

# DRAFT RESPONSE SERVICE

As part of the Rural Opportunities Bulletin, RSN will regularly provide concise potential responses to key current consultations. These are not intended to be definitive or to reflect the views of RSN and may include potentially opposing responses to reflect different views designed to assist individual organisations in compiling their own response. We do however recognise the pressure members are under and we hope this service will assist.

## **‘Fixing Our Broken Housing Market’ (Housing White Paper) – Department for Communities & Local Government consultation**

The housing white paper has been published setting out “the government’s plans to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England.”

As part of the white paper, the government is also consulting on changes to planning policy and legislation in relation to planning for housing, sustainable development and the environment.

They are keen to hear from a wide range of interested parties from across the public and private sectors, as well as from the general public. The consultation on these specific elements closes on 2 May 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

*Jo Lavis, of Rural Housing Solutions, has prepared a briefing note looking at the implications of the white paper. This provides very useful insight to support potential responses to the consultation.*

The general thrust of the paper offers some potentially helpful mechanisms to improve the delivery of rural affordable housing. However, Jo warns that other measures could unintentionally undermine the expectation that policies should help villages to thrive and provide affordable homes for local people. Rural proofing or further amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework are needed to ensure the paper delivers, it says.

The briefing note focuses on four new proposals that will specifically impact on the delivery of rural affordable housing.

It offers suggestions on where measure could be strengthened, particularly through responses to the consultation on amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework.

There are other measures that are also likely to affect delivery of rural affordable homes, it suggests.

All the encouragement for local planning authorities to support development in rural areas and provide opportunities to provide housing to meet local needs is very welcome.

But it warns that these valuable intentions will be undermined if authorities are still precluded from securing affordable housing from sites of less than 10 units in all rural communities.

Consultations on this policy when first mooted and later evidence demonstrate the devastating impact this would have on the ability to develop rural affordable housing, says the paper.

Local authorities and housing associations operating in rural areas cited the dominance of small residential sites in rural areas.

They also cited high levels of affordable housing provided through S106 agreements in rural communities, and the importance of commuted sums to fund rural exception sites.

"Neither does the 10 unit threshold help SME builders," says the paper.

"Without an affordable housing contribution the price of these sites rises, making it harder for these businesses to buy sites.

"In addition, the lack of involvement of a housing association puts pressures on cash flow as it removes a source of committed and timed income."

The full briefing note can be downloaded [here](#).