

# The Case for Rural Affordable Housing in Devon

## Why do Devon's Rural Communities need affordable housing?

- So lower earners and young people in the rural economy are not priced out of their communities.
- To ensure our villages thrive and are living, working communities.
- To support local services, amenities and rural businesses.

*"It's a dream  
come true.  
Living here means  
that my family and  
I can stay close to our  
friends, our family  
and my job."*

Verity Hookway,  
St Giles in the Wood

## What Kind of Homes do Devon's Rural Communities Need?

- Devon has a low wage economy, particularly so in many rural areas. We need homes that people can afford to live in and that help them to stay in employment in rural communities
- We need a range of affordable homes; some low cost home ownership, some for rent, some built by Housing Associations and some by community led organisations such as Community Land Trusts and Co-operatives. Or even homes built by people themselves as 'Self-Build'

## Who We Are

We are Devon Local Authorities and principle Housing Associations (Registered Providers) who work with the Rural Housing Enablers and Community Council of Devon to improve the delivery of new affordable homes in Rural Devon. This includes the Devon Rural Housing Partnership and the Exmoor and North Devon Partnership.

We are committed to learning from each other and from our communities and to working together, better, in order to make a difference for the people who live in Devon's rural communities.



## What is the Need in Devon?

- 94% of Parish Plans in Devon identify affordable housing as an issue<sup>1</sup>
- There is an average need of 10 new affordable homes per rural community<sup>2</sup>
- Average house prices are over 13 times average household incomes in Devon, rising to over 17 times in some rural areas<sup>3</sup>
- Household incomes in Devon are 15% below the national average, rising to almost 30% in some rural areas<sup>3</sup>
- The rural economy is vital to Devon's overall economy
- Just over half of Devon's population live in rural areas

<sup>1</sup> Village in Action database

<sup>2</sup> Rural Housing Enabler, evidence from Housing Needs Surveys

<sup>3</sup> Devon State of the Market Report, May 2011

## What we need to do

- Listen to Devon rural communities and respond to their needs and aspirations
- Stretch the number of new affordable homes built in Devon's villages over each of the next four years, against a backdrop of declining public funding
- Work together to make sure we have a successful programme of new homes
- Promote innovation and better ways of delivering affordable homes
- Find ways of reducing the cost of delivering homes
- Continue to provide the evidence for the need for homes, and the impact that the lack of affordable housing has on people's lives and on our rural economy

## Why We Need Change

- The challenge is enormous:
- There is much less money available from public sources
- There are new planning and housing policies that we need to work within
- The economy is slowing
- The need for affordable housing is growing

## What we have done so far

Over the 3 years 2008 to 2011 we built 453 new affordable homes in Devon's rural communities; an average of 151 homes per year. We must innovate if we are to maintain this in an era where there is less public funding for new homes.

*"There has never been a more important time to campaign to keep rural housing affordable."*

**David Orr, Chief Executive,  
National Housing  
Federation, Save Our  
Villages**

*"The rural challenge today includes supporting new, better-paid and diverse employment opportunities, providing the homes needed for those who live and work in rural areas on low incomes, and maintaining and evolving the services they rely on."*

**Matthew Taylor, Lord Taylor  
of Goss Moor, The Rural  
Challenge**

*'Traditional village life stands to wither beyond recovery if the lack of affordable rural housing is not addressed..'*

**Farmers Guardian,  
March 2010.**

*"Solving Devon's rural affordable housing challenge will not be easy, particularly in an era of reducing public investment and economic slowdown; if there were simple solutions we would have found them by now. There will be many different opinions on how we can best achieve our goals. However, we believe that by listening to our communities, working together, and finding new and better ways of delivery we can and must meet this challenge."*

**Devon Strategic Housing Group  
Position Statement**

