



# Rural Planning Seminar

November 2025

# The Rural Services Network

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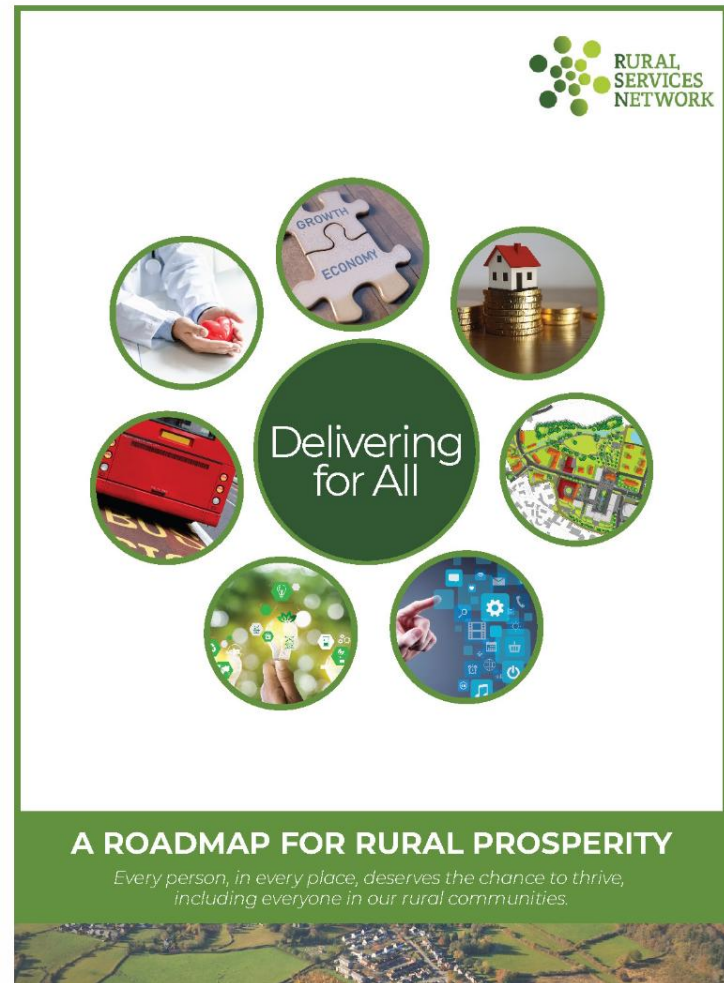


**Membership body of around  
475 organisations**

**Special Interest Group of the Local  
Government Association**

**National Champion for rural  
services ensuring that rural have a  
strong voice**

# Delivering for All



## Three foundations for effective rural policy



**Fairly Funded  
Rural Public Services**



**Use of the right  
measures & metrics  
to understand rural  
Challenges**



**A Rural Specific Plan**



# What does planning mean to me?

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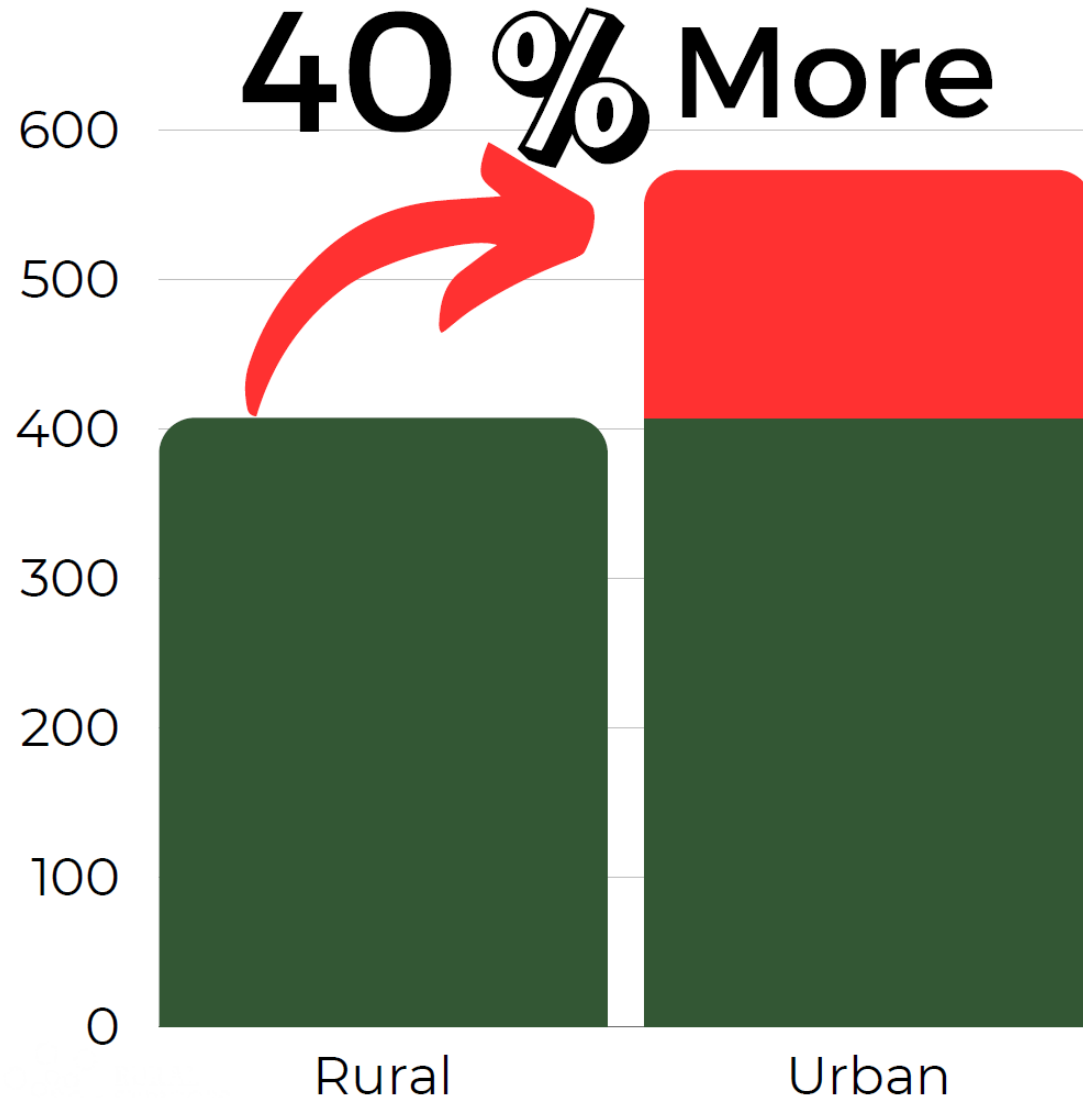
It's about creating sustainable thriving communities.

It's about making sure homes are connected to infrastructure and services.

It's about my community having a say in what happens and how our community looks.

It's about preserving local character and natural environment, while at the same time allowing the community to evolve.

# Resources...



**Government Funded  
Spending Power in urban  
Councils is **40% MORE**  
per head than in  
predominantly Rural  
Councils for 25-26**

# Changing the framework



## Parliamentary Bills

UK Parliament > Business > Legislation > Parliamentary Bills > Planning and Infrastructure Bill

HOUSE OF LORDS

Bill feed

### Planning and Infrastructure Bill

#### Government Bill

Originated in the House of Commons, Session 2024-26

Last updated: 4 November 2025 at 16:45

Commons Lords Final stages

See full passage

Details News Stages Publications

#### Long title

A Bill to make provision about infrastructure; to make provision about town and country planning; to make provision for a scheme, administered by Natural England, for a nature restoration levy payable by developers; to make provision about development corporations; to make provision about the compulsory purchase of land; to make provision about environmental outcomes reports; and for connected purposes.

#### Sponsoring departments

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Angela Rayner  
Labour, Ashton-under-Lyne

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage  
Labour, Life peer

#### Current version of the Bill

HL Bill 143 (as amended on Report)

3 November 2025

Lords

Get File

#### Bill passage

##### Bill started in the House of Commons

1st reading

2nd reading

Committee stage

Report stage

3rd reading

##### Bill in the House of Lords

1st reading

2nd reading

Committee stage

Report stage

3rd reading

##### Final stages

Consideration of amendments

Royal Assent

Key

Complete

In progress

Not applicable

Not yet reached

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is central to the government's plan to get Britain building again and deliver economic growth.

The Bill will speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure, supporting delivery of the government's Plan for Change milestones of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes in England and fast-tracking 150 planning decisions on major economic infrastructure projects by the end of this Parliament.

It will also support delivery of the government's Clean Power 2030 target by ensuring that key clean energy projects are built as quickly as possible.



## Q54 – what measures should we consider to better support and increase rural affordable housing?

### Question 54 – response

A total of 1,254 respondents answered this question.

#### Key points:

- Respondents suggested additional and better targeted funding to support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas, both as capital grant and resource funding to provide the necessary capacity within local authorities, housing associations and others. Respondents also supported making more use of rural exception sites. Respondents recognised the value of the national network of Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs) in bringing housing development forward in rural areas and the need for their support to be maintained.
- The importance of optimising the amount of affordable housing on individual development sites was widely acknowledged among respondents. The key issue raised here was the threshold below which affordable housing contributions should not be sought. There is also ambiguity over whether the policy allows a threshold to be set for sites of between 5 and 10 units.

### Government response

The government is aware of higher costs of delivery in rural areas and we want to see more affordable housing in these areas as part of our ambition to deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation.

We recognise the strong support that was given to rural exception sites and the potential for encouraging them to be brought forward in greater numbers.

We are committed to improving the quality of life for people living and working in rural areas. We intend to give further consider to how policy can better promote rural affordable housing and wider exceptions site policy as part of our work to produce a set of national policies for decision making in 2025.

# Open letter on PDR

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Campaigners from local government, housing providers, and homelessness charities have signed an open letter calling on Government to scrap permitted development rights (PDR) that have cost thousands of affordable homes.

New analysis by the [Local Government Association](#) has found that just shy of 28,000 affordable homes have not been delivered due to office-to-residential conversions under PDR in the past 11 years.

However, an amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which is making its way through Parliament, could arrest this trend by removing a raft of PDR.

**The letter, which is signed by 39 organisations, including The Rural Services Network, Shelter, the National Housing Federation, the Town and Country Planning Association, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the G15, is released as the Bill is next due to be debated in Parliament, calls on the Government to support the amendment, introduced by Baroness Thornhill and formally adopt it into the Bill.**

Analysis predicts that over 110,000 new houses were converted from offices-to- residential under PDR, where full planning permission is not required, since 2013.

This means that councils were unable to enforce affordable housing or infrastructure contributions from developers for these properties, or ensure that new homes delivered were high-quality, climate-resilient or suitably located.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/permitted-development-rights-open-letter-lga>



# Petition launched on Neighbourhood Plans

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A petition has been launched urging the Government to continue funding for community-led Neighbourhood Plans, which enable towns, parishes and local groups to shape development in their areas.

The petition, follows confirmation that government support and technical advice for Neighbourhood Plans — previously delivered through [Locality](#) — will not be renewed beyond 2025.

You can access the Petition at this link:

[Petition to :Continue support funding for community-led Neighbourhood Plans](#)

**38Degrees** people power change

Search



LATEST

CAMPAIGNS

To: The UK Government and especially the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution

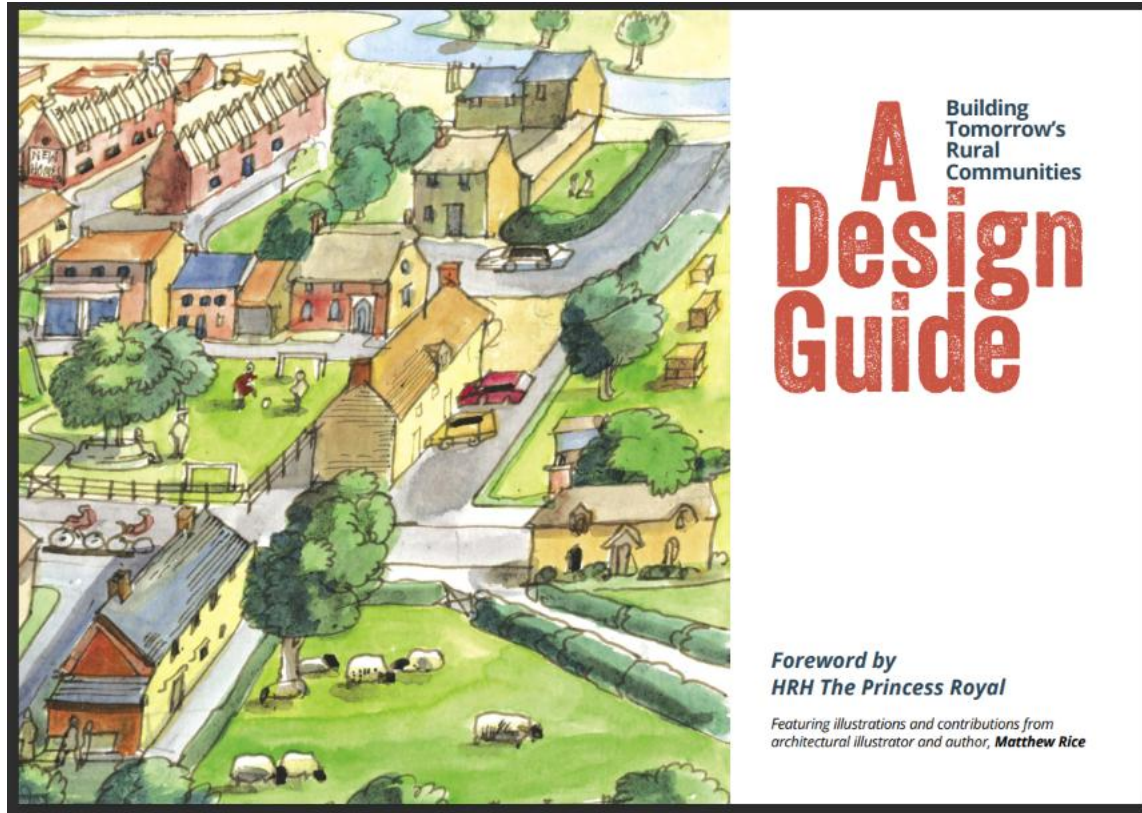
**Continuing support funding for community-led Neighbourhood Plans**



Campaign created by  
James Derounian

# Design Guide: Building tomorrow's rural communities

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This guide offers hope to communities in need of affordable, attractive homes that integrate with the local landscape.

The project was led by English Rural Housing Association.

A standout feature of the guide is the inclusion of a practical toolkit designed to empower villages in need. This toolkit provides communities with the necessary knowledge and resources to start their own journey towards building affordable and beautiful rural homes.

# What does the RSN want?



## Key Asks



### 1. Fair Funding

Ensure that rural councils have the funding and resources to effectively manage their planning departments to ensure that they can deliver the support required to enable the increase in both planning responsibilities and applications to meet the new homes target of the Government.

### 2. Metrics and Measures

Housing need and deprivation can be hidden when statistics are collected at a large geographical area therefore measures should be collected at the most appropriate geographical level.

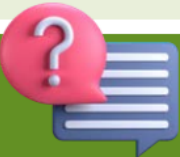
### 3. Rural Policy

Deliver an effective approach to Neighbourhood Plans into which rural communities have spent a huge amount of time and effort so that they can influence the future of their local area.

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.

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.



Everyone deserves to live in a community that has effective infrastructure and appropriate access to services. Effective planning ensures rural communities can shape their future to avoid inappropriate development, and missed opportunities for sustainable growth.

# Are You a Resident of a Rural Area in England?



## We Want To Hear From You!

If you live in rural England, that means:

- Small towns, villages, hamlets, or isolated rural areas.
- Outside major cities and large urban areas.



## Take Part In Our Research.

- **Time:** 8-10 minutes
- **Format:** Online survey
- **Confidential:** Anonymous responses



Your voice will directly inform policy discussions with Government Departments, MPs, and decision-makers.

