



The
countryside
charity

June 2020

How to improve the supply of rural affordable housing:

A guide for members of CPRE, the countryside charity

Introduction

The guide is in nine sections. By clicking on the links in the table on the next page you will be taken to the section that interests you. Within each of these there are further links to take you to more detailed information. Alternatively, you can read the whole guide from start to finish.

The need for rural affordable housing is well understood and the consequences of its absence, for low-income families and the very sustainability of rural communities, have been well rehearsed. Yet there remains a shortage. New rural affordable housing is still a rarity rather than the norm.

Nationally, CPRE, the countryside charity, has long championed the delivery of affordable housing, particularly through its policy-influencing work. However, at local level, CPRE groups and individual members have often struggled to find ways in which they can actively and positively support its delivery. With increasing awareness of the problem, and recognition of the high quality of rural affordable homes and the benefits they can bring, there is a growing appetite to do more at local level.

Outwardly, providing rural affordable housing looks simple: find a site, secure finance, gain community support and build it. It sounds so straightforward, but behind each of these inter-related components are an array of technical details that can, on closer inspection, make it seem overwhelmingly complex. Initially, this may leave you feeling daunted and perhaps put you off doing anything, when all you want to do is to build some much-needed rural affordable housing.

The aim of this guide is to demystify the policies and process and offer practical advice on how you, as a local CPRE member of staff, volunteer or supporter, can become involved. This may be by using your local influencing and advocacy role to ensure the right local policies are in place. Or perhaps you would like to be actively involved in promoting and bringing a scheme of affordable homes to your village.

Disclaimer

This guide was written based on our best understanding of current and emerging primary and secondary planning legislation at the time of writing (March 2020)

Whichever way you choose to use this guide, we hope it inspires you to support rural affordable housing, one of the vital elements that keeps rural communities thriving.

<p><u>Section 1</u> <u>The key components of a rural affordable housing scheme</u></p>	<p>A quick overview of what needs to be in place for a successful scheme to be delivered</p>
<p><u>Section 2</u> <u>Frequently asked questions and glossary</u></p>	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definitions of affordability and affordable housing • the principal routes and planning policies that support the delivery of rural affordable housing • the mechanisms to ensure the homes remain affordable and can be occupied by people from the local community
<p><u>Section 3</u> <u>The key players, what they do and when they are involved</u></p>	<p>Advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who the key players in supporting a supply of rural affordable housing are • what their responsibilities are • when they will become involved • how you can engage with them
<p><u>Section 4</u> <u>What policies to look for and propose for inclusion in a local plan</u></p>	<p>Advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spatial strategy – approaches and policy • affordable housing policies • mechanisms for securing perpetuity and occupation by people with a local connection • the evidence base • neighbourhood plans
<p><u>Section 5</u> <u>How you can shape a proposed rural market-led development so it provides affordable housing to meet local needs</u></p>	<p>Advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing which sites may come forward • knowing the nature and level of local housing needs • familiarising yourself with relevant local and national policies • using information from the economic viability assessment • engaging with the landowner • building constructive relationships with key stakeholders • drawing on the skills of independent enablers
<p><u>Section 6</u> <u>How you can become involved in a rural exception site development</u></p>	<p>Advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the initial case, building and maintaining support for a scheme • actively engaging in the pre-development process • taking part in the design process • encouraging people to formally register their housing need
<p><u>Section 7</u> <u>How you can become involved in a community-led housing development</u></p>	<p>Advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is community-led housing (CLH) • promoting the idea • forming a CLH group • how to engage in the two principal routes for CLH delivery • standalone and partnership schemes
<p><u>Section 8</u> <u>How you can build alliances and share the workload</u></p>	<p>Advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local organisations that you could work with • suggestions on how they can help you • suggestions on how you can help them
<p><u>Section 9</u> <u>Glossary</u></p>	

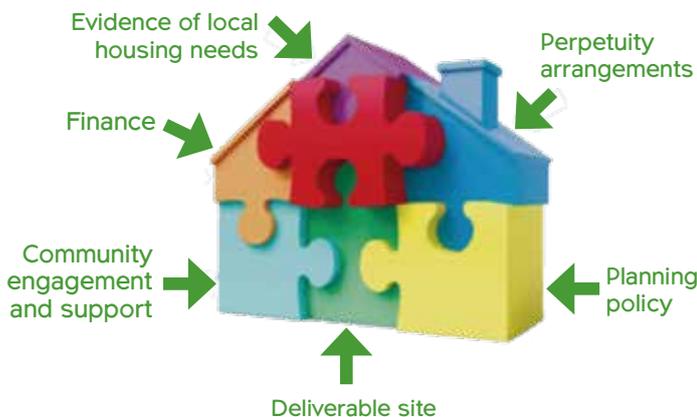


Section 1:

Key components of providing rural affordable housing

The following sections of this guide expand on the technical detail that is involved in putting each of these components in place and how you can help.

To deliver a successful rural affordable scheme, six components need to be in place. These apply whether the scheme is built as part of a market-led development or on a rural exception site.



A suitable and deliverable site

This may be a rural exception site, or the affordable homes may be part of a larger open market development. It is critical that the land price means it is financially viable to build the affordable homes.

Positive supportive planning policy and development management practice

This requires that a number of local plan strategic policies and guidance support the delivery of rural affordable housing, from the high-level spatial development strategy to the detail of the local plan's affordable housing policy. Once a scheme is proposed, these need to work hand in glove with positive and early engagement of development management planners. They play a critical role in ensuring a scheme meets local needs and fits in or enhances the local environment.

Finance

All development needs finance to cover the costs of build, but the income from affordable homes will never be enough on its own to cover these and grant subsidy will be required. This may be from a range of public sources or from surpluses made from the market housing once development costs have been covered.

Community engagement and support

The community may be the instigator of the development and will certainly have a say in whether it gains planning permission. Their early and constructive engagement is vital to the development progressing smoothly, providing the type of affordable homes they need and resulting in a scheme they can be proud of.

Perpetuity arrangements

There is already a scarcity of rural affordable housing and there are often only limited opportunities to provide it. It is frequently dependent on landowners selling sites at a price well below full market value. Their willingness to do so, along with community support for a scheme, requires that the homes are retained as affordable housing in perpetuity and occupied by people with a housing need who have a connection with the community.

Bringing all these elements together is a responsibility shared across a number of organisations, from the local authority planning and housing enabling staff and the housing association or community-led housing organisation to the community itself.



Section 2:

Frequently asked questions

The government is also considering introducing First Homes. These are a form of discounted sale, but as proposed would be at a minimum discount of 30% on the initial and subsequent sales.

What is affordable housing?

There are two related components to this question: what is meant by affordability and the type of homes classed as affordable housing.

Affordability

This refers to how much it costs an individual to buy or rent a home and whether this is judged to be affordable. The broadly accepted definitions of what is affordable, based on mortgage lending norms and research, are:

- Open market housing requires a mortgage lending ratio of no more than 3 times annual income for a single household and 2.5 times annual income for a two-person household.
- Rented housing requires that a household pays no more than 35% of their net income on rent.

Affordable housing

There is no statutory definition of affordable housing, but annex 2 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) defines it as being housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market and which complies with a provided list of defined tenures.

These include:

Affordable homes for rent – includes Affordable Rented housing, where the rent is 20% less than local market rents, and social rent, where the rent is set by government policy. In practice, social rent is usually lower than Affordable Rent. For both rented tenures, the landlord must be a registered provider (RP) with Homes England.

Starter homes – as specified in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and subject to any ensuing secondary legislation. Currently, the homes are available only to first-time buyers, with a price cap of £250,000 outside London and initial selling price 20% less than full market value. However, there is no requirement for the homes to be retained in the long term for this group or at a price that is affordable.

Discounted market sales housing – sold at a discount of 20% or more of local market values, determined by reference to what would be affordable to someone on a local income. The expectation is that arrangements will ensure the homes remain at a discounted price for future eligible households. Commonly, this would be set out in a covenant in the deed of sale of the land and the section 106 planning agreement.

Other affordable sale housing – this includes shared-ownership housing, which is a form of leasehold where the occupier buys a percentage of the equity in the home and pays rent to the owning housing association on the remainder. In rural communities, there are legal arrangements in place that mean that the occupier can never own more than 80% of the home, or that, if they sell the home, it must be bought back by the housing association.

How do I know if there is a need for rural affordable housing in my area and my community?

As part of the evidence base for the local plan and its review, local planning authorities (LPAs) will publish an annual housing need figure, calculated using the national standard methodology. This will be broken down into an assessment of the need for particular types and tenures of housing, including specifically that for affordable housing.

In some cases, there will be a rural analysis but, where this is not available or data is needed for a specific community, a local housing needs assessment may have been produced or could be commissioned. Often these are carried out by a Rural Housing Enabler (RHE). As a national group, they have adopted a [Statement of Guiding Principles for Local Housing Needs Surveys](#). Alternatively, you could speak to your local authority housing enabling officer. Enabling officers work with RHEs or, in areas where RHEs do not operate, the authority itself may carry out local housing surveys.

If you wanted to gauge the likely need before approaching an RHE or local authority, you could:

- Gain a broad picture of the age and housing profile of your community from parish data produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- Look at one of the commercial sites that advertise houses for rent and sale. This will give you an idea of how much housing is on the market, what type of housing is available and how much it costs. As a rule of thumb, you can divide the sales price by three to work out what income is needed to buy the homes. For private rented housing to be affordable, the rent should be no more than 33% of a household's gross income.
- Locally earned income data is available only at local authority level, but it is still useful. It is collected through the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), published by the ONS and can be found in ASHE Table 7.

What are the principal routes for delivering rural affordable housing?

Market-led development on sites of 10 or more dwellings

This will be on sites allocated in the local plan or windfall sites (unallocated sites that become available for development unexpectedly). The majority of the scheme will be market housing for sale, but with some affordable housing, as required by the affordable housing policies in the local plan. A private developer will build the scheme and, at completion, the affordable homes will be sold to a housing association or community-led housing organisation. They will then own, manage and maintain the affordable homes.

It is possible to use a section 106 agreement to secure occupancy of the affordable homes for local people with a housing need. However, this may make the scheme ineligible for government capital subsidy.

Market-led development on sites of fewer than 10 dwellings

Until September 2019, it was only possible to seek an affordable housing contribution in the form of a financial sum in areas designated as 'rural' under the Right to Buy legislation (S157 Housing Act 1985). The finance raised could be used to provide affordable housing on another site, not necessarily in the community where it was raised.

This restriction was removed through an amendment to the [National Planning Practice Guidance in September 2019 \(paragraph 023\)](#). Local Planning Authorities can now set their own size of site that will trigger an affordable housing contribution. In conjunction with another requirement in the NPPF the expectation is that this should be provided as affordable homes on the site of the development. In effect this means that LPA's can adopt a policy to take an affordable housing contribution from all sites in rural areas, subject to viability and evidence of need.

Rural exception sites

These are small sites (typically five to 20 dwellings) that are within or adjoin a settlement and will be considered for residential development only where they provide affordable homes to meet local needs in perpetuity. In some cases, they might include an element of market housing limited to the amount needed to provide some cross-subsidy to pay for the affordable homes.

Development will generally be led by a housing association, or community-led housing organisation. A section 106 agreement will ensure the properties are retained as affordable housing and are occupied by people in housing need and with a connection to the community.

Which planning policies support the delivery of rural affordable housing?

There are two principal areas of strategic policy in a local plan that can provide a positive policy framework for the delivery of rural affordable housing policies.

The spatial development strategy

When planning for the overall development of their area, LPAs should avoid using settlement hierarchies that prevent development in rural communities. Instead, they should set out a positive approach that maintains or enhances the sustainability of all rural communities through development of an appropriate scale and type.

Affordable housing policies

At a minimum, three affordable housing policies should be included to support delivery in rural areas.

- **Affordable housing contributions from market housing developments** – For allocated, windfall and in some cases infill developments, local plans will set out the size of development that will trigger an affordable housing contribution. This is known as the ‘threshold’. Policy will also set out the size of the required contribution, expressed as a percentage of the total number of dwellings developed on a site. These may include different thresholds and contributions for rural and urban areas.
- **Rural exception sites policy** – Allows for the development of small (typically five to 20 dwellings) sites that are within or adjoin a settlement only when it provides affordable homes to meet local needs in perpetuity. The policy may allow for some market housing to facilitate the development of the affordable homes. A section 106 agreement will ensure the properties are retained as affordable housing and are occupied by people in housing need with a connection to the community.
- **Community-led housing** – A local plan may contain a specific policy for community-led development that will support affordable housing schemes led and owned by the community. More commonly, LPAs will open opportunities for this form of development by explicitly mentioning it as a mechanism for delivering affordable housing in other policies.

A more detailed explanation of local plan policy and how it can support rural affordable housing can be found in [section 4](#) of this guide.

How is affordable housing financed?

The principal costs of any residential development are: land, construction, cost of borrowing the finance to build the scheme, developer/builder return, professional fees and marketing. These are paid through income from sales and capitalised rents. However, the income derived from affordable housing does not cover the costs of development. There is therefore a need for subsidy. This principally comes from four routes.

Cross-subsidy – from the surplus from market sales once the cost of development has been covered.

Local authority capital grant – this may be from its own reserves or from money raised by taking a commuted sum (cash payment) in lieu of an on-site affordable housing contribution from other developments.

Homes England capital grant – Homes England is a non-departmental public funding body. It administers a number of loan and grant programmes that support the delivery of homes. The most important to rural affordable housing is its Approved Development Programme. This is distributed through its registered investment partners, with a requirement that the final landlord of any Affordable Rent housing is a registered provider.

Internal cross-subsidy – provided by the developer, including housing associations, from their own reserves.

It is the balance between the costs and income generated from a scheme that is assessed in economic viability assessments.

More information on economic viability testing can be found in [section 4](#) of this guide and the viability paragraphs in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

How is the land price calculated?

The cost of the land is critical to whether a scheme is financially viable. Too high a land price and the costs cannot be covered by the income, leaving a gap that is not possible to fill by subsidy, either in the form of a grant or cross-subsidy from market sales.

For a market-led development, the land price will be calculated by subtracting the income it is expected to generate from the expected costs of development. This should take into account any affordable housing that is required by local plan policy. It is known as the residual valuation method.

For rural exception sites, a different process is used as these sites do not have any development value because they would not normally be considered appropriate for housing. Instead, a multiple of existing use value is used. The 'rule of thumb' is that this gives a value of £10,000 to £12,000 per plot, which is equivalent to £100,000 to £120,000 an acre.

More information on economic viability testing can be found in [section 4 of this guide](#) and the viability paragraphs in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

Can the homes be kept as affordable in perpetuity?

There are a number of measures that can be used to ensure the homes remain as affordable housing in perpetuity.

Statutory protections

These apply to affordable homes provided by housing associations in rural settlements with a population of less than 3,000.

Rural exemption from Right to Acquire

This prevents residents of rented homes provided by a housing association since 1996 from buying their home.

Rural exemption from leasehold enfranchisement

This prevents shared-ownership homes that use the Homes England shared-ownership lease from being bought and then sold into the open market. The protections can take two forms:

- i) Limiting the amount of equity that a resident can own to 80% (this is the most commonly used)
- ii) The housing association buying back the property when a resident owning 100% of the home wants to sell. Housing associations can ask for a waiver from these protections, but this is rarely exercised.

Planning obligations

Section 106 planning agreements can include a clause that requires the homes are retained as affordable housing in perpetuity. It is a mechanism commonly used for rural exception site schemes and can be used for affordable housing provided on market developments. Section 106 Agreements do not have the legal strength as statutory arrangements for retaining the homes as affordable housing, such as the exemption from the Right to Acquire, but act as an important 'belt and braces' provision on schemes built in villages of 3,000 or less population where the legislative protections apply. In villages of more than 3,000 population, they can be the principal mechanism for ensuring that affordable housing remains in this tenure.

Covenant in the deed of sale

A positive covenant in the land purchase agreement can include a clause that requires the buyer to use their best endeavours to maintain the affordable dwellings provided on the site as affordable housing in perpetuity. As a covenant, this will retain the homes as affordable housing even if there are changes in statute, as legislation rarely applies retrospectively. However, landowners should seek legal advice if they want to apply a covenant.

Community land trust developments

Where a scheme is developed, financed and owned by a community land trust, the residents of rented homes will not have the right to buy their property.

Does Right to Buy (RTB) apply to rural affordable housing?

Rural affordable housing built by councils is subject to Right to Buy. However, in areas designated as 'rural' under section 157 of the Housing Act 1985, two safeguards can be applied to retain the homes in the affordable housing sector when the resident who has exercised the right to buy decides to sell their homes:

- i) the home must be sold to a person with a local connection
- ii) the council has a pre-emptive right to buy back the home

Will Voluntary Right to Buy (VRTB) apply to rural affordable housing?

This is not a statutory right, and has not yet been rolled out across the country. It is a voluntary arrangement that would give tenants living in homes owned by registered providers the same RTB level of discount as that available for those living in council housing. Both housing association and community-led housing can be covered by this provision if these organisations have accessed government grant that requires them to become a registered provider. This includes community-led housing that is built in a formal partnership with a registered provider. However, at the time of writing, it also seems unlikely that VRTB will be available for housing association properties in settlements of less than 3,000 population and where a section 106 agreement requires the homes to be retained as affordable housing. When VRTB was negotiated, a case was made and agreed for exempting rural properties. Ultimately, should VRTB be extended, it will be up to the registered provider to decide if they want to agree to selling a home.

If the community-led housing is financed and developed without government grant, VRTB will not be applied.

More details on how planning policy can secure perpetuity arrangements can be found in [section 4 of this guide](#).

Will people who have a connection with the community always occupy the homes?

For affordable homes provided on rural exception sites, this is a requirement that will be set out in local plan policy and in the accompanying scheme-specific section 106 agreement. They will both define the term 'local occupancy', usually in terms of people having a connection through residency, family or employment.

A section 106 agreement can be used for the same purpose for affordable housing on a market-led development.

Increasingly, and in particular for community-led housing, there will also be a local lettings policy that will set out the eligibility criteria for occupation of the homes.

More details on how planning policy can secure local occupancy can be found in [section 4 of this guide](#).

A glossary of terms

As with any technical area, rural affordable housing has its own set of terms and acronyms. While these guidance notes will provide an explanation of most of these, a quick reference can be found in the [glossary in this guide](#).



Section 3:

The key players, what they do and when they are involved

A rural affordable housing scheme is the result of a number of organisations and individuals bringing to bear their resources, knowledge and skills.

Most of them will be involved at a number of points in the process, from when the delivery of rural affordable housing is no more than a goal to when people move into their new homes.

The following table sets out the principal roles and responsibilities of each of the key players, the points at which they are engaged and how you might work with them.

Organisation	Role and responsibility	When they become involved	How you might work with them
Local planning authority – policy planners	Assembling the evidence, writing and reviewing local plan policies and guidance that supports the development of rural affordable housing Ensuring there is a five-year land supply for housing		Commenting on draft policy and guidance. More information on what to look and ask for can be found in section 4 of this guide
Local planning authority – development management officers	Implementing local plan policy and guidance Having pre-application discussions with those wanting to develop a scheme to ensure it is deliverable, complies with policy and meets its objectives Negotiating affordable housing contributions	Helping to identify and assess the suitability of potential rural exception sites Confirming the suitability of the chosen site from a planning perspective Providing advice on the scheme design to the developer and taking part in community consultation events	Being part of a community group that is leading/shaping a development. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide Responding constructively to planning applications for delivery of rural affordable housing

Organisation	Role and responsibility	When they become involved	How you might work with them
<p>cont.</p> <p>Local planning authority – development management officers</p>	<p>Making recommendations to councillors on whether a scheme should be granted planning permission</p> <p>Informing and engaging ward councillors and portfolio holder</p>	<p>Agreeing the section 106 agreement and the inclusion of any related local lettings policies</p> <p>They can play a pivotal ‘brokering’ role when a scheme meets some obstacles</p>	
<p>Neighbourhood planning groups</p>	<p>Assembling evidence, engaging the wider community, writing policies and allocating sites in neighbourhood plans (NPs)</p> <p>Putting together and acting on an implementation plan to deliver the NP including affordable housing</p>	<p>When the NP is being drafted</p>	<p>Being a member of a neighbourhood planning group.</p> <p>Advocating and supporting the inclusion of policies in the NP for affordable housing</p> <p>Being part of an NP implementation group</p>
<p>Local authority housing enablers</p>	<p>Developing the local housing strategy</p> <p>Confirming or commissioning survey of housing needs</p> <p>Discussion and negotiation with planners</p> <p>Discussion and negotiation with housing association/community-led housing organisation</p> <p>Negotiation of affordable housing contribution</p> <p>Supporting bids or securing capital grant funding</p> <p>Working with housing allocation team on local lettings policy/ section 106 agreement</p> <p>Formal commenting on planning application</p> <p>Informing and engaging ward councillors and portfolio holder</p> <p>Where the LA owns housing stock, the housing enabler will also be involved in promoting new council housing schemes</p>	<p>Assembling the evidence, negotiating with delivery partners, working with planners to produce the local housing strategy</p> <p>Often the principal point of contact within an LA for a specific proposal</p> <p>When idea of a scheme is first mooted. Sometimes they may be the instigator</p> <p>Advising on selection of a housing association and/ or working with a housing association interested in developing a scheme</p> <p>Input into discussions on scheme financing where it requires capital grant or cross-subsidy from market development</p> <p>Contributing to community consultation events throughout pre-development process</p> <p>Discussion/negotiation with planners on site and section 106 agreement</p>	<p>Commenting on any consultations on the local housing strategy to ensure that it includes targets and action to deliver rural affordable housing</p> <p>Being part of a community group that is leading/shaping a development. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide</p>

Organisation	Role and responsibility	When they become involved	How you might work with them
Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs)	<p>Supporting the community to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess its housing needs • identify a site • choose/work with a housing association • engage in the design of the scheme • input into the local lettings policy and/or section 106 agreement <p>Acting as an independent honest broker between the different parties</p>	<p>The RHE will be involved from the start and all the way through the pre-development and construction phases to the point when the homes are occupied</p>	<p>Contributing to the work of the RHE by promoting the benefits of rural affordable housing</p> <p>All RHEs have an advisory/steering group, some are part of a rural housing partnership, and you could ask to become a member</p> <p>Being part of a community group that is leading/shaping a development. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide</p>
Community-led housing (CLH) advisers	<p>Providing independent technical advice for the community to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decide whether this is the route they want to take and what are their options • helping them form a group and gain legal incorporation • carrying out a feasibility study • putting together a business plan • in some cases, raising development finance • finding a site • designing a viable scheme • gaining planning permission • managing a build contract • managing and maintaining the homes 	<p>The CLH technical adviser will be involved from the start all the way through the pre-development, construction phases and will be able to provide support as the scheme moves into long-term management</p> <p>They will often work in concert with the local RHE and some of the pre-development tasks will be split between them</p>	<p>Being part of a community group that is leading/shaping a community-led housing development. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide</p>

Organisation	Role and responsibility	When they become involved	How you might work with them
<p>Landowners/ land agents</p>	<p>To provide sites</p> <p>They can also be a direct provider of affordable housing</p>	<p>Putting sites forward as part of the ongoing local plan process for identifying a five-year land supply</p> <p>Putting a site forward as a rural exception site</p> <p>If they are going to be the long-term owners and managers they will be involved throughout the pre-development and development process and ongoing maintenance and management</p>	<p>Monitoring and following up the strategic housing land availability assessment work of the LPA so you can engage at a very early stage with the landowner or their agent on the inclusion of affordable housing in a scheme</p> <p>When there is a call for sites for a rural exception site development, you could be a member of the community action group who contacts landowners with possible sites to explain why rural affordable housing is needed</p> <p>If the landowner is going to develop and own the affordable homes you could contact them directly to explain what the community would like to achieve and explore how the community could work with them</p>
<p>Parish councils</p>	<p>They may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be the instigators of the scheme • provide sites in their ownership • in some cases they may provide loan finance through the Public Works Loan Board <p>They are critical supporters and advocates</p> <p>They will be consulted on the planning application</p>	<p>Ideally they will have been involved and supportive from the beginning and may have set up a working group. They will often play a role at the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping with the local housing needs survey • identifying a site • helping to organise and themselves inputting into design consultations • input into section 106 heads of terms and/or local lettings policy • formally responding to the planning application 	<p>Encouraging and supporting the parish council to promote a rural affordable housing scheme. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide</p>

Organisation	Role and responsibility	When they become involved	How you might work with them
Local authority councillors	Supporters and advocates of rural affordable housing as part of their input into the LA's strategic policy making and decisions on funding and planning permission for specific schemes	At the point of preparing and signing off key strategies, including the local housing strategy and local plan As a specific scheme goes through the pre-application and development phases	Telling your councillor about the need for and benefits of rural affordable housing Providing them with evidence of the need to champion a scheme. Providing support and advocacy as the scheme goes through pre-app phases
Housing associations	They will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with the community on site identification, design and letting arrangements consider feasibility of potential sites and negotiate with the landowner raise the development finance, including accessing government grant gain planning permission build the scheme maintain and manage the homes, including deciding who will live in the homes 	At the point of identifying and securing the site Discussions with planners and LA housing staff throughout the pre- application phase Engaging with the community during the pre-application phase Submitting the planning permission Negotiating and often signatories to the section 106 agreement Agreeing and implementing the local lettings policy	Being part of a community group that is leading/shaping a development. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide
Community-led housing organisations (eg community land trusts, cohousing, co-ops, some forms of self and custom build)	<p>In some cases, they will take sole responsibility for the financing, design, development and management of the scheme</p> <p>In others, they will work in partnership with a housing association. The CLH will ensure the community is integrally involved in the scheme development and will take ownership/stewardship of the properties</p> <p>If working in partnership with a housing association, the latter will take on the responsibility for design, finance and construction and often management under a long-term lease or contractual arrangement.</p>	Discussing the development options open for the community Setting up a legally incorporated organisation Assessing the housing need Identifying and securing the site Discussions with planners and LA housing staff throughout the pre- app phase Engaging with the community during the pre-app phase Submitting the planning permission Negotiating and often signatories to the section 106 agreement Agreeing and implementing the local lettings policy	Being part of a community group that is leading/shaping a community-led housing development. More information on how you can do this can be found in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this guide



Section 4:

What policies to look for and propose for inclusion in a local plan

This section of the guide offers some ideas on what you should look and call for when responding to consultations on local plans and development management documents.

Planning policy and guidance plays a critical role in determining where rural affordable housing can be built, bringing forward sites at a price that makes provision viable, ensuring the mix or tenures and house types meets local need and that the homes are designed to be in keeping with the local area.

The section starts with a checklist of what you should seek in the key local plan policy topics. These 'asks' are then explored in more detail in the following text.

Checklist of what to seek from local plan and development document policy

Policy topic	Outcome sought
Local plan vision and objectives	Promotion of appropriate development to support the sustainability of rural communities.
Spatial development strategy	Positive approach that supports development in all rural communities to maintain or enhance their sustainability.
Site allocations	Site allocations are made in rural communities of a size that will trigger an on-site affordable housing contribution.
Affordable housing – market-led developments	Affordable housing contributions will be required from market-led developments in rural communities from allocated and windfall sites. Preferably as on-site contributions.

Policy topic	Outcome sought
Affordable housing – rural exception sites	A positively worded rural exception site policy that states the principal purpose is to provide affordable housing to meet local housing needs, but allows some market housing sufficient to make the scheme financially viable, with safeguards to prevent this inflating land values.
Affordable housing – perpetuity arrangements	Policies state that arrangements will be required to ensure the homes provided remain affordable in perpetuity.
Affordable housing – local occupancy	Policies state that arrangements will be required to ensure the homes provided are occupied by those with a housing need and connection to the local community. But not drawn so tightly that they result in difficulties raising finance to build the scheme.
Mix of types, sizes and tenures	Policies make provision to meet a range of housing needs in rural communities including those of older residents.
The local plan evidence base	The housing needs assessment, strategic housing land availability assessment and economic viability assessments are designed, and data collected and analysed to provide a rural cut and take account of rural circumstances.

More generic information on how and when you can best influence a local plan can be found in the CPRE/ NALC publication, [Planning Explained](#).

Do the local plan’s objectives support sustainable development in rural communities?

The local plan’s overarching objectives will usually refer to the goal of promoting sustainable development and responding to and engaging with communities. These stated intentions follow from the purpose of planning set out in the NPPF.

In some senses, these types of statement are enough to set a positive context for achieving these goals in a rural context. However, this is not always the case and so seeking some commitment that this principal will also be promoted in the rural communities of the plan area would be helpful.

Does the spatial development strategy and policy provide opportunities for all rural communities to be sustainable communities?

Whether explicitly stated or not, the detailed policies should open up the potential for all rural communities to become sustainable by providing opportunities for them to grow and meet their social, economic and environmental needs. This may be as individual settlements or recognising that rural communities often operate as ‘clusters’.

Historically, local plan spatial development policies often sought to restrict development in rural areas through the use of settlement hierarchies. This has constrained development in some smaller communities, resulting in higher house prices and a reduced supply of new affordable homes. Together, these factors have contributed to the out-migration of young people, reducing demand for local services and the available workforce for local businesses.

The [NPPF](#) paragraph 78 and Rural Housing section in the [NPPG](#) (paragraph 009) both require LPAs to take a more positive approach the latter stating, ‘all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence.’

Increasingly, local plans are taking a more positive approach in the way they distribute development, including allocations across rural areas. Two examples illustrate how these have been incorporated into plan-making and adopted policy.

Cornwall Council local plan 2016

The underlying principles of the strategy seek to manage future development to ensure all communities in Cornwall have an appropriate balance of jobs, services, facilities and homes. Strategic development is focused

on the main centres. Outside these, settlements have been grouped into community network areas for a place-based strategy that supports the development of homes that can best meet need and sustain the role and function of local communities and that of their catchment.

Shropshire local plan review 2018

The core objective of the local plan is to ‘support rural communities through the delivery of local housing and employment opportunities appropriate to the role, size and function of each settlement’. The local plan review states that it will retain an urban focus for development, but plans that 18% of total development will be in its key rural centres and 27% in its rural areas. Development in the latter will be on the basis of named community hubs. These have been identified using the best available information about local facilities, services and infrastructure, including feedback from previous consultation and informal consultation with representatives of the local community.

In some cases, an apparently positive policy approach on closer consideration actually offers few opportunities for rural development and can leave rural communities in a planning vacuum. For example, where a local plan is supportive of a proportionate expansion of rural settlements, but leaves the detail of site allocation and how delivery is to be achieved to neighbourhood plans. In areas where there is support and community appetite for neighbourhood plans this may be helpful. However, many rural communities lack the capacity or resources to prepare a neighbourhood plan, leaving them outside the plan-led system. It is also salutary to note that research published by [Nathaniel Lichfields](#) in 2018 showed that housing is often not included as a topic or policy in neighbourhood plans.

Are there site allocations in rural communities that are large enough to trigger an on-site affordable housing contribution?

Paragraph 67 of the [NPPF](#) requires LPAs to have a five-year supply of deliverable sites and, in most cases, they will also be expected to have a buffer of additional sites. The process of site identification and allocation is, therefore, continual. This has two impacts on the delivery of rural affordable housing, both of which

heighten the need for site allocations even in smaller rural communities.

First, landowners may be less willing to release rural exception sites if they hope that their land may soon be allocated. Consequently, if there are no site allocations

in a rural community, there is a danger it will not be possible to deliver affordable housing.

Second, if the LPA does not have a five-year land supply and/or fails the [Housing Delivery Test](#), development will be allowed under the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This can mean that market-led developments built in rural communities are inappropriate in scale and/or do not provide the level or type of affordable homes needed by the community.

Site allocations are thus becoming vital to the delivery of rural affordable housing, but local plan policy must make provision for on-site affordable housing contributions to be made, even on sites of fewer than 10 dwellings in rural communities. This is a matter dealt with in more detail in the discussion of affordable housing policies.

LPAs are sometimes reluctant to allocate sites in smaller rural communities, in part because of the time and resources it takes to identify and assess sites in dispersed locations. However, the NPPF requires that 'planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments

that reflect local needs'. To achieve this, there will need to be site allocations in some rural settlements.

To support this process, Bath & North East Somerset district council commissioned Place Studio to assist with its development plan document, containing site allocations and development management policies. The consultants devised and worked with communities to use a site assessment pro forma, similar to that used for the strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA) but going into more detail than planners often have the time to do themselves. It was also drafted so that people at community level could understand, respond to and complete it. They also used a character assessment pro forma, through which each community could undertake a study to identify and express the characteristics that defined the local distinctiveness of its whole settlement. Forty-three of the forty-eight parishes in the district took part and their engagement informs the site allocations and policies in [the Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan 2011 – 2029 Core Strategy & Placemaking Plan](#) (Rural Areas) adopted in 2017. More details on the methodology can be found on the [Town and Country Planning Association's](#) website.

Do the affordable housing policies support delivery in rural communities?

Will policy support the delivery of affordable housing from market-led housing sites in rural areas?

For allocated, windfall and, sometimes, infill developments, local plans will set out the size of development that will trigger an affordable housing contribution. This is known as the site threshold. Site size will be defined by the number of dwellings and hectareage. Policy will also set out the size of the required affordable housing contribution, expressed as a percentage of the total number of dwellings developed. This may include different thresholds and contributions for rural and urban areas. These policies will need to be tested as part of the economic viability assessment.

Affordable housing contributions can be sought from any site of 10 dwellings or more, whether located in an urban or rural community. In addition, special provision is made for some rural areas. A change to the [NPPG in](#)

[2019 \(paragraph 023\)](#) allows local planning authorities to set their own size threshold for on-site affordable housing contributions in 'designated rural areas'. These are listed in statutory instruments using provisions made in section 157 of the Housing Act 1985. Your local authority will be able to tell you which, if any, of your rural communities are designated. It automatically includes all parishes in national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This is a change from previous guidance, which only allowed for affordable housing to be taken as a financial contribution on sites of six to 10 dwellings in these designated rural areas. It may therefore be necessary to point your local authority to the revised guidance.

The limited supply of rural affordable housing and few opportunities for its provision mean that it is important for policy to require that any provision, even on market-led developments, is retained in perpetuity as affordable housing for local people with a connection to the community. The planning mechanisms to achieve this are explored further on [page 25](#).

Does the policy contain a positively worded rural exception site policy?

These are defined in Annex 2 of the [NPPF](#) as small sites (typically five to 20 dwellings), within or adjoining a settlement, which are given planning permission only if they provide affordable homes to meet local housing needs in perpetuity. The NPPF allows that in some cases these sites might include an element of market housing where this will help facilitate the provision of affordable homes.

As an exception to policies of constraint on development, there is a danger that rural exception site policies can be worded rather negatively, with a list of qualifying criteria that makes it highly unlikely that any proposed site will be acceptable in planning terms. Such an approach is contrary to the [NPPF](#) paragraph 77 requirement that, ‘Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs.’

To achieve this, the policy should be positively worded and simple, stating its purpose, where it will be an acceptable approach and requiring that arrangements

Is there scope for an entry-level exception site (ELES) policy?

This type of site was introduced in the revised [NPPF](#) paragraph 71. There is concern that they could undermine the delivery of rural affordable housing, but in some circumstances they could potentially meet a rural housing need.

It is intended that entry-level exception sites provide homes for first-time buyers or renters, unless the need is already being met within the authority’s area. They should not already be allocated, should be adjacent to an existing settlement and should not be larger than one hectare or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement. There is no requirement that they should meet the needs of first-time buyers or renters in the

be put in place for the affordable homes to be secured in perpetuity as affordable housing for those in housing need with a connection to the community. The planning mechanisms to achieve this are explored on [page 25](#) later in this section.

It is now common for rural exception sites to allow some market housing to provide cross-subsidy, which makes it financially viable to deliver affordable homes. With the uncertainty over grant funding, the inclusion of this facility is critical. However, it is also necessary that the policy includes safeguards to ensure that it does not lead to an inflation in land values, which would reduce the amount of affordable housing that could be provided. Most commonly, this is achieved by stating that the purpose of the rural exception site policy is to meet local affordable housing needs; and that the amount of market housing allowed will only be that which is necessary to make a scheme viable. Some local authorities strengthen this by setting a minimum proportion of affordable housing that will be required, which will have been tested through the economic viability assessment. Others, such as Teignbridge Local Plan – policy WE5, goes further by stating in policy the expected land price, usually £10,000 to £12,000 a plot. Others set this out in supplementary planning documents.

‘host’ community. Neither is there any expectation that the homes will be retained as affordable housing in perpetuity.

Recognising that ELES might undermine the supply of rural exception sites, the NPPF states that the policy should not be permitted in national parks (or within the Broads Authority), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or land designated as Green Belt.

At the time of writing this guide, the government has proposed a number of amendments to ELES policy through its consultation on [First Homes](#). These are that the affordable housing should be provided as First Homes, there can be some open market development to make a scheme deliverable and remove the site threshold, but retain the requirement that the scheme should be proportionate to the size of the existing settlement.

A Planner's Guide to Community Led Housing offers examples and guidance on policies, development management practice and neighbourhood plans can be found [here](#).

Do the local plan policies include arrangements to ensure that the housing provided is affordable to the intended residents and will remain so in perpetuity?

Apart from social rented homes, the sale price or rent of an affordable home is driven by local market prices. In high-value areas, this can result in homes that are not affordable to the intended occupiers. To counter this, LPAs can include four mechanisms within their housing and/or affordable housing policies.

- Stating that the evidence of local housing needs will inform the mix of housing types and tenure.
- Setting a preferred affordable housing tenure mix into policy.

This will usually seek a higher proportion of affordable or social rented housing, relative to affordable sale housing. The chosen mix will have to be tested and informed by the economic viability assessment. The policy will also need to build in flexibility for this to be revisited if there is robust evidence that the preferred mix would make the scheme financially unviable.

- Setting a ceiling on Affordable Rent.

The NPPF states that Affordable Rent is charged with a minimum discount of 20% on open market rents. To stop providers using this as the rent level, LPAs will usually require the rent to be the lower of either 80% of local open market rents or the level of local housing allowance.

- Setting the minimum discount for discounted market sale housing.

This will be informed by the evidence of what is affordable with reference to local incomes and house prices. In some cases, it will be stated as a minimum percentage discount, which will hold for first and subsequent sales. Cornwall Council has taken this a step further by including a location sensitive approach that takes account of the often lower wages and higher house prices in rural areas in Policy 8 of its [Local Plan and Housing Supplementary Planning Document](#). This is very close to the [First Homes](#) proposal on which, at the time of writing, the government is consulting.

Some local authorities are now considering policies that require some of the affordable housing to be provided at living rents. These are calculated with reference to locally earned incomes. In practice, this has often resulted in rents at around social rent levels.



Do the local plan's policies support delivery of housing through community-led housing organisations?

Community-led housing, commonly in the form of a community land trust (CLT), cohousing or co-operative, and some forms of self- and custom-build development, has become an important route for providing rural affordable housing. The inclusion of policies that support its development is essential if more communities are to have the opportunity to build and own homes to meet their specific needs.

A local plan can contain a specific policy for community-led development that will support affordable housing schemes led and owned by the community. More commonly, LPAs will explicitly mention it in other policies as one of the mechanisms for delivering housing to meet local needs, including that for affordable housing.

Does the local plan include mechanisms for ensuring that people with a local connection with the community occupy the properties built in villages?

For rural exception site policy, it is a standard requirement that those with a housing need and a local connection to the community occupy the homes. The definition of local connection may be spelled out in the local plan, but more usually this is left to supplementary planning documents.

Occupiers will be expected to meet one or more of the following qualifying criteria: they live or have lived in the community for a stated number of years; they need support from or provide support to a family member; they are employed locally. The timescales attached to these criteria should not be more than three years. Longer periods can mean it is difficult to find people who qualify, resulting in homes being left empty. This risk can result in the developer being unable to raise the necessary finance to build the scheme.

For the same reasons, policies should also adopt a 'cascade' approach. Under this approach, if no eligible applicants come forward from the 'host' community within stated timescales – usually no more than 12 weeks – the search for residents gradually widens across a larger geography. The scheme-specific section 106 planning agreement will enforce these arrangements by incorporating the local plan's qualifying criteria.

An additional mechanism is to require that the homes are allocated according to criteria set out in a local lettings policy. This will be given force by appending it to the section 106 agreement.

It is possible for LPAs to make the same requirements and section 106 agreement to secure all or a proportion of the affordable housing provided as part of a market-led scheme site in a rural community.

Do the policies support delivery of a mix of housing types, including housing for older people?

The NPPF requires that planning policies reflect the evidenced needs for different types, sizes and tenures of housing among different groups in the community, including those of older people. Given the ageing population of rural areas, local plans should seek development that meets the needs of this age group on allocated and rural exception sites. It could also support extra care provision in rural areas where the development is commensurate to the size, function and capacity of the village. In addition, the criteria should include a requirement that extra care facilities provide outreach support to those living off site in surrounding but more remote rural communities.

The local plan evidence base

To design effective local plan policy for rural affordable housing it must be informed by an evidence base that collects and analyses data at an appropriate scale and reflects the differing circumstances of rural areas. There are five elements of the evidence base where a rural analysis is particularly crucial.

Sustainability appraisal – evidence supporting the spatial strategy

The role of the sustainability appraisal is to promote sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider how the plan can contribute to improvements in social, economic and environmental conditions, and a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects. It is an iterative process informing the development of the local plan and critically its spatial development policies. More details on the sustainability appraisal process are set out in the [NPPG](#).

These will often include an assessment of settlement sustainability. In the past, these have been based on levels of service provision and resulted in some communities being excluded from future development. The NPPF and NPPG are clear that this approach is inappropriate because of the detrimental impact on community sustainability. They recognise that communities can operate as clusters that form a sustainable community, not just individual settlements. Moreover, the increasing use of the internet and other modern technologies provide rural people and businesses with services and markets, which makes an approach based on the availability of static services much less relevant.

A more appropriate approach is to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of the local plan's proposed approach on the sustainability of rural communities. A good starting point is to use the eight elements set out in the [Bristol Accord](#), which defines a sustainable community as one that is safe, fair, thriving, environmentally sensitive, and well run, served, connected and designed. Employing readily available data, these criteria can be used to assess the current sustainability of rural communities and identify what would maintain or improve their position. This assessment should take into account the form and function of different kinds of community, and how the networks between them operate.

This was the basis of Cornwall Council's local plan. Reflecting its findings, the spatial development policy is based around community networks. Strategic development is focused in the main towns. Outside these, settlements are grouped into community network areas with housing being delivered by: identification of sites where required in neighbourhood plans, rounding off of settlements at a scale appropriate to size and role of settlement, infill schemes and rural exception sites.

The NPPG opens the door for the LPA to consult the local CPRE branch on the Sustainability Appraisal. It is also a requirement that the Sustainability Appraisal report, including the non-technical summary, must be published alongside the draft Local Plan for a minimum of 6 weeks.

Evidence of housing need

LPAs are now required to base their policies and identified land supply on [a housing needs assessment](#) using the national methodology as set out in the NPPG. This is an overall housing number covering all types and tenures of housing. Within this context, LPAs are

expected to assess the type and tenure of housing needed. These findings will inform the housing trajectory and targets, including for the provision of affordable housing, with the annual monitoring report reporting delivery against these targets.

Practice in providing a strategic rural analysis of housing need by type and tenure of home has been mixed. But it is critical to designing policy, monitoring delivery and, where necessary, triggering a review of policy.

Much of the ONS data used can be analysed by settlement size, and guidance is available on using the [government's rural settlement classification](#) to produce a rural cut of standard data sets.

Strategic housing land availability assessments (SHLAAs)

The NPPG advises LPAs to carry out a strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA), drawing on the evidence from its housing need assessment.

The SHLAA process has four stages:

1. Identifying sites and broad locations for potential development
2. Assessing their development potential, suitability for development, and the likelihood of development coming forward
3. Identifying potential windfall sites (where relevant)
4. Reviewing the assessment to determine how much housing can be provided and at what point in the future

More details on each of these stages can be found in the [NPPG](#).

Three elements of the NPPG advice are particularly relevant to ensuring that all the opportunities for allocating sites capable of providing an affordable housing contribution in rural communities are considered.

These are:

- **All sites and broad locations capable of delivering five dwellings or more should be considered.** As most potential rural development sites are small, it is essential that these are included in the SHLAA process but, given the thresholds for affordable housing contributions, it is also important that larger sites in rural areas are considered.
- **Even sites with policy constraints should be included, but these should be clearly set out in the assessment process.** It will be important to ensure that restrictive settlement hierarchy/spatial development policies are not used to exclude otherwise suitable rural sites from possible allocation.

- A wide range of organisations should be involved in the call for sites, including parish councils, neighbourhood forums, landowners, developers, businesses and relevant local interest groups.

Economic viability assessment (EVA)

The NPPF says that policy requirements for developer contributions, including affordable housing, should be assessed for viability at the plan-making stage. To support a transparent, consistent and accountable process, the NPPG sets out a recommended methodology.

There are three elements where rural circumstances should be specifically built into the economic viability assessment (EVA).

- The EVA can use site typologies or samples of sites.

Given the higher house prices in rural areas, there should be a distinct assessment of rural market-led developments. It should also include specific testing of rural exception sites to establish the minimum percentage of market development necessary to maximise the amount of affordable housing they can deliver.

- The EVA will need to establish the benchmark land value. For market developments, this will be the existing use value, plus a premium for the landowner. The latter should make the price attractive for a landowner to sell their land, but should allow the development to comply with policy requirements, including the provision of affordable housing. For market developments in rural areas, establishing the benchmark land value will be the same as for urban sites.

- However, a different approach is needed for rural exception sites, reflecting that the purpose of these sites is to provide affordable housing to meet local housing needs. As such, they have an existing use value, usually as agricultural land, but the landowner premium should not be based on the value of market housing in nearby developments. Landowners will still require some uplift from agricultural or existing use value, but this should be based on the development providing 100% affordable housing. A residual calculation (subtracting income from costs to give the land value) will usually result in a negative value, so it is usual to establish a bespoke rural exception site land value. A good starting point is to take the conventional norm of £10,000 to £12,000 per plot and then test this at the outset of the EVA process with providers of affordable housing and landowners.

What policies to look for and propose for inclusion in a neighbourhood plan

CPRE and the National Association of Local Councils have produced [How to shape where you live: a guide to neighbourhood planning](#). It identifies affordable housing as one of the policy topics that can be included. The advice given in the earlier parts of this section on local plans also applies to neighbourhood plans.

However, there are five additional matters to bear in mind.

- A neighbourhood plan should not repeat policy that is already in the local plan, but it can add to, elaborate or localise a local plan policy.
- Rural exception sites cannot be allocated. If the LPA has decided not to define settlement boundaries for the community, all sites will by default be exception sites. However, it would be helpful for a neighbourhood plan to define a formal or informal settlement boundary so that exceptions can be identified. In both cases, the neighbourhood plan could include a rural exception site policy that sets out the type of organisation that can develop the affordable housing on these sites.
- It can include policies for CLH, but these should leave room for delivery of affordable housing by other providers too. Policy should not name a specific CLH organisation as the deliverer of the CLH.
- If policies supporting CLH are included, it is advisable that a CLH organisation is already in existence, or steps are under way to set one up. Without this there is a danger that the policy would be challenged as being undeliverable.
- The neighbourhood plan could include an implementation plan where it would be helpful to include action to bring forward a rural exception site and/or bring in or set up a CLH organisation.

More information on how the delivery of CLH can be supported through a neighbourhood plan can be found [here](#).



Section 5:

How you can shape a proposed rural market-led development so it provides affordable housing to meet local needs

You can find more information on local plan policies for rural affordable housing in [section 4 of this guide](#).

These will be sites that could or have been allocated in the local plan or windfall sites considered suitable for market-led residential development. Owner-occupied housing will form the majority of the development, but policies in the local plan will set out the required mix of housing types and the level of affordable housing that will be expected.

Your ability to secure affordable housing that meets the needs of your community will require the site to be of a size that triggers an affordable housing contribution. This threshold will be set out in the local plan's affordable housing policies.

The watchwords for success in shaping a market-led scheme are to engage as early and as constructively as you can. While the extent to which you will be able to influence the scheme will be more limited than if it was a rural exception site or 100% community-led development, there are steps you can take.

The points at which you engage will depend on where the site is in the planning process. In some cases, it may be as the LPA calls for sites for its strategic housing land availability assessment; in others, it may be when the developer has submitted a planning application.



There are seven actions you can take;

these are not sequential or mutually exclusive.

1 Know which sites are likely to come forward or have been allocated

The earlier you are able to shape a development the better, and for this you need to know which sites are being considered or have been allocated, and of any windfall sites that are coming forward for development.

The first step is for the local authority to prepare a strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA). The LPA makes a call for potential development sites to be submitted. The LPA will assess their deliverability, achievability and availability. If they meet the necessary criteria they will be put forward for allocation as part of the rolling five-year land supply for housing. A process of public consultation will follow, usually through the local plan and/or site allocation development plan document consultation process.

Details on how to respond to a planning application can be found in the CPRE/ NALC 8-step guide that can be found [here](#).

There are three points where you can take action.

- A)** By having an input into the SHLAA process
The LPA will advertise its call for sites by notifying key bodies, such as parish councils and neighbourhood forums. Alternatively, you could contact the local plan team to find out and ask to be notified when this process begins.
- Once the SHLAA has started you could:
- Work with your parish council and members of your community to identify and submit possible sites, stating the affordable housing you would want to see as part of the development.
 - Contact landowners in your area to explain how a site they could put forward would help meet the affordable housing needs of the community.
 - At the consultation stage, you could submit comments in support of the site, but setting out the form of tenure you would want to see provided, ideally backed by evidence of local need.
- B)** Once sites are allocated, you could seek to have an early say in the design and tenure mix of the scheme.
- Check which sites are allocated in the local plan that could provide affordable housing to meet the needs of your community. These may be in an adjoining parish.

- Contact the LPA to find out what progress has been made with these sites, whether there is a design brief, how you could contribute to one so the development helps meet the housing needs of your community.
 - Contact the landowner of the allocated sites to explain the need for affordable housing and discuss how you could work together to bring forward a development that meets that need. In some cases, the developer may already have an option on the site or be the landowner, and you will need a similar discussion with them.
- C) Once a scheme is submitted for planning permission. Engagement at this point is very late in the day and the opportunity to make changes will be slim. However, it is worth a try.
- Check the LPA's website for planning applications in your area or ask them to email or send you a weekly list.

In addition to following its advice, when making the case for affordable housing you should cite the following material considerations: the community's need for affordable housing and the NPPF's requirements for its supply and for rural development. Ideally, you would support your comments with evidence of the local housing need.

2 Know what the housing needs are in your community, including that for affordable housing

In making your case for affordable housing and contributing to scheme design, you will need evidence of the level and nature of that need, in terms of the size, type and tenure required.

You could:

Contact the local authority housing enabling officer to find out what data is available. The local authority will have undertaken a housing needs assessment to identify the type and tenure of housing that is needed. Sometimes this is analysed to give a breakdown for rural communities.

Alternatively, you could help undertake a local housing needs survey, possibly enlisting the help of the [Rural Housing Enabler](#) for your area. There is national guidance on what a local housing survey should include that can be viewed [here](#).

3 Be familiar with the policies in your local plan, relevant development plan documents and supplementary planning documents. It is also helpful to know what the NPPF requires and NPPG advises

These documents will set the parameters of what you can seek, but also provide support for your case.

You could:

Read the relevant local planning documents, which will be available on your local authority's website, usually under planning/planning policy.

Read the relevant parts of the NPPF and NPPG. There are specific paragraphs on rural affordable housing in the NPPG, but you will also need to look at the generic policy and guidance for housing.

Influence the policies in your local plan as it is prepared or reviewed. This would be particularly timely if your involvement is at the SHLAA stage.

Suggestions on what to look and ask for can be found in [section 4 of this guide](#)

4 Know what the local plan economic viability assessment concluded and the benchmark values that were used in the assessment

The local plan policies that set the level of affordable housing contributions from market-led developments will be the result of testing economic viability as the local plan is developed. Paragraph 57 of the [NPPF](#) expects:

- viability testing to be done at the plan-making stage and that planning applications should comply with policy
- only in very particular cases will viability be re-tested at application stage
- the process of viability testing to use the recommended national approach as set out in the NPPG
- Viability assessments should be made publicly available

The [NPPG](#) expands on these expectations, including detailed guidance on the factors that will be used in the methodology, such as benchmarking land values. It explicitly states that, ‘The price paid for land is not a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan.’

At a minimum, LPAs are required to provide an executive summary of a viability assessment that accompanies a specific development.

You could:

Obtain a copy of the economic viability assessment that underpins the local plan. This is likely to be available under local plans/examination/evidence.

If the scheme has reached planning application stage, check the relevant pages of the local authority’s planning web pages in case it has been decided that circumstances justify a scheme-specific assessment.

The financial viability information will give you an insight into how a scheme is expected to stack up financially.

It can:

- help you frame questions to explore whether the affordable housing can be increased
- establish whether there are any trade-offs that can be made against other contributions
- if necessary, provide a basis for challenging a scheme that is not policy compliant

5 Engage constructively with the landowner and/or developer and help facilitate a constructive dialogue with the community

There is mutual benefit in constructive dialogue between the developer and the community. From the perspective of you and the community, there is an opportunity to shape the development so it meets your needs. For the developer, it avoids a significant area of risk and the costs that arise from delay as a consequence of local opposition, particularly if this not voiced until the planning application stage.

You can facilitate a constructive dialogue by:

Requesting a direct meeting with the developer, accompanied by ‘leaders’ in your community, which may include the parish council. This could be framed in terms of you wanting to explain what the community would like from the development and explore with them how you could work together to achieve it.

Either independently, or following from a meeting, you could help organise an event where members of the community can express what they would like to see from the scheme. Ideally, it would also involve the developer and local authority. Over the years, a number of tools have been developed. **Here are a few:**

- **Concept statements** – clear expressions of what kind of space and provision should be made through a new development that are less detailed than a development brief, but more informative to the community and developer than local plan policy. Through a one-day event, involving community members, the developer and the local authority, the design principles and scheme content are agreed. These are summarised in a short document (two sides of A4). Details of how to put together a concept statement are available [here](#).
- **Village design statements** – more suitable for setting a design framework for future development or if a scheme is at the very early stages of development. Unlike the concept statement, their focus is on design aesthetics. More information and examples of village design statements can be found [here](#).
- **Planning for Real®** – a more formal process and usually used to help the community come together to articulate its vision and priorities for a community/ neighbourhood plan, but the techniques would also be relevant to engaging the wider community and key partners in the design of a specific scheme. More information can be found [here](#).
- **A ‘drop-in’ exhibition** of what is being proposed and with opportunities for members of the community to express what they would like to see included in the scheme. This could be a series of events starting when a scheme is first mooted and with further opportunities to be involved in detailed design as the scheme progresses.

6 Build collaborative relationships with the key stakeholders

As well as the developers, bringing a scheme through design, planning and construction involves a number of other stakeholders. Engaging and being willing to work collaboratively with them can open doors for you to be able to shape the development and keep you informed of progress.

You could contact:

- **The development management caseworker** handling the scheme so you are able to input into pre-application discussions and negotiations, even if not directly. The NPPF explicitly suggests LPAs encourage applicants to engage with the local community. They may also be willing to initiate and/or take part in some of the community consultation processes noted in action 5.
- **The local authority housing enabler**, who will also be looking to ensure that the housing provided meets identified housing needs. They are likely to have a knowledge of how many people in the community are looking for affordable housing, will work closely with planning colleagues, particularly on the negotiation of the affordable housing and design of the section 106 agreement, and will be consulted on the planning application. If the council owns stock, the enabler may be responsible for delivering new council housing.
- **The parish council**, perhaps starting with someone that you think will be sympathetic to what you are trying to achieve. As well as being advocates within the community, the parish council is also a statutory consultee to the planning application. Providing them with information, involving and keeping them informed of discussions will help them make the case for the type of development you are seeking.
- **The housing association or community-led housing organisation** that will eventually own and manage the affordable homes. They will be involved in discussions and negotiations with the developer, local authority housing enabler and planners. You could provide them with information on the level and type of affordable housing need and encourage them to take this on board in these discussions. Their support will also be critical if you want the section 106 agreement to require that all or some of the homes are to be occupied by people with a connection to the local community.
- **The ward councillor**. Providing them with information on the need for affordable housing and how this could be accommodated in the development will help them be an advocate for what you want to achieve from the scheme, within the community and discussions with local authority officers.

7 Draw on the skills and resources of independent enablers

These are not tasks that you need do alone or without support and advice.

There are two specific sources that you could contact, depending on who will eventually own and manage the homes.

You could contact:

- **Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs)** are independent of the local authority and developer, often acting as a broker between different interests. In the past, their work has focused on supporting communities in delivering affordable housing through rural exception sites. However, the skills, knowledge and networks they use for these schemes are also relevant to market-led developments.
These include: assessing housing needs, supporting community engagement, helping frame a local lettings policies and section 106 agreements. A growing number of them are involved in helping communities meet their housing needs through market-led developments. A contact list for RHEs is available [here](#).
- **Community-led housing advisers** support communities who want to own and manage homes themselves. In some cases, these are built as part of a market development and transferred to the community-led housing organisation when the scheme is completed. The [Community Led Homes](#) website enables you to find out how to contact a CLH adviser for your area.





Section 6:

How you can become involved in a rural exception site scheme

Rural exception sites are small sites (typically five to 20 dwellings) within or adjoining a village. They are not allocated for development and are considered for planning permission only if they provide affordable homes to meet a local housing need. In some cases, they will include an element of market housing, but usually only to provide cross-subsidy to make it viable to deliver the affordable housing.

The homes will be developed, managed and owned by either a housing association or community-led housing organisation, sometimes with the two working in partnership. Occasionally, landowners may choose to deliver and manage a scheme themselves. Where a local authority owns housing, it may be interested in developing a rural exception site, but it would not be able to meet the perpetuity requirements because the homes would be subject to Right to Buy.

As 100% affordable housing rural exception site schemes are exempt from paying any community infrastructure levy. It also means that the income from the scheme is not sufficient to make additional infrastructure contributions, other than those that directly service and are part of the development. Balanced against this, they are small and therefore do not result in a significant increase in demands on local infrastructure.

The rural exception site approach has been in existence since 1989 and, while each scheme is small, evidence shows that they have made a significant contribution to their host communities. The existing body of evidence has established a number of common stages for developing a rural exception site. These are not necessarily sequential, particularly during the early pre-development phases.



The 10 steps to delivering a rural exception site



A number of guides explain the process and give excellent examples of completed schemes – for example, the one produced for parish councils by the [Rural Housing Alliance](#). There have been some policy changes since this guide was published, but the process outlined in the guide remains largely the same.

The last five years have also witnessed a significant expansion in the ways in which rural housing needs can be met through community-led housing. The [National Community Land Trust Network](#) provides some examples; just click on the name of the scheme that interests you.

In this section you can find out the action that you as a local CPRE member could take to be involved with and promote a rural exception site through the stages of its development.

Make the initial case for an affordable housing scheme and begin building support

Your first action might be to champion the idea. Not everyone appreciates that providing affordable homes for people with a local connection can benefit the village, allowing young and older people to stay in their community, supported by and supporting their relatives and friends, and providing homes for people who work in local businesses and provide local services. They may be unaware of the high-quality design of rural affordable schemes.

You could:

- **Speak informally to a local 'leader'** who you think may or could be sympathetic to what you want to achieve. This might be a particularly influential individual, a parish councilor or the ward councilor. Take photos of completed schemes and perhaps some case studies. You could do this alone, or with the local Rural Housing Enabler (RHE).
- **Contact your local Rural Housing Enabler (RHE)**
 - they are independent of a developer or local authority, and their role is to support communities through the process of gaining affordable housing to meet their needs from start to completion.
 - They will help with:**
 - evidencing the local housing need
 - finding a suitable site
 - facilitating positive community engagement, including in the design of the homes
 - supporting the community input into any section 106 agreement and local lettings policy
 - acting, when necessary, as a broker between the different agencies involved, including the local authority planning and housing departments and housing association
- **Speak informally to others in the community to explore the idea** – perhaps parents at the local school or play group, the WI, older residents, the vicar, people who run local businesses.
- **Make formal contact with the parish council**
 - you could ask to speak at one of their meetings, perhaps accompanied by your sympathetic local leader. Again, you could do this with the RHE, who will be able to provide more of the technical details and set out how they can support the parish council to bring a scheme forward.

Keep making the case and championing the scheme

Once the scheme moves into the more formal stages it will still need your support. Keeping people informed of progress, dispelling myths early on and opening up opportunities for others to become involved will all help keep the scheme on track and ensure it is a success. Not everyone is going to be supportive and sometimes people have legitimate concerns that need to be addressed. The more you can do to build informed support and open up opportunities for constructive dialogue, the better.

You could:

- **Set up a Facebook page, Instagram or blog on the village website** – but remember, not everyone uses IT.
- **Write articles for the village newsletter**, or flyers that update people on progress and next steps.
- **Run a ‘stall’ at local events**, such as summer fayres.
- **Run regular ‘briefing’ sessions** – perhaps at the local pub, where you can explain what is happening and invite people to ask questions. If you cannot answer them then and there, find out and get back to them.
- **Contact a local journalist** and help them to run positive stories about the scheme. When the scheme is completed, be ready to make a big splash to celebrate success.

All of these will need to be in concert with the parish council and/or the housing association/community-led housing organisation that is developing the scheme.

Take an active role in the pre-development process

The pre-development phase has a number of stages that include community engagement where you could take part.

You could:

- **Be a constant source of support and help with the ‘leg work’**
Join or offer to set up a working group – sometimes the parish council will form a working group to support them in promoting and securing a scheme that meets the community’s needs.
- **Help assemble the evidence base**
Assist with advertising and encouraging people to complete the local housing need survey. This is likely to be administered by the RHE or local authority housing enabling team. A guide on what you should expect from a local housing needs survey has been produced by the national network of RHEs and can be found [here](#)
- **Help in the identification of possible sites**
Take part in the call for sites – as rural exception sites are not allocated, they have to be identified. It is usual for this to be done with members of the community.
You could contribute by:
 - Speak to landowners who you think may be willing to release a rural exception site. You will need to explain that this will be an affordable housing scheme, why it is needed and that the homes will be retained as affordable housing for local people in perpetuity. It might be worth taking along some case studies and photos with you to show the high quality of these developments. Although in need of updating for national policy content, you may also want to look at this [guide](#), which has been produced for landowners and includes information and suggestions that will help the development meet their needs and wishes.
 - Take part in the village ‘walkabout’. Frequently, there will be an organised walk around the village to identify possible sites. This will include parish councillors, community members and the RHE, often the development manager from the housing association, local authority planner or housing enabler.
 - Look at the local authority’s strategic housing land availability assessment and see if you can identify any sites that have not been allocated, but may be considered suitable as rural exception sites. You could then feed these into the call for sites process.

For all of these, you will need to be familiar with the local plan policy for rural exception sites.

Take part in the design process

One way in which local objections are avoided or overcome is by ensuring the scheme is in keeping with the village and designed to a high standard. Equally, there has to be pragmatism so, while the aesthetic reflects local form and materials, it does not result in costs that would make it unviable to deliver the affordable homes.

You could contribute by:

- **Participating constructively in any public exhibitions** where members of the community have an opportunity to comment and put forward ideas to those designing the scheme.
- **Checking for any existing design guidance** – there may be a village design statement, guidance produced by your LPA or, where relevant, a character assessment in support of your neighbourhood plan.
- **Undertaking a quick village design statement** to set out the key design features that characterise your village and that you would like to see reflected in the scheme design. More details on village design statements and some examples can be found [here](#).
- **Organising a concept statement event** with members of the community, the developer and the local authority. Over the course of a day, they identify the assets and aspects of the site that they value and wish to ensure are retained or replaced. They consider what layout might work best, and the shape, form and materials that characterise the village to be reflected in the scheme design. These are brought together in a short summary (usually two sides of A4) that sets out the main design principles in words and pictures. More details on concept statements can be found [here](#)
- **Helping to find design solutions that reflect local character, but do not financially break the scheme** and explaining the reasons for these compromises to the wider community (see actions under ‘Keep making the case and champion the scheme’).



Encourage those looking for affordable homes to register

The homes will be allocated first to those who have a housing need and have a connection with the local community. [This is explained more fully in section 4 of this guide.](#)

Allocations can only be made to people who are registered on the local authority’s Home Choice register or equivalent.

Having a formal record of those looking for an affordable home also helps supplement the evidence base that supports the scheme.

You could encourage people to register by:

- Checking with your local authority housing enabling officer or the developing housing association what is the process for people to register.
- Putting articles in village newsletters/websites etc.
- Providing information on how to register in any briefings or updates about the scheme and at any public events, such as exhibitions on the design.
- Making sure people are aware of when the homes will be advertised and how to bid. This information will be available from the housing association and local authority housing officer.



Section 7:

How you can become involved in a community-led housing scheme

You will find some inspiring examples of rural CLH on the [National Community Land Trust Network's](#) website; just click on the name of the scheme that interests you.

Over the last decade there has been a significant increase in the number of rural affordable homes provided through community-led housing (CLH), primarily in the form of community land trusts (CLTs).

These have often unlocked sites and brought affordable homes into communities where conventional delivery has not happened. As well as affordable homes, CLH schemes can provide other community benefits, such as open space or community facilities. Most have an asset lock so the benefit will remain in perpetuity for the community.

There is no statutory definition of CLH (although there is for CLTs), but the government's Community Housing Fund has adopted the following criteria to define it:

- Open and meaningful community participation and consent takes place throughout the process.
- The community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes in whichever way they decide to.
- The housing development is of true benefit for the local community, a specific group of people (an intentional community), or both. These benefits should also be legally protected in perpetuity.

All CLH housing will be provided, owned and managed through a community organisation that is a legally incorporated body. Its memorandum and articles will set out its objectives, what it will provide and the community it will serve. The latter is usually a geographic community, but it could be a community of interest, such as a group of older people.

The most common forms of CLH are: community land trusts, cohousing, co-operative housing and some forms of self and custom build. More information on CLH and

the different forms it can take can be found on the [Community Led Homes](#) website. This link will also take you to information about the Community Housing Fund and resources that are available to support communities achieve their ambitions, from exploring an idea to help during the pre-development process and capital and infrastructure funding.

CLH can be provided as part of a market-led development on an allocated or windfall site, or through a rural exception site scheme. The suggestions in this guide on how you can be involved in these types of development, [in sections 5 and 6](#), also apply to CLH schemes. But there are very specific aspects of CLH development where you could also contribute.

The diagram below sets out these actions against the key steps that will result in a CLH organisation being in place, able to deliver, own and manage the affordable homes.

For all these steps, there are resources to help you, including support from community-led housing advisers, who are accredited under the national CLH training and accreditation scheme. They will have skills and knowledge on the different forms of CLH, group formation and legal incorporation, business planning and feasibility assessment pre-development tasks – including financing and planning, managing a build contract and managing the completed homes. They are often employed by CLH Hubs that provide face-to-face support across a county/sub-region. You can find contact details for your CLH Hub and an adviser through the [Community Led Homes](#) website.

How to engage in a community-led housing scheme

phase 1: Group formation

Steps to deliver a community-led housing scheme	How you could contribute	Sources of support
<p>Step 1</p> <p>A group forms and discusses the options for providing affordable housing in their community – including that for a CLH scheme</p>	<p>Sound out whether there is interest in your community for CLH</p> <p>Form or join the group</p>	<p>Rural Housing Enabler CLH adviser</p>
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Having agreed that CLH is the route they want to follow, a working group will be established and begin to promote the idea within the community and develop their vision, aims and objectives for the CLH scheme</p>	<p>Help promote the idea – for example, through newsletters, social media.</p> <p>Talk to a local ‘leader’ in the community</p> <p>Use case studies to enthuse engagement and develop the vision of what your scheme could provide</p>	<p>Rural Housing Enabler CLH adviser</p>
<p>Step 3</p> <p>The working group will explore the legal model they want to adopt and seek legal incorporation</p>	<p>You may have a legal background or understanding of charities that could assist the group make a decision</p> <p>You could become a trustee or director of the formal CLH group</p>	<p>CLH adviser</p>
<p>Step 4</p> <p>The working group decides which delivery approach to follow. These broadly fall into two types:</p> <p>A) ‘Stand alone’ – CLH groups that raise the finance, undertake all the pre-application work, manage the build contract and manage the homes. In some cases, the group will bring in professional project management to help.</p> <p>B) Partnership – CLH groups work with a housing association (HA). The CLH group owns the freehold, and then leases the homes on a long-term lease to the HA. The HA raises the finance, builds and manages the homes. The CLH group still leads the scheme through the pre-development phases, including negotiating with the HA: the outcomes the CLH group wants to achieve, the design, perpetuity arrangements and allocations policy and input into the local lettings policy.</p>	<p>CLH adviser</p>	

How you can become involved in a community-led housing scheme

phase 2:

Pre-development for a 'stand-alone' CLH scheme

Steps for a 'stand-alone' community-led housing scheme	How you could contribute	Sources of support
<p>Step 5 Undertake a feasibility study, including design and financial viability</p>	<p>You may have skills or an understanding of financial viability modelling for residential development that could help the CLH group. You could do this as a co-opted member of the CLH group.</p>	<p>CLH adviser</p>
<p>Step 6 Write a business plan</p>	<p>You may have skills in developing and writing a business plan that could be helpful to the group. You could do this as a co-opted member of the CLH group.</p>	<p>CLH adviser</p>
<p>Step 7 Raise finance for building the scheme Finance may be raised through a Community Share Offer - you could buy some and encourage others to do likewise. The CLH group may decide to raise finance through crowdfunding. You could contribute and encourage others to do likewise.</p>	<p>You may have experience of developing a case for funders, writing bids for funding. CLH adviser</p>	<p>CLH adviser</p>
<p>Step 8 Onwards – formal pre-development phase and scheme development phases</p> <p>These stages cover the formal process of site identification, design, gaining planning permission and building the scheme</p>	<p>At these stages, a CLH scheme is like any other development. The suggestions on how you can be involved if the CLH scheme is to be built on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an allocated or windfall site can be found in section 5 • a rural exception site can be found in section 6 <p>It is likely that the CLH group will need advice on particular technical matters. If you have skills in surveying, planning, design, managing a build contract, you could offer to support the CLH group, possibly becoming a co-opted member during these stages of the scheme's development.</p>	<p>CLH adviser Technical advisers who can be paid for through the Community Housing Fund</p>
<p>Completion</p>	<p>Celebrate and encourage others to do so too</p>	

How you can become involved in a community-led housing scheme

phase 2:

Pre-development for a 'partnership' CLH scheme

All community led housing schemes will follow stages 1- 4, but If you decide to develop a community led housing scheme in partnership with a housing association you route at stage 5 will diverge from when this is a 'stand-alone' community led housing scheme, as set out above.

Steps for a 'partnership' community-led housing scheme	How you could contribute	Sources of support
<p>Step 5 Select a housing association</p>	<p>You may have experience of affordable housing delivery or management that could help the CLH group. You could do this as a co-opted member of the CLH group.</p> <p>You may already have relationships with local HAs. You could find out what their interest is in developing a CLH scheme.</p> <p>Talk to the local authority housing department – which HAs would could be invited into the selection process? Seek any advice on criteria the CLH group could use to make the selection.</p>	<p>CLH adviser Rural Housing Enabler</p>
<p>Step 6 Pre-development and development phases</p>	<p>At these stages, a CLH scheme is like any other development. The suggestions on how you can be involved if the CLH scheme is to be built on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an allocated or windfall site can be found section 5 • a rural exception site can be found section 6 <p>Although the CLH group will not take lead responsibility for most of the activities at this stage, it will be integrally involved and welcome some advice on technical matters. If you have skills in surveying, planning, design, managing a build contract, you could offer to support the CLH group, possibly becoming a co-opted member during these stages of the scheme's development</p>	<p>CLH adviser</p>
<p>Completion</p>	<p>Celebrate and encourage others to do so too</p>	



Section 8:

Building alliances and sharing the workload

This section is aimed at those of you who are actively involved in the local CPRE group, operating at a more strategic level.

The previous sections of this report provided advice on how you, as a staff member or volunteer with a local CPRE group, or as an individual CPRE member, can support rural affordable housing, either through your engagement with the local plan or involvement with specific schemes.

It offers suggestions on local organisations you could work with to your mutual benefit. As CPRE members, you have knowledge, skills, contacts and a powerful 'voice' that will be welcomed by others seeking to promote rural affordable housing. For their part, they will have complementary knowledge and be part of networks that will help you with evidence, case studies and open up routes to help strengthen your influence.

As CPRE groups, you can play a pivotal role in bringing these voices together. You could take the lead on some of the suggested activities or collaborate with these other organisations. It is certainly worth checking what activity they already have in hand, finding out what support you can offer and involving them at an early stage in any campaigns or training events you choose to organise.



Organisation	How they can help you	How you can help them
<p>ACRE Network members</p> <p>These are the county rural community councils. Although many of them now operate under a different name, a contact list for them can be found here.</p> <p>Like CPRE, they recognise the importance of affordable housing to the sustainability of rural communities. Their operational involvement in housing is variable, but even if this is not a direct stream of work, they are likely to be involved in community development work and neighbourhood planning. Within the county, they will also operate at a strategic level and have established relationships with some of the key players, particularly within local authorities.</p>	<p>They often employ the Rural Housing Enabler, who can provide you and the community with technical support. Some will also employ a community-led housing adviser.</p> <p>Providing case studies of successful affordable housing schemes that you could use to build support.</p> <p>Providing contacts to community ‘leaders’ that you could talk to gain their support.</p> <p>Knowledge of the other activities that may be happening in the community that could provide evidence of the need or sources of support for affordable housing.</p> <p>Strategic level</p> <p>Access to a network of key officers within the local authority.</p> <p>Access to local politicians, including MPs and councillors.</p> <p>Access to other organisations or networks, who could help support affordable housing delivery, such as local enterprise partnerships and rural partnerships.</p>	<p>By offering your support for a scheme and encouraging others to engage positively and constructively – more information on what this could entail can be found in sections 5,6 and 7.</p> <p>By sharing your responses or providing a set of key points they could use to respond to consultations on local plan documents.</p> <p>Helping to co-organise events that promote affordable housing. These could include, conferences, breakfast meetings, bus tours etc.</p> <p>Joint media campaign to support the delivery and show the benefits of rural affordable housing delivery.</p>
<p>Local housing associations (HAs) developing in rural areas</p> <p>These not-for-profit organisations, with charitable objects, build and manage affordable housing. In some areas, there are HAs specialising in rural delivery. In others, it requires action by more generic, sometimes larger, HAs.</p> <p>As with any developer, they will be looking to reduce risk and costs associated with delay, particularly when this occurs at a late stage in the pre-development process as a result of local objections to a scheme.</p> <p>Your local authority will be able to provide a list of HAs who develop or manage rural homes in your area, or you could check the Rural Housing Alliance website that lists HAs that have signed up to delivering rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>Providing case studies that you could use to build support.</p> <p>Offering opportunities to visit completed schemes to help you better understand the process and provide examples you can use to build support for rural affordable housing.</p> <p>Providing evidence of need and the impact of development. Some housing associations will undertake an impact assessment after scheme completion. In some cases, this will extend to a social return on investment assessment.</p> <p>Access to key local authority officers to help deepen your understanding of the challenges and what would help overcome them.</p> <p>Access to a wider network of housing organisations that could provide a forum for you to make the case for rural affordable housing delivery.</p>	<p>By offering your support for a scheme and encouraging others to engage positively and constructively – more information on what this could entail can be found in sections 5 and 6.</p> <p>Sharing practice from elsewhere in the CPRE network, particularly in terms of policy, that the HA could use in their influencing work.</p> <p>Helping to co-organise events that promote affordable housing. These could include, conferences, breakfast meetings, bus tours etc.</p> <p>Taking part in any activities they are organising as part of Rural Housing Week, usually held in July of each year.</p> <p>Using your campaigning skills and networks to help them promote rural affordable housing.</p>

Organisation	How they can help you	How you can help them
<p>The local community-led housing hub</p> <p>These organisations provide technical support to groups building homes to meet the needs of their community. This may be through a community land trust, cohousing group, co-operative or some forms of self and custom build.</p> <p>They work directly with communities, but also assist local authorities use their policies and resources to support Community Led Housing.</p>	<p>They can provide case studies to demonstrate what CLH is and how it has been provided, both locally and from other parts of the country.</p> <p>Access to a network of people involved in supporting delivery of CLH, including local authority officers, and capital lenders, to help deepen your understanding of the challenges and how they can be overcome.</p>	<p>By offering your support for a scheme and encouraging others to engage positively and constructively – more information on what this could entail can be found in sections 5 and 7.</p> <p>Supporting their work to influence policy and secure resource support for CLH. For example, a combined response to a local plan consultation.</p>
<p>The county branch of the Country Land and Business Association</p> <p>This is a membership organisation for owners of land, property and businesses in rural England. It has a regional structure, often also with county offices. Contact details for the regional offices can be found here.</p> <p>They offer: advice to their members on a wide range of issues that can include questions around land disposal for affordable housing; lobbying on behalf of their members by sitting on regional/county panels and boards; and organising events to inform and advise their members.</p>	<p>Providing examples of where landowners have made land available for affordable housing or have built and managed affordable homes themselves.</p> <p>Access to individuals who would be able to provide a landowner perspective on what would encourage them to engage in the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>Access to a different set of organisations and boards where you could make the case for rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>You may be able to offer them examples of where landowners have made land available for affordable housing or have built and managed affordable homes themselves, drawing on examples from other CPRE branches.</p> <p>Helping to co-organise events that promote affordable housing. These could include, conferences, breakfast meetings, bus tours etc.</p> <p>Joint media campaign to support the delivery and show the benefits of rural affordable housing delivery.</p>

Organisation	How they can help you	How you can help them
<p>Local Association of Local Councils (LALCs).</p> <p>These are countywide organisations that are affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). They provide support and advice to member parish and town councils in their area. You can find your association by typing the name of your county and then Association of Local Councils into your internet search engine.</p>	<p>By providing an opportunity for you to participate in an LALC training event organised around planning or a bespoke event on how parish and town councils could support rural affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>Some LALCs also produce policy position statements or guides on specific subjects. There may be an opportunity to shape one that is specific to how parish and town councils could support rural affordable housing.</p> <p>They may be able to put you in touch with parish or town councils that have already embraced a rural affordable housing scheme that you could use as a case study.</p>	<p>Through the LALC you may be able to encourage parish and town councils to support delivery of rural affordable housing by sharing the key points that parish councils could use in response to a particular local plan consultation.</p> <p>Helping to co-organise an event to encourage parish and town councils to support rural affordable housing.</p> <p>Run a conference to enable and upskill. Set up a cross-county working group of parish and town councils who want to deliver affordable housing to share learning.</p>
<p>Local politicians, parish councillors, ward councillors, portfolio holders, MPs</p> <p>At all levels politicians can exert considerable influence, but need the evidence and case studies to make the case.</p> <p>They may be unaware of the importance and benefits of providing rural affordable housing and may more often be confronted with opposition, rather than support, for its development.</p>	<p>An inside track to understanding the position of officers and communities to rural affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>An influential voice in the local and national policy making process.</p> <p>They may be able to open doors for you to speak to those in senior positions who are making policy.</p> <p>With support and backing they can be powerful ambassadors for rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>Run a campaign where parish and town councillors publicly show their support for rural affordable housing to support thriving rural communities.</p> <p>Take them on a tour of sites and working with the housing association or CLH group provide an opportunity for them to meet residents and hear about the challenges that face delivery.</p> <p>Organise a briefing session for the local MPs on rural affordable housing.</p> <p>Publicly support developments that propose a high proportion of affordable homes.</p>



Section 9:

Glossary

Term	Definition
Affordable housing	Homes offered for rent or sale at below open market prices and rents.
Affordable Homes Programme (AHP)	Capital grant programme run by Homes England available to registered providers to develop affordable housing. Also sometimes referred to as the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme.
Affordable Rent	Homes offered at no more than 80% of open market rents.
Affordable home ownership	Homes offered for sale at prices below open market value. Can include discounted market sale and shared-ownership homes.
Allocations scheme	Document published by the local authority that sets out who is eligible for affordable housing and the process for making nominations.
Capital gains tax (CGT)	Tax paid on the profit from the disposal of an asset.
Cascade	Sets out the ever-widening geography over which homes will be allocated if there is no one in parish with a housing need. It usually starts with the parish, then neighbouring parishes and eventually out to the council area. It will be defined in the section 106 agreement.
Choice-based lettings	A system used by most local authorities for residents to register a need for affordable housing. When a home comes up for letting or re-let those registered can 'bid' for the property. They will then be assessed against the eligibility criteria of housing need and any local connection requirements.
Community Housing Fund	Government funding programme to support community-led housing administered by Homes England. Provides funding so groups can buy in advice, infrastructure funding to unlock sites and capital grant funding.
Community-led housing hub	County or regional organisations that provide local face-to-face support for groups considering or involved in a community-led housing scheme.
Community-led housing organisation	Legally constituted local organisations who own and can develop and manage homes for the benefit of the local community with an asset lock to keep the homes affordable. Includes community land trusts, co-operative housing, co-housing, some forms of self- and custom-build and self-help housing.
Cohousing	Housing that is created and run by its residents. Each household has a self-contained home. Includes private and affordable homes.
Co-operative housing	Affordable housing that is owned and/or managed by their residents who are members of the co-operative.
Community land trusts	Local legally constituted groups who develop and manage homes for the benefit of people in their community. They may also own and manage other assets such as allotments and workspace.

Term	Definition
Community-led housing adviser/facilitator	Individual with expertise who supports community groups to form, develop and manage affordable housing that will be owned by the community.
Community right-to-build order	A development order for a specific site that is put together by a local community and follows a similar process to a neighbourhood plan.
Commuted sum	Financial sum taken in place of on-site provision of affordable housing. Its future use will be to support affordable housing delivery, but this need not be in the community where it has been levied.
Concept statement	Document produced by a community that sets out in an informal way what they would like to see as part of a development, including its design.
Covenant	A formal and binding legal agreement between two or more people. Can be used to secure long-term affordability of homes developed as affordable housing.
Cross-subsidy	The use of sale profit from market housing to help pay for the development of affordable homes.
Designated protected areas	Defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 as settlements of less than 3,000 population where occupiers of shared ownership properties can only buy up to 80% of the equity or the housing association has a pre-emptive right to buy back the property when it comes up for sale.
Development management plan	Document produced by the Local Planning Authority that expands on the policies for development set out in the Local Plan.
Discounted covenanted market sales housing	Homes sold at below market value with the percentage reduction secured for future sales by covenant and or a section 106 Agreement.
Entry-level exception site	Sites that are not allocated in the local plan but made available to provide affordable homes for first-time buyers and renters, when their needs are not being met elsewhere in the local plan area. The sites should not be larger than 1 hectare or exceed the existing settlement by more than 5%.
Financial development appraisal	Assessment of the costs and income of a proposed scheme. Used to determine if or how a scheme could be financially viable.
Help-to-buy agent	Regional organisation appointed by government to guide and support people seeking affordable home ownership properties.
Homes England	Government agency responsible for the distribution and management of funding for the delivery of a range of housing, including of affordable housing.
Home Builders Fund	Loan fund for developers.
Housing association	Usually a not-for-profit organisation with charitable purposes that develops owns and manages affordable housing.
Housing register	Register held by local authority, housing association or community housing organisation by which people with a housing need can apply for affordable housing owned by that organisation.
Intermediate housing	Housing for sale or rent at below open market prices and rents, but with no other cap on the price or rent charged.
Local authorities	Organisation responsible for the delivery of public services for a defined geographical area. They may be district/borough/county or unitary bodies. Their responsibilities include housing and planning, except in national parks where planning is the responsibility of the national park.
Lettings plan	Sets out the target proportions of lettings for different types and sizes of affordable housing based on evidence of local supply and demand.
Local lettings policy	Documents that set out lettings policies for a specific development. This could include a requirement that the homes are let to people with a local connection.

Term	Definition
Local planning authority (LPA)	The organisation statutorily responsible for preparing and implementing planning policy for development in its area and making decisions on planning applications. It may be a district/borough/unitary council or a National Park authority.
Local plan	Sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is to be used, what and where it will be built. These provide the framework for development and planning decisions in the area they cover.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Sets out the government's planning policies for the use of land in England. It is the framework that guides the policies within local plans.
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)	Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is arranged and accessed by topic.
Neighbourhood plan (NP)	A development plan for a formally defined neighbourhood area by a neighbourhood planning group. Once it has been approved through a formal inspection and passed by a local referendum, it becomes part of the local plan for the area.
Nomination agreement	A contract under which councils place those in housing need into housing association homes as they become available.
Overage agreement	An agreement that means the seller of the land is entitled to a sum of money if specified conditions or changes of circumstance occur.
Planning conditions	Conditions imposed on a grant of planning permission. They may require additional approvals for specific aspects of the development or restrict the use of the site, such as that the housing should be occupied by people with a defined housing need and local connection.
Planning obligations (also known as section 106 agreements)	Private agreements between local authorities and developers that are attached to a planning permission to make acceptable a development that would otherwise be unacceptable. This runs with the land, not the developer, so providing perpetuity to the requirements, such as occupancy and local connection criteria.
Registered provider	Organisations that develop affordable housing and have achieved registration with the Homes England by virtue of meeting financial and governance criteria.
Right to Acquire	Statutory right for tenants who rent their home from a housing associations to buy their home. There is a rural exemption from the Right to Acquire in settlements of less than 3,000 population.
Right to Buy	Statutory right for tenants renting their home from a local authority to buy their home. There are rural safeguards that ensure the homes are in future available to local people, but these are unlikely to be as rented homes.
Rural exception site	Small site within or adjoining a rural settlement that would not normally be considered suitable for residential development, but may be granted planning permission where the development meets a local need for affordable housing in perpetuity.
Rural Housing Enabler (RHE)	Independent adviser and broker employed to support communities gain affordable housing to meet their needs by helping them: assess housing needs; identify a suitable site; engage in the design of the scheme; input into the criteria and heads of terms of section 106 agreements.
Section 106 agreement	These are private agreements, known as planning obligations between local authorities and developers that are attached to a planning permission to make acceptable a development that would otherwise be unacceptable. This runs with the land, not the developer, so providing perpetuity to the requirements, such as occupancy and local connection criteria.

Term	Definition
Self- and custom-build housing	Defined in the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015. These are homes built by individuals or groups of individuals or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, to build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. It can include affordable housing and may be part of a community-led housing scheme.
Shared ownership	Properties where the resident part buys and part rents their home and over time can increase their equity share. In designated protected areas, statutory arrangements are in place to prevent the eventual sale of the homes onto the open market.
Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme	Capital grant programme run by Homes England available to registered providers to develop affordable housing. Also sometimes referred to as the Affordable Homes Programme.
Social rented housing	Homes made available at a rent determined by a national formula. This is usually less than an Affordable Rent. Social rented housing can be built by: councils, housing associations and community-led housing organisations. It may also be offered by a private landowner who is building and managing affordable homes.
Starter homes	Homes available to first-time buyers under the age of 40 who have an annual income of less than £80,000 a year (outside London). The resident can sell their home into the open market, but during the first 15 years they will have to pay back any discount. The Housing and Planning Act gives planning authorities the discretion to exclude starter homes from rural exception sites.
Supplementary planning document (SPD)	Formally adopted document produced by the local planning authority that provides detailed guidance for the implementation of policies in the local plan. These are often subject specific, for example, affordable housing or design.
Threshold/affordable housing threshold	The size of development or site that will trigger an affordable housing contribution. This, along with the size of the affordable housing contribution, will be set out in the local plan.
Village design statement	Formal document produced by the community that sets out the design requirements for new development so it reflects the local character of the community.
Voluntary Right to Buy	This is currently being piloted and it is not certain that it will be rolled out. It allows registered providers to offer on a voluntary basis the opportunity for residents of their rented properties to buy their home. However, housing associations with rural stock have discretion not to sell, particularly where there was a section 106 agreement requiring the homes to be retained as affordable housing in perpetuity. Where such agreements were in place the local authority would in any case have to agree to the section 106 being lifted, which, given their rural exception site policies, would be unlikely.



Contact us:

5-11 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ

Telephone: 020 7981 2800

Email: externalaffairs@cpre.org.uk

 @cprecountrysidecharity

 @CPRE

 @CPRE

cpre.org.uk

The Campaign to Protect Rural England is a company limited by guarantee
Registered in England number: 4302973 Registered charity number 1089685