



Commission for
Rural Communities

Tackling rural disadvantage

Assessment of the
implementation of
the Affordable Rural
Housing Commission's
recommendations

Introduction

Two years ago the Government's Affordable Rural Housing Commission (ARHC) launched its report to wide acclaim. It set out a raft of inter-related recommendations for government departments, Regional Assemblies, Local Authorities and communities.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has put in place two of the five essential elements identified by the ARHC. Through PPS 3 they have provided a supportive planning policy framework, and set an investment target for delivery of rural affordable housing in villages. However, there remain key gaps in the implementation of the ARHC's recommendations which need to be addressed if the benefit of these steps is to be realised. These include:

- Provision of government resources to help build the skills and capacity of local authorities and communities.
- A positive and proactive response by Regional Assemblies and the Planning Inspectorate to rural affordable housing. Without a change in their approach Local Authorities will remain cautious about adopting the approaches set out in PPS 3.
- Action by Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT), the Homes and Communities Agency and Local Authorities to encourage the release of public and private land for rural affordable housing.

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) has monitored implementation of the ARHC report by staging a major conference one year on from the ARHC publishing its recommendations and preparing a 'watchdog' report. It also drew on the experience of key stakeholders and commissioned research on the take up of the ARHC recommendations at regional level. This has informed our housing work plan for the coming year. It aims to encourage further implementation of the ARHC's recommendations and make the most of the steps that have been taken, and respond to new challenges arising from the 'credit crunch', evolving government policy and what we anticipate will be included in Matthew Taylor's inquiry into planning for rural economies and housing for the Prime Minister.

We have identified five priorities:

- Increase resources to assist local authorities and rural communities develop their skills so they are able to make the most of the planning and funding framework provided by Government.
- Work with regional organisations so that they put in place policy and practice that supports delivery of rural affordable housing.
- Work up proposals and models that will increase the supply of public, church and private land for rural affordable housing.
- Provide advice and guidance on providing low cost home ownership that is affordable, available in perpetuity and which is able to attract mortgage finance.

- Promote ways in which rural communities support rather than oppose new affordable housing development.

Progress report

Summary

The highest level of response to the Affordable Rural Housing Commission's recommendations has been by CLG. Through publication of national policy and guidance they have implemented many of the headline recommendations of the report. This is most notable in the realm of planning policy and the setting of a rural investment target for settlements of less than 3,000 population. However, there has been less activity on those recommendations that would ensure that these helpful policy changes result in more delivery. This is most evident in those recommendations that relate to providing technical support and training and enabling activities. The recommendations directed at HMT and Defra have not been implemented.

Regional bodies have not been as responsive as central Government. Any implementation of the ARHC recommendations has often only occurred after advice from the EiP Panel Report or CLG.

The Housing Corporation has responded but this has been as a consequence of other changes, such as the introduction of the Code for Sustainable Homes, or through informal practice, rather than as a result of explicit revisions to policy direction.

Local Authorities are varied in their willingness to take up the ARHC recommendations. There is a greater interest in taking a positive approach to delivering rural affordable housing, but a reluctance to adopt this approach, borne of a lack of confidence and limited resources, skills and capacity.

Introduction

The recommendations of the ARHC report were drafted to promote action that together would help improve the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas. These were arranged under the five key factors affecting delivery: planning, finance, supply of sites, use of existing stock and implementation at the community and local level. For each recommendation the ARHC identified the agency that would be responsible for its implementation. Primarily, these were government departments, Regional Assemblies, the Housing Corporation, and Local Authorities. In addition, a small number of recommendations were directed at specialist organisations, such as the National Housing Federation and CPRE.

The Government, too, has used this framework to report on its progress in taking up these recommendations and alerting the public to other steps they have taken that will assist delivery of rural affordable housing. These are reported on the rural affordable housing website hosted by Defra.

Report of progress

The tables in the appendices set out the progress that has been made towards implementing the ARHC's recommendations. Starting with the recommendation, these note the responsible organisation and provide an assessment of progress. Where no or partial progress has been made further opportunities for implementing the recommendation are identified.

Findings

Government departments

CLG has actively pursued the headline planning policy recommendations. This has largely been achieved through publication of PPS 3 and further guidance that it has issued through Ministerial letter and advice to Government Offices.

There has also been significant progress on the recommendations relating to public investment, with the announcement of a target for settlements of less than 3,000 population, and introduction of a PSA for delivery of affordable housing that will be rurally tagged.

Through Government-tabled amendment to the Housing and Regeneration Bill it is almost certain that arrangements to secure shared equity housing in perpetuity will be secured. It has also explored and taken some steps to strengthen the provisions to retain properties sold under Right to Buy in the affordable housing sector.

There are also some significant policy gaps. The rural target will provide about half the number of new affordable homes in smaller rural settlements called for by the ARHC. No corresponding target for settlements between 3,000 and 10,000 population has been announced.

There has been the lack of action by HMT on the recommendations to change the tax regime to encourage landowners to release sites for affordable housing. Moreover, concerns remain that the Community Infrastructure Levy will add a further disincentive to release land that will provide affordable housing, particularly of rural exception sites.

The recommendations that were made by the ARHC to ensure successful implementation of the national policy changes it sought have largely not been implemented. This includes a lack of bespoke guidance on building a rural dimension into Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Housing Market Assessments; providing RAs and LAs with access to key housing market data sets; and vesting the NHPAU with a specific role that includes advice on how regions and sub-regions should assess rural housing markets.

Perhaps most significant is the lack of action to build the skills and capacity of local authorities and rural communities so they adopt a positive approach to rural affordable housing. The Rural Excellence Programme has been well received, but it ends in the next month and no further funding is available after September. The Housing and Planning Delivery Grant will primarily be aimed at

authorities that are seeking significant growth. This will not include most rural local authorities where further development is needed, but on a much smaller scale, and where it will be important to maximise affordable housing contributions. At a community level, there has been no extension of funding for the Rural Housing Enabler programme, and a decision has been made not to fund the more generic local delivery 'pot' proposed by Defra last year.

Regional bodies

There has been partial take-up of the ARHC's recommendations by Regional Assemblies. As the RSS process has progressed there has been greater reference to the pro-active policies contained in PPS 3. However, changes to a more rounded approach to sustainable development and higher housing numbers has often only been secured after external pressure expressed through Panel Recommendations and Secretary of State proposed changes to RSS.

The paucity of consistent housing market evidence has prompted RAs to commission evaluations of the SHMAs that have been completed, but only in the South West has this required a specific exploration of how data has been collected and reported for rural areas.

The Regional Assemblies were encouraged by CLG to increase levels of investment in their housing strategies. At the point of submission the funding they had allocated would deliver less units per annum than in previous years. This raises concerns about the realism of being able to deliver the Government's rural affordable housing target.

Housing Corporation

The Housing Corporation has made a partial response to the ARHC's recommendations. The adoption of the Code for Sustainable Homes meant a move away from sustainability being judged on service availability. In practice its funding decisions do appear to accept that grant requirement will be higher on rural schemes. However, evidence from the NHF identifies that the additional costs and difficulties meeting level three of the Code, without a formal acknowledgement by the HC of the need for higher grant, means that some RSLs are no longer interested in developing in rural areas.

There has been a rural dimension to transitional work by EP and HC which has led to identification of publicly owned sites in the SW. However, it has not as yet brought this together with a delivery mechanism or suggested how this work could be rolled out across the country.

Although not part of the ARHC recommendations, it has set up a Rural Advisory Group. However, this does not have any dedicated resources at its disposal and its ability to promote change at national, regional and local levels is unclear.

Local Authorities

It is difficult to assess the extent to which Local Authorities have responded to the ARHC's recommendations, apart from through anecdotal evidence. This suggests that a greater number of local authorities are interested in pursuing a positive and proactive approach to providing affordable housing. However, some lack the confidence or evidence base to implement it through emerging core strategies and DPDs. It is also evident that others cite the RSS and promotion of sustainable development as reasons not to follow the ARHC's recommendations.

Appendices

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>Rural affordable housing is provided through a plan-led approach in partnership with communities.</p> <p>Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) make allocations for housing provision that reflect the nature of rural housing markets.</p> <p>To help provide more affordable housing, housing provision in rural areas needs to increase, taking some of the share of the overall increase accepted by Government in its response to Barker. However, it should be in scale with its surroundings, and appropriate to help meet rural affordable housing needs identified in Housing Market Assessments; and be located where justified by a sustainability appraisal, subject to concerns raised below.</p> <p>The Government issues guidance to RPBs to give greater weight to rural housing needs in the development of RSS and specifically, that RPBs should not weigh rural against urban housing needs expressed through sub-regional housing market assessments.</p>	<p>Regional Assemblies</p> <p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>Yes, PPS 3 embedded a plan-led approach to delivering rural affordable housing into national guidance.</p> <p>In advance of any review of RSS housing numbers CLG has issued a statement that RSS numbers should be treated as a minimum not a ceiling where evidence shows there to be a need for further development.</p> <p>No – in most regions the housing number allocations for many rural districts are less than the levels of affordable housing required. Some minor changes have been made after Panel Reports and SoS proposed changes, most notably in the South West.</p> <p>In most RSS, rural needs continue to be weighed against the need for urban regeneration. In consequence housing numbers for rural districts are constrained.</p> <p>The RSS still place a reliance on rural exception sites outside of Service Centres.</p>	<p>CLG has made a commitment to review RSS housing numbers; this could include review of allocations to rural districts.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>At a local level most affordable housing in villages and market towns should be delivered by allocating sites both for mixed development and solely affordable housing. Where appropriate, windfall sites should be used.</p> <p>The rural exception site policy should be retained, but not relied on as the principal means of meeting rural affordable housing needs.</p>	<p>LAs</p>	<p>It is too early to make a general judgement on LDFs. There is anecdotal evidence of interest in allocation policies, but lack of confidence in adopting them.</p>	
<p>The Government urgently reviews the sustainability appraisal criteria which are used for each RSS to determine policies for rural areas. The review should examine whether sufficient attention has been given to social issues and the needs of the local economy as well as the environment.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>No. No further guidance or review has taken place. However, through PPS 1 Climate Change, PPS 3 and PPS 4, LPAs are encouraged to take a more rounded approach to development in rural areas</p>	<p>The draft statutory guidance on Creating Safer Stronger, Prosperous Communities offers a further opportunity to influence CLG CRC /CLG are to meet to discuss how to promote an integrated approach to creating sustainable rural communities</p>
<p>The Academy for Sustainable Communities, with advice from Defra, CLG and the Commission for Rural Communities develops examples of how sustainability appraisal can be applied robustly and sensitively when considering rural areas in RSSs and LDFs.</p>	<p>Academy for Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>CRC has met with ASC, but as yet this has not resulted in any further work by the Academy for Sustainable Communities</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>Local Authorities, parish councils and the national network of Rural Community Councils work alongside groups such as Campaign to Protect Rural England, to promote ways of minimising the environmental footprint of rural communities.</p>	<p>LAs/PCs/ACRE/CPRE</p>	<p>In part. CPRE and NHF published a joint statement encouraging provision of rural affordable housing.</p>	
<p>The Government provides a centralised data service, using ward level data for local authorities and sub-regional groups to use, to support housing market assessments (preferably GIS based).</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>No, but it recommended this course of action in the Housing Green Paper.</p>	
<p>The new National Advisory Unit, to be set up by Government later this year, develops a role in advising and assisting rural local authorities on how to undertake robust Housing Market Assessments. It should also offer guidance to regional planning bodies on how they can incorporate top down and bottom up evidence to develop policies which are responsive to rural needs within their regions.</p>	<p>NHPAU</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>CRC has met NHPAU to explore how this could be achieved. Further meetings are planned to discuss the detail</p>
<p>Government makes it clear to those undertaking Housing Market Assessments that these should be undertaken at a scale not larger than (and ideally below) ward level in rural areas and should take into account the views of the local communities concerned.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Yes this was included in the SHMA guidance and it has supported the wider publication of the EMRAF guide 'building a rural dimension into SHMAs' by posting it on the Defra /CLG affordable housing website. But this does not appear to have happened.</p>	<p>LAs are calling for more explicit guidance from CLG on how to undertake SHMAs in rural areas</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>As part of its review of Public Service Agreements, the Government introduces a target for tracking rural affordability and delivery of affordable housing in rural areas. To assist sub-regional strategic working, CLG advises on local PSA targets which would support the delivery of rural affordable housing through Local Area Agreements, which include county and district councils.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Yes, PSA 155 increased delivery of affordable housing. This is one of the few PSAs that will be rurally tagged. As part of the guidance on devising LAAs, local authorities are required to select 35 PSAs as the basis for local targets</p>	<p>Confirmation is needed that the PSA will be rurally tagged and reported. LAAs are devised at county level. In some areas this may mean that an alternative housing PSA linked to growth is selected, or a rural dimension to the affordable housing target is not made explicit.</p>
<p>Regional Planning Bodies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect and use ward level housing market evidence and other data, which shows at a local level patterns of travel and service use in order to derive the appropriate allocation of housing numbers to districts; • through the RSS encourage Local Authorities to use available mechanisms to secure affordable housing including where feasible the adoption of lower thresholds and more ambitious quotas, and the allocation of sites solely for affordable housing, and; • where there has been a moratorium on new housing development, but the housing market assessment clearly indicates a need for affordable housing, undertake an early review to allow more housing to come forward where it would help meet these needs. 	<p>Regional Assemblies</p>	<p>In part. A number of RAs have commissioned reviews of the SHMAs that have been completed in their regions. However, only one (South West) has specifically asked how SHMAs have provided an analysis of rural housing markets. Most of the RSS now incorporate the main elements of PPS 3, however, the use allocation, low thresholds and high contributions is only applied to local service centres. The moratoria appear to have been lifted through the drafting of RSS.</p>	

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>The Examination in Public (EIP) Panel for the draft RSS be asked to advise the Secretary of State whether rural housing needs have been addressed.</p>	<p>CLG/GO</p>	<p>In part. CLG asked for the EIPs to explore whether the rural guidance in PPS3 was being implemented. The resulting Panel Reports make reference to rural affordable housing issues, but pass responsibility for addressing these to the Local Authorities, thus absolving the RSS of the need to respond to the advice for RAs in PPS 3.</p>	<p>CLG need to provide a greater steer to GOs on amendments to RSS which could be secured through Secretary of State Proposed Changes</p>
<p>Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to actively pursue lower thresholds and more ambitious quotas of affordable housing, seeking where appropriate and feasible one affordable home for each market house as suggested in the Rural White Paper 2000.</p> <p>Local Planning Authorities use the guidance within PPS 3 to allocate and identify sites and manage land supply so that the affordable housing needed is delivered quickly on suitable sites.</p>	<p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>There is evidence that local authorities are interested in reducing thresholds and increasing the affordable housing contribution. However, there is also some caution because of the lack of evidence on viability, uncertainty about the response of PiNs and fear of appeal.</p> <p>LPAs do not seem to be fully aware of the extended scope of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments to identify suitable sites in rural areas.</p>	<p>Further training and advice on the commissioning and use of SHLAAs alongside viability assessments would be helpful.</p> <p>The PPS 3 implementation fund could support such a programme. Unfortunately, funding for a series of seminars to be run by the PAS and supported by policy officials was turned down by CLG because it was not delivering a front line service.</p>
<p>Government provides a simple but robust development viability tool which Local Planning Authorities can use to inform their negotiations with developers on Section 106 sites.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>No. The HC do have a model that can be used by LAs and some LAs have developed their own.</p>	<p>IDEA is providing some limited training which is being funded by CLG's Strategic Housing Pot. There could be scope to use the PPS 3 Implementation funds to support training etc.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>The Planning Inspectorate, through its Continuing Professional Development programme and the Planning Advisory Service, promotes best practice in rural affordable housing delivery to help local planning authorities implement the new policies successfully.</p>	<p>PiNs/CLG</p>	<p>No. Through their examination of Core Strategies and RSS, there appears still to be a lack of understanding or willingness to apply the rural aspects of PPS3.</p>	<p>CRC is hoping to pursue this with CLG/IDeA and PiNs this year.</p>
<p>The Government provides further guidance on paragraph 41 of draft PPS 3, which makes it clear that the advice in the PPS 3 as a whole may carry greater material weight than the relevant policies in the local development plan where the latter is under review. This could be supported by the Planning Inspectorate offering advice on the process needed for Local Planning Authorities to adopt new policies provided in PPS 3.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>In part. CLG advised Local Planning Authorities in 2005 that the draft PPS 3 should be considered a material consideration and so inform LDF/RSS preparation. They have also advised that PPS 3 sets out the policy approach when no local plan/LDF/RSS policy is available</p>	<p>There remains uncertainty amongst LPAs on how to take forward the policies in PPS 3 where there are no saved policies or the local plan is out of date but no Core Strategy or DPD is available. Advice from GOs does not always accord with that of CLG and some LAs are taking a route that could leave them vulnerable to appeal.</p>
<p>Rural Local Authorities, where appropriate, form sub-regional partnerships which can help them make better use of their own resources and develop their expertise.</p>	<p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>There is increasing evidence of LAs joining together, particularly to commission SHMAs. However, as yet, this does not often extend to setting up cross sub-regional teams or resources to secure affordable housing.</p>	<p>The advent of LAAs to increase the supply of affordable housing may provide an incentive for closer sub-regional working.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>An appraisal of the impact of PGS specifically on the supply of affordable housing in rural areas is undertaken and the tax be designed in such a way as to not adversely affect its delivery. PGS should not apply to Rural Exception Sites.</p>	<p>CLG/HMT</p>	<p>No, PGS has been replaced by CIL. It is not clear whether the impact on rural affordable housing supply has been considered. Such research was sought by Defra in relation to PGS. Amendments have been tabled that in two tier areas the charging authority should be the County Council.</p>	<p>There is still an opportunity to amend the Planning Bill, to exempt RSL development from the charge. This would be particularly important for small rural and exception sites.</p> <p>Making a County Council the charging authority raises similar concerns to those which have affected Supporting People, where ineffective working between the districts and county can result in a lack or inappropriate provision.</p>
<p>The Government increases the emphasis placed on the statutory duty to foster the social and economic well-being of Park communities to ensure that National Park Authorities use their planning and other functions actively to encourage the provision of affordable rural housing. National Park Authorities and their constituent local housing authorities set up working arrangements such as joint protocols on how they will deliver an increase in affordable housing within the Parks. The Association of National Parks, together with the Council for National Parks, provides training and support for National Park officers and members so that they proactively encourage the development of affordable housing within Park communities.</p>	<p>ENPA Defra</p>	<p>ENPA has recently published a policy statement on provision of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Defra anticipates revising National Parks Guidance in 2008.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – positive planning (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>New affordable housing is designed to provide a positive contribution to the environment through its scale, reflection of local character and by incorporating high levels of eco-efficiency. Local Planning Authorities, housing associations, developers and rural communities take note of the principles, tools and examples we have found and apply these to future developments.</p>	<p>CLG/HC/RSLs/LPAs</p>	<p>In part. Encouraging good quality design and high eco-efficiency standards is embedded in PPS1 Climate Change and PPS 3.</p>	<p>There remain concerns at the difficulties and additional costs involved in meeting Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which is mandatory for RSLs schemes if they are to receive grant. There remain issues of procurement and availability of skills. These do not appear to be being addressed in relation to small schemes in rural locations.</p>
<p>Local Planning Authorities, housing associations and developers should make use of the advice from 'Sustainable Homes' based at Hastoe Housing Association which promotes awareness of sustainable development issues for housing associations and encourages the adoption of sustainable and environmental policies and practices.</p>		<p>See above</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>CLG with CABI and Housing Corporation run a rural showcase or competition for eco and cost efficient affordable housing, accompanied by an evaluation and dissemination of the lessons.</p>	<p>CLG/CABI/HC</p>	<p>No, the HC ran a Gold Award for eco-design, but this did not have a specific rural dimension.</p>	

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better finance

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>Government through CSR 07 reviews the balance of the National Affordable Housing Programme and seeks to increase funding for rural communities to help deliver a minimum of 11,000 new affordable homes per annum in settlements of less than 10,000 population from 2008 to 2013. The levels of funding going to rural settlements be at minimum proportionate to their share of the country's population with 13% going to settlements of less than 3,000 and 7% to settlements of 3,000 to 10,000 population. In the longer term, the balance of funding is reviewed in the light of evidence fed from local and sub-regional Housing Market Assessments. The national rural target is re-introduced to ensure that funding is directed at rural settlements, at least until accurate rural housing market information is available to inform investment decisions at a regional level. This should be split into separate targets for settlements of less than 3,000 population and 3,000 to 10,000 population respectively. The split should at a minimum reflect their proportionate share based on population.</p>	<p>CLG/RAs/LAs</p>	<p>In part. Funding has been increased to a point wherein settlements of less than 3,000 population it will deliver on average 81% more completions per annum providing 3,433 units per annum over the next 3 years. A target has been set for investment in settlements of less than 3, 000 population, but no corresponding target for settlements between 3,000 and 10,000 population.</p>	<p>There needs to be a separate target for settlements of population between 3,000 and 10,000. There is an annual shortfall for smaller communities of 3,833 units between the target and the number that would have been provided using the proportionate split proposed by ARHC. It is still not clear on what basis CLG decided that 10,300 homes over the next three years was an appropriate target. It is likely that this was on the advice of the Regional Assemblies, but as the RSS briefings have shown the rural evidence base held by RAs is very weak. There is some evidence that the funding made available by the RAs through their Regional Housing Investment strategies is insufficient to meet the target. Given the delays in preparation of LDFs, which could reduce site supply, there is some advantage in having a lower target which has some chance of being met. The CRC/NHF and CPRE all argued for a target that increased incrementally over the next three years. There remains a need to improve the evidence base. CLG and the RAs could do more in terms of guidance and provision of data to assist this process.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better finance (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>There is better coordination between Regional Housing and Spatial Strategies so that funding and planning policy for the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas is complementary.</p>	<p>Regional Assemblies</p>	<p>No, the policies of constraint continue within the RSS. This limits opportunities to cross subsidise affordable housing in rural areas. Yet the RHS investment allocations for rural areas are less than in previous years.</p>	<p>Through the definition and approval of LAAs, CLG and LAs could ensure that the levels of rural affordable homes are monitored and steps taken to improve its delivery. To maintain the drive and leadership, which in the past has been offered by the Housing Corporation, it is vital that the Homes and Communities Agency is given a clear remit/steer by Ministers that their work includes villages as well as market towns and urban areas. (see CRC Business Plan)</p>
<p>Rural Local Planning Authorities seek to increase the contribution to private developments by using their powers to reduce site thresholds and increase the proportion of affordable housing on market sites, based on robust housing market and needs assessments. The Government, working with the Chartered Institute of Housing provides guidance to local authorities on how to use the resources at their disposal to increase the provision of affordable housing in rural areas.</p>	<p>CLG/CiH</p>	<p>In part. CLG has funded a Strategic Housing Enabling Programme delivered by IDeA, but this has primarily been aimed at urban authorities. CRC and IDeA have managed to secure funding from this source to support a programme of 8 sub-regional events. These are aimed at building skills necessary to implement PPS 3.</p>	<p>Training and support for rural Local Authorities to maximise the resources available is vital. The funding for the Rural Excellence Programme ends in September. It would be helpful to be able to access CLG Strategic Housing and PPS 3 Implementation funding to support its continuation. There is an opportunity to secure the more active engagement of the CiH with implementation of the ARHC. (See CRC Business Plan)</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better finance (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>The Housing Corporation reviews and, if necessary, revises the application of the Housing Quality Index and Grant Index so that decisions take better account of the availability of services, the generic higher costs of delivery and the limited availability of infrastructure that makes it difficult to achieve high Eco-homes ratings in rural areas using the current criteria. The Housing Corporation incorporates criteria for rural schemes to reward innovative ways of reducing carbon emissions to offset current criteria on reduced personal transport. This needs to be reflected in Eco-homes standards and the emerging Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>	<p>HC/CLG</p>	<p>In part. CLG published the Code for Sustainable Homes and it is mandatory for any housing that receives Housing Corporation funding to attain Level 3. Helpfully, it offers a menu approach that allows flexibility in the way that the required score can be attained. Reductions on VAT have been introduced for some eco-efficiency measures, such as solar panels and wind turbines.</p>	<p>RSLs are experiencing difficulty attaining Level 3 in some communities, particularly those without a gas supply. It also adds to the cost of what are already relatively expensive schemes. For some RSLs, this has resulted in a withdrawal from rural development because these costly schemes increase the overall grant rate of their programmes. This can disadvantage them in the bidding process to the Housing Corporation. The HC has disputed that it costs more to deliver in rural areas. This is countered by very recent research undertaken by the NHF which looked at development records for 29,000 rural homes funded between 2005 and 2007. It found that social rented homes cost 13% and Homebuy 5% more to build than their urban equivalents. Greater Government support is needed to improve the supply and use of modern methods of construction that provide homes suitable in design for a rural setting. (See CRC Business Plan)</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better finance (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>Through sub-regional partnerships, Local Authorities and housing associations work with Rural Housing Enablers and the Housing Corporation to develop a forward pipeline of schemes which can be funded either through slippage in the current funding round or as a programme for future investment. Regional offices of the Housing Corporation adopt cascade mechanisms that ensure that any funding arising from the slippage of rural schemes is used in alternative rural developments within the sub-region or region. The Housing Corporation, with English Partnerships explore and pilot with a consortium of housing associations how to bring together public land and funding to increase the supply of rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>HC LAs RSLs</p>	<p>No, there is some evidence of sub-regions working more closely together, but these have not so far included a coordinated strategy for providing a pipeline of schemes, as adopted by HARAH. The HC and EP have been doing some transitional work to identify publicly owned sites in the South West that could be used for rural affordable housing. It is not clear how this is being taken forward.</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to influence the remit, responsibilities and powers of the HCA to a position where they could play a leading role in the delivery of rural affordable housing. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a rural responsibility set out in statute; • a requirement that land in their ownership is transferred at nil value where it is to be used for affordable housing; and • a power to provide funds that allow them to act as a guarantor, particularly for rural LCHO schemes, so making them attractive to lenders and maintaining perpetuity.
<p>Local Authorities work with private companies which can deliver affordable housing, where appropriate, to maximise the opportunities for delivery without the use of public subsidy. Local Authorities should make it explicit that this does not require the developer to be a housing association but does require adequate perpetuity arrangements to be in place and other public interests to be safeguarded. The Government, with the Housing Corporation develops a 'Kite Mark' standard for this sector which would assess private companies against criteria such as adequate perpetuity arrangements and reliability of delivery.</p>	<p>HC CLG</p>	<p>No, LAs are still wary of private LCHO initiatives.</p>	<p>The current state of the mortgage market has led to a withdrawal of mortgages for those offering alternative LCHO products, and potential residents. This is particularly the case where perpetuity arrangements are in place. Discussions are needed with the CML on lending for rural LCHO products to develop a more favourable climate for developers and residents. HCA could be given a role as guarantor for rural LCHO schemes where perpetuity arrangements are required. (See CRC Business Plan)</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better finance (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>We welcome HM Treasury's proposals for the introduction of UK-REITs but we believe that it must monitor whether the conversion charge acts as a potential barrier and, if so, rectifies this. Housing associations operating in rural areas consider the REIT mechanism as one which could play an important role in raising finance for investment in their activities. HM Treasury develops an enforceable proposal for the reduction of VAT on the refurbishment and renewal of properties for use as affordable housing so that application of the provision in the EU Sixth VAT Directive is applied to the UK. HM Treasury considers the potential impact of tax reform on levels of affordable housing provision, seeking evidence from bodies such as the Country Land and Business Association.</p>	<p>HMT</p>	<p>No. There has been further discussion but as yet no positive changes have been made to support the delivery of rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>The only change to CGT has been to reduce the rate from 40% to 18% on the sale of second homes. This is likely to exacerbate the shortage of housing choice in rural areas, particularly at the lower end of the market. Further and more active engagement of HMT is needed. (see CRC Business Plan)</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – increasing a supply of sites

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>HM Treasury assesses the potential impact of these (tax) proposals and examines other tax incentives which could improve the supply of affordable housing, seeking evidence from bodies such as the Country Land and Business Association.</p>	<p>HMT</p>	<p>No. There has been further discussion but as yet no positive changes have been made to support the delivery of rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>The only change to CGT has been to reduce the rate from 40% to 18% on the sale of second homes. This is likely to exacerbate the shortage of housing choice in rural areas, particularly at the lower end of the market. Further and more active engagement of HMT is needed. (see CRC Business Plan)</p>
<p>If the supply of affordable housing in rural areas does not improve, CLG and Defra identify a mechanism for re-classifying agricultural buildings as brownfield. Local Authorities consider the contribution which the conversion of traditional farm buildings can make to the supply of housing – both market and affordable.</p>	<p>CLG LA</p>	<p>No, but draft PPS 4 does encourage LPAs to consider land and buildings no longer needed for economic use to be used for housing. However, it does not change the definition of previously developed land.</p>	
<p>The Housing Corporation, together with the National Housing Federation and landowner interests, such as the Country Land and Business Association, explore and test a new leasehold model. This would provide social housing grant to be held on the balance sheet of the housing association and used to provide additional income for the private landlord who had leased it as land for affordable housing. This would supplement the net rent received from the affordable or sub-market tenancy and be paid in return for nomination and management rights in favour of the housing association for an agreed lease period.</p>	<p>HC/NHF/CLA</p>	<p>No</p>	

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – increasing a supply of sites (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>A 'Rural Housing Partnership' is established with access to the National Land Use Database of Previously Developed Land and Register of Surplus Public Land. This would bring together the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and a housing association consortium. Working with Local Authorities and Rural Housing Enablers, they would build up a pipeline of rural affordable housing schemes and link them directly to the Housing Corporation's funding programme. If the current English Partnerships' pilot is successful, inclusion of surplus Local Authority land on the Register of Surplus Public Sector Land is made compulsory.</p>	<p>HC/EP</p>	<p>In part. The HC and EP have been doing some transitional work to identify publicly owned sites in the South West that could be used for rural affordable housing. It is not clear how this is being taken forward. LAs were invited to register as users of the Register of Surplus Public Land, but only one came forward.</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to influence the remit, responsibilities and powers of the HCA to a position where they could play a leading role in the delivery of rural affordable housing. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a rural responsibility set out in statute; • a requirement that land in their ownership is transferred at nil value where it is to be used for affordable housing; and • a power to provide funds that allow them to act as a guarantor, particularly for rural LCHO schemes, so making them attractive to lenders and maintaining perpetuity. The arrangements for the register of Publicly Owned land will be reviewed in 2008.
<p>Government provides clearer guidance and/or greater promotion of existing guidance to encourage public authorities, at both the national e.g. NHS, and local level e.g. Local Authorities, to release land for affordable housing, taking into account HM Treasury guidance and ODPM Circular 06/03. Government gives active consideration to the Joseph Rowntree proposal that the public sector's duty in disposing of surplus land be to secure "greatest public benefit".</p>	<p>CLG /HMT and other Government Departments and public sector bodies,</p>	<p>No. The Housing Green Paper reiterated the requirement that other Government departments should release land at discounted value for affordable housing, including small sites. But no further guidance has been issued.</p>	<p>Amendments are currently being proposed to the Housing and Regeneration Bill to ensure that any land owned by the Homes and Communities Agency is transferred at nil cost where it will be used for affordable housing.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – increasing a supply of sites (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>The Church of England looks in detail at its use of glebe land for the delivery of affordable housing, as a follow up to its 1990 report 'Faith in the Countryside'. Other denominations look actively at their land holdings to see how/where they can contribute to delivery of affordable housing. Government determines whether charity law is inhibiting the Church of England and other denominations in making land available for affordable housing. If this is the case they provide greater flexibility in order that land may be disposed of at less than market value so that proven need for affordable housing can be met.</p>	<p>Church of England Government</p>	<p>In part. Further research is being sponsored by HC, religious groups and CRC into how to unlock a supply of church owned land for affordable housing.</p>	<p>(see CRC Business Plan)</p>
<p>Either through the Shared Equity Task Force, or as a discrete study, CLG, Defra and the Housing Corporation explore, through piloting and evaluation, whether Community Land Trusts can help add to the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas in a way which offers good value for money and supports the Government's wider objectives of community engagement.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Yes, CLTs are being piloted in 12 areas, three of which are rural with funding primarily from the Housing Corporation. Guidance arising from this and earlier work has been published. HC announced that CLTs would be able to bid for public grant.</p>	

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better use of existing stock

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>Local Authorities assess whether a joint approach to empty homes would be successful in bringing back into use additional dwellings. Upper tier authorities may have a coordinating role to play in such partnerships, possibly through Local Area Agreements. Rural Housing Enablers engage in the reclaiming of empty homes where appropriate to complement their work on developing new affordable homes. Local Authorities work more closely with private landlords to find creative solutions, making use of existing best practice.</p>	<p>LAs County Councils RHEs</p>	<p>Not able to say. In part. The draft statutory guidance on 'Creating Safer, stronger, prosperous communities' emphasises the need for county councils to work with their Districts and LSP to define LAAs. However, there remain concerns about how LAAs will be set where there are diverse housing market conditions.</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to influence the content of the guidance to allow for more than one target or two different LAAs to be set that are responsive to rural and urban housing requirements.</p>
<p>There is potential to bring into use empty homes and vacant space over shops in market towns. However, it has been difficult to unlock this in many rural areas. CLG in consultation with Local Authorities undertake a specific initiative designed to give rural authorities better tools with which to exploit this opportunity.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Further work was undertaken on LoTs during the preparation of the ARHC report. It identified some major barriers in assembling a portfolio of properties that could be used, and the difficulties of undertaking this work at a local level. The project was not progressed any further.</p>	<p>This could be taken forward through the HCA.</p>
<p>Department of Health and CLG explore and promote specific approaches which provide a range of affordable housing which offers older people in rural areas both extra care and independence and choice. The new Supporting People strategy and funding arrangements are designed to work in two-tier authorities and take into account the ageing of the rural population and the additional costs of delivering support services in rural areas.</p>	<p>CLG/DoH</p>	<p>Yes, through 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: housing and ageing population' January 2008. The new arrangements for Local Area Agreements and LSPs should help, but there are aspects where this could prove problematic in two-tier areas.</p>	<p>The preparation of 'Lifetime Homes: Lifetime Neighbourhoods' included consideration of rural issues and its recommendations are as valid in rural as urban areas. However, there may be some aspects where delivery in rural areas may be impaired and further work is needed. (see proposed work for HC rural advisory group). Further advice is needed on how county LAAs can respond to varying needs across their areas.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better use of existing stock (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>The Government develops a robust method of identifying second homes based on the system of self-certification used for tax purposes. This could provide a means of targeting policy in the future. Local Authorities act now to focus additional affordable house building into settlements where second home ownership is affecting the sustainability of the communities.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>No Not able to say</p>	<p>These tend to be the smaller settlements where development even of affordable housing is often not encouraged.</p>
<p>The ongoing review of local government considers whether local authorities should have the power to levy a 'second homes impact tax' in specific rural communities where there is a disproportionate number of second homes. This could be used to offset the homes. This could be used to offset the negative impacts second homes can sometimes have on the viability of communities and help fund more affordable housing.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>In part. The Lyons report suggested that this is an issue that the Government could explore, but it made no firm recommendations.</p>	
<p>The review should also consider how the levy from such a tax could be distributed at local level through a partnership arrangement between district and parish councils.</p>	<p>CLG</p>		
<p>All Local Authorities reduce the Council Tax discount from 50% to 10% and work collaboratively with partners including housing associations and rural communities to decide how this funding should be used to support the delivery of affordable homes and related services.</p>	<p>LAs</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>From research by CRC the reverse is happening as County Councils face increasingly restricted budgets, the second homes receipt is being retained by them for more generic uses.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better use of existing stock (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>Local Authorities enforce correct registration of those letting properties to ensure they are paying Council Tax at the appropriate level. There is a presumption in favour of conversion of holiday let accommodation to affordable housing, outside RSS allocations, where this can be secured in perpetuity.</p>	<p>LAs</p>	<p>Not able to say</p>	
<p>Consideration is given to widening the range of rural occupations that could be deemed to satisfy existing or new agricultural occupancy conditions. Encouragement is given to Local Authorities to enforce more rigorously the existing occupancy conditions to prevent abuse. Consideration is given as to whether the 10-year rule for qualification for a certificate of lawfulness should be extended for a longer period in the case of agricultural dwellings. CLG examine whether primary legislation is required to effect these changes.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Not able to say No</p>	
<p>CLG consults further with Local Authorities to identify whether this issue would warrant legislation allowing control of two-into-one conversions and policy limiting the size of extensions on the grounds of maintaining a balanced mix of housing types.</p>	<p>CLG</p>		<p>Some LAs already do this. The Local Development Orders introduced in the Planning and Compensation Act should allow LPAs to take this action.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better use of existing stock (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>CLG reviews how Local Authorities currently designated as rural under Section 157 of the 1985 Housing Act are using their powers either to restrict sales of RTB properties to people with a local connection or to require pre-emption rights in favour of the former landlord for 10 years. CLG remind Local Authorities that they can ask the Secretary of State to exercise their power under section 157 of the Housing Act 1985 to designate areas as 'rural' so that those authorities may require that homes in the areas in question which are sold under the Right to Buy scheme can only be resold to people who have lived or worked locally for at least three years.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Yes, CLG accepted these recommendations and has asked local authorities and RSLs in rural areas for their views on the operation of section 157 of the Housing Act 1985. Their responses are being analysed.</p>	
<p>That CLG invites those districts designated as rural under S157 of the 1985 Act to re-apply for designation so that settlements of up to 3,000 population can be included under the rural safeguard provisions.</p>			
<p>As part of the ongoing review of maximum discounts, we would recommend that lower discounts are introduced in those areas which have been designated as 'rural' under S157 of the 1985 Act for the purposes of Right to Buy. A cap of 80% of the value is placed on all purchases made under the Right to Buy in settlements with populations of less than 10,000. This restriction should remain on the title of the property in perpetuity and be accompanied by a pre-emption upon resale in favour of selling to a Local Authority or housing association.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>CLG has explored whether discounts should be changed. They found that that some people want these to be raised to reflect rising house prices while others want them to be lowered to retain social housing stock. The Government considers that the present maximum discounts represent a reasonable balance between these points of view. It has no plans to change RTB discounts. Consideration was given to some of these issues as part of drafting amendments to the Housing and Regeneration Bill. It was decided not to proceed because the disadvantages in terms of accelerating loss outweighed the benefits of any radical change.</p>	

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better use of existing stock (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>A cap of 80% on the value of all LCHO 'staircasing' in settlements below 3,000 population.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Yes. Government tabled an amendment to the Housing and Regeneration Bill to this effect.</p>	
<p>Model restrictive covenants should be developed which could allow planning authorities to retain any privately provided affordable housing in the sector in perpetuity. The Shared Equity Task Force should be given a specific task to find an alternative model which extends opportunities for home ownership in rural areas without depleting the availability of this type of housing for future households.</p> <p>In undertaking this we would encourage them to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing intermediate housing products in terms of their affordability; • the extent to which measures to retain the housing in the affordable housing sector in perpetuity are successful; and • the potential for applying the Scottish 'Rural Burden' in England, as an alternative way of preventing the leakage of affordable homes onto the open market and the benefits of the approach which shares the increase in equity value between the Community Land Trust and individual so that residents are given a foot on the ladder whilst value is retained for the benefit of future occupiers of the CLT. 	<p>CLG</p>	<p>No. The Government has introduced two new shared ownership products that are more affordable than current Homebuy. However, they do not currently offer the level of perpetuity that would be needed in rural areas.</p>	<p>The current cutback in the availability of mortgages is having a significant impact on lenders' willingness to provide RSLs and residents with mortgage finance on alternative LCHO models. (see CRC work plan)</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – better use of existing stock (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>Specific guidance is contained within the new PPS 3 to amend PPG 3 Annex B, to require the inclusion in the planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) of a geographic cascade mechanism which includes timescales and pre-emption rights, and provide an opportunity for the housing to remain affordable, but ends with a mortgagee in possession exemption clause. For shared ownership/new build Homebuy schemes on rural exception sites, a further safeguard is provided for landowners considering selling land at a price which makes it viable to provide affordable housing. This should take the form of a claw-back mechanism for any equity sold by a mortgagee in excess of the maximum 80% ownership which usually applies.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>Yes, the accompanying guidance note on delivering affordable housing contained specific advice on the use of cascade mechanisms to retain affordable housing in rural areas without losing the support of lenders.</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>The Shared Equity Task Force reviews the range of lenders and products available to individual shared owners seeking loans to purchase shared ownership properties where restrictions on resale are in place, and make recommendations for increasing the accessibility and terms of these products.</p>	<p>CLG</p>	<p>In part. The Government has introduced two new shared ownership products that are more affordable than current Homebuy. However, they do not currently offer the level of perpetuity that would be needed in rural areas. In the 2008 Budget, arrangements for deferral of stamp duty on shared ownership homes were announced. SD will now only be payable on shared ownership homes of more than £125,000 when the resident purchases more than 80% of the home.</p>	<p>(see CRC Business Plan)</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – making it happen

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>The Government issues clear national guidance for parish councils and community groups on developing parish plans, including the provision of affordable housing and use of Village Design Statements. The impact of past programmes (for example Vital Villages) to support parish councils in this work has been considerable and should be revived. We also recommend that Government identifies funding from within Defra's Rural Social and Community Programme budget to meet the costs incurred in preparing Village Design Statements and parish plans. The Government sets out firm guidance on how to integrate parish plans into Local Development Frameworks, National Parks Policy and Local Area Agreements. This should be the primary way in which the Government's agenda to devolve responsibility to local level is pursued in rural areas. The Government's review of the Quality Parish Council initiative looks at providing incentives for parish councils to join the scheme and to identifying the positive role which they can play in the delivery of affordable housing.</p>	<p>CLG CLG/Defra</p>	<p>The Rural Communities Action Network produced a toolkit on Parish Plans in January 2007. This is signposted on the Government's affordable housing web site. Defra published research on 'bridging' parish and local authority plans in July 2007.</p> <p>No</p>	<p>The Government's draft statutory guidance 'Creating Safer, Stronger, Prosperous Communities' makes passing reference to Parish Plans and parish councils. There is an opportunity to strengthen the guidance and embed them in the strategy development process of LAs. This could be accompanied by advice on how LAs could support rural communities' develop inclusive parish plans that contribute to delivery of rural affordable housing. The Planning Bill may provide other opportunities for embedding community plans into the statutory system.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – making it happen (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/opportunities
<p>A guidance role (for RHEs) is provided and managed at a strategic level by the Regional Housing Boards. Wherever possible value should be added to this through partnership funding agreements between housing associations and local authorities. In order to enable an orderly transition to these new arrangements Defra and/or CLG replace the funding for Rural Housing Enablers being provided through the Rural Social and Community Programme with three years of Increased continuity/development funding. We anticipate this costing around £5 million. The aim would be to comprehensively raise standards of delivery, and develop a professional progression and vigorous approach to continuing professional development.</p>	<p>HC RAs Defra/CLG</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Central government funding for RHEs has now finished. Budget cuts at Defra also led to a possible alternative, more flexible source of funding – ‘The Rural Challenge Pot’ not materialising. The HC may be considering providing some support for local delivery, but there would be a danger that this would be achieved by diverting capital funding. A careful judgement would need to be made about the long term benefits if such a decision was to be made. CLG could be asked to pick up the funding, as part of their drive to bring the delivery of rural affordable housing into the mainstream. Potentially, funds may be available from the Strategic Housing or Implementing PPS 3 funds.</p>
<p>Sub-regions and Local Authorities have access to a common GIS, which is continuously updated.</p>		<p>No</p>	<p>This was proposed in the Housing Green Paper, but no action has yet occurred.</p>

Progress in implementing ARHC recommendations – making it happen (continued)

Recommendation	Responsible organisations	Implementation	Outstanding issues/ opportunities
<p>The Housing Inspectorate retains and enhances its voluntary improvement work with Local Authorities with a specific target to assist rural local authorities. The Government puts in place a training programme aimed at rural Local Authorities and national park planning officers and councillors, to help them implement effective policies for providing affordable housing in rural areas. The Government explores with IDeA the scope to extend its existing programmes – including Rural Excellence and its Leadership Academy – to increase Local Authorities' capacity to facilitate delivery of affordable rural housing. This should include development support for parish councillors. The Government explores extending the purpose of the Planning Delivery Grant to provide financial support for extending these programmes.</p>	<p>Audit Commission CLG</p>	<p>No. In part. Some training has been provided through PAS, funded by the PPS 3 Implementation fund. However, this has tended to be through large scale conference and often more geared to urban than rural authorities, ditto the Strategic Housing Fund. Yes. With CLG and Defra funding a Rural Excellence Programme – affordable housing has run for the last year, providing support for 8 local authorities/sub-regions. It also included some 'action learning sets' for parish councils. The evaluation has shown that this has been very well received. No, the decision has been taken to direct it to those LAs which significantly increase their housing delivery. Given the housing numbers in rural areas, this is not likely to benefit many rural LAs, particularly the smaller and more remote authorities.</p>	<p>There is potentially a greater role for the Audit Commission to drive LAs to improve their performance in delivery of rural affordable housing. IDeA with CLG and CRC funding is providing 8 sub-regional seminars to provide training on implementing PPS 3. The funding for Rural Excellence finishes in September. It has proved to be very beneficial to those who have taken part as mentors and mentorees. Now would be an opportune time to seek funding for it to continue and greater 'buy-in' from the LGA.</p>
<p>The Government assesses the effectiveness of RRDFs in reflecting the affordable housing needs of rural areas, and influencing the regional planning process.</p>	<p>CLG/Defra</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Consideration could be given to the role of RRDFs and Regional Rural Affairs Forums as part of the sub-national review.(see CRC Business Plan)</p>

Glossary

ACRE	Action for Communities in Rural England
ARHC	Affordable Rural Housing Commission
ASC	Academy for Sustainable Communities
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CGT	Capital Gains Tax
CiH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CLA	Country Landowners and Business Association
CLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
CLT	Community Land Trust
CML	Council for Mortgage Lenders
CPRE	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
CRC	Commission for Rural Communities
Defra	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
DoH	Department of Health
DPDs	Development Plan Documents – part of the suite of documents setting out local authority planning policies
EiP	Examination in Public – process of inspection of Regional Spatial Strategies
EMRAF	East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum
ENPA	English National Parks Authority
EP	English Partnerships
GO	Government Office
HARAH	Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing
HC	Housing Corporation
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
IDeA	Improvement and Development Agency for local government
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LA	Local Authority
LAA	Local Area Agreement

LCHO	Low Cost Home Ownership
LDF	Local Development Framework – suite of documents that set out local authority planning policies
LGA	Local Government Association
LoTs	Living over the shop
LPAs	Local Planning Authorities
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NHF	National Housing Federation
NHPAU	National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit
PAS	Planning Advisory Service
PCs	Parish Councils
PGS	Planning Gain Supplement
PiNs	Planning Inspectorate
PPS	Planning Policy Statement – national planning guidance
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RA	Regional Assembly
REITs	Real Estate Investment Trusts
RHEs	Rural Housing Enablers
RHS	Regional Housing Strategy
RPBs	Regional Planning Bodies
RRDFs	Regional Rural Delivery Frameworks
RSLs	Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations)
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RTA	Right to Acquire
RTB	Right to Buy
SD	Stamp Duty
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SoS	Secretary of State

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