

**HARAH**  
Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing

*"It's amazing, I love my house, I'm back in the village where I grew up."*  
John Smith, Warminster



[www.harrah.org.uk](http://www.harrah.org.uk)

# Working Together The HARAH model

Councillor Sandra Hawke  
Chairman of HARAH Members Board

Brian Cowcher  
Head of Housing & Environmental Health  
Test Valley Borough Council

# Introduction to HARAH

## Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing

- Formed in 2005
- Consists of:
  - Rural Housing Enablers
  - Homes and Communities Agency
  - Six rural Local Authorities
  - Hampshire County Council
  - National Park Authority
- Selected Hyde Group as partner
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Business Plan



# The need for rural affordable homes

## Affordability in Hampshire

- Households need to borrow 8.5 x earnings to buy a property in the lowest price quartile.

## ...and in Test Valley

- Households need to earn more than £66k to be able to afford the average property.
- 2 bedroom homes in village locations rent at around £950 a month.
- Rents for three bedroom family homes in villages exceed £1,200 a month.



# Common Problems – Shared Solutions

## Problems:

- Engaging rural parishes
- Objections
- Scheme delays
- Finding suitable sites
- Capacity issues
- Political buy-in

## Solutions:

- Communications strategy
- HARAH DVD and website
- Case study publicity
- Agreed plot value
- Work to bring forward sites
- Strategic Housing Officer
- Member Group



# Shared Resources – Increased Capacity

## Shared Resources

- Funding of RHEs
- Strategic HO and budget
- Dedicated RP officer
- Shared policies and protocols
- HARAH Evaluation



## Increased Capacity

- More certainty for RHEs
- Capacity to undertake strategic work
- Identify / extend good practice
- Share knowledge about costs
- Share knowledge and reduce cost of building
- Shared actions set out in Business Plan

# One Development Partner

## The Hyde Group

- Built on rural expertise
- Gained trust of parish councils
- Understand planning requirements
- Range of local architects
- Single local building contractor
- Prepared to work on small costly sites
- Economies and efficiencies
- Pay towards RHE
- In it for the long term
- Benefits of single partner outweigh disadvantages



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# Improved Delivery

- 40 projects completed: 371 homes
- On site or in planning: 50 homes
- Pipeline of schemes: 33 projects in discussion
- Targets in Business Plan
- Quality governed by HARAH Rural Housing Design Guide
- Support for rural affordable homes where RHE's are contributing to Neighbourhood Plans.



# Confidence and Endorsement

## **Partnership ► more confidence ► more support ► higher profile**

- Quoted as example of best practice
- Responded to and influenced regional and national reports
- IDeA programme – establishment of Members Group
- Increased network, rural housing champions
- Increased profile of rural housing – corporate priority





# 3 interrelated challenges

## 1) Emphasis on home ownership in housing and planning policy

- Extension of the right to buy
- Proposed rural starter home initiative
- Rural land price expectations
- Likely shift in emphasis to home ownership  
.... plus the impact of RP rent constraints

## 2) Continued parish priority to maximise local connection in allocations

## 3) Comparatively low rural earnings to access even discounted home ownership



# What have we learned?

## Not a quick win

- Requires time, resources and commitment
- Handling diversity within partnership
- Evolution and growth
- Others can learn from our framework

## 10 years on

- Able to focus and be more effective
- DVD, website and case studies
- Business Plan
- Greater confidence to make hard decisions



# Next steps?

Though the outlook is uncertain HARAH has the relationships, processes and governance structure to work through the national and local policy challenges ahead.

For more information about HARAH see our website [www.harrah.org.uk](http://www.harrah.org.uk)

