

Enabling Rural Affordable Housing Introductions

Susan Tron – Community
Development Officer –
Durham Community Action

Accredited Community Led
Housing Advisor

County Durham Rural
Housing Enabler

**Local homes for local
people.**



Defra Funding via ACRE Network

- Rural Housing Enabler new role for County Durham
- Programme runs from 1 Jan 2024 – March 2025
- 3 day a week role
- Partnership approach.
- Develop response to rural housing need. Rural west.
- Aligns with DCC Draft Housing Strategy



How does it Work?

- Local Authority Rural Event July 2023
- Rural Working Group.
- Approach from Parish Council or landowner.
- Neighbourhood Plan or Community Plan.



What is Rural Affordable Housing

- Small scale. (5-20 units)
- Local Lettings Policy
- Secured in perpetuity.
- Affordable rent or discounted market sales.
- Delivered by Housing Associations or Local Authority.



Why are new rural homes needed?

- Unusually high cost of living.
- Use of second homes or holiday lets.
- Lack of affordable housing for young people or key workers.
- Developers not interested in smaller sites.



What will the Rural Housing Enabler do?

- Work with Parish Councils.
- Encourage constructive community engagement.
- Evidence local housing needs.
- Support to identify sites.
- Develop key partnerships.
- Utilise smaller sites (Villages less than 3,000 residents).



Housing Needs Surveys

Parish-wide surveys of housing need.
These surveys:

- determine the local level of need for housing, both affordable and market, and
- explore community opinion towards new housing development at **no cost to Parish Council.**
- Collect primary & secondary data.



Rural exception sites

Local Needs Schemes are built to identified need on 'rural exception' sites.

Rural exception sites = small sites, within or adjoining existing rural community, may be subject to policies of restraint (eg Green Belt) and which would not otherwise be suitable for general market housing.



Housing Associations

Once a suitable location is chosen by the parish council/community a housing association gets involved with land purchase negotiations.

Housing association works with appropriate partners to purchase the land, prepare designs, submit a planning application, build and manage the new homes.





Call to Action

Would welcome an approach from:

- Parish councils.
- Community led planning group (Parish Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plan)
- Local councillors/ officers.



More information



- Email: susan.tron@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk
- Telephone: 07496 461 998
- Website: <https://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/rural-housing-enabling>



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