

**Notes from the Rural Services Network  
East Midlands & East Anglia Regional Seminar/Meeting  
Kindly hosted by Huntingdonshire District Council  
9<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

**Present**

Cllr Peter Stevens, St Edmundsbury Council – Chair of the Meeting  
Cllr Alan Chantler, Daventry District Council  
Anita Goddard, Head of Housing & Property Services, South Cambs District Council  
Cllr Hazel Smith, South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Louise Harris, Housing Development & Strategy Manager, East Hertfordshire Council  
Carol Conway, Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager, East Northamptonshire Council  
Jill Sanderson, Housing Development Officer, Newark & Sherwood District Council  
Cllr Tim Alban, Huntingdonshire District Council  
Cllr Terry Parish, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council  
Cllr Andrew Murray, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council  
Cllr Richard Bird, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council  
Cllr Mark Whittington, Lincolnshire County Council  
Cllr Carol Bull, St Edmundsbury Borough Council  
Cllr Mac McGuire, Huntingdonshire District Council  
Rebecca Breakwell, Northamptonshire ACRE  
Kerry Booth, RSN  
Ivan Annibal, Rose Regeneration

- 1. Apologies:** Due to the amount of apologies, these are included at the end of the notes of the meeting.
- 2. Introduction**  
Welcome and Introduction from Councillor Peter Stevens of St Edmundsbury Council.
- 3. RSN – Kerry Booth of RSN introduced the Organisation and explained that the RSN represents rural service providers across England. It has several sectors of membership which represent its different interest groups. It aims to provide a voice for rural service providers and has a range of services across the different levels, from Parliamentary with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services, and the Fair Share Group of MPs, down through Local Authorities and finally Parish Councils and the wider community group with its Sounding Boards and Neighbourhood Planning Evidence Base. There are a number of meetings held in London each year and these regional meetings are designed to help regions network with each other and share best practice on a specific topic.**

## Seminar Sessions

### 4. Matt Bukowski - Social Care Strategies, Extra Care Housing and Public/Private Sector Relationships

Matt Bukowski is a former Director of Social Services at Lincolnshire and now runs his own business helping to manage change in Organisations. He is currently working with HBV in partnership on Supported Housing.

HBV is a specialist developer of housing and only works in partnership with Councils where there is a need rather than speculatively. The aim is to enable people to live 'independent lives'. They work with support providers, registered providers and Local Authorities. Extra Care Housing is housing designed with technology and 24 hour support. It can be better value as an alternative to placement in care homes, even for people with complex and changing needs.

It all starts with the development of a business case, for investors, for Councils and for operators so that they are all confident with the process. This brings together evidence and socioeconomic profiling of the area being considered. They also do a case audit which looks at a sample of people that went into Residential Care in the area and can work out the cost benefit analysis of Extra Care Housing had it been an option over Residential Care and often over 50% could have gone to Extra Care Housing instead. There are wider benefits for the community which include the creation of jobs in the local area.

(See presentation for more information)

### 5. John Mather – Developing Community Led Housing

John Mather, from Lincolnshire Community Land Trust, shared his experiences of developing Community Led Housing. There has been considerable growth in this area over the last 6 years. The CLT doesn't just focus on housing but they have worked with empty Methodist Churches to get better use from the sites rather than just selling them on the open market. They have also worked with Parish Councils to bring library buildings into alternative use.

John then talked through several examples where land has been developed for housing.

**Willsford Community Land Trust** – community of 300 people, identified a need for local people for affordable housing. They helped the new CLT to work with the Housing Association and Council which resulted in 10 affordable homes being built for people with a local connection. These were off gas grid and included solar hot water and electric. What was interesting about this site was that it managed to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier allocation policy, which included people from a neighbouring village in the local connection, and this village was in another district!

**Pinchbeck** – village on the edge of Spalding.

The CLT were at the table negotiating the allocation policy for the housing. The land was owned by the Parish Council and so they received a capital receipt for the land, but it was sold at a price which meant that the development was viable. This was a rural exception site so the land was of greater value than agricultural but capped so not open market land.

**Youlgrave** – some issues between full time residents and 2<sup>nd</sup> home owners. It's in a National Park and so houses were built out of local stone to blend in. There was a criteria set for a 10 year local connection needed to get one of these houses! There were 6 properties which were affordable rent and 2 that were shared ownership.

**Bradwell** – A largish engineering works closed down which led to a once in a generation opportunity for the site. The Neighbourhood Planning process had started and the village wanted this in place in advance of plans for the site. There were 12 units of affordable housing which would pass into the ownership of the CLT for a nominal sum and they found a small Housing Association to manage the housing. The National Park and Derbyshire Dales were very supportive of the option.

John also discussed Homes England and the funding currently available. Bidding for Phase 1 funds is now open until Dec 19 or when the money runs out! This is bidding for funds rather than having it allocated, as was done previously. Part 1 can be used for predevelopment, the start up of a group, securing planning permission etc.

Part 2 of the funds is for Infrastructure and this is for Local Authorities to bid for.

Phase 2 is the Capital Grant but the detail is not out on this yet.

## **Afternoon discussion**

### **Issues relating to Affordable Housing in the East Midlands and East Anglia area**

- Links between the Local Plan and Community Land Trusts, we can deliver what we haven't in the past. Smaller villages that have been overlooked in the Local Plan as unsustainable can have life breathed into them again.
- High Street in decline, including charity shops in some areas.
- Seaside towns are losing Banks / Post Offices, the Council needs to encourage the climate for the shops and businesses to return.
- Aging population and people who can't get on the housing market, house blocking as older people want to downsize but there aren't the bungalows available.
- Extra Care Housing with local connection can help to resolve that issue.
- Rural Exception Sites can be done with a mixture of tenure and types of accommodation.
- New towns could be an opportunity for building extra care housing – make the community fit for all.
- Developers aren't keen to build bungalows as they don't make as much profit on them.
- Developers often want flexibility on the 40% affordable housing as otherwise they say sites are not viable.
- Shropshire has designated a site which will have 50 modular units of differing designs which are hugely energy efficient. (Ivan will circulate the details)
- North Norfolk has issues with 2<sup>nd</sup> homes which are becoming ghost towns as people go there to retire. There are however problems finding a workforce to maintain the services
- Rents in Extra Care Housing are higher than the LA allowance but are covered as an alternative to residential care
- In some areas, younger people struggle to purchase the older housing stock, as support is provided for shared ownership for the newer houses. The same amount of support is not provided to buy 'second hand homes'.

- Young people need to be employed 52 weeks of the year, not just in leisure and tourism industries which are seasonal.
- Creating communities is important.
- Lots of people work from home but where do they move on to when businesses grow, they need reliable broadband and mobile signal.
- Need to make Ministers listen.
- Social Care is difficult as they can't get staff to deliver services in rural areas, as they don't get travelling costs.
- Hub & Spoke model – would that work?
- Sian Lockwood – from Community Catalysts has developed a toolkit which can be used by people wanting to set up as self employed social care providers, which is particularly useful in rural areas where there aren't many providers. She will be speaking at the Rural Conference on this initiative.  
<http://www.rsnonline.org.uk/rsn-rural-conference-2018>
- There are schemes where the staff at the Extra Care Scheme may be able to deliver other services in the community.
- Technology can help and reduce the need for staff if there are issues recruiting.
- Can schools and colleges be encouraged to run courses on social care and caring as a profession to increase the numbers of people with the right skills which areas need?
- Rural Transport is key when thinking of rural housing
- There is an "Infrastructure Deficiency" in rural areas

Update from Carol Conway, the Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager at East Northamptonshire Council, further to discussion at the meeting:

*We have developed some shared ownership bungalows in the district at Thrapston (a small market town) but they were not on exception sites. That said, there is no reason why this couldn't be done on exception sites as the Thrapston bungalows were really popular and sold very quickly. However, there may be some mortgage/finance issues with restrictions on resales. It also might be more difficult to do with strict local connection criteria so the housing needs survey would need to have established likely demand and the S106 would need to be structured to allow the properties to be sold to people outside the village if there were no purchasers with a connection.*

*We are also just about to start on site on an exception site at Little Addington where there are 4 open market properties, three of which are bungalows. The affordable housing comprises 2 x 2 bed houses and 2 x 3 bed houses for shared ownership and 2 x 2 bed bungalows for rent. There is also a bungalow to be available on an 80% OMV discounted market sale basis, the discount to be retained in perpetuity.*

**Apologies**

| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Organisation</b>                  |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Cllr Jan Goodeve   | East Hertfordshire Council           |
| Cllr Richard Kemp  | Suffolk County Council               |
| Cllr Louise Gooch  | Waveney District Council             |
| Cllr Jeremy Savage   | South Norfolk Council                |
| Cllr Patrick Chung   | St Edmundsbury Borough Council       |
| Cllr Andrew Proctor  | Norfolk County Council               |
| Cllr Lance Stanbury  | Forest Heath District Council        |
| Cllr Bob Adams   | Lincolnshire County Council          |
| Steve Healey, Chief Fire Officer                                   | Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service      |
| Cllr Jane Storey   | Mid Suffolk District Council         |
| Cllr Clive Pollington  | St Edmundsbury Borough Council       |
| Cllr Parry Tsimbiridis   | Nottinghamshire County Council       |
| Cllr Jessica Fleming   | Suffolk County Council               |
| Cllr Barry Chapman   | Huntingdonshire District Council     |
| Cllr Doreen Savage   | Suffolk Coastal                      |
| Cllr David Pressley  | Bassetlaw District Council           |
| Cllr Brian Harvey  | Forest Heath District Council        |
| Cllr Nigel Dixon   | North Norfolk District Council       |
| Cllr Anita Diaz  | Huntingdonshire District Council     |
| Cllr Derrick Haley   | Mid Suffolk District Council         |
| Cllr Mike Steptoe  | Essex County Council                 |
| Cllr Andy Wood   | Essex County Council                 |
| Cllr Steffan Aquarone  | Norfolk County Council               |
| Cllr Margaret Marks  | St Edmundsbury Borough Council       |
| Cllr Robin Vickery   | Suffolk County Council               |
| Maria Taylor, Community Manager                                    | Daventry District Council            |
| Cllr Jon Neish   | Huntingdonshire District Council     |
| Julie Salisbury, Housing Specialist<br>Strategy & Enabling Officer | West Suffolk Council                 |
| Cllr Lisa Stubbs   | East Cambridgeshire District Council |
| Cllr Simon Walsh   | Essex County Council                 |
| Cllr David Collis  | Norfolk County Council               |
| Cllr Yvonne Bendle   | South Norfolk District Council       |
| Cllr Robin Millar  | Forest Heath District Council        |