

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

Chat Log from the Event

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

If you would like to view the agenda for this event, please follow this link:

https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/meetings/online-seminars/30.06.2021%20Housing/Agenda_RSN_Seminar_Rural_Housi.pdf

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

You can also find us on twitter at <https://twitter.com/RSNOnline>

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

To find out more about Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

To read the chapter on Availability of Rural Affordable Housing, please follow this link:

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

To read the chapter on Rural Planning, please follow this link:

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

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

Please follow the link below to read the "Finding a place to call 'home': what more can be done to plug the rural housing gap" piece by Jessica Sellick, Senior Research Fellow on the topic of rural housing: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/finding-a-place-to-call-home-what-more-can-be-done-to-plug-the-rural-housing-gap>

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

To find view our events calendar for 2021 and register for our events, please visit our website at

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/future-meetings-and-events>

From Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

How many of us could purchase the home we currently live in, using the current income from the job we did when we originally purchased?

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

In Eden, sadly we are getting applications to amend existing planning permissions to reduce the number of AHs, using viability argument, which we are resisting strongly. But the govt proposals to reduce the requirement for AHs on small schemes could undermine this further.

From Julie Dyer, Westbury Town Council:

What do you consider to be affordable?

From Cllr Mike Thompson, St Austell Town Council:

The greater difficulty here in Cornwall, exacerbated to some extent by the pandemic, is the local economy only supports low unskilled work and the local population is being out competed by

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incoming second homeowners which distorts the housing market and is beginning to result in ghost towns and ghettoization of the local population.

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

Ditto in many areas in Devon!

From Cllr Allan Daniels, Allerdale Borough Council:

And the lake district

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

It doesn't seem fair that developers can be subsidised for providing the affordable elements of massive for-profit housing developments devastating our countryside and AONB.

From Cllr Julian Brazil, South Hams District Council:

Not a single genuinely affordable house built here in the South Hams (S. Devon) in decades.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

Not just the Lake District, but many other areas in the wider rural Cumbria. But there is a strong 'ripple effect' from the Lake District into rural Cumbria.

From Andrea King, Northumberland County Council:

Viability is a huge issue! For us in Northumberland we've had to remove the affordable housing ask for sites of less than 30 dwellings in lower value areas from our local plan policy ask. Yet, the economic impacts of Covid over the last couple of years is likely to mean a greater need for developers to provide affordable homes rather than less!

From Andrea King, Northumberland County Council:

2nd and holiday homes is also a huge issue in Northumberland coastal areas!

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

When local wages are substantially less than average UK wage, with high rents, saving for a deposit to buy is impossible.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

I don't think they should be allowed to wriggle out using viability as an excuse. House prices have gone up 12% in the last year here, so inviability is a nonsense!

From Cllr Julian Brazil, South Hams District Council:

Massive increase in land values because of planning permission or allocated sites. If you paid less for the land, you could get more affordable.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

A change in Planning law to discourage second homes and holiday lets may help greatly in many rural areas, as it takes a long time to get a few AHs built whilst at the same time communities can 'lose' many more homes to non-main residences.

From Peter Lock, Uttlesford District Council:

Take a look at the profits being made & dividends being paid out currently by developers & you know that viability should not be an issue.

From Cllr Allan Daniels, Allerdale Borough Council:

We need to have the government stop giving small business rates relief to holiday lets.

From Cllr Liz Withington, North Norfolk District Council:

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In terms of the amount of affordable rental homes provided, do you have a breakdown of how much is happening by area. Definitely don't see it in Norfolk. Desperately needed as an area with house to income ratio in north Norfolk is high.

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

Holiday lets should pay full Council Tax and not wriggle out claiming small business relief.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

We find the problem is the other way around. Because of the housing-land supply targets we HAVE to hand over land regardless of AONB protections - so have massive housing estates built - but not for local people. We want to make it more difficult to build for-market property and focus on smaller community-led housing development.

From Madeleine Bell, Harrogate Borough Council:

The whole Strategic Partnership approach has been a disaster for rural housing as HA are only interested in large sites of 50+ homes.

From Graham Biggs MBE, Rural Services Network:

On the skills and capacity work more Rural Housing Enablers would be of significant benefit

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

There has to be a balance re: providing the housing rural people need and turning our rural areas into cities and urban conurbations - there is a climate emergency after all!

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

Like Barratt's you mean?

From Cllr Ian Carrington, North Kesteven District Council:

In North Kesteven, having declared a Climate Emergency we've decided to build our new HRA housing to Passivehaus standards and to insist on very high environmental standards for affordable housing entering the pipeline via S106 and direct developer partnerships. Would be interested in Matthew's and other colleagues' views on this - and yes, there is a cost penalty! Incidentally, we find Homes England an excellent partner and would recommend working with them to anyone who isn't already!

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

would love to see local Planning authority insisting on PassivHaus standards!

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

We need to get rid of national targets and let LAs determine their own targets with a housing needs assessment evidence base - and then allow them to build the houses people really need in the places they need them.

From Robert Cogings, Derbyshire Dales District Council:

Question for Matt, DDDC is providing Council housing again (after LSVT in 2002), our first properties are empty homes/existing dwellings, but HE would not provide grant because empty homes do not represent a net gain. Given the time it takes to bring affordable sites forward, empty homes can be a quick win. Will HE change their view on empty homes?

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

Yes, empty homes and brownfield-first and affordable-first.

From Sarah Adams, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Council:

Please can we have Matthew Dodd's email address?

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From Madeleine Bell, Harrogate Borough Council:

Robert, we receive grant for empty homes and also use 141 receipts depending on how the money stacks up.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

Whereas we're getting massive housing estates, 4,000 and 1,000 house developments on AONB land with a tiny percentage of affordable delivered.

From Madeleine Bell, Harrogate Borough Council:

It is not correct that HE have not been challenged on 100% affordable schemes. We have done it in Harrogate.

From Robert Cogings, Derbyshire Dales District:

DDDC have delivered RP led schemes in many locations across the Dales, often 30-unit schemes.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

It's not his fault we have a government whose prime motive is developer profit.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

If we build more houses in rural areas, the areas will no longer be rural.

From Cllr Julian Brazil, South Hams District Council:

supply and demand are a red herring. We're building 1000's of houses in the South hams - none of them will be affordable to local people.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

But if we build more houses without local occupancy or main residence conditions in Eden, will they just be bought as second homes, holiday lets or incoming retirees? Not homes for local workforce who are much needed as we have a super ageing population and reducing workforce in Cumbria.

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

Julian, if the public sector built many more homes for rent (Council Houses) then this would provide a brake on prices. Which is probably why we don't!

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

How many more houses - 5,000 here - and none for local people - and we can't recruit health and key workers because no one can afford to live here apart from retired Londoners who push the prices up even further and increase the aging population.

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

Sarah, I share your pain...thousands of houses, with no infrastructure and eg. 85 local families applied for a single 3 bed rental that came up last month.

From Cllr Harry St John, West Oxfordshire District Council:

affordable is less than market value whether to buy or rent- the question is what the right percentage discount - there is a wide range of opinion on what should be. The main problem is land values are too high and that could be addressed by a great levy for paying for local infrastructure - landowners should be happy with no more than 10 times agric value whereas in places they are getting nearer 100 times ag value.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

What's a community council?

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

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I wanted to ask Matt - how do we argue to get Social Rent grant for HAs to build truly affordable homes in Eden? We need to retain/attract young people into the area, but most of our jobs are low wage and house prices are high. And why don't all the National Parks (I know they are not the Housing Authority!) get SR grant automatically to help HAs built truly affordable homes? As often the NPs are strongly in need of more truly affordable homes.

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

But in the past, market value was also affordable. That's what we need to aim for.

From Madeleine Bell, Harrogate Borough Council:

We have to be honest that lots of people in villages don't want new housing, even with a local connection. We have applied for planning for 2 homes on a brown field site in a village and we have received 80 objections.

From Robert Cogings, Derbyshire Dales District Council:

most of our rural schemes split the village in two, those in favour and those against. those against shout the loudest and the Parish Council usually (but not always) then withdraw their support.

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

That's why a housing needs assessment evidence base is so important - and then communicating it.

From Martin Collett, English Rural HA:

We experience the same issue with rural residents registering on LA housing waiting lists. The response is normally 'why would you register for homes that generally don't exist where I want to live'.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

Peter - I see your point about market value in the past, but I think those days are gone, as we now see houses as assets not as homes. I blame the sale of council homes starting a spiral of house price rises....

From Robert Cogings, Derbyshire Dales District Council:

totally agree - that's what we do but the people who live next to the proposed site come out against the scheme

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

Judith: Agreed! But if we built, say, a million more council houses then we could start to turn the clock back. But this would not please readers of the Mail/Express...

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

Please note, if you missed the housekeeping at the start of the event, we will be circulating notes and copies of the presentations after the event to you via email.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

I used to do Housing Needs Surveys as a RHE, but I now see a need for a wider assessment of what homes are needed for community sustainability and employment needs. As many of our rural businesses are struggling to get staff, not just now due to Brexit, but as an ongoing issue in Cumbria and especially rural areas, due to reducing workforce as lost young people for the last 30 years and increasing incoming retirees and non-main residences.

From Sarah Adams, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Council:

Hi - do you have a community led housing policy?

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

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Excellent - just exactly what's needed. A need - rather than profit - based approach and not an overwhelming massive development - just homes for local people who need them.

From Cllr Alan Dunn, Keswick Town Council:

I think it was Kerry that mentioned a 2-bed bungalow on the market for £400,000. Here in Keswick a very small one-bedroom cottage has just gone on the market for £280,000. It will be snapped up as a holiday home and may even be bought without the buyer even viewing it. I can see many participants from similar tourist hotspots who will be experiencing the same problems. The government needs to take action to control holiday let ownership while we still have a community left. Sorry for my rant!

From Cllr Phil King, Harborough District Council:

In our area we have 25 Neighbourhood Plans made which has brought forward quite a few smaller sites in rural areas.

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

In 1950 Winston Churchill was ambushed at the Conservative Party Conference and the party committed to 300,000 homes a year - probably not expecting to win the 1951 election. He did win the election and appointed Harold McMillan as housing minister and told him to get on with it. Post war governments were used to making things happen and McMillan treated the challenge as like producing Spitfires. He organised brickworks and timber suppliers, divided the country into ten zones and he built my families first home!

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

We only get older folk, older couples in five-bed luxury houses. Young families can't afford the houses.

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

Cllr Daniels: It's surprising how much you can achieve if you don't know it's impossible, but just get on with it!

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

Also extended families - if families can stay together in the same area, grandparents can deliver childcare, and children can take better care of their parents.

From Cllr Harry St John, West Oxfordshire District Council:

excellent point

From Kerry Booth, Rural Services Network:

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

From Kerry Booth, Rural Services Network:

The Rural Services Network, along with CPRE and English Rural Housing commissioned research into the Economic and Fiscal case for investing in rural affordable housing to drive post-pandemic recovery. This research shows that investing in building more affordable homes in rural communities makes fiscal, societal, and economic sense, for example ten new rural homes provide a £1.4million boost to help level up disadvantaged local economies, through the creation of jobs, and the impact through the supply chain to the local area.

From Cllr Brenda Weston, Somerset West and Taunton Council:

We have a fundamental problem in that government policies don't join up for rural communities. The now defunct commission for Rural Communities had an important role in this respect! My

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question is having an analysis of the impact on rural housing of the new 'First Homes' policy been carried out?

From Cllr Sarah Carney, Bridport Town Council:

Apologies, I have to leave now. Thanks everyone, really interesting and useful.

From Cllr Julian Brazil, South Hams District Council:

Me too. Thank you.

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

Thanks for your input Sarah!

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

I saw a stat that in the 60's/70's the treasury housing investment was 80% into building and 20% rent support. It's now 80% rent support and 20% building. I may have got the numbers wrong, but the principle is correct.

From Cllr John Toye, North Norfolk District Council:

Apologies but I must leave. Thank you.

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

Our house (3 bed) used to have 12 people living in it - including a lodger! Now there is 2 of us. Our valley used to have approx. 3 times as many residents in less houses than now.

From Michael Tu, Arundel Town Council:

why aren't all your new homes built to Passivehaus standard?

From Robert Cogings, Derbyshire Dales District Council:

I have to leave now, thank you for a very good event

From Kerry Booth, Rural Services Network:

Summary Report -

https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/campaigns/pragmatix/Executive_summary_report_to_CPRES.pdf

From Penny Body, Devon Churches Rural Forum:

Please accept my apologies - I need to leave - and thank you very much indeed.

From Kerry Booth, Rural Services Network:

Full Report -

https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/campaigns/pragmatix/2020_10_08_Report_to_CPRES_Engli.pdf

From Madeleine Bell, Harrogate Borough Council:

I am very interested in positive examples of heat pump use. We have 100s of HP but people often don't like them. We found they may have card payment meters and they self-disconnect when funds are low, so HP are problematic. PH don't seem to work well with an intermittent electrical supply.

From Cllr Richard Good, Richmondshire District Council:

Have also to leave, excellent and very informative event thank you.

From Cllr Brenda Weston, Somerset West and Taunton Council:

Sorry - have to leave. Would appreciate having the PPT presentations if poss. Thank you.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

If reliant on heat pump, or other systems needing electricity supply, how do you future proof the heating system if regular electrical cuts in rural areas, especially in winter?

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

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Upgrading rural electricity networks for heating and electric cars will make the supply of broadband look like chicken feed, in comparison! It's a huge challenge.

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

Jo Lavis did a useful paper on First Homes

From Helen Wood, South East Water:

I need to leave but a couple of points

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

We are always seeking to improve our services to our members. If you wish to provide us with feedback about this event, please follow this link and fill out a quick survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RSNSeminarRuralHousing2021>

From Helen Wood, South East Water:

You have included utilities in your discussions and water companies too may have to install new infrastructure for a relatively small number of properties. This can take time but always easier if discussed in advance. Also, a plea that planning authorities take into account that we may need to install or maintain infrastructure not just in the village concerned but across countryside or through other villages that may be under the control of another local authority. Thanks

From Alex Rehaag, West Devon & South Hams Councils:

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/discounted-properties-register>

From Marija Aleksandrova, Admin, Rural Services Network:

Our next event RSN Seminar: Enabling Rural Business will take place on Wednesday, 28th July 2021. If you wish to attend or know a colleague in your organisation who would be interested in attending, please follow the link below to book your place:

<https://rsnseminar-ruralbusinessadvice2021.eventbrite.co.uk>

From Madeleine Bell, Harrogate Borough Council:

Well, the SoS will be long gone when First Homes are a disaster and we in Local Government have to sort it out

From Kay Sentance, Thame CLT:

In light of the help-to buy agents - do the housing allocations need to be reviewed? They are quite out of step with housing need...

From Cllr Liz Withington, North Norfolk District Council:

Well said Martin, this is not also what people in tourist dependent areas can afford or sustain AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING is what is needed.

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

With the rising numbers of houses being rented out, not to homeowners but as holiday lets, that pay no Council Tax nor business rates, what legislation is needed to stop the sale of viable homes for holiday lettings?

From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

Prof Mark Shucksmith did his dissertation on housing in central Lakes in 1985, entitled 'No Homes for Locals?'...

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council:

The essential paradox is that government want to keep up the prices of open market houses whilst promoting a parallel restricted market. It's ultimately unsustainable.

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From Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Eden District Council & LDNPA:

How about having a session on second homes/holiday lets and planning options?

From Cllr Jan Goffey, Okehampton Town Council:

Invite St Ives? that brought in local legislation?

From Cllr Harry St John, West Oxfordshire District Council:

thank you all for a useful exchange of views on this subject. Planning Bill may be chance to influence as Graham says...

From Andy Dean, Rural Services Network: Excellent session.

From Cllr Julie Yelland, West Devon Borough Council: Thank you!

From Cllr Peter Thornton, Cumbria County Council: Thanks everyone!

From Sarah Thorneycroft, Cornwall Council: Thanks - really interesting presentations and Q&A

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