

RSN Seminar: Rural Housing

Date: 30th June 2021

Subject: Rural Housing

Chair: [Kerry Booth](#), Assistant Chief Executive, Rural Services Network

Host: Online Event via Zoom

Speakers

Speaker 1: Matthew Dodd, Senior Affordable Housing Strategy Manager
– Rural and Community Led, Homes England

Speaker 2: Mary Ridgway, Housing Enabling Officer, Teignbridge District Council

Speaker 3: Martin Collett, Chief Executive, English Rural Housing Association

Learning Outcomes

Examples of Good Practice/Reports/Information

- [Award winning](#)¹ Higher Shippen development in Cheriton Bishop.
- [Hutton Rudby Affordable Housing Scheme](#)
- Shropshire Council's [Single plot exception site policy](#) delivering 25-30 new homes a year.
- [South Hams Discounted Properties Register](#)

Key Learning Points

Homes England and the Delivery of Affordable Rural Housing

- **Rural and community-led housing focus has increased**, and Homes England has encouraged the government to look at these areas.
- Homes England is the **Government's housing delivery partner**. Need a resilient and diverse housing market and the plan is to build one million homes in this Parliament.
- [Homes England Strategic Plan 2018-2023](#) sets out the vision to respond to the long-term housing challenges.
- [The Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026](#) is the newest investment programme with £7.39 bn available from April 2021 with a mixture of homes for rent and different routes into home ownership.
- [Capital Funding Guide](#)² also includes [Right to Shared Ownership](#).
- New national model for Shared Ownership - [Policy Overview](#) - (see [Technical Consultation](#)³).
- **First explicit rural target – minimum 10%** of homes to be delivered in rural areas and in settlements with a population of 3,000 or less. Homes England figures show they have built between 8.5% and 13%. According to a recent Guardian newspaper, 17% of the population lives in rural areas. Important to increase supply of affordable housing to keep communities thriving.

¹ <https://www.hastoe.com/news/awards/devonshire-homes-win-best-rural-development-award/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/capital-funding-guide>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-model-for-shared-ownership-technical-consultation/outcome/new-model-for-shared-ownership-technical-consultation-summary-of-responses>

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- **Total investment in rural homes (2019/20) is £67M.** Lots of rural areas eligible for social rent and the South has been the predominant place for delivery of affordable homes.
- **Co-ordinated multi-agency response:** land & planning; financing and skills & capacity.
- **Case Studies – small schemes of different sizes.** Choice of different homes, using local firms. See examples of good practice.
- **Government looking at the S106 and Exception sites levels.** MCHLG needs to engage with rural areas and the First Homes policy and are aware that the definition does not cover some areas.
- **Push for Home Ownership from the Secretary of State – government policy**

Delivery through Partnership – Rural Affordable Housing in Denbury

- **Development on an exception site of 10 affordable homes** in a village near Newton Abbot. Took 6 years to complete with many issues to overcome.
- A number of Partners committed to the project but also **need a team champion to keep the process going.**
- **Engagement with the community is key.** Need to listen and respond to concerns and understand the housing need. A community led approach kept the project going. [Devon Communities Together](#)⁴ were trusted and independent and supported the Parish Council.
- **Landowner is part of the relationship** and often live within the community.
- **Registered Provider – Willow Tree Housing Partnership**⁵ retention of local skilled workforce and project management.
- **The Local Authority acts as the “middle-man”** unlocking problems internally eg planning, interpret LA policy etc.
- **Local Builders who resurfaced local car park for community.**
- **Moving Forward and lesson learnt to improve the process:** Teignbridge District Council Housing Strategy 2021-2026 [“More than bricks and mortar”](#)⁶
- Need to show that you are **genuinely responding.**
- South West Housing Association are **close to their tenants** and showed the community how they would support and give people a voice.
- Need a mix of ages and **need to keep young people in communities.**
- **Sometimes there are difficult conversations and sometimes it doesn’t work.**

Affordable Rural Homes – More Than Bricks

- **English Rural Housing Association (ERHA)** is based in South England. Working in partnership with rural communities to have small affordable schemes.
- **Rural homelessness not looked at.** Rough sleeping in Cornwall risen by 21% but not gone down as it has in urban areas.

⁴ <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/>

⁵ <https://www.willowtreehousing.org.uk/>

⁶ <https://democracy.teignbridge.gov.uk/documents/s12322/2%20Draft%20Housing%20Strategy%20v6%20210407%20APPENDIX%20A.pdf>

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- **2019 survey on employment status** found that there were high levels of employment in rural areas but that many of the jobs were part-time or were in self-employment.
- **For almost 60% of those surveyed their average household income was less than £20K**
- **58% of households receive no benefits** towards the cost of their rent due to high levels of employment.
- **Number of households experiencing long term ill-health** is a growing trend and shows the changes in demography i.e., ageing population. Important to plan for this challenge and the importance of retaining young people in the community to offer support.
- **Smaller numbers in households** is another growing trend.
- **Heating/Energy efficiency of homes is an issue** with many households not on mains gas. New homes are more efficient and starting to look at retrofits with the aim of getting 90% to EPC C by 2025.
- **Lockdown has shown the vital work of the “unskilled” workforce** and they make up just over 32% of the working-age population in rural areas. Housing costs are often higher in rural areas compared to nearby urban areas and the wages are lower.
- **Joint research by RSN, CPRE and ERHA** into [economic and fiscal case for investing in rural affordable housing](#)⁷ undertaken by Pragmatix. Summary and Full report available on the link above.
- **Insecurity of employment** has meant that some are pushed into home ownership at low level but with huge responsibilities.
- **#CommunityisWhy** on Twitter

Any Other Key Outcomes from the Seminar

Affordable housing is at the heart of all the issues discussed. Need policies that are right for rural areas and not bolt-ons for urban centric policies that have unintended consequences. Need a mixture of tenures for affordable housing to rent as well as to buy.

RSN’s Revitalising Rural Campaign Specific Policy Asks of the Government is for fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and more nuanced national policies. There are 14 Chapters in the campaign; and one looks at [Availability of Rural Affordable Housing](#)⁸ and another at [Rural Planning](#)⁹.

As new Government strategies are announced, RSN puts them through a “**Rural Lens Review**” which adds depth and texture to the Policy Asks. A fresh crosscut of the Revitalising document being worked on will look in more depth at younger and older people, working age families and businesses (includes agri.). It will also look at the impact of various

⁷ <https://www.rsonline.org.uk/rural-homelessness-in-england-rises-by-115-in-past-two-years>

⁸ <https://rsonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/availability-rural-housing.pdf>

⁹ <https://rsonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/rural-planning.pdf>

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issues on these groups of people and develop case studies (personal experiences) rather than dry policy discussions.

Jo Lavis, Housing Specialist – [Briefing Note: Rural Implications of the Government's response to Changes to the Planning System and the new Shared Ownership model](#)¹⁰

[RSN Spotlight on Rural Housing – July 2021](#)¹¹ in partnership with the Rural Housing Alliance. A quarterly bulletin highlighting current rural housing issues and opportunities.

Rural Housing Alliance launched the [Parish Guide to Affordable Rural Housing](#)¹² in July 2021 working in partnership with RSN and National Housing Federation (NHF).

Analysis and Commentary pieces for Rural Services Network by Jessica Sellick, Researcher at Rose Regeneration: [Finding a place to call "home": what more can be done to plug the rural housing gap?](#)¹³

RSN Member Insights produced by Dan Worth, Research & Performance Analyst, RSN. Please click on the link to access the [Housing Insights](#)¹⁴.

Attendance and Apologies

Attendance

Full Name	Organisation
Sarah Adams	Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils
Bethan Aldridge	Rural Services Network
Cllr Paul Anstey	Fordingbridge Town Council
Gwenda Beckley	Teignbridge District Council
Madeleine Bell	Harrogate Borough Council
Jane Berni	YMCA Community Lincs
Graham Biggs MBE	Rural Services Network
Cllr Jake Bishop	Amphill Town Council
Penny Body	Devon Churches Rural Forum
Kerry Bolister	Housing Plus Group
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Jenna Brame	Cambridgeshire ACRE
Cllr Julian Brazil	South Hams District Council
Valerie Bunting	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

¹⁰ <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/APPG/minutes/27.01.21/updated-briefing-note-government-responses-changes-to-planning-system.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/spotlight-on-rural-housing-july-2021>

¹² <https://ruralhousingalliance.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/parish-councillors-guide-to-rural-affordable-housing.pdf>

¹³ <https://rsnonline.org.uk/finding-a-place-to-call-home-what-more-can-be-done-to-plug-the-rural-housing-gap>

¹⁴ <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/tag/housing-insights>

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Cllr Sheila Burry	Clare Town Council
Cllr Raymond Cade	Wealden District Council
Cllr Sarah Carney	Bridport Town Council
Kieran Carr	Cambridgeshire ACRE
Olivia Carr	Cambridgeshire ACRE
Cllr Ian Carrington	North Kesteven District Council
Keith Chaplin	Forest of Dean District Council
Sarah Close	Harrogate Borough Council
Robert Cogings	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Martin Collett	English Rural HA
Justine Cook	Westbury Town Council
Vanessa Cookson	Bassetlaw District Council
Cllr Sue Cooper	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Allan Daniels	Allerdale Borough Council
Andy Dean	Rural Services Network
Cllr Judith Derbyshire	Eden District Council
Matthew Dodd	Homes England
Richard Dowson	Raising Aspirations Empowering Change Ltd
Cllr Alan Dunn	Keswick Town Council
Julie Dyer	Westbury Town Council
Shannon English	East Suffolk Council
Cllr John Evans	Uttlesford District Council
Stuart Francis-Dubois	Willow Tree Housing
Stephen Gabriel	Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils
Brendan Gallagher	Lincolnshire County Council
Kirsty Gilby	Corsham Town Council
Jo Giles	Cadent Ltd
Cllr Jan Goffey	Okehampton Town Council
Cllr Richard Good	Richmondshire District Council
Carol Grey	Penrith Town Council
Robert Grigorjevs	Eden District Council
Michael Harris OBE	New Forest District Council
Lizzi Hearn	CPRE
Cllr Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire County Council
Debbie Holloway	Pillar Land Securities
David Inman	Rural Services Network
Justin Johnson	Rutland County Council
Liz Johnson-Idan	Chard Town Council
Helen Johnstone	Stroud District Council
Cllr Phil King	Harborough District Council
Andrea King	Northumberland County Council
Kim Langley	West Suffolk Council
Antony Leech	West Devon Borough Council
Peter Lock	Uttlesford District Council

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Ursula Mann	Tavistock Town Council
Maureen Margrie	Cirencester Housing
Charlotte Mccallister	West Suffolk Council
Angie Morrissey	Cornwall Rural Housing Association Limited
Richard Mugglestone	Midlands Rural Housing
Leigh Palmer	Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
Samantha Parkin	Moretonhampstead Parish Council
Sue Petters	Barnstaple Town Council
Richard Pinnock	Mendip District Council
Lee Price	West Suffolk Council
Cllr John Redpath	Guildford Borough Council
Desi Reed	East Suffolk Council
Alex Rehaag	West Devon & South Hams Councils
Rebecca Richards	Lancaster City Council
Mary Ridgway	Teignbridge District Council
Julie Salisbury	West Suffolk Council
Kay Sentence	Thame CLT
David Siddle	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Laura Smith	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Susan Southwell	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Cllr Harry St John	West Oxfordshire District Council
Gavin Stonham	Guildford Borough Council
Cllr Mike Thompson	St Austell Town Council
Sarah Thorneycroft	Cornwall Council
Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
Cllr John Toy	North Norfolk District Council
Michael Tu	Arundel Town Council
Cllr Brenda Weston	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Cllr Sarah Williams	Bridport Town Council
Cllr Marie Williams	Uttoxeter Town Council
Cllr Liz Withington	North Norfolk District Council
Helen Wood	South East Water
Cllr David Worden	North Devon Council
Cllr Julie Yelland	West Devon Borough Council

Apologies

Full Name	Organisation
Tom Ashton	East Lindsey District Council
Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Tim Ball	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Roz Barnett	Saxmundham Town Council
Ursula Bennion	Trent & Dove Housing

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Cllr Paul Bishop	Clare Town Council
Debbie Bond	Edenbridge Town Council
James Brewer	Isle of Wight Council
Cllr Alan Burgis	Camelford Town Council
Murry Burnett	West Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Sarah Butikofer	North Norfolk District Council
Jo Calvert	South Somerset District Council
Esther Carter	Sedgemoor District Council
Frank Cracknell	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Donald Davies	North Somerset Council
Susan Deacon	Stroud District Council
Jackie Deane	Great Dunmow Town Council
Julie Debbage	Leominster Town Council
Mark Dow	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Suzanne Fairless-Aitken	Hexham Town Council
Rachael Fullwood	Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association
Cllr Margaret Godwin	Clare Town Council
Andy Haime	Lincolnshire Rural HA Ltd
David Hall	Northumberland County Council
Cllr Paul Harris	Gillingham Town Council
Sarah Harris	Westbury Town Council
Connor Harrison	Hambleton District Council
Duncan Harvey	Sedgemoor District Council
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
Cllr Joanna Hewitt	Sandy Town Council
Cllr Claire Hodson	Torridge District Council
Bryn Howells	Tewkesbury Borough Council
Nicola Kemp	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Rev Richard Kirlew	The Agricultural Chaplains Association
Paul Leadbetter	Charnock Richard Parish Council
Cllr Petrina Lees	Uttlesford District Council
Toby Matthews	Norfolk County Council
Madeleine McGarvie	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Conrad Moore	Stroud District Council
Janet Neale	Warwickshire County Council
Elspeth Pooley	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Pam Posnett	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Barry Ratcliffe	West Devon Borough Council
Cllr Richard Sherras	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Liz Small	North Yorkshire County Council
Ann Stewart	North Yorkshire County Council
Pippa Stroud	Stroud District Council
Dez Tanser	North Northamptonshire Council
Karen Tarburton	Harworth and Bircotes Town Council
Amy Thomas	Lincolnshire County Council
Paul Thomas	Isle of Wight Council
Nadine Trout	Rural Services Network

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Cllr Adrian Watney	Bovingdon Parish Council
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire County Council
Rebekah Wood	Sedgemoor District Council

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