

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do you mean by affordable?

'Affordable' is the term used to describe a number of housing tenures for those who are unable to purchase on the open market; it includes affordable rented homes and shared ownership. Starter homes have also been included in this definition. The term affordable does not relate to the quality of the build.

Q: Why do we need affordable homes in our village?

It's important that we try to maintain a mix of residents, including families, couples and older people as this helps to maintain village facilities such as a local school or shop, and creates a balanced community.

Q: What do you mean by local connection?

Whilst the finer detail of any agreement may alter slightly between authorities, in essence it means that to qualify for a home you must either live or work in the parish or have a close family member residing in the parish.

Q: How can you make sure these homes remain for local people?

A formal agreement known as a Section 106 agreement is drawn up as part of the planning permission. This details who is eligible for the homes - not just when they are built but in perpetuity.

Q: Where are the homes built?

At first glance it may seem that there is simply no-where for any new homes. However by taking a careful look at a village it is often possible to come up with several small parcels of land for half a dozen homes. We work with the local community to identify potential land and then assess it against a list of criteria. Often such land would constitute an exception to Planning Policy.

Q: What is a rural exception site policy?

In short it means it is an exception to normal planning policies. It is a mechanism that, subject to a local need being identified, allows a small number of homes to be built so long as they are affordable and remain for local people in perpetuity. Land values are much lower on such pieces of land.





Q: Isn't this just the thin edge of the wedge for allowing all types of development?

Not at all, consent will only be given where there is a demonstrated need for affordable homes and does not create a precedent for other kinds of development.

Q: Can anyone apply for the homes?

So long as you are in need and can prove your local connection you will be eligible to apply. The best way is to make sure you are registered with your local council.

Q: Who will own them?

The question of who will build them, own them and manage them in the future is all part of the discussions to be had. Sometimes a local housing association may take the project on or sometimes the landowner or the local community may decide to form their own housing trust to deliver the homes. All the options will be explored to see what fits best for your local community.

Q: I want to build my own home, can you help?

It's important you have registered your interest with the local authority so that if a suitable piece of land or plot becomes available for self build they can get in touch with you. There is no reason why this cannot be considered on a rural exception scheme.

Q: Why do you need to do a housing needs survey when there is a housing register?

A rural exception scheme gives priority to local people, so for example someone still living at home may not think to join the housing register because ordinarily they would be unlikely to be allocated a home for many years. However, should a local scheme go ahead you must have a local connection to be eligible for them. By identifying such people via the survey it enable us to keep them in the loop and encourage them to join the register.

Q: New homes were built in the village centre but none of these went to local families.

When new homes are built inside the settlement boundary any affordable homes developed as part of this will be allocated to someone on the housing register who has the greatest need - they do not need to have a local connection because no such restrictions would have been placed on the homes.

Surrey Rural Housing Group

Is a partnership between the following organisations

