



Rural Planning Seminar

**Kerry Booth, Chief Executive
Rural Services Network**

21 October 2024



Rural Planning

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

Delivering for Rural

Unlocking Rural Prosperity

- RURAL PLANNING
- RURAL ECONOMIES
- RURAL TRANSPORT
- RURAL CONNECTIVITY
- RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- FAIR FUNDING
- RURAL NET ZERO
- RURAL HEALTH & CARE

The infographic features a central dark green circle with the title and tagline. Surrounding it are several smaller circles, each containing an image and a label: a woman in a hospital, a bus on a road, a hand holding a smartphone, wind turbines and solar panels, a smiling man in a workshop, a map of the UK, a group of children, and an aerial view of a rural landscape.

Fair Funding

 Almost 10 million people live in rural England...
...that is **MORE THAN** the whole of **GREATER LONDON**



 Urban voters receive 36% more per head in government funding

 Rural voters pay 20% more in Council Tax per head

Find out more [here](#)

Access to Health & Care

 74% of 65+ year olds voted in the General Election (2019)

Over 30% of rural voters are 65+



 Urban Councils receive 57.5% more per head to spend on public health

 Rural voters can wait 3 times longer for an ambulance

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Transport

 Improved public transport is better for the environment...
...reduces issues of social isolation
...provides access to training, skills and employment



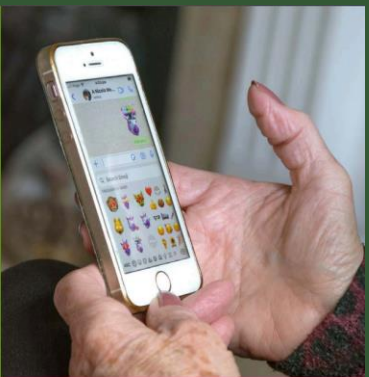
 Urban councils budget to spend 3.5 times more than rural on public transport


 Rural voters have fewer transport options and are reliant on private vehicles which can be expensive to run

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Connectivity

 Unlocking the digital potential of rural areas could add up to £26bn annually to the UK economy...
...growing turnover for rural businesses by £15bn each year



 Only 47% of rural voters have Gigabit capability

 49% of rural voters do not get 4G mobile coverage on all networks indoors

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Economy

 There are over half a million rural businesses in England...
...that is 23% of all registered businesses



 Productivity and GVA in rural areas is lower than urban

 Rural voters earn £1,600 less a year

Find out more [here](#)

Affordable Housing

 Ten new affordable rural homes create an economic boost of £1.4m GVA...
...and yet they only cost £1.1m to build





 The rural fuel poverty gap is nearly double the national average


 Houses in rural areas are less affordable to purchase for those in the bottom 25% of earners compared to urban


Find out more [here](#)

Rural Net Zero

 Rural households emissions are 19% higher than urban...
...yet rural areas have the resources to contribute to Net Zero



 25% of rural homes are not connected to the gas network

 Rural voters are more reliant on costly fossil fuels

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Planning

 Over 600 Neighbourhood Plans have been made in rural communities showing how voters want to influence how their local area is developed



 There are almost 100,000 second homes in rural areas

 Most rural developments are too small to include affordable homes

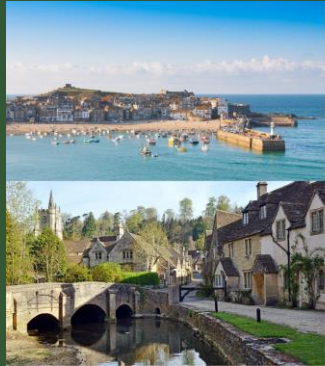
Find out more [here](#)

Key Challenges

Houses in rural areas are **less affordable** to purchase for those in the bottom 25% of earners compared to urban areas.



Source: Statistical Digest of Rural England, November 2023



Rural areas can struggle from an influx of short term lets and Airbnb making access to the longer term rental market extremely difficult

Rural Homelessness **increased** in 2021-2022.



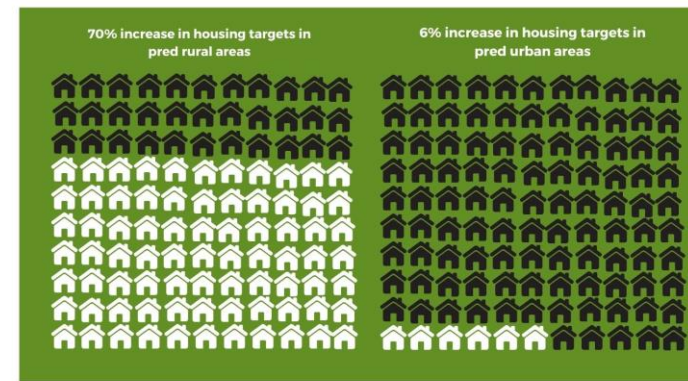
Source: RSN analysis of Housing Statistics for Rural England, 2022/23

The average residential sale price in the year ending September 2023.



Source: RSN analysis of Housing Statistics for Rural England, year ending September 2023

NPPF proposes:



Rural Affordable Housing and Planning

- Housing is less affordable in rural than in urban areas (except London)
- Severe affordable housing crisis
 - High house prices
 - Elevated living costs
 - Lower incomes
- Lack of availability of long term rental market
- Hidden issues of rural homelessness
- Prevalent of older inefficient properties in rural areas

Everyone deserves access to an affordable home

- This housing deficit not only stifles rural economic growth but also risks turning these areas into enclaves for wealthier, older demographics, eroding community diversity
- The shortage also challenges rural businesses in retaining essential workers and impedes the recruitment of key professionals like healthcare workers and educators
- The prevalence of older, inefficient properties in rural areas exacerbates health risks, underscoring the need for immediate housing improvements.
- Challenge for NPPF and Govt, how do we deliver rural affordable housing to meet local need?

Rural Challenges

RSN Planning Asks of Government

First 18 months

Deliver an effective approach to Neighbourhood Plans into which rural communities have spent a huge amount of time and effort.

Protect rural voices in community engagement around planning.

Whilst digital might always be the preferred choice, poor connectivity in rural areas means many voices are being lost.

Ensure vacant and underused buildings in rural town centres find productive use as housing in appropriate locations where little prospect exists of continuing in retail use.

First 3 years

Address the issues caused by combining Section 106 and CIL into a single Infrastructure Levy. There is danger that the legal basis for enforcing a local connection with a development through S106 will be lost if the rules are softened

Develop rural proofed planning policy which gives autonomy to Local Authorities and the communities they serve and ensure that the needs of rural communities are not overlooked in future changes to national planning policy guidance.

Create thriving rural areas by building the right homes in the right places offering a range of tenures for all stages of life from the working young to retirees.

RSN Housing Asks of Government

First 18 months

Deliver a rural housing strategy stating how new housing will be delivered to meet rural communities needs. Introduce and fund an ambitious annual target for genuinely affordable quality rural homes and deliver this through a dedicated rural affordable housing funding programme to reflect local needs and policies

Protect rural tenants by ensuring that local authorities can register and manage the short and long term rental market to meet local need, thus avoiding oversupply of holiday lets. In addition, Government should ensure that policies on EPC do not result in a reduction of long term rental properties.

Ensure that a national homelessness strategy includes investing in solutions in rural areas, taking into account the distinct challenges of rural communities

First 3 years

Address the lack of affordable homes in the countryside by Rural Proofing any planning policy changes which may be introduced. This will ensure that all planning policies have an aim of increasing the proportion of affordable quality homes built and that no policies have an unintended consequence negatively impacting on opportunities for affordable housing in rural areas.

Develop a policy to exclude rural areas from any proposals to extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association properties.

Create a programme of at least 5 years of support for a national network of Rural Housing Enablers covering each rural housing authority

Letters to Ministers on key planning issues



The Rt Hon Daniel Zeichner, MP
Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House, 17 Smith Square,
London
SW1P 3JR

Dear Minister,

Support from the Rural Services Network for Rural Housing Enablers

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Rural Services Network [RSN] and, by extension, the rural people, communities, and businesses they serve.

We are the national champion for rural services and a membership body representing over 500 organisations focused on delivering services in rural communities. As you know whilst we campaign for fair funding for rural public services, we also focus on policy that impacts rural communities.

We are concerned about the moment to create a national programme of vital affordable rural housing developments, built up over the last year through the Rural housing Enabler project, is not lost amongst the inevitable budget difficulties that the Government is facing.

Already within a limited time the RHE project has been a great success and achieved value for money, covering as it does almost all rural England by being embedded in the national ACRE network. This network of RHE's has started to have a real impact through its support and inspiration of rural communities to find ways of developing genuinely affordable homes to meet the needs of local communities.

In terms of the Government's Five Missions, we believe this approach of supporting rural communities to assess their own local housing needs, and then find locally appropriate ways of meeting them, has the greatest chance of getting homes built that will 'break down barriers' and 'kickstart economic growth' across rural England. Lack of affordable homes for the local workforce is often one of the most limiting factors for the rural economy, stifling opportunity, holding back growth, and giving the impression to young people that there is no future for them living in the countryside.

Delivering more homes of all types, but especially genuinely affordable ones will be fundamental if the Government is to succeed in its plans. The countryside is already

Campaigning for Fairer Funding for Rural Communities

Kerry Booth, Chief Executive PO Box 101, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 7AL
Tel: 01822 851 370
www.rsonline.org.uk email: kerry.booth@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsonline



The Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook, MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2, Marsham Street,
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Dear Minister,

HOUSING PROVISION IN RURAL AREAS OF ENGLAND

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Rural Services Network [RSN] and, by extension, the rural people, communities, and businesses they serve.

Our review of the proposals regarding the NPPF raise several very significant concerns which we wish to bring to your direct attention as the Government develops its thinking on the provision of housing in the rural areas of England. The issues go beyond those relating to the planning system. We have, of course, responded in full to the recent NPPF Consultation following our own substantial consultation with our members (Local Planning Authorities and Housing Authorities/Providers and others).

Wider Issues

As you will know well the issues go beyond a narrow view of "housing"

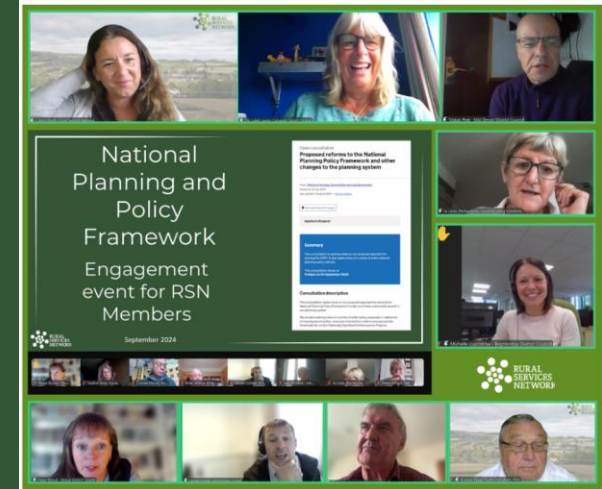
We agree with the Government that housing to meet local needs is essential and we are pleased to see the Government's commitment to delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation. Key to that in the rural context is that the new homes are genuinely affordable based on local workplace-based incomes.

We note that housing is a key part to the Government's Mission to Kick Start Economic Growth and therefore wish to bring to your direct attention a landmark report published on 19th September 2024 which reveals the enormous potential of the rural economy, which could generate billions of pounds annually in additional tax revenues.

The [Reigniting Rural Future Report](#) shows that with the right policy framework, the rural economy could increase productivity significantly, leading to an additional £9 billion to £19 billion per year in tax revenues. This growth would not only support rural communities but also have far-reaching benefits for the national economy, helping to fund essential public services and drive broader economic initiatives. The Treasury stands to gain substantially from an invigorated rural economy, making this an opportunity too significant to ignore.

Campaigning for Fairer Funding for Rural Communities

Kerry Booth, Chief Executive PO Box 101, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 7AL
Tel: 01822 851 370
www.rsonline.org.uk email: kerry.booth@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsonline



- Member event
- DEFRA RIF
- Consultation response
- Letters to Ministers
- Round table discussions at DEFRA

