

HARAH

Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing Planning Statement

2008



Introduction

HARAH (Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing) is a partnership between 7 Hampshire councils, the Housing Corporation, Community Action Hampshire and Hyde Housing Association. Its primary aim is to promote an increase in the supply of rural affordable housing. In 2008 the HARAH Members Board agreed to share information and research best practice on affordable housing planning policies. The aim of this exercise was to look for opportunities to develop common approaches to increasing the overall supply of affordable housing, not only in rural but also in the urban parts of the area. The outcome of this exercise was the creation of range of policy options, some of which are suitable for core strategies, others of which are appropriate to more detailed planning or housing policy documents.

The HARAH Partnership

- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Community Action Hampshire
- East Hants District Council
- Hart District Council
- Hampshire County Council
- The Housing Corporation
- Hyde Housing Association

- New Forest District Council
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Winchester City Council

Additional member of the Member's Board

- New Forest National Park Authority

The HARAH Vision

To ensure that communities are sustainable and inclusive by enabling an increase in the supply of affordable housing to meet needs.

To do this it is necessary to

- maximise affordable housing within overall housing supply (subject to sustainability, demonstrated need and viability constraints)
- enhance access to housing of the right type in the right location and, in particular, improve the supply of high quality, affordable housing;
- ensure housing is of a high quality and meets the needs of households;
- promote safe, mixed, inclusive and high quality neighbourhoods, providing support where necessary;
- support vulnerable and disadvantaged people to meet their housing needs;
- involve communities in achieving their aspirations, and;
- limit the environmental impact of housing.

Sustainable Communities

Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They are diverse, reflecting local circumstances and meet the range of needs of existing and future residents. Sustainable communities are sensitive to their environment, contribute to a high quality of life and offer equality of opportunity. They do these things by balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of their community.

The significant shortage of affordable housing is a threat to sustainable communities. Although the greatest shortages of affordable housing are in HARAH's major settlements, rural communities experience particular housing problems. Many local people are no longer able to buy a home in the village they grew up in and have to leave to find suitable accommodation elsewhere. This in turn impacts on the age structure of the community, its social diversity and cultural identity.

National planning policy reflects the Government's commitment to improving the affordability and supply of housing in all communities, including rural ones. The Government's key housing policy goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live (PPS3).

National planning policy promotes the need to provide housing in rural areas, not only in market towns and local service centres but also in villages in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability (PPS1). This means that, particularly in small rural settlements, there is a need to consider how housing growth can:

- support informal social support networks;
- assist people to live near their work and benefit from key services;
- minimise environmental impact, and;
- where possible, encourage environmental benefits (PPS3).

This may mean balancing the elements of a sustainable community described above. For instance, when considering the need to secure rural affordable housing opportunities to meet the needs of local people it will be necessary to recognise that a site may be acceptable even though it may not be readily accessible other than by the private car (PPS 1 Supplement (Planning and Climate Change)).

Policy Options

Policy options are set out in the appendix.

Each constituent local planning authority has the responsibility of preparing its own Local Development Framework (LDF). These must be locally distinctive and be evidence based. The HARAHA partnership strongly encourages each local planning authority to adopt and develop the approaches advocated in this statement; however it recognises the requirements placed on each local planning authority to ensure their LDF is locally distinctive.

HARAHA will monitor the extent to which policy options are taken forward by individual local planning authorities and act as a forum for sharing information and developing good practice on affordable housing planning policies. It will also investigate further areas that are highlighted for more research.

