

### AI Generated Transcript Summary from RSN NPPF Meeting 5 September 2024

#### Discussing NPPF Implications for Rural Areas

The meeting was about discussing the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its implications for rural areas. Kerry Booth, Chair, representing the Rural Services Network (RSN), emphasized the need for fair funding for rural public services and the importance of considering rural needs in policy development. The RSN is currently shaping its response to the NPPF consultation and seeks input from attendees on critical areas. Kerry also raised concerns about the increase in housing targets in rural areas and the lack of transparency in their calculation. She encouraged attendees to share their views on the matter.

#### Housing Targets and Calculation Methodology Concerns

The meeting focused on the housing targets and the proposed new approach to calculating future housing needs. Andrea King from Northumberland County Council expressed concerns about the methodology, stating that it penalizes authorities that have delivered a high amount of housing in recent years and assumes a national average growth rate. Daniel Corden from Shropshire Council also shared his concerns, highlighting the potential for unsustainable development patterns and the risk of negatively affecting urban areas. Both speakers emphasized the need for a more nuanced approach to housing needs, considering factors such as affordability and rural infrastructure.

#### Rural Services Targets and Housing Needs Discussion

The meeting focused on the new targets for rural services, which were discussed in relation to the removal of the 35% urban uplift. Tristan Peat from Mid Devon District Council expressed concerns about the proposed new methodology, stating that it was not an accurate way to measure housing needs. He also highlighted the challenges of accommodating a higher housing target within a 20-year plan and the need for additional housing in rural areas to meet local needs. Michelle Luscombe from Teignbridge District Council emphasized the need for proper sub-regional strategic planning to address housing requirements, suggesting that a coordinated approach would be more effective than regional planning.

#### Challenges With Local Plans and Government Approaches

Councillor Andrew Brown from North Norfolk District Council discussed the challenges they faced with their local plan, particularly with the standard methodology for population trends. He expressed concerns about the impact of the government's new approach on their plan, which aims to expand large growth towns and small growth villages. Councillor Juliet Layton from the Cotswolds District Council shared similar concerns, highlighting the difficulty of finding sites in their largely national landscape area and the potential vulnerability of their land supply during the transition period. Both councillors expressed worries about the sustainability and infrastructure of their settlements, particularly in relation to sewage and road capacity issues.

#### Rural Housing Allocation and Affordable Housing Discussion

Graham Biggs from the RSN expressed concerns about the increase in rural housing numbers and suggested that the allocation of land should be based on the proportion of increased local need generated by affordability. Daniel Corden from Shropshire Council agreed with the principle but noted that the viability approach wouldn't allow for this due to the level of affordable housing provision it would require. Mary Ridgway from Teignbridge District Council emphasized the need for a link to the revised funding program for social rent and higher grant levels in rural areas. The team also discussed the definition of affordable housing, the need for more rural exception sites, and the importance of considering the needs of smaller communities in rural areas. The RSN proposed 6 measures to increase rural affordable housing delivery, and a discussion followed on these. Roger Ranson from Rutland County Council raised concerns about the impact of the new housing need figures on the 5-year supply and the need for transition arrangements. Daniel suggested that local authorities should determine site size thresholds for affordable housing and that templates should be provided for assessing housing need at a smaller level. The team agreed on the need for increased grant funding and emphasized the importance of affordable housing in rural areas.

#### National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

Graham expressed concerns about the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the government's ability to review all responses within the given timeframe. He suggested that a dialogue outside of the consultation is crucial for future engagement with ministers. Jo Lavis, Rural Housing Solutions discussed the need for a national threshold for affordable housing contributions from small sites, emphasizing the importance of local authority discretion. The team agreed to send their draft responses to the consultation by the 18th of September and to continue working on the issue of delivering affordable rural housing.