing.org.uk). Midlands Rural Housing Association acts as a 'host' organisation for a number of rural housing enabler posts.
- Examples of recent rural investment include innovative eco-technological schemes in Manby Middlegate, East Lindsey District Council and Long Sutton, South Holland DC; and integrated supported housing for people with learning disabilities on an exception site in Barleythorpe, Rutland
- We are also funding North Kesteven DC through the LA New Build Programme to provide the first straw bale local authority homes in the country, at Martin and Waddington, Lincolnshire

South East

- In the south east, about a third of the population live in rural areas
- Rural is a thematic priority within all developing Local Investment Plans
- We work closely with proactive strategic and delivery rural housing partnerships across the south east, including Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing and the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership.

North East

- The North East was the first region to fund a Community Development Trust housing project (at Holy Island, off the coast of Northumberland) using National Affordable housing programme funds.
- We have supported the work of the Federation of Northumberland Development Trusts (FoNDT) to promote the Holy Island example across the county and the wider region.
- We have supported the work of Teesdale and West Durham Community Interest Company which has ambitions to provide affordable homes in that part of Durham.
- The first two pilot Local Investment Plan's for the North East have been produced covering Northumberland & Durham. In both cases rural affordable homes proposals feature prominently and plans to support the provision of a small network of rural enablers are also supported through the LIP's.

East of England

- Within the region rural issues are overseen by the East of England Rural Forum which reports to the Regional Housing Advisory Group. We would identify a key part of the successful delivery of the rural programme as the close working in some districts in particular between Rural Enablers, Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords with Parish Councils
- Colchester has had an initiative working with rural enablers and local parish councillors to raise awareness of rural housing and this has had an impact on delivery. Bury St Edmunds have a 'rural task group' – which they have just set up but is aimed at delivering better outcomes in rural communities.
- The Investment Agreement for Kings Lynn and West Norfolk already contains a proposal to deliver rural affordable units. It is anticipated that other investment plans in Suffolk and Norfolk will include a rural programme. The use of Community Land Trusts is similarly being explored.

North West

- The North West team has been involved in the Medium Towns/ Key Service Centre study which looked at the towns which supports the surrounding rural areas and how these can improve provision and services:
http://www.cwea.org.uk/sites/cwea.org.uk/files/Market_Towns_Investment_Prospectus_Mar09.pdf
- In Cheshire the second code 6 scheme will be funding by NAHP and will provide not only 18 affordable homes, but will be used as a pilot to train local labour in renewal technology.
- We have been discussing with the Local Authorities' and registered providers ways to utilise surplus public sector land and investment into larger rural schemes which will support rural schools and local facilities.

Yorkshire & Humber

- Y&H attracted one of the biggest allocations under the LA New Build Programme with £26m in Round 1 to produce 454 new affordable rent units and 108 in rural parishes, the majority being in East Riding.
- Y&H worked in partnership with stakeholders, including the National Housing Federation, to produce the 'Solid Foundations' guide and DVD to help the rural housing enablers and others involved in delivering rural affordable housing.
- Y&H participated with North Yorkshire County Council's Second Homes Panel to strategically allocate £5.6m of housing projects for vulnerable client groups across the county to complement HCA priorities and outcomes.
- With the West Yorkshire Rural Partnership and Leeds City Region (LCR) involved in research that better defined 'what rural means' and provide further understanding of rurality within the plans for the LCR. Research helped shape the overall strategic themes of the LCR investment plan of which one of its themes is rural economic renaissance.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

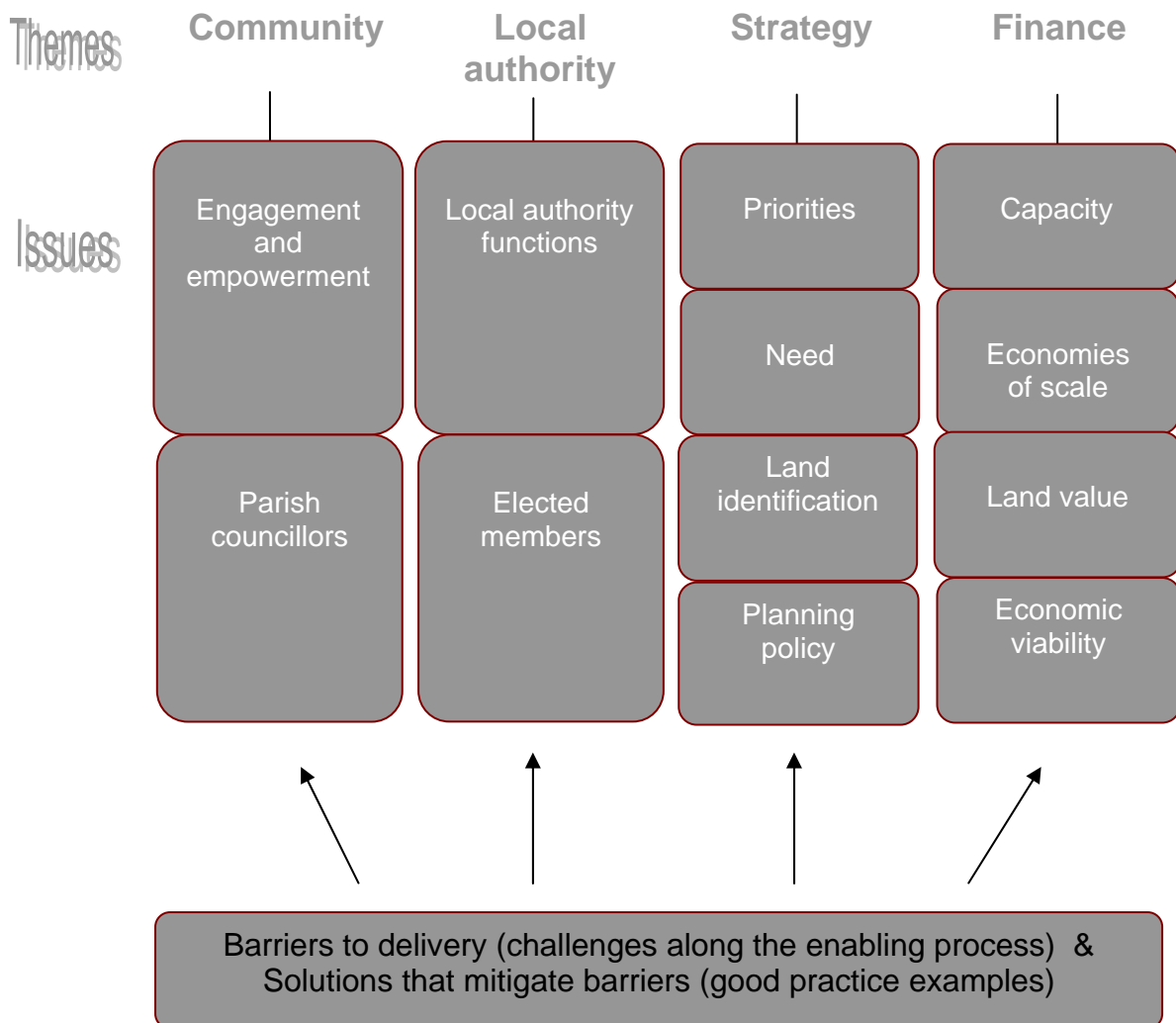
5.1 Focus of the conclusions

- 5.1.1 The central theme of this report is the application of good practice to overcome barriers to delivery. The demand for rural affordable housing is unanimously acknowledged by academic, government and media reports. The key question to address is not *why* rural housing is important, but *how* it can be delivered.
- 5.1.2 *How* to deliver is the focus of the conclusions, below. This is complimented with (i) key recommendations and (ii) commitments gained from the HCA that helps to ensure ongoing support for communities, local authorities and their partners.

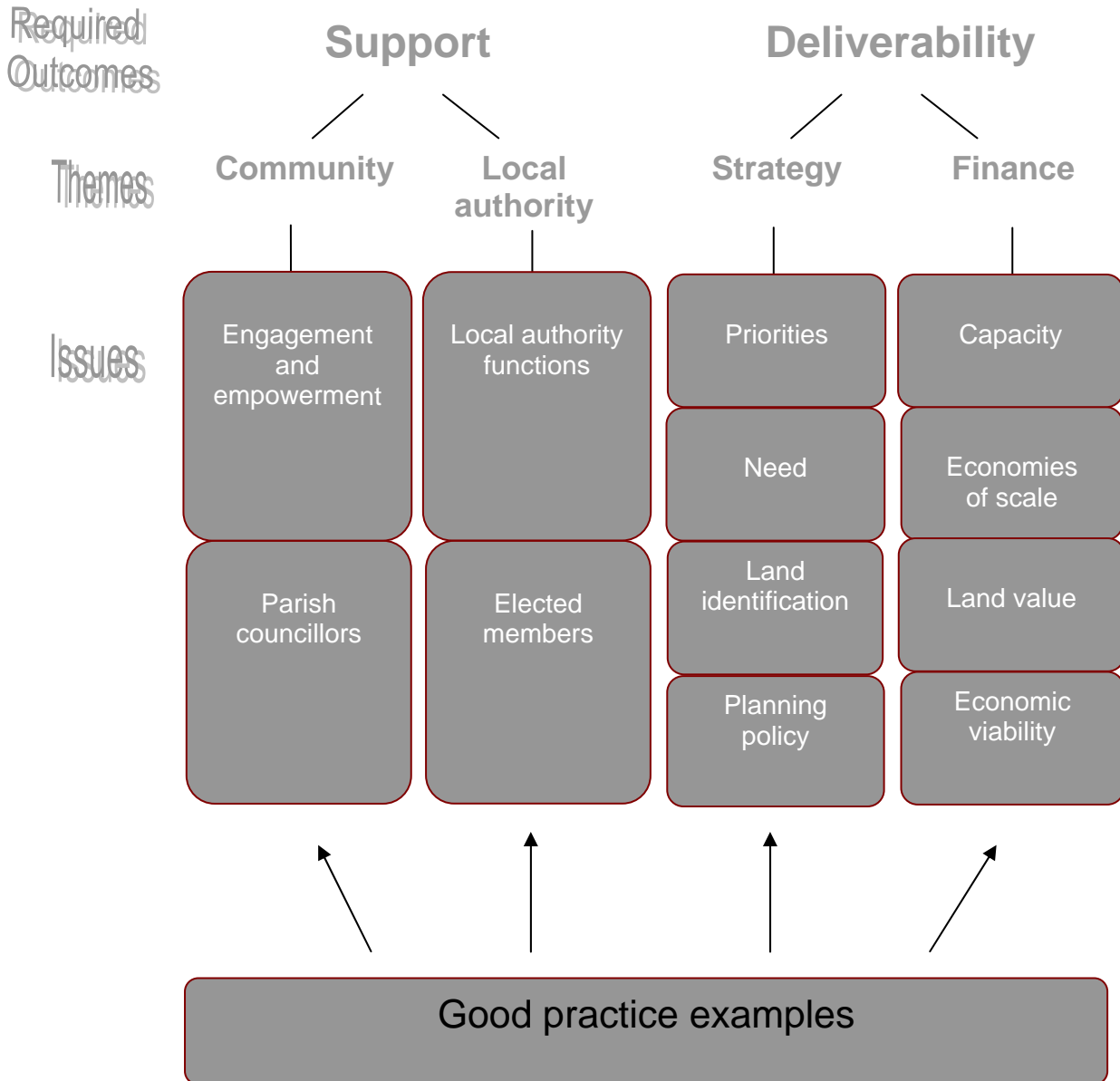
5.2 Concluding discussions: four themes

5.2.1 The study has produced four themes: (i) community; (ii) local authority; (iii) strategy; and (iv) finance.

5.2.2 Each of the themes has related issues, which can be associated with both barriers to delivery and solutions that help to mitigate those barriers.



5.2.3 By having proper regard to all issues within this thematic model, solutions can be applied in a targeted manner through existing good practice and further support, transforming issues linked to barriers into ones that enable the required outcomes for successful development. This forms the basis of the Rural Enabling Guide.



5.3 Concluding discussions: good practice

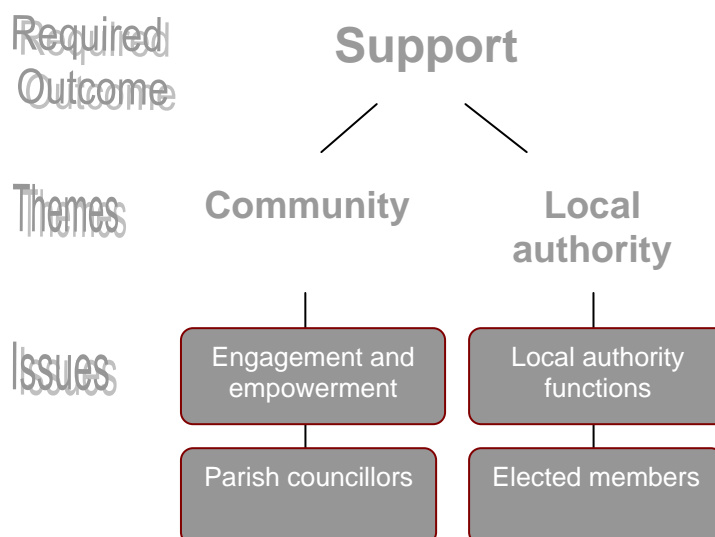
5.3.1 It is clear from the data analysis that there is an abundance of positive and proactive enabling practice across the country, and that this extends to overcoming rural specific challenges within strategic housing planning policy and practice as a whole. This demonstrates a local understanding and implementation of rural proofing.

5.3.2 This, though, is not across the board. The following pages highlight the opportunity to enable sharing of good practice. This does not require a ‘reinventing of the wheel’. But it does provide a mechanism to share the plethora of experience, knowledge and enthusiasm that already exists.

5.4 Good practice: Facilitating support for rural affordable housing

5.4.1 The study has shown that support is integral for the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas.

5.4.2 With this in mind, the challenge is clear: to identify and implement good practice that helps to overcome challenges associated with opposition to, and low prioritisation of, affordable homes across rural communities. These two barriers can be found in a number of communities, and also within some local authorities – from both a political and policy perspective. So as to engender and maintain support for rural affordable housing, it is therefore necessary to have regard to the issues related to the themes of (i) community and (ii) local authority.

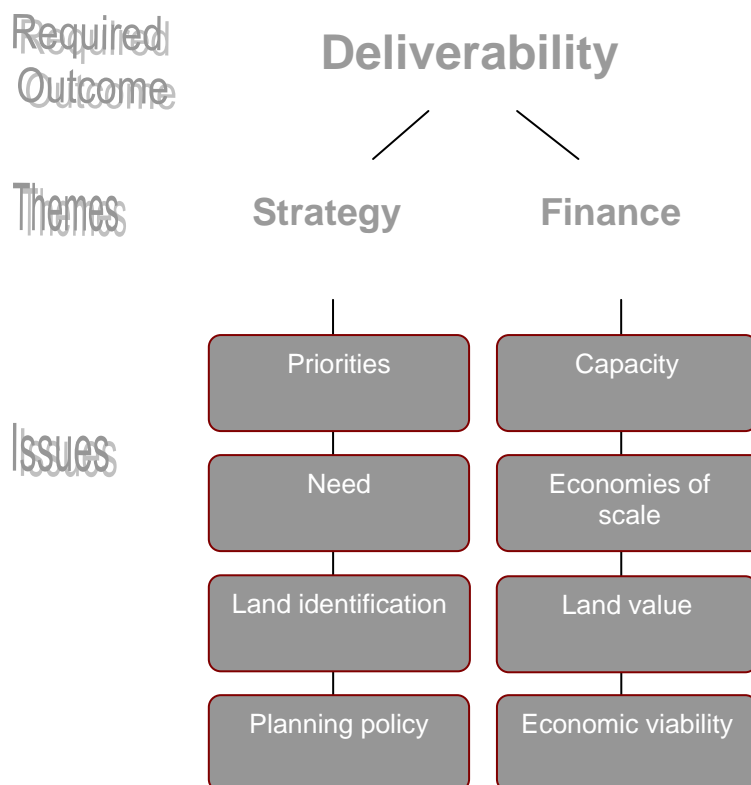


5.4.3 The examples of good practice across local authorities and rural housing partnerships demonstrate how these four issues can facilitate support for rural affordable housing. Policies and procedures that help enable (i) properly informed decisions; (ii) challenges to received wisdom and culture; (iii) focussed and supportive working practices; and (iv) proactive political leadership, all facilitate support for, and so help enable, successful development of affordable decent homes in rural communities.

5.5 Good practice: ensuring rural affordable housing is deliverable

5.5.1 Deliverability is not a new term when discussing affordable housing – having been used as part of the assessment criteria within the National Affordable Housing Programme 2008/11, with a particular focus on ‘planning status’.⁴³

5.5.2 Deliverability is the positive outcome of the eight issues linked to the (i) **strategic**, and (ii) **financial considerations** that need to be addressed.



⁴³ Housing Corporation (2007), page 52

- 5.5.3 The examples of good practice across local authorities and rural housing partnerships demonstrate how these eight issues can facilitate deliverability. Policies and procedures that help enable (i) focussed and clear objectives; (ii) evidence to implement policy; (iii) proactive and flexible approaches; (iv) capacity building; (v) clear communication and expectations, and (vi) risk management, all facilitate the actual deliverability of a rural affordable housing scheme.
- 5.6 Good practice: interlinking nature of solutions
- 5.6.1 We can see from the data analysis that there are examples of good practice that have been used to illustrate how barriers linked to a particular issue can be overcome. Some are illustrated with other issues that are also linked to the good practice example. This demonstrates that many policies and procedures have a wider impact than a simple categorisation may suggest.
- 5.6.2 With the above in mind, the Rural Enabling Guide has been summarised (see Appendix 1). This illustrates the above, showing the interlinking nature of the identified issues, and indeed, of the solutions that enable the required outcomes for successful development.

5.7 Further support and signposting

5.7.1 As well as the options available within the menu of good practice examples linked to each issue, local authorities and practitioners, so as to move toward an enhanced rural enabling process, can draw from the 'further support', which signposts to knowledge, awareness, and capacity building.

5.7.2 The identification, collation and dissemination of the good practice and further support is the main output of the Rural Affordable Housing Project. To maintain momentum, and to ensure long term stewardship, with continual updates and revision, the Rural Enabling Guide is available on line, sitting along side further rural housing resources, at www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk

Rural Affordable Housing - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Homes and Communities Agency

Address <http://www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk/home.html>

Rural Housing Information Centre

Home About Us Rural Housing Advisory Group Further Support Good Practice Forum Contact

Rural Housing > Welcome

Welcome to the Rural Housing Information Centre

This website has been designed for practitioners, stakeholders and all those involved in planning for and enabling rural affordable housing.

Learning, networking and sharing good practice are the main activities within the Rural Housing Information Centre. The website also provides links to helpful sources of information, and is the forum for the Rural Housing Advisory Group.

The Rural Enabling Guide is your tool to target the good practice examples that can benefit your activities. It allows you to search via 'themes' and 'issues' found within 'Good Practice' menu. For a more detailed search enter keywords in the box to the right, or click on the Rural Enabling Guide logo for extra search criteria.

The Rural Housing Information Centre supports the ongoing objectives of the Rural Affordable Housing Project

Rural Affordable Housing Project

Homes & Communities Agency

defra

Rural Enabling Guide

Rural Affordable Housing Project.
Homes & Communities Agency, 2 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EH
ruralhousing@hca.gov.uk | [Sitemap](#) | [Web Design](#) | [Online CMS](#)

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- 5.7.3 The following key recommendations are made within the context of the objectives to help to *(i)* set up future delivery; *(ii)* help ensure local authorities' policies have full regard to the housing needs and aspirations across their small rural communities; *(iii)* inform rural proofing of HCA and partner organisational policies related to investment in, and delivery of, affordable housing; and *(iv)* ensure long term stewardship of the Project's aims and objectives. The commitments gained from the HCA are framed within the same objectives. These are all intended to help support communities, local authorities and their partners move toward an enhanced rural enabling process.

5.8 Evaluation

5.8.1 The following evaluates the value of the project's outputs.

5.8.2 The thematic model used for data analysis and employed for the Rural Enabling Guide is one that proved valuable to demonstrate, firstly, that the well known issues that have associated barriers to delivery can provide opportunities for successful development of affordable housing. Secondly, it clearly illustrates the interlinking nature of the issues, so providing a substantive conclusion that a local authority or rural housing partnership should have focussed regard to all issues to ensure the required outcomes for successful development.

Recommendation 1

Local authorities and rural housing partnerships should consider integrating the Rural Enabling Guide into their housing enabling action plans and strategies.

This is with the aim to support knowledge and awareness-raising, as well as capacity building.

5.8.3 The data analysis provided a narrative that demonstrated the barriers linked to the issues, and the good practice that can overcome them. For example, models of partnership working prove essential to mitigate barriers linked to the issue of capacity. It is clear that lack of capacity has a negative impact on the ability to apply good community engagement policies. This can lead to silo working due to a lack of time and resources for liaising and enabling joint working structures. It can also render the collection of evidence for positive strategic planning, at the very least, difficult and has obvious financial implications due to understandable inefficient working practices with double handling and a need to fire fight rather than properly plan.

Recommendation 2**The HCA should support local authorities in forming rural housing partnerships.**

Existing rural housing partnerships should be evaluated. Considerations should include:

- how local authority strategic housing and enabling and planning functions work together across district boundaries (if appropriate);
- the use of delivery mechanisms, contractors, and personnel that address barriers related to capacity, economic viability and interconnected issues;
- National Park Authority engagement (if appropriate);
- County Council engagement (if appropriate);
- elected member engagement;
- Parish Council engagement;
- incorporation of an employment and skills strategy and programme specific employment and skills plan; and
- employment of resources and expertise within the third sector and Rural Community Councils.

Rural Housing Partnerships' structures will differ to adhere to the contextual elements of an area, including type of local authorities within a Local Investment Plan Area, and whether there is a National Park Authority.

- 5.8.4 Recommendation 2 helps to provide mechanisms for local authorities, (within the context of rural housing partnerships), to move toward an enhanced rural enabling process, not only helping build capacity, knowledge and awareness, but also providing the architecture to influence priorities and approach rural delivery in a proactive strategic manner.
- 5.8.5 The support for rural housing partnerships is integral for a strategic approach to rural affordable housing delivery. With that in mind, the issues and barriers connected to and affected by capacity need to be further considered. Mechanisms that help to facilitate and co-ordinate a partnership as well as providing expertise and gate-keeping specialisms are essential for an enhanced rural enabling process. For this reason it is important that a strategic coordinator who is a practitioner 'in the field' fulfils this role.

- 5.8.6 The data analysis illustrated the differing views and ways of working with 'independent' and/or 'in-house' Rural Housing Enablers. It is clear that Rural Housing Enablers have an essential role, and have much expertise, enthusiasm and enterprise to help fulfil local authority housing enabling function's role. It is also clear that, to move toward a strategic approach to delivery, the relationship between local authorities and the independent RHE role must innovate. The funding streams of Rural Housing Enablers need to be more sustainable and linked to the strategic programme of investment for delivering rural affordable housing. Funding Rural Housing Enabling activities, whether traditionally 'independent' or 'in-house' should be linked to rural housing partnerships and the related strategic priorities.

Recommendation 3

The HCA should support rural housing partnerships' plans for programmes of investment for delivery of rural affordable housing.

Existing programmes should be evaluated in terms of policy, process, delivery and strategic potential for setting up future delivery - to be used to influence how existing programmes can modify and new ones form within Local Investment Plan areas.

Plans for programmes of investment for delivery of rural affordable housing should have proper regard to rural housing partnership's capacity, and how 'rural enabling activities' are funded.

'Proper regard' involves identifying the roles and responsibilities across the partnership, and ensuring targeted resources are available for focused rural enabling activities, including co-ordination of the rural housing partnership; relationship management of all stakeholders; and proactive community engagement.

- 5.8.7 Returning to the ‘nub of the housing debate’, it is clear that planning policy and the way sustainability is measured has a direct effect on the future of the delivery of affordable housing across small rural communities. The impact of planning policy and development management decisions based on a criterion that negates development in many small settlements due to lack of services, and a perceived lack of local need, makes scarcity, wide affordability gaps and high housing need more acute. Existing planning policy statements provide a framework that enables development in small rural settlements that have an identified need, as well as ensuring housing that is in locations without access to service centres can still enjoy a sustainable local economy.⁴⁴

Recommendation 4

Local authorities and rural housing partnerships should consider consulting parish councils on enabling ‘cross parish partnership’ working.

This may include creating ‘Community Areas’ made up of a cluster of parishes that are connected by geography, services and the housing market. Community Areas can be used as a mechanism to (i) engage and communicate with communities more effectively; (ii) strategically plan for rural affordable housing, applying a ‘cross parish’ approach to local need; and (iii) engender a cultural shift which recognises that groups of communities can help sustain each other via shared key facilities, whilst not being bound to major service centres.

⁴⁴ *Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing* advises local planning authorities that ‘[w]here viable and practical, Local Planning Authorities should consider allocating and releasing sites solely for affordable housing, including using a Rural Exception Site Policy. This enables small sites to be used, specifically for affordable housing in small rural communities that would not normally be used for housing because, for example, they are subject to policies of restraint.’ – see CLG (2006a), page 11. *Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for sustainable economic growth* advises that local planning authorities can ‘support small-scale economic development where it provides the most sustainable option in villages, or other locations, that are remote from local service centres, recognising that a site may be an acceptable location for development even though it may not be readily accessible by public transport’ – see CLG (2009b), page 18. *Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1* advises LPAs that ‘When considering the need to secure sustainable rural development, including employment and affordable housing opportunities to meet the needs of local people, planning authorities should recognise that a site may be acceptable even though it may not be readily accessible other than by the private car’ – see CLG (2007b), page 16.

Recommendation 5

The Planning Advisory Service should provide a guidance note to local planning authorities regarding strategic allocation of affordable housing and market housing in rural areas, clarifying and building on existing guidanceⁱ.

ⁱ For example, Supplement to PPS1; PPS3; PPS4; and PPS12

This is with a view to complimenting planning policy guidance, and supporting local authorities and rural housing partnerships in strategic planning for housing across small rural communities. The guidance note should also include rural proofed information relating to Strategic Market Housing Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, explaining how these mechanisms should be applied to sparse rural areas within sub regions.

- 5.8.8 The following evaluative conclusions, framed around the four key themes of community; local authority; strategy; and finance should be read and acted upon within the context of the recommendations, above (1 – 5).
- 5.9 Evaluation: *community*
- 5.9.1 Parish Council and community support is essential for successful delivery. ‘Fire fighting’ opposition to affordable housing in rural areas impacts on the deliverability of a scheme: stretching capacity, affecting economic viability, and highlighting a gulf between communities’ priorities and the objectives of the local authority. Local opposition produces a further problem of demonstrating that aspiration of strong voices may conceal the housing needs of vulnerable people.
- 5.9.2 To overcome barriers that local opposition can create, working practices and policies that shift community empowerment from a token maxim, to one that is enabled via tangible mechanisms, are essential. Such policies and procedures prevent the need to ‘fire fight’ NIMBYism, and enables Parish Councils to be partners within the enhanced rural enabling process.

Recommendation 6

Local authorities and rural housing partnerships should consider producing a Rural Communications Plan.

A rural communications plan should detail the mechanisms by which key stakeholders can be properly informed about existing rural planning policy, allocations, affordable housing (and lack of) in rural communities, and the available channels of communication to the local authority and rural housing partnership.

The HCA commits to:

- ✚ **Draw on the conclusions of the community-led planning and affordable housing study, led by the University of Reading and Community Council Berkshire, and ensure they are part of the wider approach to assessing the value of a rural housing partnership's initial plan for a programme for delivery.**
- ✚ **Make the report available to local authorities, rural housing partnerships and all stakeholders involved in the rural enabling process; and provide strategic support to improve a constructive engagement with the community led planning process overall.**

Recommendation 7

The HCA should consider collaborating with the National Association of Local Councils to support a programme of sub-regional 'Parish Council Information Exchange' events.

This programme will enable parish councils to share experiences about rural affordable housing and related issues. This will support a 'bottom up' approach to informed decision making, as well as helping to ensure that the issues surrounding affordable housing and sustainable communities are placed on all parish council agendas.

- 5.10 Evaluation and recommendations: *local authority*
- 5.10.1 Organisational culture has a determining impact on whether support can be garnered across different local authority functions. Positive leadership is essential to encourage joint working towards a shared goal.
- 5.10.2 With the above in mind, it is clear that how elected members approach the subject of rural affordable housing, and relay it to officers across the different functions, has a huge impact on determining the culture surrounding rural delivery. Without a constructive message and unified goal, different officers across different functions will interpret national, sub-regional and local policy that impacts on affordable homes across rural communities in silo-fashion rather than as part of an enhanced, joined up, enabling process.
- 5.10.3 With a positive culture that has clear aims and objectives regarding rural affordable housing delivery comes a working environment that can be structured in a way that pushes the agenda forward, and is external facing with a clear unified message.
- 5.10.4 Joined up working across local authority functions, as a result of a positive culture, provides an opportunity to overcome barriers related to other issues, including capacity, community engagement, and, of course, planning policy.
- 5.10.5 This may involve Housing Strategy and Enabling representation within strategic planning, development management, community engagement and consultation processes; and that functions concerning these processes should have regular liaison and representation on rural housing partnerships. Regular contact, briefings and sharing expertise across local authority functions is a way to build knowledge, awareness and capacity; something that helps to enable support and an outward facing consistent, helpful message to communities and partners.

Recommendation 8

Local authorities and rural housing partnerships should consider signing up to the 'Elected Member Support Programme for Rural Affordable Housing.'

The programme, a collaboration between HCA and IDeA, will be rolled out in 2010/11. The aim is to provide a forum for elected members to share experiences, good practice and learn from each other; and to be properly informed about the issues surrounding rural affordable housing.

5.11 Evaluation: *strategy*

- 5.11.1 Priorities of a local authority dictate how many of the other 11 issues are approached, and so how solutions to blockages can be implemented. The Sustainable Communities Strategy, which provide the basis for a housing strategy, as well as how delivery takes place (within the frame work of priorities), is a document that has potential to ensure affordable housing delivery is rural proofed. That is, local strategic partnerships have an opportunity to ensure rural specific issues are fully accounted for within the overall strategy to enable sustainable communities across sparse rural areas within a sub region.
- 5.11.2 With rural affordable housing as a priority, delivery can take place via a proactive strategic manner, rather than reactive and 'piece meal'. Collecting a comprehensive evidence base to support a programme for delivery, as well as identifying deliverable land is resource intensive, especially across small rural communities, which is why issues related to strategy need to be approached within the context of priorities, as well as per recommendations 3 and 4.
- 5.11.3 Planning policy should be fit for purpose. Within the context of rural affordable housing delivery, this means progressive ways of measuring sustainability when making development management decisions, including having proper regard to community priorities, is essential to move towards an enhanced rural enabling process.

Recommendation 9

Rural housing partnerships* should consider initiating a programme of Parish Housing Needs Surveys, targeting parishes that include housing need as an action point within parish/community plans.

* see Rural Housing Economic Viability Toolkit, section 4, for an overview of different types of rural housing partnerships.

To best utilise limited resource and capacity, these parishes should be used as samples to model housing needs by Community Area (or parish cluster). This could be resourced and managed within the context of a rural housing partnership and form part of the essential criteria for rural programme of investment. A mechanism that enables collection of parish level data is essential to be confident about fully identifying need, and uncovering 'hidden need'; and will compliment the data gleaned from Strategic Housing Market Assessments.

Data from housing registers, choice based lettings systems, HomeBuy Agent reports, as well as first hand evidence from Housing Options and Homelessness Advisors can be used to compliment the parish level housing need surveys and strategic housing market assessments, further ensuring hidden need is uncovered, the most vulnerable people are identified, as well as creating a robust evidence base for planning purposes.

The HCA commits to:

Build on relationships with large public landowners and estates, with a view to identify ways of bringing forward land for rural affordable housing.

This should include a strategy to ensure identification of small rural sites – with a view to incorporating them into an evidence base to influence deliverability of a rural programme of investment.

The HCA commits to:

Approach the Valuation Office Agency, with a view to share rental market evidence (raw data) with local authorities.

Private rental market evidence is collected by Rent Officers to inform Local Housing Allowance within Broad Rental Market Areas. This information provides up-to-date, robust data regarding open market rents, and is a valuable data set for understanding, and acting upon affordability across different areas and housing markets. Local authorities and rural housing partnerships would benefit from accessing the raw data in order to further understand their housing markets, (at a lower level, needed across rural areas).

This will help to inform strategic delivery, tenure choice (including intermediate rent), planning decisions and mitigation of opposition. Further more, this data will help support the government's expectation that local planning authorities should provide "good data to the electors in the neighbourhoods, so that they can develop their vision for their community on a well-informed basis"*

*Open Source Planning Green paper - page 8

The HCA commits to:

Provide regular reports to partners and stakeholders, including the Local Investment Plan Practitioners Network, regarding the progress of the 'Development of a tool to demonstrate the contribution of affordable housing on the sustainability of rural communities' project.

Appropriate HCA staff should be encouraged to join the related Community of Practice, which will ensure a practical engagement as well as project management role.

The HCA should plan for the evaluation and dissemination of the outputs of the study, ensuring the value can be applied to the rural programmes of investment within the context of the delivery of Local Investment Agreements.

5.12 Evaluation: *finance*

- 5.12.1 Mitigation of barriers related to financial considerations at a time of economic austerity is a challenge we all face – value for money and efficiency are watch words with more significance placed on them today than in recent history.
- 5.12.2 Efficiency does not need to have negative connotations when linked with savings. Building knowledge, awareness and capacity within the framework of moving towards an enhanced rural enabling approach means a more efficient way of working - a win-win scenario. That is, the mechanisms to implement an enhanced rural enabling process are closely allied to more efficient ways of doing things (refer to recommendation 3).
- 5.12.3 As well as employing partnerships and cultural shifts to make for more efficient enabling activities, the data analysis illustrated some examples of policy that helps to mitigate financially connected delivery barriers. Investigating ways to exempt Registered Providers from s106 contributions and tariffs on 100% affordable housing development⁴⁵; understanding perceptions of land value and reasons landowners may decide to provide land; and challenging what can be perceived as onerous planning obligations relating to expensive materials, can all help (within the rural partnership model) counter aversion to perceived risk of working up small rural schemes.

⁴⁵ Policy regarding contributions and tariffs could be framed to reflect numbers of schemes within a 'Community Area' (cluster of more than one parish) and within a rural programme of investment; or render Registered Providers exempt based on evidenced economic viability affecting deliverability of the schemes(s).

The HCA commits to:

- ✚ Draw on the conclusions of the Rural Economic Viability Toolkit – Stage 1 Report, and ensure they are part of the wider approach to assessing the value of a rural housing partnership’s initial plan for a programme for delivery.**
- ✚ Make the report and toolkit available to local authorities, rural housing partnerships and all stakeholders involved in the rural enabling process; and provide strategic support to improve understanding and awareness of economic viability challenges in rural areas**

The rural housing economic viability toolkit is a practical learning and guidance tool to support local authorities and rural housing partnerships better understand viability challenges, with a view to overcome them.

The Stage 1 report includes recommendations to approach viability challenges to design, infrastructure, code for sustainable homes, resources, construction and fees, and how to incorporate them into strategic and delivery plans.

5.13 Evaluation: *quality and adherence to wider strategic aims*

- 5.13.1 It is of paramount importance that by supporting local authorities and their partners increase and accelerate delivery, quality and adherence to wider strategic aims are not compromised.
- 5.13.2 A focus on the needs and aspirations of vulnerable people is essential. To enable and maintain sustainable communities, the relationship with housing also demands a strategy that has both the ambitions and delivery mechanisms to enable vulnerable people to live within their own communities, negating a sense of dependence and social exclusion. Although not highlighted as part of the data analysis, this issue provided some cause for discussion in relation how proper regard to the needs of vulnerable groups can be part of a strategy to enable sustainable rural communities.
- 5.13.3 These discussions covered issues ranging from the need to overcome mis-informed perceptions of who is allocated affordable homes, to

ensuring development in small rural settlements is planned with a proper regard to the needs and aspirations of all members of communities, including vulnerable groups.

- 5.13.4 An ability to provide data detailing outcomes of allocations policies, including actual allocations, would help to inform local communities' priorities and planning. Furthermore, presentation of this data may support local authorities help mitigate opposition by allaying 'fears' and mis-informed perceptions; and help to highlight positive impacts of mixed and diverse communities.
- 5.13.5 With the above in mind, any evidence base collected and passed to the electorate to help define priorities should include robust data regarding vulnerable groups. This way, suitable planning policies, including local allocations plans, are more likely to come about.

5.14 Project Outputs

- 5.14.1 Since the Project launch in April 2009, the team has visited over 65 local authorities and partners organisations, as well as attending many forums about rural housing, and delivering presentations and workshops at various events and partnership meetings. This process has helped enthuse and energise local authorities and partnerships, although conversely many have enthused and energised the project team, providing fresh impetus, examples and ideas.
- 5.14.2 All outputs of the Rural Affordable Housing Project are a result of the dialogues with local authorities, Registered Providers, Rural Community Councils and other community organisations.
- 5.14.3 All outputs have been designed to support local authorities and Rural Housing Partnerships prepare and be set up for future delivery.
- 5.14.4 All outputs have been produced with the intention of being used in a practical way – including this document, which is written, not only as the report of the project's research, but also as an introduction to the Rural Enabling Guide.
- 5.14.5 The Rural Enabling Guide is a tool to collate and disseminate all the outputs of the Rural Affordable Housing Project in a practicable way. It houses all the good practice examples, retrievable via the thematic model informed by the project dialogues and data analysis. It also provides further support and signposting regarding rural affordable housing planning and delivery. The summarised Rural Enabling Guide can be found in Appendix 1; the full version is accommodated within the Rural Affordable Housing Project pilot web site, along with other rural housing related information and links. This is the mechanism to ensure the project's aims and outcomes are maintained, providing the capacity to

continuously review and update the Rural Enabling Guide, keeping it relevant and of value: www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk

5.15 Concluding discussions: Reflections

5.15.1 The enthusiasm, energy and expertise on the ground is palpable. Many local authority strategic housing and planning officers are clearly working hard to negotiate challenging layers of strategy, policy and procedure, in order to help enable and maintain sustainable rural communities.

5.15.2 Many partnership agreements between local authorities, registered providers and community organisations are extremely organised, with much to offer in terms of cooperative and strategic working practices and policies.

5.15.3 The data analysis focussed on the dialogues with local authorities. The structure and framework of this report does not allow for a full analysis of the dialogues the project held with Registered Providers, Rural Community Councils and other organisations involved in the enabling process. But, all evaluative conclusions and recommendations take this data fully into account. In fact, the focus on Rural Housing Partnerships is indicative of the manifest importance of the respective parties within policy and procedure relating to rural affordable housing delivery. No local authority can be a successful enabler across their small rural settlements without the employment of the expertise of partners; this being a fundamental principle of an enhanced rural enabling approach.

5.15.4 Enabling affordable housing is a local authority function. How this is delivered across small rural settlements depends on the full engagement of the various partners, and ensuring enabling activities are conducted with rural specific matters embedded within action plans and strategies. It is the conclusion of this report that only by moving toward an enhanced rural enabling process can this function be successfully achieved in a long term, sustainable manner. This requires knowledge, awareness and capacity building, which in turn demands a structured, joined up approach, internally and externally, for both rural strategic planning and delivery.

5.16 Concluding discussions: aiming to garner support and ensure deliverability

5.16.1 The recommendations above have been made with a view to help local authorities move towards an enhanced rural enabling process – thus supporting not only local authorities, but for partner organisations and stakeholders to have full and equal investment in the shared goals of enabling affordable housing - in its role as an essential piece in the puzzle of rural sustainable communities.

5.16.2 The theoretical context, as detailed in chapter 2, reminds us that affordable housing is linked to how communities can maintain themselves

into the future. As part of the wider debate surrounding jobs, the local economy, services, education and social capital in small rural communities, housing affordability is key. This is one of the reasons the Rural Affordable Housing Project commissioned the study to develop a tool to demonstrate the contribution of affordable housing on the sustainability of rural communities – to nail down evidenced links between affordable housing and these other elements being essential to engender support for delivery and to inform planning decisions. This report has not, though, investigated strategic planning policies directly impacting on rural employment space, retail, and services. The remit and framework did not have room for this, although discussions surrounding live/work housing and using public assets as community hubs and retail centres should move forward. Nor has this report focussed on the different models of ‘affordable housing’, from self build, to co housing, to vehicles such as community land trusts / local housing trusts – this relies on further data and is a discussion for another forum. The good practice examples illustrated above, and on the pilot good practice website, demonstrate that local authorities and communities are working well together in many areas; and are well equipped to take on the challenges of the new political and economic landscape using progressive ‘community led’ and ‘bottom up’ approaches including local housing trusts. This, though, means it is even more important for local authorities to focus on the policies and procedures surrounding their rural housing enabling services, evaluate service delivery by way of communities’ needs and aspirations, and work in partnership with delivery partners, communities and other stakeholders to help ensure a sustainable rural future across the country.

- 5.16.3 This report has focussed on how to help enable and accelerate delivery of affordable housing in small rural settlements by identifying and disseminating examples of policies, procedures and mechanisms that help to overcome the barriers to delivery. Employing the good practice shared across the country is the first step towards a process of overcoming barriers when enabling affordable housing in rural areas, and dispense with much of the need to ‘fire-fight’ in a reactive manner. Importantly, it also provides partners and stakeholders with a full overview of the rural-specific issues within a strategic context - with the ultimate aim of garnering support and ensuring deliverability.

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Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Village Information events	Enable communities to examine the plans for a proposed scheme, and to register an interest	Babergh District Council	Parish councillors; Need
Publicity campaign for rural exception sites	Develop a local understanding about exception sites	Broadland District Council	Parish councillors; Land identification; Capacity
Project Team approach: <i>study illustration</i>	Help accelerate the development process, and to ensure a transparent and inclusive procedure	Cheshire East Council	Parish councillors; LA functions; Need
Local connection registration events	Overcome capacity issues when identifying eligible households and verifying local connection	Chichester District Council	Parish councillors; Need; Capacity
Landowner and developer information leaflet	Provide clear information to landowners as to how they can make their land available	Daventry District Council	Land identification
BANANA campaign	Raise the profile of affordable housing and to help engage and inform communities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Parish councillors; Priorities; Need
Concept statement approach	Help identify potential development sites which reflect the local characteristics and priorities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Capacity; Planning policy
Links with local schools	Provide a platform for the school to act as a champion of a scheme, and raise awareness	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Need
"Village Homes for Village People" - <i>research</i>	Investigate and analyse the effects of new affordable housing schemes	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Parish councillors; Priorities Elected Members; Planning
Impact assessment of rural exception site	Assess the impact exception site has on a village, both to new residents and the existing community	East Hampshire District Council	Parish councillors; Planning Elected members; policy
Partnership with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust	Build capacity so that the council can carry out a full work plan across the rural communities	Eden District Council	Need; Capacity
Lead of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme	Achieve a step change in the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities	Hambleton District Council	Need; Planning policy
Rural housing partnership	To address the need for affordable housing in the villages of Hampshire	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	Elected Members; Priorities; Capacity; Econ of scale
Partner of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme	Achieve a step change in the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities	Harrogate Borough Council	Need; Capacity
Guide for parish councils	Explain the process of developing rural affordable housing for local people	Herefordshire Council	Parish councillors; Land ID
'Out in the Sticks' programme	Promote equality with a focus on lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender communities	Herefordshire Council	
Programme of needs surveys with information events	Empower local communities to deliver accommodation for their long term needs	Herefordshire Council	Parish councillors; Need Capacity
Investing in Communities project	Help communities better understand the planning system, and how they can become involved	Lake District National Park	Need; Land ID Planning; Capacity
Community planning officer	Consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	PCs; LA functions Land ID; Planning
Event for landowners	Highlight the importance of releasing land for rural affordable housing	North Dorset District Council	Priorities; Land ID Land value
Parish Clusters and local forums	Enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies, and share solutions	North Kesteven District Council	PCs; Priorities; Land ID; Planning

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Rural housing	To provide local authorities in Oxfordshire with	Oxfordshire Rural	Priorities; capacity
Partnership	a vehicle to focus strategically on delivery	Housing P'tnership	Econ of scale; E viability
Communications and marketing plan	Raise awareness of rural housing issues and gain support in rural parishes	Rother District Council	PCs; Land ID; Capacity
Community hubs and clusters	Enable, maintain and improve community sustainability	Shropshire Council	PCs; Planning policy
Rural toolkit Approach	Help to establish community aspirations in terms of new development	Shropshire Council	PCs; Planning policy
Parish affordable housing surgeries	To improve communication links with communities over a wide geographical area	South Hams District Council	PCs; Planning policy
Homebuyers Day event	Help people to have a better understanding of low cost home ownership as a housing option	Vale of White Horse District Council	

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Cross parish joint Local needs schemes	Provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes to develop a joint local needs scheme	Ashford Borough Council	Need; Land ID; Econ of scale Economic viability
Guide for parish councillors	Promote rural affordable housing and ensure key partners have the relevant information	Babergh District Council	
Monthly 'e' newsletter	Promote rural affordable housing and ensure key partners have the relevant information	Babergh District Council	Elected members
Village Information events	Enable communities to examine the plans for a proposed scheme, and to register an interest	Babergh District Council	Engagement; Need
Parish 'peer mentoring' and clustering	Mitigate negative views of affordable housing and to enable sharing of ideas across parishes	Breckland District Council	Planning policy
Publicity campaign for rural exception sites	Develop a local understanding about exception sites	Broadland District Council	Engagement; Land ID; Capacity
Workshops for parish/town councillors	Increase knowledge needed to meet the challenges	Broadland District Council	Priorities
Parish council rural housing event	Engage parishes and district council members	Cherwell District Council	Elected members; Priorities; Capacity
Quarterly report to parish councils	Improve communication links with parish councils	Cherwell District Council	Priorities; Capacity
Project team approach: <i>case study illustration</i>	Help accelerate the development process, and to ensure a transparent and inclusive procedure	Cheshire East Council	Engagement; LA functions; Need
Local connection registration events	Overcome capacity issues when identifying eligible households and verifying local connection	Chichester District Council	Engagement; Need Capacity
Rural housing site appraisal project	Promote comprehensive site identification in high need rural priority parishes	Cornwall Council	Land ID; Land value Economic viability
Affordable housing panel	Implement the action plan to improve the affordable housing service	Daventry District Council	LA functions; Members Priorities; Capacity
BANANA campaign	Raise the profile of affordable housing and to help engage and inform communities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; Priorities; Need
"Village Homes for Village People" - research	To investigate and analyse the effects of new affordable housing schemes	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; Members; Priorities; Capacity
Impact assessment of rural exception site	Assess the impact exception site has on a village, both to new residents and the existing community	East Hampshire District Council	Engagement; Members; Planning policy
Council rural housing needs surveys	To ensure that hidden housing need is addressed	East Lindsey District Council	LA functions; Need
Rural working group	Address the needs of rural communities surrounding a major urban centre	Gtr Peterborough Partnership	Priorities; Need Capacity
Guide for parish councils	Explain the process of developing rural affordable housing for local people	Herefordshire Council	Parish councillors; Land ID
Programme of need surveys with information events	Empower local communities to help deliver accommodation for their long term needs	Herefordshire Council	Engagement; Need; Land ID
Community planning officer	Consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	Engagement; LA functions; Land ID; Planning policy
Parish Clusters and local forums	Enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies, and share solutions	North Kesteven District Council	Engagement; Priorities; Land ID; Planning policy

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Rural affordable housing plan	A mechanism to work in partnership with parish councils to deliver affordable housing	North Kesteven District Council	Priorities; Need; Capacity
Communications and marketing plan	Raise awareness of rural housing issues and gain support in rural parishes	Rother District Council	Engagement; Land ID; Capacity
Exception sites Project	Increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need	Rother District Council	Priorities; Need; Land ID Planning policy; Capacity
Community hubs and clusters	Enable, maintain and improve community sustainability	Shropshire Council	Engagement; Planning policy
Rural toolkit Approach	Help to establish community aspirations in terms of new development	Shropshire Council	Engagement; Planning policy
Parish affordable housing surgeries	Improve communication links with communities over a wide geographical area	South Hams District Council	Engagement; Planning policy
Partnership with Community Lincs	Help build capacity, and ensure need surveys are completed	South Kesteven District Council	Need; Land ID; Capacity
Severn Voice (parish clustering)	Address the challenges of identifying land which is not deemed sustainable in planning terms	Stroud District Council	Need; Land ID; Planning Capacity; Econ of scale
Training for parish councils	Ensure parish councils are aware of issues relating to rural housing	Test Valley Borough Council	

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Rural round table	Identify issues that are blocking delivery and seek solutions through a multi disciplinary team	Ashford Borough Council	Planning policy
Use of council land for affordable housing	help support delivery by making Council owned land available at up to 100% discount	Babergh District Council	Priorities; Land ID Land value; Econ of scale
Team information sessions	Bring together strands of information, share updates, and encourage collaborative practices	Broadland District Council	Planning policy; capacity
District Implementation Group	Foster and maintain joined up working practices across LA functions, and with external partners	Cherwell District Council	Planning policy; capacity
Project Team approach: <i>case study illustration</i>	Help accelerate the development process, and to ensure a transparent and inclusive procedure	Cheshire East Council	Engagement; PCs; Need
Affordable housing panel	Implement the action plan to improve the affordable housing service	Daventry District Council	PCs; Members; Priorities; Capacity
Programme Delivery Group	Deliver the affordable housing capital programme	East Lindsey District Council	Members; Priorities; Land ID; Planning policy
Council rural housing needs surveys	To ensure that hidden housing need is addressed	East Lindsey District Council	PCs; Need; Planning policy
Partnership strategic Officer role	To undertake a strategic role across the HARAH partnership	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	Land ID; Planning policy; Capacity
Community planning officer	Consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	Engagement; PCs; Land ID; Planning policy
Designated planner for rural schemes	Meet the need for consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	Land ID; Planning policy
Affordable housing member and officer groups	Accelerate the enabling process, and find solutions to blockages	North Dorset District Council	Elected members; Planning policy; Capacity
Rural housing Partnership	To provide local authorities in Oxfordshire with a vehicle to focus strategically on delivery	Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership	Engagement; Priorities; Capacity; E of scale; Viability
Internal joint working	Provide a basis for high quality, accelerated output	Shropshire Council	Elected members; Planning; Capacity
Delivery Review Group	Review the affordable housing delivery process and to increase the speed of delivery	South Norfolk District Council	Elected members; Priorities
Development team Approach	Speed up the process of planning applications, enabling more to come forward	West Norfolk Council	Planning policy

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Monthly 'e' newsletter	Promote rural affordable housing and ensure key partners have the relevant information	Babergh District Council	Parish councillors
Training sessions for elected members	Ensure members are properly informed and kept up to date of the national and local issues	Breckland District Council	Priorities
Parish council rural housing event	Engage parishes and district council members	Cherwell District Council	Parish councillors; Priorities LA functions; Capacity
Affordable housing panel	Implement the action plan to improve the affordable housing service	Daventry District Council	PCs; Priorities; Capacity
"Village Homes for Village People" - research	To investigate and analyse the effects of new affordable housing schemes	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; PCs; Priorities; Planning
Impact assessment of rural exception site	Assess the impact exception site has on a village, both to new residents and the existing community	East Hampshire District Council	Engagement; PCs; Planning
Programme Delivery Group	Deliver the affordable housing capital programme	East Lindsey District Council	LA functions; Priorities; Land ID; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	To address the need for affordable housing in the villages of Hampshire	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	Engagement; Priorities; Capacity; Econ of scale
Affordable housing member and officer groups	Accelerate the enabling process, and find solutions to blockages	North Dorset District Council	LA functions; Planning
Internal joint working	Provide a basis for high quality, accelerated output	Shropshire Council	LA functions; Planning; Capacity
Delivery Review Group	Review the affordable housing delivery process and to increase the speed of delivery	South Norfolk District Council	LA functions; Priorities

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Use of council land for affordable housing	Help mitigate scarcity of suitable sites for affordable housing	Ashford Borough Council	Land ID; Econ viability
Use of council land for affordable housing	help support delivery by making Council owned land available at up to 100% discount	Babergh District Council	LA functions; Land ID; Land value; Viability
Workshops for parish/ town councillors	Increase knowledge needed to meet the challenges	Broadland District Council	Parish councillors
Training sessions for elected members	Ensure members are properly informed and kept up to date of the national and local issues	Breckland District Council	Elected members
Parish council rural housing event	Engage parishes and district council members	Cherwell District Council	PCs; Elected members; Capacity
Quarterly report to parish councils	Improve communication links with parish councils	Cherwell District Council	PCs; Capacity
Rural housing Partnership	Increase rural affordable housing in parishes with a significant local need	Chichester Rural Housing Partnership	Need; Capacity; E of scale
Cornwall Community Land Trust Project	Help ensure schemes are properly funded to initiate and to develop the planning stages	Cornwall Council	Economic viability
Affordable housing panel	Implement the action plan to improve the affordable housing service	Daventry District Council	PCs; LA functions; Members; Capacity
BANANA campaign	Raise the profile of affordable housing and to help engage and inform communities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; PCs; Need
"Village Homes for Village People" - research	To investigate and analyse the effects of new affordable housing schemes	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; PCs; Elected members; Planning
Rural housing partnership	Improve the rural delivery pipeline, and to manage the Rural Enabler programme	Devon Rural Housing Partnership	Capacity; Econ of scale
Programme Delivery Group	Deliver the affordable housing capital programme	East Lindsey District Council	LA functions; Members; Land ID; Planning policy
Rural housing partnership	Enable development of rural affordable housing and a forum to share best practice	Gloucestershire Rural H'sing P'ship	Need; Capacity; E of scale
Rural working group	Address the needs of rural communities surrounding a major urban centre	Gtr Peterborough Partnership	PCs; Need; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	To address the need for affordable housing in the villages of Hampshire	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	Engagement; Members; Capacity; E of scale
Event for landowners	Highlight the importance of releasing land for rural affordable housing	North Dorset District Council	Engagement; Land ID; Land value
Parish Clusters and local forums	Enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies, and share solutions	North Kesteven District Council	Engagement; PCs; Land ID; Planning policy
Straw bale social housing	Provide an exemplar project using straw bales to build new social housing in rural areas	North Kesteven District Council	Planning policy
Rural affordable housing plan	A mechanism to work in partnership with parish councils to deliver affordable housing	North Kesteven District Council	PCs; Need; Capacity

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Countywide protocol – <i>work in progress</i>	Map out the stages and responsibilities involved in delivering exception sites; and to build capacity	North'shire Rural Housing Partnership	Need; Capacity
Exception sites Project	Increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need	Rother District Council	PCs; Need; Land ID; Capacity; Planning policy
Utilising Council owned sites for rural affordable housing	To overcome scarcity of land, particularly acute in rural areas	South G'shire Council	Land ID; E of scale; Land value; E viability
South Holland Homes	Vehicle to enable development of affordable housing across the district	South Holland District Council	Economic viability
Delivery Review Group	Review the affordable housing delivery process and to increase the speed of delivery	South Norfolk District Council	LA functions; Members
Council land used for exception sites	Enable affordable housing sites to be brought forward and development to progress	Test Valley Borough Council	Land ID; Land value; Economic viability

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Cross parish joint Local needs schemes	Provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes to develop a joint local needs scheme	Ashford Borough Council	PCs; Land ID; E of scale Economic viability
Village Information events	Enable communities to examine the plans for a proposed scheme, and to register an interest	Babergh District Council	Engagement; PCs
Project Team approach: <i>case study illustration</i>	Help accelerate the development process, and to ensure a transparent and inclusive procedure	Cheshire East Council	Engagement; PCs; LA functions
Local connection registration events	Overcome capacity issues when identifying eligible households and verifying local connection	Chichester District Council	Engagement; PCs; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	Increase rural affordable housing in parishes with a significant local need	Chichester Rural Housing P'tnership	Priorities; Capacity Econ of scale
BANANA campaign	Raise the profile of affordable housing and to help engage and inform communities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; PCs; Priorities
Links with local schools	Provide a platform for the school to act as a champion of a scheme, and raise awareness	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement
Council rural housing needs surveys	To ensure that hidden housing need is addressed	East Lindsey District Council	PCs; LA functions; Planning policy
Partnership with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust	Build capacity so that the council can carry out a full work plan across the rural communities	Eden District Council	Engagement; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	Enable development of rural affordable housing and a forum to share best practice	Gloucestershire Rural H'sing P'ship	Priorities; Capacity; Econ of scale
Rural working group	Address the needs of rural communities surrounding a major urban centre	Gtr Peterborough Partnership	PCs; Priorities; Capacity
Lead of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme	Achieve a step change in the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities	Hambleton District Council	Engagement; Capacity
Partner of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme	Achieve a step change in the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities	Harrogate Borough Council	Engagement; Capacity
Programme of need surveys with information events	Empower local communities to help deliver accommodation for their long term needs	Herefordshire Council	Engagement; PCs; Land ID
Partnership Approach – <i>case study</i>	Demonstrate a partnership approach in the Peak District National Park	High Peak Borough Council	Capacity
Investing in Communities project	Help communities better understand the planning system, and how they can get involved	Lake District National Park	Engagement; Land ID; Planning; Capacity
Rural affordable housing plan	A mechanism to work in partnership with parish councils to deliver affordable housing	North Kesteven District Council	PCs; Priorities; Capacity
Countywide protocol – <i>work in progress</i>	Map out the stages and responsibilities involved in delivering exception sites; and to build capacity	North'shire Rural Housing Partnership	Priorities; Capacity
Exception sites Project	Increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need	Rother District Council	PCs; Priorities; Land ID; Planning; Capacity
Partnership with Community Lincs	Help build capacity, and ensure need surveys are completed	South Kesteven District Council	PCs; Land ID; Capacity
Severn Voice (parish clustering)	Address the challenges of identifying land which is not deemed sustainable in planning terms	Stroud District Council	Need; Land ID; Planning Capacity; Econ of scale

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Cross parish joint local needs schemes	Provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes to develop a joint local needs scheme	Ashford Borough Council	PCs; Need; Econ of scale; Economic viability
Use of council land for affordable housing	Help mitigate scarcity of suitable sites for affordable housing	Ashford Borough Council	Priorities; Econ viability
Use of council land for affordable housing	Help support delivery by making Council owned land available at up to 100% discount	Babergh District Council	LA functions; Priorities Land value; Econ viability
Publicity campaign for rural exception sites	To develop a local understanding about exception sites	Broadland District Council	Engagement; PCs; Capacity
Land incentivisation: <i>case study illustration</i>	Help bring forward a scheme in a specific area where suitable land is scarce	Chichester District Council	Land value; Econ viability
Departure and cross subsidy policy: <i>discussion</i>	Provide a more flexible approach to delivery in the rural areas	Cornwall Council	Planning; Econ viability
Rural housing site appraisal project	Promote comprehensive site identification in high need rural priority parishes	Cornwall Council	PCs; Land value; Econ viability
Landowner and developer Information leaflet	To provide clear information to landowners as to how they can make their land available	Daventry District Council	Engagement;
Programme Delivery Group	Deliver the affordable housing capital programme	East Lindsey District Council	LA functions; Members; Priorities; Planning policy
Holiday cottages into affordable homes	Utilise holiday homes left empty for long periods for housing that is affordable for local people	Eden District Council	Planning policy
Partnership strategic Officer role	To undertake a strategic role across the HARAH partnership	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	LA functions; Planning ; Capacity
Empty properties activities	maximise the delivery of affordable housing; making best use of housing stock	Herefordshire Council	
Guide for Parish councils	Explain the process of developing rural affordable housing for local people	Herefordshire Council	Engagement;; PCs
Programme of need surveys with information events	Empower local communities to help deliver accommodation for their long term needs	Herefordshire Council	Engagement;; PCs; Need
Investing in Communities project	Help communities better understand the planning system, and how they can get involved	Lake District National Park	Engagement; Need; Planning policy; Capacity
Partnership with the National Trust	Help with the identification of potential land supply	Lake District National Park	Planning policy; Capacity
Community planning officer	Consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	Engagement; PCs; LA functions; Planning
Designated planner for rural schemes	meet the need for consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	LA functions; Planning
Event for landowners	Highlight the importance of releasing land for rural affordable housing	North Dorset District Council	Engagement; Priorities; Land value
Call for land for exception sites	Identification of suitable land for exception sites	North Kesteven District Council	Planning; Land value

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Parish Clusters and local forums	Enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies, and share solutions	North Kesteven District Council	Engagement; PCs; Priorities; Planning
Landowner incentivisation strategy	Increase knowledge, address negative perceptions, and to incentivise rural landowners	Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership	Land value; Econ viability
Communications and marketing plan	To raise awareness of rural housing issues and gain support in rural parishes	Rother District Council	Engagement; PCs; Capacity
Exception sites Project	Increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need	Rother District Council	PCs; Priorities; Need Planning; Capacity
Utilising Council owned sites for rural affordable housing	Overcome scarcity of land, particularly acute in rural areas	South G'shire Council	Priorities; Econ of scale Land value; Econ viability
Affordable housing developer's partnership	Maximise development of affordable housing, share resources, expertise and best practice	South Kesteven District Council	Capacity; Econ viability
Partnership with Community Lincs	Help build capacity, and ensure need surveys are completed	South Kesteven District Council	PCs; Need; Capacity
Supported housing scheme using exception site policy	Enable housing for young people with autism in an area with need and a lack of available land	South Norfolk District Council	Planning policy
Severn Voice (parish clustering)	Address the challenges of identifying land which is not deemed sustainable in planning terms	Stroud District Council	PCs; Need; Planning Capacity; Econ of scale
Council land used for exception sites	Enable affordable housing sites to be brought forward and development to progress	Test Valley Borough Council	Priorities; Land value; Econ viability
Communication with Diocese	Help mitigate the scarcity of land for affordable housing development	Vale of White Horse District Council	

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Rural round table	Identify issues that are blocking delivery and seek solutions through a multi disciplinary team	Ashford Borough Council	LA functions
Parish 'peer mentoring' and clustering	Mitigate negative views of affordable housing and to enable sharing of ideas across parishes	Breckland District Council	Parish councillors
Team information sessions	Bring together strands of information, share updates, and encourage collaborative practices	Broadland District Council	LA functions; Capacity
District Implementation Group	Foster and maintain joined up working practices across LA functions, and with external partners	Cherwell District Council	LA functions; Capacity
Departure and cross subsidy policy: <i>discussion</i>	Provide a more flexible approach to delivery in the rural areas	Cornwall Council	Land ID; Econ viability
Concept statement approach	Help identify potential development sites which reflect the local characteristics and priorities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; Capacity
"Village Homes for Village People" - research	To investigate and analyse the effects of new affordable housing schemes	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; PCs; Members Priorities
Impact assessment of rural exception site	Assess the impact exception site has on a village, both to new residents and the existing community	East Hampshire District Council	Engagement; PCs; Members
West Durham Community Interest Co. - <i>Work in progress</i>	To maximise investment in affordable housing in rural villages in West Durham	Durham Council	Land ID; Econ of scale Economic viability
Programme Delivery Group	Deliver the affordable housing capital programme	East Lindsey District Council	LA functions; Members; Priorities; Land ID
Council rural housing needs surveys	To ensure that hidden housing need is addressed	East Lindsey District Council	PCs; LA functions; Need
Holiday cottages into affordable homes	Utilise holiday homes left empty for long periods for housing that is affordable for local people	Eden District Council	Land identification
Partnership strategic officer role	To undertake a strategic role across the HARAHA partnership	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	LA functions; Land ID; Capacity
Investing in Communities project	Help communities better understand the planning system, and how they can get involved	Lake District National Park	Engagement; Need; Land ID; Capacity
Partnership with the National Trust	Help with the identification of potential land supply	Lake District National Park	Land ID; Capacity
Community planning officer	Consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	Engagement; PCs; LA functions; Land ID
Designated planner for rural schemes	meet the need for consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes	New Forest District Council	LA functions; Land ID
Affordable housing member and officer groups	Accelerate the enabling process, and find solutions to blockages	North Dorset District Council	LA functions; Members; Capacity
Call for land for exception sites	Identification of suitable land for exception sites	North Kesteven District Council	Land ID; Land value
Parish Clusters and local forums	Enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies, and share solutions	North Kesteven District Council	Engagement; PCs; Priorities; Land ID

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Straw bale social housing	Provide an exemplar project using straw bales to build new social housing in rural areas	North Kesteven District Council	Priorities
Working with partners to overcome viability challenges	Address and overcome economic viability challenges and achieve best value for money	North W'wickshire District Council	Land value; economic viability
Exception sites Project	Increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need	Rother District Council	PCs; Priorities; Need; Land ID; Capacity
Community hubs and clusters	Enable, maintain and improve community sustainability	Shropshire Council	Engagement; PCs
Internal joint working	Provide a basis for high quality, accelerated output	Shropshire Council	LA functions; Members Capacity
Parish affordable housing surgeries	To improve communication links with communities over a wide geographical area	South Hams District Council	Engagement; PCs
Supported housing scheme using exception site policy	Enable housing for young people with autism in an area with need and a lack of available land	South Norfolk District Council	Land identification
Severn Voice (parish clustering)	Address the challenges of identifying land which is not deemed sustainable in planning terms	Stroud District Council	PCs; Need; Land ID; Capacity; economic of scale
Development team Approach	Speed up the process of planning applications, enabling more to come forward	West Norfolk Council	LA functions

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Publicity campaign for rural exception sites	Develop a local understanding about exception sites	Broadland District Council	Engagement; PCs; Land ID
Team information sessions	Bring together strands of information, share updates, and encourage collaborative practices	Broadland District Council	LA functions; Planning
District Implementation Group	Foster and maintain joined up working practices across LA functions, and with external partners	Cherwell District Council	LA functions; Planning
Parish council rural housing event	Engage with parishes and district council members	Cherwell District Council	PCs; Members; Priorities
Quarterly report to parish councils	Improve communication links with parish councils	Cherwell District Council	PCs; Priorities
Local connection registration events	Overcome capacity issues when identifying eligible households and verifying local connection	Chichester District Council	Engagement; PCs; Need
Rural housing partnership	Increase rural affordable housing in parishes with a significant local need	Chichester Rural Housing Partnership	Priorities; Need; E of scale
Affordable housing panel	Implement the action plan to improve the affordable housing service	Daventry District Council	PCs; LA functions; Elected members; Priorities
Concept statement approach	Help identify potential development sites which reflect the local characteristics and priorities	Derbyshire Dales District Council	Engagement; Planning
Rural housing partnership	Improve the rural delivery pipeline, and to manage the Rural Enabler programme	Devon Rural Housing Partnership	Priorities; Econ of scale
Partnership with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust	Build capacity so that the council can carry out a full work plan across the rural communities	Eden District Council	Engagement; Need
Rural housing partnership	Enable development of rural affordable housing and a forum to share best practice	Gloucestershire Rural H'sing P'ship	Priorities; Need; E of scale
Rural working group	Address the needs of rural communities surrounding a major urban centre	Gtr Peterborough Partnership	PCs; Priorities; Need
Partnership strategic officer role	To undertake a strategic role across the HARAHA partnership	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	LA functions; Land ID; Planning policy
Rural housing partnership	To address the need for affordable housing in the villages of Hampshire	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	Members; Priorities; Econ of scale
Lead of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme	Achieve a step change in the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities	Hambleton District Council	Engagement; Need
Partner of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme	Achieve a step change in the delivery of affordable housing in rural communities	Harrogate Borough Council	Engagement; Need
Investing in Communities project	Help communities better understand the planning system, and how they can get involved	Lake District National Park	Engagement; Need; Land ID; Planning policy
Partnership with the National Trust	Help with the identification of potential land supply	Lake District National Park	Land ID; Planning policy
Affordable housing member and officer groups	Accelerate the enabling process, and find solutions to blockages	North Dorset District Council	LA functions; Members; Planning policy
Countywide protocol – <i>work in progress</i>	Map out the stages and responsibilities involved in delivering exception sites; and to build capacity	North'shire Rural Housing Partnership	Priorities; Need

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Rural affordable housing plan	A mechanism to work in partnership with parish councils to deliver affordable housing	North Kesteven District Council	PCs; Priorities; Need
Rural housing Partnership	To provide local authorities in Oxfordshire with a vehicle to focus strategically on delivery	Oxfordshire Rural Housing P'tnership	Engagement; Priorities; econ of scale; Econ viability
Partnership approach – <i>case study</i>	Demonstrate a partnership approach in the Peak District National Park	High Peak Borough Council	Need
Communications and marketing plan	Raise awareness of rural housing issues and gain support in rural parishes	Rother District Council	Engagement; PCs; Land ID
Exception sites Project	Increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need	Rother District Council	PCs; Priorities; Need; Land ID; Planning policy
Internal joint working	Provide a basis for high quality, accelerated output	Shropshire Council	LA functions; Members; Planning policy
Affordable housing developers partnership	Maximise development of affordable housing, share resources, expertise and best practice	South Kesteven District Council	Land ID; Econ viability
Partnership with Community Lincs	Help build capacity, and ensure need surveys are completed	South Kesteven District Council	PCs; Need; Land ID
Severn Voice (parish clustering)	Address the challenges of identifying land which is not deemed sustainable in planning terms	Stroud District Council	PCs; Need; Land ID; Planning; Econ of scale

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Cross parish joint Local needs schemes	Provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes to develop a joint local needs scheme	Ashford Borough Council	PCs; Need; Land ID; Economic viability
Rural housing partnership	Increase rural affordable housing in parishes with a significant local need	Chichester Rural Housing P'tnership	Priorities; Need; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	Improve the rural delivery pipeline, and to manage the Rural Enabler programme	Devon Rural Housing Partnership	Priorities; Capacity
West Durham Community Interest Co. - <i>Work in progress</i>	To maximise investment in affordable housing in rural villages in West Durham	Durham Council	Land ID; Planning Economic viability
Rural housing partnership	Enable development of rural affordable housing and a forum to share best practice	Gloucestershire Rural H'sing P'ship	Priorities; Need; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	To address the need for affordable housing in the villages of Hampshire	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Aff' H'sing	Engagement; Members; Priorities; Capacity
Rural housing partnership	To provide local authorities in Oxfordshire with a vehicle to focus strategically on delivery	Oxfordshire Rural Housing P'tnership	Engagement; Priorities; Capacity; econ viability
Utilising Council owned sites for rural affordable housing	To overcome scarcity of land, particularly acute in rural areas	South G'shire Council	Priorities; Land ID; Land value; Econ viability
Severn Voice (parish clustering)	Address the challenges of identifying land which is not deemed sustainable in planning terms	Stroud District Council	PCs; Need; Land ID; Planning; Capacity

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Use of Council land for affordable housing	Help support delivery by making Council owned land available at up to 100% discount	Babergh District Council	LA functions; Priorities; Land ID; Econ viability
Land incentivisation: <i>case study illustration</i>	Help bring forward a scheme in a specific area where suitable land is scarce	Chichester District Council	Land ID; Econ viability
Rural housing site appraisal project	Promote comprehensive site identification in high need rural priority parishes	Cornwall Council	PCs; Land ID; Econ viability
Event for landowners	Highlight the importance of releasing land for rural affordable housing	North Dorset District Council	Engagement; Priorities; Land ID
Call for land for exception sites	Identification of suitable land for exception sites	North Kesteven District Council	Land ID; Planning policy
Working with partners to overcome viability challenges	Address and overcome economic viability challenges and achieve best value for money	North W'wickshire District Council	Planning policy; E viability
Landowner incentivisation strategy	Increase knowledge, address negative perceptions, and to incentivise rural landowners	Oxfordshire Rural Housing P'tnership	Land ID; Econ viability
Utilising Council owned sites for rural affordable housing	To overcome scarcity of land, particularly acute in rural areas	South G'shire Council	Priorities; Land ID; E of scale; E viability
Council land used for exception sites	Enable affordable housing sites to be brought forward and development to progress	Test Valley Borough Council	Priorities; Land ID; Economic viability

Appendix 1 Summary of good practice in the Rural Enabling Guide



Good Practice	Objective	Organisation	Search by other issues
Cross parish joint local needs schemes	Provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes to develop a joint local needs scheme	Ashford Borough Council	PCs; Need; Land ID; Econ of scale
Use of council land for affordable housing	Help mitigate scarcity of suitable sites for affordable housing	Ashford Borough Council	Priorities; Land ID;
Use of Council land for affordable housing	Help support delivery by making Council owned land available at up to 100% discount	Babergh District Council	LA functions; Priorities; Land ID; Land value
Land Incentivisation: <i>case study illustration</i>	Help bring forward a scheme in a specific area where suitable land is scarce	Chichester District Council	Land ID; Land value
Cornwall Community Land Trust Project	Help ensure schemes are properly funded to initiate and to develop the planning stages	Cornwall Council	Priorities
Departure and cross subsidy policy: <i>discussion</i>	Provide a more flexible approach to delivery in the rural areas	Cornwall Council	Land ID; Planning policy
Rural housing site appraisal project	Promote comprehensive site identification in high need rural priority parishes	Cornwall Council	PCs; Land ID
West Durham Community Interest Co. - <i>Work in progress</i>	To maximise investment in affordable housing in rural villages in West Durham	Durham Council	Land ID; Planning policy; Econ of scale
Working with partners to overcome viability challenges	Address and overcome economic viability challenges and achieve best value for money	North W'wickshire District Council	Planning policy
Landowner incentivisation strategy	Increase knowledge, address negative perceptions, and to incentivise rural landowners	Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership	Land ID; Land value
Rural housing partnership	To provide local authorities in Oxfordshire with a vehicle to focus strategically on delivery	Oxfordshire Rural Housing P'tnership	Engagement; Priorities; Capacity; Econ of scale
Utilising Council owned sites for rural affordable housing	To overcome scarcity of land, particularly acute in rural areas	South G'shire Council	Priorities; Land ID; Econ of scale; Land value
South Holland Homes	Vehicle to enable development of affordable housing across the district	South Holland District Council	Priorities
Affordable housing developers partnership	Maximise development of affordable housing, share resources, expertise and best practice	South Kesteven District Council	Land ID; Capacity
Council land used for exception sites	Enable affordable housing sites to be brought forward and development to progress	Test Valley Borough Council	Priorities; Land ID; Land value

Appendix 2 Initial sample

	No. LAs	TOTAL <3000	% LAs	% <3000	sample	>100 (initial sample)
East Midlands	40	1945	12.46%	12.08%	6	7
East of England	48	2083	14.95%	12.94%	6.5	6
North East	23	686	7.17%	4.26%	2	2
North West	43	1334	13.40%	8.29%	4	4
South East	67	2384	20.87%	14.81%	7.5	7
South West	45	4089	14.02%	25.40%	13	14
West Midlands	34	2026	10.59%	12.58%	6.25	5
Yorkshire & Humber	21	1553	6.54%	9.65%	4.8	5
TOTAL	321	16100	100.00%	100.00%	50.05	50

N East / N West / E Midlands / W Midlands	Yorkshire & H / East/ S East	S West
Cheshire East	E Riding	Wiltshire
Allerdale	Hambleton	Stroud
Eden	Harrogate	Forest of Dean
S Lakeland	Richmondshire	Cotswold
Northumberland	Ryedale	Mendip
Durham	Breckland	Sedgemoor
Derbyshire Dales	Kings Lynn and W Norfolk	South Somerset
East Lindsey	North Norfolk	Cornwall
N Kesteven	S Norfolk	East Devon
S Kesteven	Mid Suffolk	Mid Devon
W Lindsey	Suffolk Coastal	North Devon
S Northamptonshire	S Oxfordshire	South Hams
Bassetlaw	W Oxfordshire	North Dorset
Herefordshire	Chichester	West Dorset
Shropshire	Wealden	
Stafford	Test Valley	
Stratford on Avon	Cherwell	
Wychavon	W Berkshire	

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

1. Cross parish joint local needs schemes

Keywords: Crundale, Godmersham, HNS, parish, survey, exception site, local, need, land, viability, Shaw, Jennifer Shaw

Description: Good Practice: Provides an opportunity for two or more small parishes that are closely related to each other to develop a joint local needs housing scheme where by working alone would be unlikely to identify sufficient need to justify a viable development

Author: Ashford Borough Council Issues: Parish councillors; Need; Land identification; economies of scale; economic viability

2. Rural Round Table

Keywords: local needs, need, exception site, meeting, local authority, planning policy, Shaw, Jennifer Shaw

Description: Good practice: Quarterly officer group that meets to discuss progress and issues to affect timely delivery of local needs housing schemes

Author: Ashford Borough Council Issues: LA functions; planning policy

3. Use of council land for affordable housing

Keywords: partnership, Charing, High Halden, Stone, Smarden, Smeeth, exception site, local needs, need, land, viability, Shaw, Jennifer Shaw

Description: Good practice: Utilising Council land holdings to facilitate rural affordable housing

Author: Ashford Borough Council Issues: Priorities; land id; economic viability

4. Guide for Parish Councillors

Keywords: local needs, need, RHE, community, exception site, knowledge, understanding, perceptions, training, Tippet, Ian Tippet

Description: Good Practice: Babergh has developed a guide to assist parish councillors to bring forward rural affordable housing.

Author: Babergh District Council Issues: Parish councillors

5. Use of Council land for affordable housing

Keywords: assets, meeting, Tippet, Ian Tippet

Description: Good practice: Council owned land is made available in both towns and rural parts of the District at up to 100% discount for the delivery of new affordable housing schemes.

Author: Babergh District Council Issues: LA functions; priorities; land id; land value; economic viability

6. Monthly 'e' newsletter

Keywords: knowledge, understanding, perceptions, training, Tippet, Ian Tippet

Description: Good practice: Monthly 'e' newsletter to all elected members, parish councils and Registered Providers.

Author: Babergh District Council

Issues: Parish councillors; Elected members

7. Village Information event

Keywords: knowledge, understanding, perceptions, training, community, consultation, event, Tippet, Ian Tippet

Description: Good practice: To enable the local community to be fully consulted about the details of a proposed scheme, and also to register an interest for a home.

Author: Babergh District Council Issues: Engagement & empowerment; Parish councillors; Need

8. Training sessions for elected members

Keywords: Darryl Smith, smith, knowledge, understanding, perceptions, training, community, gypsy and traveller,

Description: Good practice: Regular briefing and training sessions are undertaken on specific areas which affect the Council, including rural affordable housing.

Author: Breckland District Council Issues: elected members; priorities

9. Parish Councillor 'Peer Mentoring' events

Keywords: Darryl Smith, smith, knowledge, understanding, perceptions, training, clustering

Description: Good practice: To help mitigate negative perceptions of affordable housing and to enable sharing of good practice and ideas between parishes

Author: Breckland District Council Issues: Parish councillors; planning policy

10. Team Information Sessions

Keywords: Veronica Savage, savage, knowledge, understanding, exception site, training

Description: Good practice: Sessions held monthly across teams that focus on individual topic areas including affordable housing in rural areas. This provides an opportunity to explain the related delivery challenges and issues.

Author: Broadland District Council Issues: LA functions; planning policy; capacity

11. Workshops for Parish / Town Councillors

Keywords: Veronica Savage, savage, knowledge, understanding, perceptions, training

Description: Good practice (event): The council made a commitment to provide additional information, skills and tools to work with their communities in delivering the proposed growth. The programme was delivered in ten evening workshops.

Author: Broadland District Council Issues: parish councillors; priorities

12. Publicity campaign for rural exception sites

Keywords: Veronica Savage, savage, knowledge, understanding, exception site, exception site, Norfolk Rural Community Council, Rural Community Council, RCC, leaflet

Description: Good practice: To develop a local understanding about exception site affordable housing and to facilitate debates based on facts rather than myths.

Author: Broadland District Council Issues: Engagement; parish councillors; land id; capacity

13. District Implementation Group (DIG)

Keywords: Fiona Brown, Brown, Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership, ORHP, Rural Housing Enabler, RHE, exception site, partnership

Description: Good practice: The DIG is the 'local arm' of the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership. To foster and maintain joined up working practices across local authority functions, and with key external partners in the delivery of rural affordable housing

Author: Cherwell District Council Issues: LA functions; planning policy; capacity

14. Parish council rural housing event

Keywords: Fiona Brown, Brown, Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership, ORHP, knowledge, understanding, training, partnership

Description: Good practice: The event was arranged to strategically react to feedback from some Parish Councils, which pointed to the fact that they did not feel fully involved in the enabling process and left out of the communication loop

Author: Cherwell District Council Issues: LA functions; elected member; priorities; capacity

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

15. Quarterly report to Parish Councils

Keywords: Fiona Brown, Brown, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, RCC, Rural Community Council, communication, report, Parish Councils, parish

Description: Good Practice: Part of a strategy to engage with parish councils who are not currently involved in the process

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Author: Cherwell District Council Issues: Local authority functions; priorities; capacity

16. Project Team approach

Keywords: Bob Vass, Vass, planning application, partnership, Lower Withington, Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, CPPHT, parish, parish council

Description: Good Practice (case study): To help accelerate the development process, enable a smooth planning application process, and to ensure a transparent and fully inclusive procedure

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Author: Cheshire East Council Issues: Engagement; Parish councillors; LA functions; Need

17. Landowner incentivisation

Keywords: Sam Irving, Irving, exception site, local, need, local needs, land, viability, nominations, nomination rights, Singleton, Goodwood Estate, HydeMartlet

Description: Good Practice (case study): . A local landed estate offered an area of their land for development, on the basis that it would be affordable housing for local people in perpetuity |

Author: Chichester District Council Issues: Land identification; land value; economic viability

18. Local Connection Registration Events

Keywords: Sam Irving, Irving, nominations, community

Description: Good Practice: To help overcome staff capacity issues in terms of identifying eligible households and verifying local connections

Author: Chichester District Council Issues: Engagement; Parish councillors; Need; Capacity

19. Cornwall Community Land Trust Project

Keywords: Sarah Wetherill, Wetherill, St Just, St Ewe, CLT, viability

Description: Good Practice: To provide funding to enable the Community Land Trust to become more self sustaining, and to bridge the funding gap at planning and initiation stages.

Author: Cornwall Council Issues: Priorities; economic viability

20. Departure and cross subsidy policy

Keywords: cross subsidy, second homes, Louise Dwelly, Dwelly, open market, exception sites

Description: Discussion: As part of the new council's draft development plan document, the Council has introduced more flexible policies in relation to rural areas.

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Author: Cornwall Council Issues: Land identification; planning policy; economic viability

21. Site appraisal project

Keywords: Louise Dwelly, Dwelly, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, SHLAA, toolkit, parish, landowner, land

22. Affordable Housing panel

Keywords: Elaine Ferguson, Ferguson, meeting, partnership

Description: Good Practice: The panel brings together the key players in delivering affordable housing in the District

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Author: Daventry District Council Issues: Parish; LA functions; elected members; priorities; capacity

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

23. Landowner and developer information leaflet

Keywords: Elaine Ferguson, Ferguson, information, perceptions, guidance, awareness

Description: Good Practice: Provides information to landowners as to how they can make their land available for affordable housing

Author: Daventry District Council Issues: engagement and empowerment; Land identification

24. BANANA Campaign

Keywords: information, perceptions, NIMBY, Isabel Bellamy, Bellamy, Bonsall Parish Council, Bonsall

Description: Good Practice: Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything campaign raises the profile of affordable housing and helps engage and inform communities

Author: Derbyshire Dales District Council Issues: Engagement Parish councillors; priorities; Need

25. Concept Statements

Keywords: RHE, Rural Housing Enabler, Peak District National Park Authority, PDNPA, national park, national park authority, film, dvd, Planning Cooperative, land, Robert Cogings, Cogings

Description: Good Practice: A mechanism to work closely with local communities in order to help identify potential development sites for affordable housing

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Author: Derbyshire Dales District Council Issues: Engagement, planning policy, capacity

26. Links with local schools

Keywords: Robert Cogings, Cogings, partnership, knowledge, perceptions, parish, Derwent Living, Middleton by Wirksworth, middleton,

Description: Good Practice: A platform is created for the school to act as a champion of a scheme and raise awareness in the local community

Author: Derbyshire Dales District Council Issues: Engagement and empowerment; Need

27. Research into the impact of housing

Keywords: perceptions, knowledge, awareness, Middleton by Wirksworth, middleton, Bakewell, Village,

Description: Good Practice: Observations from neighbours of new schemes included that they felt schemes integrated well with the village. These views help to combat NIMBY claims

Author: Derbyshire Dales District Council Issues: Engagement, P councillors; members; planning policy

28. Community Interest Company

Keywords: Graham Pilkington, Pilkington, Local Investment Plan, LIP, Partnership, land, land trust, trust

Description: Work in progress: A Land Trust covering West Durham was formally constituted in March 2009 kick-started by the gift of land from Teesdale District Council to help establish the company.

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Author: Durham Council Issues: Land identification; planning policy, econ of scale; economic viability

29. Impact Assessment

Keywords: Helen Cann, Cann, Parish Councils, parish, Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing, HARAHA, partnership, exception site, exception, guidance, knowledge, awareness

Description: Work in progress: To assess the impact the rural exception site has had on Ropley, for both individual residents and the community.

Author: Hampshire District Council Issues: Engagement, Parish councillors; members; planning policy

30. Programme Delivery Group

Keywords: meeting, Helen Henning, Henning, partnership, Linkage,

Description: Good Practice: The Programme Delivery Group meet on a monthly basis. The Group incorporates all relevant sections at a senior level who are involved in the Housing Capital Programme.

Author: East Lindsey District Council Issues: LA functions; members; priorities; Land id; planning

31. Rural Housing Needs Surveys

Keywords: Helen Henning, Henning, South Somercotes, HNS, parish, exception site, local, Lincolnshire, Code 5

Description: Good Practice: To ensure that hidden housing need is addressed. The surveys can be completed within approximately 10 weeks, which ensures that delivery is not delayed.

Author: East Lindsey District Council Issues: P councillers; Need; Land id; econof scale; econ viability

32. Partnership with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust -

Keywords: Anne Rogers, Rogers, HNS, capacity, need, survey, housing needs survey,

Description: Good Practice: The purpose is to assess the housing needs of each Parish, to engage with local Parish Councils and Community groups, and to open a dialogue with those communities regarding enabling affordable housing for local people.

Author: Eden District Council Issues: Engagement and empowerment; Need; Capacity

33. Holiday cottages into affordable homes

Keywords: Anne Rogers, Rogers, empty properties, empty homes, empty, awareness, local

Description: Good Practice: To utilise holiday homes, left empty for large periods of time, for accommodation that is affordable for local people

Author: Eden District Council Issues: Land identification; planning policy

34. Lead local authority of the North Yorkshire Enablers programme

Keywords: Helen Fielding, Fielding, RHE, rural housing enabler, community

Description: Good Practice: Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) are embedded within each local authority housing or planning department, and benefit from support and guidance from a senior RHE.

Author: Hambleton District Council Issues: Engagement and empowerment; Need; Capacity

35. Out in the Sticks programme

Keywords: Lynsey Radmore, Radmore, Diversity, equalities, equality, community, LGBT, Rainbow Forum, Herefordshire Housing Crundale, police.

Description: Good Practice: To bring together the heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities and celebrate LGBT communities

Author: Herefordshire Council Issues: Engagement and empowerment

36. Rolling programme of local housing need surveys and events

Keywords: parish council, parish, HNS, web site

Description: Good Practice: On average 10 events are undertaken each year, to coincide with the housing need survey programme. There is a part time officer responsible for the entire process of the housing needs surveys from distribution to analysis and producing the report.

Author: Herefordshire Council Issues: engagement; Parish councillors; Need; Land identification

37. Empty properties activities

Keywords: Birtley, decent homes standard, decent homes, partnership, empty homes,

Description: Good Practice: Housing Development Officer dedicated to bringing Empty Properties back into use in rural areas to maximise the delivery of affordable housing

Author: Herefordshire Council Issues: Land identification

38. Guide for Parish Councils

Keywords: knowledge, perceptions, awareness, guidance, exception site, local needs, local

Description: Good Practice: The guide provides a clear explanation of the process of delivering affordable housing in rural areas.

Author: Herefordshire Council Issues: engagement; Parish councillors; Land identification

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

39. Partnership approach

Keywords: Joanna McKendrick, McKendrick, Hope, Derbyshire, Parish, Housing Needs Survey, survey, HNS, Peak District national Park, Peak District

Description: Case study: Working in partnership to enable rural affordable housing in a National Park Authority

Author: High Peak Borough Council Issues: Need; Capacity

40. Investing in Communities project

Keywords: Paula Allen, Allen, Action for Communities in Cumbria, ACC, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, CRHT, partnership, Bootle, cluster, surveys, HNS, housing need survey

Description: Good Practice: The project looked into better integration of community led action plan evidence into policy and associated delivery

Author: Lake District National Park Authority Issues: engagement; Need; Land id; planning; capacity

41. Partnership with the National Trust

Keywords: Paula Allen, Allen, Local Development Framework, LDF, Core strategy,

Description: Good Practice: The National Trust is a member of the Lake District National Park Partnership. Since its establishment in 2006, the Partnership has started some good and often challenging initiatives.

Author: Lake District National Park Authority Issues: Land identification; planning policy; capacity

42. Affordable Housing Working Groups

Keywords: Derek Hardy, Hardy, Member, elected member, councillor, officer, meeting

Description: Good Practice: North Dorset DC has two working groups set up. Both groups are designed to help deliver more affordable housing

Author: North Dorset District Council Issues: LA; elected members; planning policy; capacity

43. Event for landowners

Keywords: Derek Hardy, Hardy, land, community land trusts, CLT, tool kit, Dorset Community Strategy

Description: Good practice (Event): Approximately 100 delegates attended - including landowners, rural asset management agents, affordable housing providers and enablers from the public, private and charitable sectors

Author: East Lindsey District Council Issues: P councillors; Need; Land id; econof scale; econ viability

44. Community Planning Officer

Keywords: Penny Velandar, Velandar, PC, guidance, perceptions, knowledge, awareness,

Description: Good Practice: New Forest District Council employ a Community Planning Officer who helps Parish Councils to produce either a parish plan or a market town health check.

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Author: New Forest District Council Issues: engagement; p councillors; LA functions; land id; planning

45. Designated planner for rural schemes

Keywords: Hampshire Alliance of Rural Affordable Housing, HARAHA, Rural Housing Enablers, RHE, National Park, National Park Authority, knowledge

Description: Good Practice: To meet the need for consistency of approach and understanding of rural schemes.

Author: New Forest District Council Issues: LA functions; Land identification; planning policy

46. Parish Clusters and local forums

Keywords: Stephen Priestley, Priestley, sustainable, need

Description: Good Practice: To help enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies to deal with them and share solutions across the District.

Author: North Kesteven District Council Issues: P councillors; Need; Land id; eco of scale; econ viability

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

47. Rural Affordable Housing Plan

Keywords: Stephen Priestley, Priestley, partnership, guidance, knowledge, perceptions

Description: Good Practice: A document has been produced for parish council and members to set out the issues around delivery of affordable housing and preferred approaches to responding to them

Author: North Kesteven District Council Issues: LA functions; priorities; Need; capacity

48. Call for land for exception sites

Keywords: Stephen Priestley, Priestley, SHLAA, Local Development Framework, LDF, sustainability

Description: Good Practice: In villages there is rarely a lot of land put forward for housing due to planning policy - the call for land has enabled the council to build up a database of land in rural areas.

Author: North Kesteven District Council Issues: Land identification; planning policy; Land value

49. Straw Bale Social Housing

Keywords: Stephen Priestley, Priestley, Waddington, housing register, code for sustainable homes, code, Level 4

Description: Good Practice: The council piloted a project to see if social housing could be built using alternative, more sustainable methods of construction.

Author: North Kesteven District Council Issues: priorities; planning policy

50. Working with partners to overcome viability challenges

Keywords: Paul Roberts, Roberts, land, economic, Code for Sustainable Homes, code, Level 4, economic, land value, value

Description: Good Practice: Example of transparency and openness between parties when considering the viability of potential schemes coming forward.

Author: North Warwickshire District Council Issues: priorities; planning policy

51. Communications and Marketing Plan

Keywords: Alison Spring, spring, information, training, perceptions, website, awareness

Description: Good Practice: A new communications plan has been developed that includes engaging the community with the use of a short film at annual conferences, parish council meetings and public events

Author: Rother District Council Issues: Engagement; parish councillors; land id; capacity

52. Exception Sites Project

Keywords: Alison Spring, spring, information, training, perceptions, website, local needs, local, need, HNS, housing needs survey, communication

Description: Good Practice: The project is partnership led and this is an important way of improving public perception and appealing to a larger cross-section of the community

Author: Rother District Council Issues: parish councillors, priorities; need; land id; planning; capacity

53. Community hubs and clusters

Keywords: Jake Berriman, Berriman, sustainability, sustainable, employment, network

Description: Good Practice: The policy focuses rural development on Community Hubs and Community Clusters identified as being suitable for development by the communities themselves.

Author: Shropshire Council Issues: engagement and empowerment; parish councillors; planning policy

54. Joint working across local authority functions

Keywords: Jake Berriman, Berriman, LDF, local development framework, choice based letting, CBL, hosting

Description: Good Practice: Example of transparency and openness between parties when considering the viability of potential schemes coming forward.

Author: Shropshire Council Issues: LA functions; elected members; planning policy; capacity

55. Rural Toolkit approach

Keywords: Jake Berriman, Berriman, sustainable, sustainability, Rural Innovation, parish, PC, parish councillors, community, consultation

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

Description: Good Practice: This involves getting together everything the Council has been able to find out about a community, including Parish Plans and its shared evidence base, and then asking a range of people from the community to reality check the evidence through a Community Testing Event

Author: Shropshire Council Issues: engagement and empowerment; planning policy

56. Single Plot Exception site policy

Keywords: Jake Berriman, Berriman, value, land, local need, local

Description: Good Practice: The policy enables building on single plot “exceptions sites” where it will assist local people who have a need for affordable housing to stay within their community

Author: Shropshire Council Issues: land id; planning policy

57. Parish Affordable Housing Surgeries

Keywords: Debbie Holloway, Holloway, East Portlemouth, awareness, communication, perceptions, consultation, PC, parish council, Local Development Framework, LDF, HNS, housing needs survey, Isobel Waterhouse Trust, Disabled Facilities Grants

Description: Good Practice: Provides an opportunity for informal discussions about housing need to take place across rural communities, and in turn may feed into the programme of housing

Author: South Hams District Council Issues: engagement; parish councillors; planning policy

58. Utilising Council owned sites

Keywords: Clare Burchell, Burchell, economic, land value, value, hope value, Acton Turville, Falfield, Cromhall, Western Challenge, Winterbourne

Description: Good Practice: South Gloucestershire Council Housing Department reviewed its land and stock holdings and subsequently retained a number of small sites when Council housing stock transferred to Merlin Housing Society

Author: South Gloucestershire Council Issues: priorities; land; econof scale; land value; econ viability

59. Local Housing Community Interest Company

Keywords: James Faircliffe, Farcliffe, South Holland Homes, Deeping St Nicholas, Pinchbeck, land, LHC, local housing company

Description: Good Practice: The creation of a community interest company meant that the Council could access Social Housing Grant, which until recently was only available to Registered Providers.

Author: South Holland District Council Issues: priorities; economic viability

60. Affordable housing developers partnership

Keywords: meeting, Larkfleet, housing needs surveys, private, private developer, Mandy Gee, Gee

Description: Good Practice: Private developer partners' attendance is to enable both the developing Registered Provider (RP) partners and private developers to work in partnership to identify potential sites and share best practice and costs in bringing a site forward.

Author: South Kesteven District Council Issues: land id; capacity; economic viability

61. Partnership working with Community Lincs

Keywords: HNS, PC, parish, parish council, housing needs survey, rural housing enabler, RHE, Mandy Gee, Gee

Description: Good Practice: By working in partnership the council and Community Lincs make best use of resources by sharing the costs of housing needs surveys in terms of officer time and materials.

Author: South Kesteven District Council Issues: Parish councillors; need; land id; capacity

62. Delivery Review Group

Keywords: Abi Dennington-Price, Dennington-Price, evaluation, service improvement

Description: Good Practice: Task and finish group to review the affordable housing delivery process and to establish whether the process could be improved

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

Author: South Norfolk District Council
Issues: LA functions; elected members; priorities

63. Supported housing scheme under the Exceptions Planning Policy

Keywords: Abi Dennington-Price, Dennington-Price, Tharston, Long Stratton, local, need, local need, vulnerable, specialised housing, vulnerable people,

Description: Good Practice: Flexible planning decisions enabled the delivery of a development for young people with autism that provided long-term residential accommodation and a respite care unit

Author: South Norfolk District Council

Issues: land id; planning policy

64. Severn Voice (Parish clustering)

Keywords: Pippa Stroud, stroud, exception site; exception, local need, local, cluster, hub, community, clustering, Arlingham, Elmore, Frampton on Severn, Fretherne with Saul, Hardwicke, Longney and Epney, Moreton Valence, Slimbridge, Whitminster

Description: Good Practice: Severn Voice is a forum for parish councils in the Severn Vale

Stroud District Council Issues: Parish councillors, need, land id; planning policy, capacity, econ of scale

65. Training for Parish Councils

Keywords: awareness, guidance, perceptions, opposition, NIMBY, education, Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing, HARAHA, DVD, film, parish, PC, newsletter, Donna Wagers, Wagers

Description: Good Practice: Example of transparency and openness between parties when considering the viability of potential schemes coming forward.

Author: Test Valley Borough Council Issues: parish councillors

66. Council land used for exception sites

Keywords: Donna Wagers, wagers, Hurstbourne Tarrant, local need, local

Description: Good Practice: Council owned land has been disposed of at below market value to enable the development to progress

Author: Test Valley Borough Council Issues: priorities; land id; land value; econ viability

67. Communication with Diocese

Keywords: Glebe land, glebe, Shrivensham, cluster, clustering, parish, land, Helen Novelle, Novelle

Description: Good Practice: Liaison with Diocese achieves updates on potential land becoming available. Periodic meetings with contact from Oxfordshire Diocese enables exchange of information on sites.

Author: Vale of White Horse District Council Issues: land id

68. Homebuyers Day

Keywords: Helen Novelle, Novelle, education, awareness, low cost home ownership, LCHO, Homebuy, shared ownership, parish council

Description: Good Practice: These events are a 'one stop shop' for members of the public to gain advice and information on low cost home ownership schemes available in their area

Author: Vale of White Horse District Council Issues: engagement and empowerment

69. 'Development Team' approach

Keywords: Lorraine Douglas, Douglas, meetings, partnership

Description: Good Practice: To enable joint working and to speed up planning application process

Author: Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Council Issues: LA functions; planning policy

70. Rural Working Group

Keywords: Nick Goodman, Goodman, partnership, exception sites, local needs housing, local, local need, Rural Housing Partnership, Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire, ACRE, Action with communities in rural England, PC, parish council, parish, Sustainable Community Strategy, sustainable, sustainability

Description: Good Practice: To address the needs of rural communities surrounding a major urban centre

Author: Greater Peterborough Partnership Issues: parish councillors; priorities; need; capacity

71. Landowner incentivisation strategy

Keywords: Ffyona MacEwan, McEwan, West Oxfordshire District Council, economic, land value, value, South Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell district council, vale of Whitehorse district council

Appendix 3 Initial list of good practice examples with key words for searches

Description: Good Practice: To raise the profile of rural housing, increase knowledge, address negative perceptions, and help mitigate scarcity of land for affordable housing development

Author: Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership

Issues: land id; land value; econ viability

72. Strategic Housing Officer role (cross partnership role)

Keywords: Debbie Rhodes , Rhodes, community, perceptions, awareness

Description: Good Practice: The main purpose is to undertake a strategic role across the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH) partnership

Author: Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable H'sing Issues: LA functions; land id; planning; capacity

73. Chichester Rural Housing Partnership

Keywords: HydeMartlet, Sam Irving, Irving, sussex, west sussex, RHE, rural housing enabler, Community Development Worker,

Description: . The Chichester Rural Housing Partnership was created in response to an identified high need for affordable housing in rural areas.

Author: Chichester Rural Housing Partnership Issues: priorities, Need; capacity, economies of scale

74. Devon Rural Housing Partnership

Keywords: Mary Ridgway, ridgeway, RHE, rural housing enabler, programme

Description: . Formed in order to enable the provision of rural social housing (both for rent and shared ownership) on a more strategic and co-ordinated basis. The Devon Rural Housing Partnership manages the Rural Housing Enabler programme.

Author: Devon Rural Housing Partnership Issues: priorities, capacity, economies of scale;

75. Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing

Keywords: Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, Hampshire County Council, New Forest National Park Authority, film, dvd, RHE, rural housing enabler,

Description: To address the need for affordable housing in the villages of Hampshire; working to ensure local people are able to afford to live in the places where they were brought up, work or have family connections.

Author: HARAH Issues:engagement, elected members, priorities, capacity, economies of scale;

76. Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership

Keywords: Rural Community Council, RCC, RHE, rural housing enabler, programme, Martin Hutchings, hutchings, Local authority, partners, Stroud District Council; Tewkesbury Borough Council; Forest of Dean District Council; Cotswold District Council

Description: . A countywide partnership to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in the rural areas of Gloucestershire

Author: Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership Issues: priorities, need, capacity, econof scale;

77. Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership

Keywords: Rural Community Council, RCC, RHE, rural housing enabler, programme, Local authority, partners, Cherwell District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Ffyona MacEwan, MacEwan

Description: To provide local authorities in Oxfordshire with a vehicle to focus strategically on delivery; to increase capacity and enable affordable housing in rural Oxfordshire

Author: Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership Issues: priorities, need, capacity, economies of scale;

78. Countywide rural housing partnership protocol

Keywords:RHE, rural housing enabler, programme, Local authority, partners, Midlands Rural Housing, Midlands Rural Housing Association, MRHA, MRH, Richard Mugglestone, Mugglestone, housing need surveys, HNS, evidence

Description: To define the roles of the key stakeholders and map out the stages and responsibilities involved with investigating need and delivering exception sites.

Author: Northamptonshire Rural Housing Partnership Issues: priorities, need, capacity, econ of scale

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Rural Affordable Housing
Project

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