



# The Rural Services Network

# **National Rural Conference 2024**

Delivering for Rural – Unlocking rural prosperity

Tuesday 17th September

**Rural Affordable Housing & Planning Session**



# Rural Affordable Housing and Planning

**RURAL SERVICES NETWORK**

**Delivering for Rural**

*Unlocking Rural Prosperity*

**RURAL PLANNING**

**RURAL ECONOMIES**

**RURAL TRANSPORT**

**RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**RURAL CONNECTIVITY**

**FAIR FUNDING**

**RURAL NET ZERO**

**RURAL HEALTH & CARE**

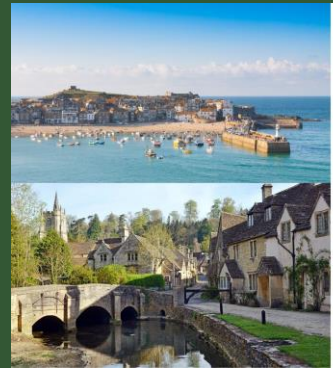
The infographic features a central dark green circle containing the text 'Delivering for Rural' and 'Unlocking Rural Prosperity'. Surrounding this are several smaller circles, each with a different image and a label: 'RURAL PLANNING' (elderly woman), 'RURAL ECONOMIES' (bus on road), 'RURAL TRANSPORT' (hand holding smartphone), 'RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING' (aerial view of houses), 'RURAL CONNECTIVITY' (road network map), 'FAIR FUNDING' (map of England), 'RURAL NET ZERO' (wind turbines and solar panels), and 'RURAL HEALTH & CARE' (man in workshop). The Rural Services Network logo is at the top center of the infographic.

# Rural Affordable Housing and Planning

Houses in rural areas are **less affordable** to purchase for those in the bottom 25% of earners compared to urban areas.



Source: Statistical Digest of Rural England, November 2023



Rural areas can struggle from an influx of short term lets and Airbnb making access to the longer term rental market extremely difficult

Rural Homelessness **increased** in 2021-2022.



Source: RSN analysis of Housing Statistics for Rural England, 2022/23

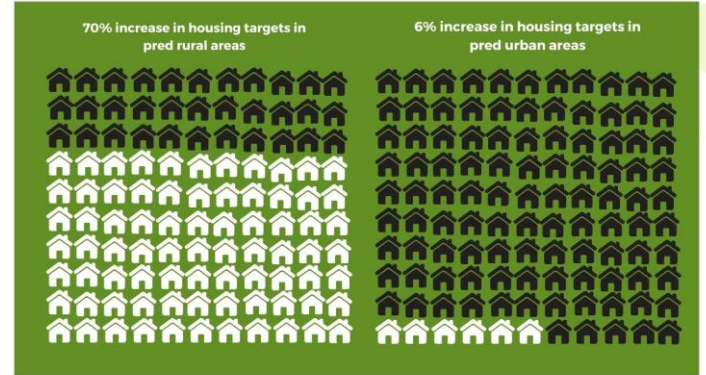
The average residential sale price in the year ending September 2023.



↑ For rural, this is **£49,602** higher than in urban areas outside of London ↑

Source: RSN analysis of Housing Statistics for Rural England, year ending September 2023

NPPF proposes:



# Rural Affordable Housing and Planning

- Housing is less affordable in rural than in urban areas (except London)
- Severe affordable housing crisis
  - High house prices
  - Elevated living costs
  - Lower incomes
- Lack of availability of long term rental market
- Hidden issues of rural homelessness
- Prevalent of older inefficient properties in rural areas

**Everyone deserves access to an affordable home**

- This housing deficit not only stifles rural economic growth but also risks turning these areas into enclaves for wealthier, older demographics, eroding community diversity
- The shortage also challenges rural businesses in retaining essential workers and impedes the recruitment of key professionals like healthcare workers and educators
- The prevalence of older, inefficient properties in rural areas exacerbates health risks, underscoring the need for immediate housing improvements.
- Challenge for NPPF and Govt, how do we deliver rural affordable housing to meet local need?

**Rural Challenges**

# Rural Affordable Housing & Planning

## First 18 months

Deliver a rural housing strategy stating how new housing will be delivered to meet rural communities needs. Introduce and fund an ambitious annual target for genuinely affordable quality rural homes and deliver this through a dedicated rural affordable housing funding programme to reflect local needs and policies

Protect rural tenants by ensuring that local authorities can register and manage the short and long term rental market to meet local need, thus avoiding oversupply of holiday lets. In addition, Government should ensure that policies on EPC do not result in a reduction of long term rental properties.

Ensure that a national homelessness strategy includes investing in solutions in rural areas, taking into account the distinct challenges of rural communities

## First 3 years

Address the lack of affordable homes in the countryside by Rural Proofing any planning policy changes which may be introduced. This will ensure that all planning policies have an aim of increasing the proportion of affordable quality homes built and that no policies have an unintended consequence negatively impacting on opportunities for affordable housing in rural areas.

Develop a policy to exclude rural areas from any proposals to extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association properties..

Create a programme of at least 5 years of support for a national network of Rural Housing Enablers covering each rural housing authority