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HOUSING AND
CARE FOR
OLDER PEOPLE

Rural Housing for an Ageing Population:
Preserving Independence

HAPPI 4

The Rural HAPPI Inquiry

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April 2018



**HOUSING AND
CARE FOR
OLDER PEOPLE**

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Foreword



LORD BEST

Chair of the APPG
Rural Housing Inquiry

For all the many advantages of living in the countryside, life can be pretty miserable if your home is no longer right for you: if you can no longer manage the steps and stairs, if maintaining the property is costing too much, if keeping warm is a trial and your energy bills a nightmare, if you can no longer tend the once-beautiful garden. Indeed, if you need some support – and some company – but if these are not to hand, then country living can be tough.

It was great while you were fighting fit, while your income was adequate, while you could still drive a car or while public transport and the village facilities could meet your needs. But with more of us ageing in rural communities, and more rural services disappearing, problems facing older people are becoming more apparent and more prevalent.

This report presents the findings of our APPG's latest Inquiry: *Rural Housing for our Ageing Population: Preserving Independence*, the fourth in this series of "HAPPI" reports covering different aspects of housing and care for older people.

Our underlying concern is with the growing numbers of older people in rural communities who will face a huge challenge to their independence and wellbeing if their homes are no longer suitable. Their needs can be met by both small village developments – perhaps six bungalows on an unused scrap of land – or by larger scale retirement schemes in towns close by.

While we concluded that both these solutions can work well, we were particularly keen to remove the barriers to helping people remain in their own locality. We recognised that there are extra costs of delivering care to those in rural areas, we were clear that tailor-made homes will, of themselves, reduce the need for care at home and help older people stay well for longer.

We also noted the value of "care and repair" home improvement services that enable people to stay put, postponing or preventing the need for a costly move.

Our recommendations, therefore, seek to remove the barriers to more and better homes for the ageing population in rural areas. We commend them to all the key players and we are grateful to all those who gave up their time to let us visit, and who submitted evidence or shared it with us at our Inquiry sessions in Westminster.

1 Introduction



The All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People

In the summer of 2017, during Rural Housing Week¹, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Housing and Care for Older People established a special Inquiry to consider recommendations for addressing the needs of older people living in rural areas.

The Inquiry's Statement of Intent was:

"To explore the current housing needs and care problems facing older people in rural areas and to make recommendations to central and local government and other partners for solutions."

Chaired by Lord Best, the APPG brought together a select group of Parliamentarians and invited experts. They met between August 2017 and January 2018 to hear and evaluate evidence from a wide range of “witnesses”, visited projects (in England and Wales), listened to the voices of older people in rural communities, and received professional insights from trade bodies, housing, charitable and commercial organisations working in the field. See the full list of members, those “witnesses” who gave evidence and a bibliography at **Appendices Two, Three and Four**.

The group of experts for this Inquiry included representation from the last APPG Inquiry in 2016. Our then report, *Housing our Ageing Population: Positive Ideas*² had found that, despite many innovative and positive initiatives to enhance the range of purpose-built, specialist housing



for people in later life, there was still an urgent need to transform supply and scale-up delivery. It may come as no surprise that, two years on and in our focus on rural housing for older people, we have reached similar conclusions.

Findings have also now been published by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee in its latest report, *Housing for Older People*. While undertaking a broader investigation into the housing and care needs of older people in England, and calling for a national strategy which brings together and improves the policy on housing for older people, it made a number specific recommendations relevant to our Inquiry. In particular, it stated:

“We believe that developers of specialist and accessible housing should be more ambitious in the design of their housing and should make use of the HAPPI (the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) design criteria for older people’s housing. Local authorities and housing associations should require developers to involve older people in the design process, to better reflect their needs.”³

Our recommendations compliment the excellent recommendations from the Select Committee and put the HAPPI spotlight on housing for older people within a rural context.

Furthermore, at the time of writing, the government has issued its consultation on the draft revised text of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁴. In relation to planning in rural communities, the document states:

“The rural economy section in the existing Framework has been brought within this chapter [Chapter 6], with new policy at paragraph 85 on the potential need for planning policies and decisions to accommodate sites for local business and community needs outside existing settlements, in ways which minimise the impact of such sites and exploits opportunities to make such locations more sustainable. This approach reflects the fact that the availability of sites to accommodate appropriate development in rural areas may be limited, particularly within existing settlements.”

The NPPF consultation period closes on 10 May 2018, within two weeks of the publication of our Inquiry report. This presents a welcome opportunity to present our recommendations on the strategic and local planning requirements that can make a significant difference to meeting the existing and future housing needs of older people in rural communities.

¹ <https://www.housing.org.uk/get-involved/celebrating-our-sector/rural-housing-week/>

² https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Other_reports_and_guidance/HAPPI3_Report_2016.pdf

³ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/news-parliament-2017/housing-for-older-people-report-17-19/>

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685288/NPPF_Consultation.pdf

2 Conclusions



“We need to be more creative if we are to meet the housing needs of rural communities.”⁵

Dominic Raab MP, Housing Minister, 13 March 2018

Our Inquiry has concluded that the ageing population in rural areas deserves a new drive for more and better homes, preferably where older people can stay close to friends and family – and the informal networks they provide – and always where the independence can be preserved.

It is therefore essential that policy makers and local authorities recognise the growing housing needs of older people in the countryside, within villages and new ‘hubs’ in market towns where services can be brought together under one roof.

Making provision for this should be an integral part of national housing strategy and of every local authority Strategic Plan, Local Plan and plan policy. Creative, well-designed HAPPI inspired homes need to be available for sale, and at both market and affordable rents. And the release of larger properties helps families find the homes that suit them.

Housing provision that meets the needs of older people also has significant benefits to their health and wellbeing while easing social care and NHS budgets. Properly adapted and energy efficient housing can reduce the need for social care and improve wellbeing. However, the central dilemma we encountered concerned the problem and cost of delivering care services to older people in more remote locations. Care agencies report difficulties in recruitment and local authorities face extra costs for transport and unproductive time in providing domiciliary support to rural communities.

Moreover, it is only in urban settings that economies of scale can be achieved through building bigger developments. We did not, however, conclude that these arguments meant new accommodation should always be built in market towns to which those from neighbouring villages should move. Instead, we concluded that – while Extra Care, Assisted Living, and other retirement housing should indeed be available in most towns – small scale provision in large numbers of villages would often be the preferred solution for those who otherwise simply refuse to take the step of moving from unsuitable properties.

We noted some real advantages in meeting local requirements within village settings: these can enable continued support from family and friends, and we were greatly impressed by the strength of voluntary and community activity – with consequent savings to the State – in rural areas. We could see how small projects for a few (relatively high density) bungalows could assist those moving from agricultural dwellings, housing association and local authority family houses, and owner-occupied homes that no longer served their purpose. And we were clear that new, purpose-built accommodation for those “right-sizing” could preserve independence and reduce the need for care and support.



We could see that some local (SME) housebuilders could meet local needs with decent quality homes, but it was clear that major housebuilders and speculative developers both want both larger sites and have little interest in building for the local older population. In a handful of “retirement areas”, new projects are being developed for retirees moving to the village; but these are seldom helpful to those already living there.

Until measures are in place that mean private sector players can meet local need, we conclude that accommodation for older people will usually require the involvement of housing associations, local Councils, or other not-for-profit bodies like Community Land Trusts or almshouses.

Our overarching conclusion is that, despite government commitments to increase housebuilding nationally, special measures will be needed to secure homes suitable for older people – increasingly representing the majority of residents – living in rural communities. Our recommendations are aimed at making this happen.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-minister-announces-homes-boost-for-rural-families>

3 Recommendations



We recognise that some rural communities are much more remote and more sparsely populated than others. Varied local circumstances will dictate the extent to which each of our recommendations below is applicable.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

1. We recommend that DEFRA's role is enhanced in ensuring 'rural-proofing' of all relevant governmental action by taking special cognisance of the centrality of housing issues.

We also recognise the merits of the recommendation of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities that the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government should take on DEFRA's current responsibility for rural policy. If this is accepted by government, our recommendation here applies equally to that Ministry.

2. In conjunction with the Cabinet Office, DEFRA should play a key part in the integration of policies for housing, health and social care in rural areas for older people; this includes support for transport and broadband connectivity upon which rural communities will depend.
3. Recognising the consequences of changes to government agriculture policy, and the age profile of today's farm workers, we recommend that DEFRA supports efforts to meet the housing and care needs of those retiring from a life in farming.



Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)

1. We recommend MHCLG recognises the specific differences between housing policies appropriate for urban and for rural areas, acknowledging – in particular – that reliance on the major housebuilders will not be appropriate.
2. Contrary to the suggestion in the review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), we recommend MHCLG does not remove the current obligation on every local authority to prepare a Local Plan since this provides the framework for planning decisions that create healthy, well designed places.
3. We recommend that, in better resourcing the planning system, MHCLG recognises the central importance of the planners in securing quality and appropriate 'age-friendly' HAPPI housing for development in rural areas.
4. We recommend that, bearing in mind the demographic projections for the decades ahead, MHCLG strongly encourages all new homes to be built to the Lifetime Homes standards of accessibility that serve the needs of people of all ages.
5. We recommend that the Secretary of State for Housing, in taking forward the powers conferred by the Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Act 2017, issues guidance to Local Planning Authorities on meeting the needs of older people in rural communities, e.g. by the allocation of sites in the Local Plan specifically for the housing of older people.
6. In reviewing the National Planning Policy Framework, we recommend MHCLG adopts the proposal for significant amendment to the so-called "viability test" which has led to substantial reductions in affordable homes in rural areas.

7. Because so many sites for potential development in villages are small, and because of the acute need for affordable homes in these communities, we recommend MHCLG restores local authorities' discretion to include an element of affordable housing irrespective of the size of the development where appropriate. We do, however, realise that this could deter some landowners from bringing forward small rural sites for development and flexibility should be exercised.
8. We recommend continuing MHCLG support for the making of Neighbourhood Plans and maximum use of the Community Housing Fund for community-led village projects, including the undertaking of local needs assessments by Parish Councils.
9. We recommend measures to preserve the remaining social housing in rural areas: discretion for the local authority to withhold Right to Buy sales and an exemption from the Right to Buy for housing association tenants in those areas where replacement development is highly constrained.
10. While welcoming more conversion of farm buildings for residential use, we recommend MHCLG monitors the outcomes of "Permitted Development" relaxations to ensure these do not lead to a lowering of standards.

Homes England

1. We recommend Homes England gives special consideration to older people's housing in rural areas, recognising that in the near future, those over 65 will represent a majority in rural communities and that – because of higher costs and absence of economies of scale – the market will not meet the needs of those already living in these areas.
2. We recommend Homes England restores its earlier targets for housing in rural areas, progressively increasing the share of its funding until these areas receive comparable support – some 13% of the total – commensurate to their population. Within this, we recommend Homes England recognise the significance of meeting the needs of older people in rural areas, not least since support for those who "right size" from social housing will free up affordable family homes.
3. In partnership with local authorities, we recommend Homes England support the network of Rural Housing Enablers, noting that the numbers of successful rural schemes is much greater in the places where RHEs operate.
4. We recommend Homes England, through its Affordable Housing Programmes, continues the work of the Homes & Communities Agency in championing the HAPPI design principles and considers additional suggested "rural proofing" features.

Local Authorities

1. In their "placemaking" role, we see the planning role of Local Authorities as key to securing the quantity and quality of homes needed in rural areas. We recommend that Local Planning Authorities, in exercising strategic leadership, pay special regard to the needs of older people in rural communities as well as the key workers upon whom those communities depend.
2. We recommend every Strategic and Local Plan ensures specific sites are allocated for the housing of older people across all tenures, thereby enabling provision which cannot be achieved through open market competition for sites.

3. We recommend that more widespread use of Rural Exception Sites should include homes for older people in the local community. We recognise that it will sometimes be sensible for a small proportion of the homes built on such sites to be for market sale, including where insufficient grant aid for affordable housing is available.
4. We recommend local authorities, when disposing of land in their ownership in rural areas, always ensure priority for provision, not just of affordable homes but of housing suited to the needs of older people.
5. We appreciate that local authority budgets have been the subject of substantial cuts and that pressure on Adult Care Services is acute. We see provision of more suitable housing – within villages as well as in nearby towns – as an important part of relieving some of this pressure.
6. In integrating housing and social care policies, we encourage Local Planning Authorities consider not only the clear advantages from larger developments for older people in market towns but also the community and wellbeing benefits from small retirement housing projects, including almshouses, in villages.
7. We recommend that all Health & Wellbeing Boards, in bringing together housing, care and health measures, should plan for provision that meets the needs of older people, including in rural areas.
8. We encourage local authority Adult Care services to recognise that terms and conditions for care workers need to reflect the additional cost and value of delivery to rural locations, e.g. in covering their transport costs.
9. We encourage Council backing for the Rural Housing Enablers, working closely with village or community agents, who can make a dramatic difference to delivery of affordable homes by bringing together Parish Councils, landowners and housing associations, with the local authority.
10. We encourage strong support for Home Improvement Agencies to assist not only in improving the accessibility of homes in rural areas (often using Disabled Facilities Grants) but more broadly in ensuring adequate energy efficiency and essential repair for older occupiers who “stay put”.

11. We recommend that masterplans for any new settlements in the countryside should incorporate a proportion of housing of different kinds specifically for older people, as well as for the key workers which new communities will need.
12. Local authorities should recognise the importance of rural volunteering in building and supporting effective community resilience.

Parish Councils

1. We recommend Parish Councils undertake assessments of housing need in their locale, including the needs of older people.
2. In supporting the creation of Neighbourhood Plans, we encourage Parish Councils to be mindful of the importance of supporting older people as well as younger families.

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

1. We recommend that BEIS revives its support for energy efficiency measures, with special reference to fuel poverty amongst older people in rural areas.



HM Treasury

1. We recommend HM Treasury gives careful consideration to the recommendations from the RICS for tax changes that could encourage the release of sites in rural areas, with no loss to the Exchequer. Building on existing taxation arrangements, there could be:
 - conditional deferment of Inheritance Tax where land is developed for affordable housing; or
 - An extension of roll-over relief from Capital Gains Tax where sites are sold on a Rural Exception basis and/or for affordable housing.

Housing Associations

1. We recommend concerted action by more housing associations – not least those now owning/ managing accommodation built by local authorities – to address the needs of older people, as well as families, in rural communities.
2. As well as schemes for low cost home ownership, we encourage more housing associations to bid for funding from Homes England to meet the needs of older people in rural areas.
3. We encourage housing associations to explore opportunities for innovation, not least in the use of technological solutions, to equip their housing projects in more remote locations with “care ready” support.
4. We encourage housing associations to partner with Community Land Trusts and other rural housing initiatives, such as local community-led housing projects that empower delivery of local housing solutions for their ageing populations.
5. We encourage housing associations, who do not already do so, to look at ways in which their existing rural sheltered housing can become a “community hub”, a base from which wider engagement with older people can be achieved.

Land Owners and Rural Employers

1. We recommend that more landowners take up the opportunities for supporting their local communities while raising capital and/or revenue from developing homes for older people, not least those who are in tied agricultural accommodation and are now retiring.
2. We recommend more landowners consider, with their local authority, use of Rural Exception Sites for development of housing for local older people, sometimes retaining nomination rights to some of the homes or membership of a tenant selection body.
3. We recommend the Country Land & Business Association promotes good practice in achieving outcomes beneficial to all parties, e.g. in assisting with standardised documentation for ensuring land used for affordable housing remains for that purpose in perpetuity.



4 Background



“When a social problem [rural housing] reaches 'The Archers' you know it's big”

Richard Macer, The New Builds Are Coming: Battle in the Countryside, Episode 1, BBC, 21 February 2018 ⁶

Housing our Ageing Population: Preserving Independence is the fourth HAPPI report.

The first three explored 10 specific design principles that can help us create age-friendly, ‘care ready’ homes and communities, predominantly but not exclusively urban-centric. These HAPPI design principles and suggested specific ‘rural proofed’ features are listed in **Appendix Three**.

This latest APPG report, or HAPPI 4, draws on these principles and places them in a broader context, in particular, to better understand the wider housing needs and aspirations of later life living in rural communities. It captures and illustrates the range of evidence presented to the Inquiry, and from our visits. It presents a set of recommendations that can help address these needs and offer a better range of housing choices for people approaching or in retirement.

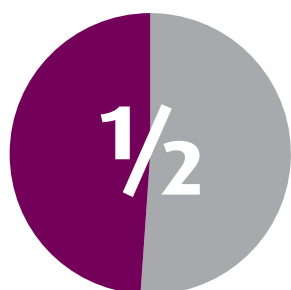
The overarching message is one of needing to ‘rural proof’ the housing for our ageing population. This means ensuring there are sufficient choices to enable people in rural areas to adjust to later life living – whether by making improvements or adapting our existing homes to accommodate changing needs and lifestyles. And this means ensuring there are a smarter range of affordable HAPPI inspired housing choices in our countryside so that we can maintain people’s precious rural, social and community networks in older age.

⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b09rf94t/the-new-builds-are-coming-battle-in-the-countryside-series-1-episode-2>

5 Rural profiles

Demographics

Government estimates that by 2039 nearly



of rural households will be aged over 65 ⁷

The number of over



represents a higher proportion of the population in rural than in urban areas ⁸

The rural population is

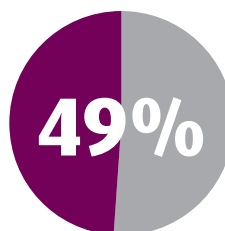


than in other parts of the country ⁹

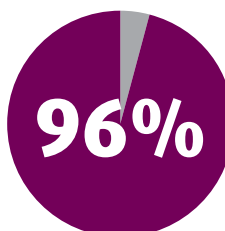
Transport



Rural areas spend a higher proportion of expenditure than urban areas on transport costs ¹⁰



of households in the most rural areas had a regular bus service close-by compared with



per cent of urban households ¹¹

Housing

Rural homes are



more expensive than in urban areas ¹²



Homes in rural areas are less likely to be adapted for ageing ¹³

Affordable housing is 20% in urban areas compared to



in rural area ¹⁴

Housing associations only completed



in rural areas in 2016/17 ¹⁵

Older people in rural areas are more likely to own their own home ¹⁶



of sheltered housing schemes are in rural locations, a lower proportion than population share ¹⁷

⁷ http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pub.housing.org.uk/Affordable_Housing_Saving_Rural_Services_-_Rural_Life_Monitor_2017.pdf

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-population-and-migration/rural-population-201415>

⁹ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/brandpartnerglobal/bedfordshirevpp/older_life_in_rural_england_report_lr.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663092/Statistical_Digest_of_Rural_England_2017_November_edition.pdf

¹¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539299/Statistical_Digest_of_Rural_England_2016_January_edition.pdf

¹² <https://static.halifax.co.uk/assets/pdf/media-centre/press-releases/2017-10-02-rural-housing-review-30-september-2017-housing-release.pdf>

¹³ http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/EOS042015R05.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.cpre.org.uk/magazine/opinion/item/4234-the-housing-bill-bad-for-villages>

¹⁵ <https://www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/browse/rural-homes-2016-17/>

¹⁶ <https://ruralengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Final-report-Income-and-Poverty.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://ruralengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SORS-2016-full-report.pdf>

Fuel Poverty

There is a higher incidence of fuel poverty in rural areas,



compared to 10% in urban areas ¹⁸

In 2010,



of rural homes were off the gas grid ¹⁹

Health

Rural areas have worse access in terms of distance to health ²⁰



Only

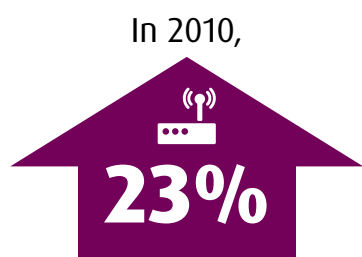


of GP services are in rural areas ²¹

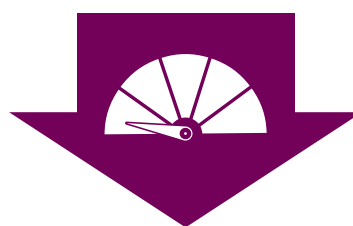


Average journey times to a GP are longer and home visits more prevalent ²²

Broadband



of households in rural areas had no or only a slow broadband compared with just 5% of households in urban areas ²³



The speed of internet connection and service is often much slower in rural areas than in urban ones, because existing broadband technology is less efficient in sparsely populated areas ²⁴



¹⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663092/Statistical_Digest_of_Rural_England_2017_November_edition.pdf

¹⁹ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/brandpartnerglobal/bedfordshirevpp/later_life_in_rural_england_report_lr.pdf

²⁰ https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.39_Health%20in%20rural%20areas_WEB.pdf

²¹ <https://ruralengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SORS-2016-full-report.pdf>

²² <https://ruralengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SORS-2016-full-report.pdf>

²³ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/brandpartnerglobal/bedfordshirevpp/later_life_in_rural_england_report_lr.pdf

²⁴ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/6331/the-rural-challenge-achieving-sustainable-rural-communities-for-the-21st-century-rural-coalition-2010.pdf>

6 Fact finding – our rural visits



In August 2017, a number of the Inquiry members visited four very different rural housing projects for older people in Cheshire and North Yorkshire. We observed some initial points from very inspiring visits that demonstrate just how much can be achieved for older people in rural communities.

Too few

We were much impressed by the developments we saw but heard repeatedly that these are too few and far between. The emphasis of private and social housing providers, and planners, has been on (young) families. But there was agreement that providing for the older generation is likely to mean freeing up an under-occupied family home – thereby achieving "two for one".

Committed landowners

We noted that rural landowners can make a huge difference because securing good sites is key. This can mean making land available on terms that mean homes are affordable to local people (young and old) in return for:

- nominations to some of the homes or membership of a tenant selection body (e.g. equal numbers from Parish Council, District Council, the Estate);
- and/or opportunity for market sale of proportion (25%?) of homes built on a Rural Exception Site;
- and/or direct development with rents retained by the patient landowner (who may become a private sector Registered Provider).

Furthermore, we came across landowners – large and small – who have emotional and financial interests in housing for older local people. We heard that tenant farmers may be unable to retire because losing their farmhouse would render them homeless; that the tied housing may be needed for a younger employee; some tenants may be finding their accommodation no longer suitable as they age or on account of disability or injury; and owners who are not absentee landlords may well have known their tenants for decades and want to do the best for them, as outlined next.

THE BOLESWORTH ESTATE, CHESHIRE – SPOTLIGHT ON RURAL HOUSING



The Bolesworth Estate and Castle is a modern country Estate and has been in the ownership of the Barbour family since 1856. At approximately 6,500 hectares, and with 11 let dairy farms, the Estate is one of the biggest areas of land owned and managed by a single entity in the Cheshire West and Chester Council area.

We heard from Bolesworth's Estate Manager, Matthew Morris that the Barbour family have throughout their stewardship continued to invest in its economic and environmental assets, and have substantially shaped the character of the immediate local area.

The Estate is a housing provider. It owns approximately 170 residential properties in and around the surrounding villages. These houses are of all types and sizes (from five bedroomed farmhouses to two bedroomed cottage), and make important contribution to the private rental market. In particular, rents are set at affordable levels as many of the tenants also currently work on the Estate or have now retired.

Of interest to this Inquiry is that the Estate was also the first private landlord to be considered as a Registered Provider (RP). As an RP, the Estate was able to retain the affordable properties and manage them as part of the wider estate, subject to strict letting criteria, to ensure that local people have first refusal.

Since then, the Bolesworth Estate has been instrumental in helping to deliver a Retirement Village in Tattenhall (see details on Gifford Lea below) which will also deliver 20 affordable homes for people over 65 years of age. Crucially, the ownership of these has been retained by the Estate. In addition, in Burwardsley, a community of just 88 households, the Estate has achieved planning consent for a further 5 houses in the village. 4 of these will be available to rent at affordable levels for local people, including a bungalow.

In addition to residential letting, there are over 140 commercial tenants located on the Bolesworth Estate. They embrace all sectors of business, employing over 1,000 people from industries diverse as food, forestry, leisure and renewable energy. Its role in the local economy has seen Tattenhall being awarded the title of 'Top Village in the UK for Business'.

We also noted the positive employment aspects of retirement and extra care schemes in rural communities on the care economy, including recruiting and training local people e.g. care workers, catering staff. And these developments can be a focal point for intergenerational activities, related jobs, e.g. for the crèche for children of care and catering staff. For example:

GIFFORD LEA, TATTENHALL RETIREMENT VILLAGE, CHESHIRE



Phase One of Inspired Villages' Gifford Lea Retirement Village on the Bolesworth Estate, eight miles from Chester, is located a short walk from Tattenhall village centre, on one of the Estates' former dairies surrounded by rolling countryside.

Recently acquired by Legal & General, we learned from Inspired Villages Chief Executive Office, Jamie Bunce, the collection of 48 one- and two-bedroomed leasehold properties have been sensitively designed in keeping with the character of the local village and landscape setting. And Phase Two at Gifford Lea will see the creation of a central village 'hub' with communal facilities including a restaurant, reception, delicatessen, library, craft room, wellness centre, spa and a bowling green.

Employing local people, the professional on-site care team is able to deliver bespoke care and support and adapt to residents' changing needs to enable them to live independently.

Smaller is more acceptable

We learned that local communities are usually averse to bigger village (and suburban or Green Belt) extensions - mostly by short-termist volume house-builders - that can 'swamp' the village or encroach on the countryside. Small schemes using the local vernacular (and designed to HAPPY principles and the Nationally Described Space Standards²⁵) should be encouraged but may be stymied by government's planning rules and local plans that exclude them from affordable housing requirements.



Existing accommodation is precious

We saw at first hand that upgrading existing homes for older people - e.g. Almshouses - makes sense because such accommodation is likely to be in a central location where sites cannot be afforded, while also sparing green field land. Absence of land costs makes renovation a good solution.

THE LADY LUMLEY ALMSHOUSES TRUST IN NEWTON-LE DALE, RYDALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE



Built in 1658, the row of Almshouses set along the main street in the historic village of Thornton le Dale, near Pickering, and within easy reach of local amenities, the Almshouses were built as a gift to the village in 1658 from Viscountess Elizabeth Lumley, who owned much of the land around the area. A £1million improvement programme was completed in October 2014 which sympathetically modernised the 350+ year-old Grade 2 Listed Almshouses and small community hall (the old grammar school).

The Trust borrowed £500,000 from the Charity Bank to help fund the refurbishment, with a further £400,000 coming from the Homes and Communities Agency and, in partnership with housing association Broadacres Housing Association and its developing partner Southdale, carried out the work following consultation with the Almshouses' residents.

Continued over

²⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf

The refurbished Almshouses now meet the highest standards, whilst maintaining their character and outward appearance. Each home has now high quality insulation, double glazing (with patio windows overlooking the gardens), underfloor heating, fitted kitchens/cupboards, modern bathrooms (with 'wet room' shower), delightful cottage gardens and vegetable patches to the rear. During our visit residents described how their lives have been transformed living there.

Fiona Coleman, Development Manager for Broadacres, said: "Working within the existing shell of the building, and providing a sympathetic new extension, the aim is to give residents the feeling of more space whilst ensuring they have a home that is fit for the 21st century and that will also meet the needs of future generations."

Community and companionship

Rural areas can contain unseen, hidden needs: older people can be lonely and cut off; older car owners may have had to give up driving but bus services may be negligible or non-existent. We were deeply impressed by the many examples of voluntary action within local rural communities, such as befriending and companionship, informal support, information or advice or meals.

We saw at first-hand how rural communities can build 'resilience' and conquer these problems through extensive volunteering, not least with volunteer drivers for a community mini-bus, volunteer outings organisers, as described below.

ABBNEYFIELD SOCIETY'S ESK MOORS LODGE AND BRADBURY CENTRE, CASTLETON, NORTH YORKSHIRE



Esk Moors Lodge is situated in the rural village of Castleton, near Whitby, which is located in the Upper Esk Valley, an area of great natural beauty in the northern part of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park.

The £3.6 million scheme was developed through a partnership between North Yorkshire County Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Abbneyfield (owner and landlord) and the local community, with its opening in 2009 marking the culmination of 10 years' hard work and determination of the community and its partners to secure the development.



The scheme provides 12 apartments for rent to people who live in or have a local connection with the Upper Esk Valley area along with a range of other facilities. These facilities critically include the Bradbury Community Centre. The Bradbury Centre is a key element to the success of the Extra Care scheme by creating a 'community hub' where meals, activities, events and services can be accessed and used by both residents and the wider community. On our visit, we talked to members of the scheme's volunteer group and learned that they organise events and outings, including driving residents to GP or hospital appointments.

Abbeyfield Society's regional manager Jacqueline Notman told us: "Historically this area has presented challenges in the delivery of care. In recognition of these issues the local community have worked with North Yorkshire County Council and other partners to develop an innovative, community based model of providing social care for this remote rural area."

Local care

Because it is costly and inefficient to send a care worker to an individual in a relatively remote village, we found that extra care housing 'hubs' that cover a rural area can be very significant. Those moving in may come from extremely inadequate properties nearby and from situations where care provision has been absent.

And to attract older people used to non-urban, low-rise environments, the much-derided bungalow may need to make a come-back. Another reason to support this APPG's advocacy for Stamp Duty relief for those over pension age!

THIRTEEN GROUP'S NEW EXTRA CARE HOUSING SCHEME, SOWERBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE



Orchid House is situated in Sowerby, in close proximity to both the market town of Thirsk, a new retail centre and a new neighbouring housing estate opposite.

Developed and managed by Thirteen Group, in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council and Hambleton District Council, supported by funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, the scheme at Herriot Gardens was opened in November 2016 and offers 64 one and two bedroom accessible apartments for rent, shared ownership or sale in a supportive community that is staffed 24 hours a day. There are also 26 two-bedroom bungalows for rent, shared ownership and outright sale.

We learned from the local adult social care commissioner at North Yorkshire County Council that with pressure on adult social care spend on domiciliary care and residential care in the county, the scheme enables those with increasing care needs in the surrounding area to have access to on-site 24 hour care and support and also be better accommodated in purpose-built housing, built to HAPPY principles, that is designed to meet their needs.

Rural Housing Enablers

We were impressed how Rural Housing Enablers²⁶ can make a huge difference getting affordable housing schemes off the ground and supporting local housing projects such as Homes Improvement Agencies and handyperson services. They have extensive networks and have a pivotal role liaising/mediating between Parish Councils, local authorities and their planning departments, Registered Providers (housing

associations), landowners, Homes England, Department of Health capital for specialist housing and/other funders and the wider community. Working alongside village agents, their role is also all the more important where Parish and Neighbourhood Plans²⁷ are involved in, supporting the case for much needed housing for all ages in rural communities, as evidenced below.

RURAL HOUSING ENABLERS IN NORTH AND EAST YORKSHIRE

In North and East Yorkshire, Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) promote the value of affordable housing, identifying the housing needs of local people and working in partnership to deliver sustaining rural solutions.

High house prices in many rural areas across the county are causing problems for local people on low incomes and average incomes, young and old alike. In some places, house prices are so high that they can only be afforded by people commuting to nearby towns and cities. We learned that some villages are turning into 'dormitory' villages and the social and economic mix of the area is becoming unbalanced. To address this, RHE work with local parishes to:

- carry out a parish wide survey to assess local housing needs
- work with Parish Councils and other organisations, such as RPs (housing associations) to explore ways of meeting housing needs
- liaise with landowners, local authority planning departments to identify possible sites

- help to secure funding for an affordable housing scheme, including grants from Homes England (formerly the Homes and Communities England), and to access other sources of funding from public, private and social enterprises for capital and/or revenue, and
- act as an honest broker between all parties as the housing scheme progresses, ensuring that the community participates in the process.

We learned that a report²⁸ last year from the RHE Network in North and East Yorkshire, supported by the Nationwide Foundation, wanted to see a significant increase in community-led housing activity from what was currently a nearly non-existent base i.e. one scheme in the pipeline. They wanted to identify practical opportunities for new developments and raise awareness and understanding amongst a broad range of local stakeholders, particularly communities, local authorities and housing associations. The partners anticipated that the work would identify up to 5 pilot schemes that could be taken forward. These would be a mix of community-led approaches including: group-led such as the Alive 50+ cohousing group.

²⁶ <http://acre.org.uk/blog/2017-07-05-who-are-rural-housing-enablers-by-mark-deas-rural-housing-enabler-at-cambridgeshire-acre>

²⁷ <http://acre.org.uk/blog/2017-07-05-who-are-rural-housing-enablers-by-mark-deas-rural-housing-enabler-at-cambridgeshire-acre>

²⁸ <http://nycyerhousing.co.uk/data/documents/SRC-Community-Led-Housing-Nationwide-Fdn-FINAL-REPORT-March-2017.pdf>



7 Meeting older people's housing needs and aspirations



"I want to grow older where I am. Living in a village is lovely. There is togetherness which I wouldn't find so easily in a town whereas in a village I am not lonely at all. It's idyllic, it's peaceful, and it's wonderful."

Mrs June Rowberry, retired Rooftop Housing Group resident

However, Mrs Rowberry went on to describe that with advancing years she could also see that the village she lives in might not be able to accommodate her lifestyle choices in later life. She explained that she is still able to drive but without her car she would lose her independence: for example, she wouldn't be able to visit family and friends, undertake errands for her even more elderly neighbours or take them out, go shopping, get to her GP or attend hospital appointments etc., without being dependent on others. Private and public transport was therefore a major concern to her:

“There is only a bus once a fortnight and I really don't want to move into town.”

Introduction

An ageing and disconnected population is experiencing a reduction in local amenities and services in rural areas. There is also an ageing farming and agriculture workforce, increasing housing poverty across the generations as younger people are being priced out of living in rural communities, a rise in older rural homelessness, and a noticeable lack of suitable accommodation for those approaching or in retirement.

And as our infographic shows (p14-17), the proportion of older people living in rural areas is forecast to increase significantly as a result of additional migration to some types of rural areas combined with further increases in life expectancy. And whether their needs are being met in terms of suitable accommodation, maintaining family attachments and/or social connections, access to health care and the availability of public transport are a concern for many older people in rural areas.

Healthier homes

In a House of Lords debate on 14 December 2017, the Lord Bishop of St Albans highlighted that one-sixth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators are in rural or significantly rural areas. And the number of older people living in rural communities tends to be higher than those living in more urban areas²⁹. The challenges faced by older households in these communities can be exacerbated by large travel distances and poor or no transport connections, constrained resourcing for public services – libraries closed, reduced opening hours or run by volunteers; isolated communities, limited housing provision, including for emergency accommodation for older homeless people, and higher health inequalities.

A recent systematic review on home adaptations by the Centre for Ageing Better³⁰ found that they are an effective intervention to improve health and wellbeing and reduce or delay people's need for health and care services.

We heard from Paul Smith, Chief Executive of Foundations – the national umbrella body for home improvement agencies (HIAs) – that older people in rural areas are more likely to experience ill health conditions caused by poorer housing conditions. For example, they are more likely to live in fuel poverty than those in urban areas. He pointed out that many older people in more sparsely populated areas occupy older homes that are 'off the grid' (i.e. no street lamps, water or sewage, gas, telephone and broadband), in poor condition or difficult to maintain, not adapted and/or heat inefficient properties.

He stated that the value of HIAs and handyperson services in rural areas cannot be underestimated. They offer an essential network of rural service across the country to maintain, improve and adapt older people and disabled people's homes. He drew attention to the work of several HIAs in accessing Better Care Fund Disabled Facilities Grant, government Warm Homes funding, and other grants, loans and fee income to carry out 'odd jobs' around the home, tackle disrepair, make properties accessible and/or install affordable heating systems.

²⁹ <https://churchinparliament.org/2017/12/14/bishop-of-st-albans-highlights-mental-health-link-to-poverty-and-raises-deprivation-in-rural-areas/#more-14919>

³⁰ <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Room-to-improve.pdf>

CARE AND REPAIR (SOUTH NORFOLK, BROADLAND AND NORTH NORFOLK)



The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) operates a collaborative 'early help hub' with 17 partner organisations offering a one-stop service for people over the age of 60, or who have a disability, or those classed as vulnerable i.e. those in receipt or eligible for income related benefits.

The service provides support and assistance for homeowners, and private tenants to undertake essential repairs and disabled adaptations to their homes to help keep them independent in their home.

In addition, the South Norfolk, Broadland, Breckland, Norwich City and North Norfolk District Councils have jointly funded a hospital discharge service. The District Direct service is designed to prevent unnecessary hospital stays and re-admissions by patients at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. District Direct is designed to:

- Help people remain in their homes where possible and reduce or prevent avoidable or lengthy hospital admissions.
- Improve patient experience by delivering a bespoke in-hospital service.
- Prevent avoidable homelessness and supporting residents to maintain tenancies where appropriate.
- Support hospital staff by working with patients who have non-medical needs, releasing hospital staff to deal with emergencies.
- Reduce falls by assessing and removing hazards from the home helping to prevent re-admission

<https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/getting-home-district-direct>

Rural baby-boomers

However, there is also evidence that rural life is changing. Market insight by Strutt and Parker³¹ suggests new demographic groups are playing key roles in reviving the future of village life. They identified five core ‘tribes’ who will increasingly be important to this revival. Two of the tribes relate to an ageing population – ‘Elderflowers’ and ‘Onesies’ (of all ages). They are characterised as follows:

Typically born after the Second World War, ‘Elderflowers’ have benefited from sustained economic growth, as well as increasing levels of housing equity. They are the largest demographic in the UK – and they are growing. By 2033, 60% of household growth will be headed by those aged 65 or over.

Elderflowers have either lived in the village all their lives or are ‘empty nesters’ looking to move into a village house that suits their changing lifestyle choices. As a predominantly healthy and active generation, Elderflowers are in a position to enjoy a positive move into and through retirement.

It is estimated that by 2033, sole occupiers or ‘Onesies’, will make up 41% of all households in the UK. They observe that this trend particularly reflects the requirements of older women. Currently, about 3.8 million older people are single-dwellers and 70% of these are women. The challenge is to provide suitable housing options for Onesies. These range from individuals who need to downsize as they occupy a home that is too large for their requirements to people seeking more spacious options than those offered by a one-bedroom flat.

Both Elderflowers’ and Onesies’ needs and aspirations can be met by the HAPPI design principles, advocated by this APPG. And in their report, Strutt and Parker describe such developments as ‘Platinum Places’ – new mixed communities that are part of a village and offer access to amenities, such as a local farmers’ market which may also have wellness facilities such as gyms and swimming pools.

In addition, they consider that there is a growing demand for a HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) House. Seen alongside ‘care ready’ housing, this has the potential to create healthy living spaces for an ageing population, or community ‘hubs’ as highlighted below.

A sheltered life for retirement housing

And with regard to current provision for older people in rural communities, we heard from Kathleen Dunmore and Richard Morton from the Retirement Housing Group that to flourish, ordinary sheltered housing (or retirement housing) needs a local population of 2,775 households with c12% of older households. They pointed out that in many of our rural communities, this equates to three villages just to occupy one 50 unit scheme. And for bungalows, 10 units require a population of c880 households which means that, subject to local land availability, one village could fill a 10 bungalow development.



Furthermore, they explained that larger retirement villages (for either the ‘Platinum Places’ or HEAL Living’) can work in rural areas and, as evidenced by this Inquiry’s visits to Cheshire and North Yorkshire (see p22-23) and evidence submitted by St Monica Trust on Sandford Station in North Somerset. These can provide a ‘hub’ that offers much needed additional communal facilities for residents and/or the local community. However, they pointed out that without capital subsidy, they can be expensive to develop, ‘land hungry’ (sites suitable for large scale development in open countryside are rare i.e., a 6,000 sq ft development is likely to be out of scale in most village settings), and if developed by private sector retirement village operators are reliant on event fees to recover their outlay, as referred to in our APPG’s last HAPPI Inquiry³².

³¹ https://www.struttandparker.com/application/files/7914/6106/8728/Housing_Futures_2016.pdf

³² https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Other_reports_and_guidance/HAPPI3_Report_2016.pdf

Back to the future

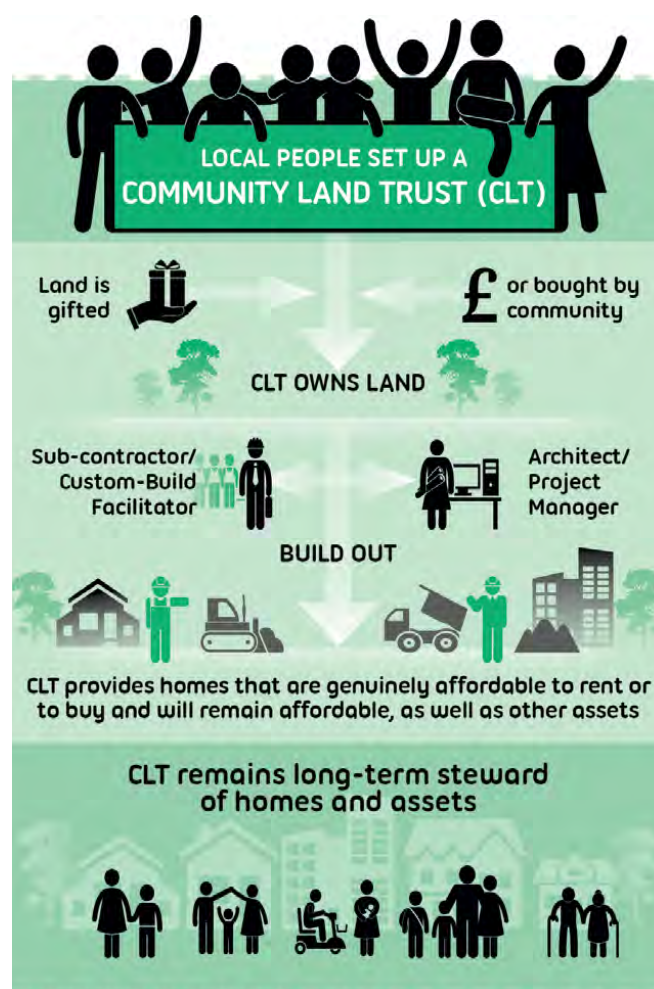
We also heard from Anthony De Ritter, Chief Executive of The Almshouse Association who explained that almshouse charities are run solely for the benefit of existing and future residents where overheads are low, and the funding has no other purpose other than to cater for the well-being of residents. 80% comprise less than twenty dwellings and over 30% occupy listed buildings, which mean that they are an important part of our rich, national heritage. Furthermore, as evidence in our visit to The Lady Lumley's Almshouse Trust in Thornton le Dale (see p21), they are frequently sited at the heart of a town or village which provides an added benefit for their residents.

He also suggested that almshouses have many strengths when evaluating future rural housing possibilities. For example, the majority are likely to have some geographic restriction in their schemes. In addition, they are specific to each charity which means that they are not subject to choice based letting, and can only be occupied by beneficiaries of the charity. There is also a Right to Buy exemption for all almshouse charities. Thus, if a new almshouse charity was created to address a specific need, whether it was to provide housing for retired, young or disabled people, the homes could only be used for that purpose. And lastly, the existence of parish councils could also ostensibly provide potential trustee boards for the formation of new Trusts. Arguably, this could make them more attractive to small rural communities, and less likely to attract local opposition.



Catherine Harrington, Chief Executive of the National Community Land Trust Network, shared how there is a growing movement of people volunteering to form Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to plan and build affordable housing for people with a connection to their community. She cited that there are over 225 CLTs in England and Wales who, often with a Registered Provider (housing association) partner have developed over 800 permanently affordable homes to date, with a further 4,000 homes in the pipeline.

She explained that CLTs are a form of not-for-profit community-led housing. The CLT acquires land through purchase by the community or a gift, and oversees the development of small-scale, affordable housing to buy or rent, in partnership with their partner, e.g. a Registered Provider. The housing remains affordable in perpetuity – the CLT then acts as a long-term steward of the homes built.



She also highlighted that 25% are in rural areas and are a classic case for CLT development – village communities and market towns taking the initiative to develop new homes and community assets (post office, community hall or pub) for their area. For example, as featured on BBC TV's Countryfile³³ last year, Toller Porcorum CLT in West Dorset have worked closely with Aster Group to deliver 6 new affordable homes and a new post office on gifted land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty³⁴. Toller Porcorum, a village of approximately 160 households, was struggling to maintain local services and the provision of additional housing for local people helped safeguard the long term viability of the community and provided a permanent home for the Post Office (see below).



And in Stocksfield, Northumberland, an award winning partnership project between the local community owned business and social housing provider Isos (part of the Karbon Group) resulted in two new bungalows and four flats in Guessburn and one in Branch End, the first affordable homes to be built in the village for 25 years³⁵.

Whilst many CLT local plans acknowledge the unsuitability of older people's housing in rural areas, there has not yet been sufficient focus nationally to address the specific housing needs of later life living in rural communities from a CLT perspective. However, she suggested that the specific case for older people's housing, including intergenerational projects, could attract inward investment from a variety of sources, including charitable funding³⁶, ethical or socially responsible lending, pension funds, and a variety of Homes England's capital programmes.

Furthermore, she outlined that government is taking a growing interest in the proposed relaunch of the £60 million pa Community Housing Fund in early 2018, announced by the (then) Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Alok Sharma MP³⁷. A mix of capital and revenue funding will be available over four years (£240million in total) from Homes England to stimulate supply, leveraging wider investment and further development of local enabling services that support community-led housing, e.g. CLTs, housing association development and other collaborative forms of housing, such as cohousing.

³³ <https://wessexca.co.uk/toller-porcorum-clt/>

³⁴ <http://ruralhousingalliance.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Aster.pdf>

³⁵ <http://www.scatastocksfield.co.uk/>

³⁶ <http://www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk/the-nationwide-foundation-gives-over-1-million-to-back-community-led-housing/>

³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/community-led-housing>

Intergenerational opportunities

The point on intergenerational housing also came up in the evidence presented by the Barnwood Trust in Gloucestershire (see case study on p52-53) and by Community Voice on Planning (CoVoP). Cheryl Tyler, CoVoP's chair, stated:

"Life can be difficult for old people and they should not be deliberately cut off from the rest of the community. One option is to provide inter-generational buildings, which would include apartments for independent older people and a number of units reserved for younger people who would provide services to the community. This could solve several problems at once by providing homes and jobs for younger people, company for the older residents as well as a breakdown of the generational divide."

A rural housing pledge

We heard from Peter Moore, Chief Executive of Cornwall Rural Housing Association and a founding member of the Rural Housing Alliance (see case study on p34-35) and how the Rural Pledge³⁸ informs and frames their work to:

- Work closely with the local community and Parish Council to find the right site
- Always give qualifying local people in housing need first priority for every home
- Ensure that affordable homes always remain affordable
- Build sensitively designed, high quality homes to high environmental standards
- Provide good quality and locally sensitive management services to our residents, and
- Always respond positively to the local community

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION WITH THE RURAL HOUSING ALLIANCE – THE RURAL HOUSING 5-STAR PLAN

The Rural housing 5-star plan outlines an ambition for housing associations and the wider rural housing sector. It focuses on delivering more quality homes that meet local needs through partnerships with rural communities and landowners. The 5 points of the plan are:

- Work in partnership with and for rural communities to meet the needs of local people, in accordance with the Rural Housing Alliance pledge
- Increase the current level of housing supply in rural communities by 6% per year for each of the next five years.
- Bid for at least 10% of Homes and Communities Agency (or successors) investment to deliver new homes in rural areas
- Ensure that homes delivered benefit the local economy, including the farming and food economy
- Meet the needs of rural communities and contribute towards five key tenures, as appropriate – homes for affordable rent, market rent, affordable home ownership, self-build and market sale.

Find out more at: http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pub.housing.org.uk/Rural_housing_5-star_plan_-_briefing_for_boards.pdf

³⁸ <http://ruralhousingalliance.net/our-pledge/>

Farming today and for tomorrow

Charles Smith, Chief Executive of The Farming Community Network (FCN) suggested the establishment of a farming specific housing association and/or opportunities for farming charities to forge closer partnerships with housing associations to develop housing for retired tenanted farmers. He highlighted the work of The Addington Trust and their Affordable Rural Housing programmes to provide a number of homes for farming families living in England and Wales who have to leave the industry, through no fault of their own, and by doing so will lose their home.

THE ADDINGTON FUND AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING (ARH) SCHEME

Properties within the Fund's ARH scheme have some form of subsidy on them, such as having been bequeathed to the charity, built on donated land, or converted from barns where we have received a grant for some of the conversion costs. Because of this they are able to provide these homes at an 'affordable rent' level (defined as no more than 80% of the local market rent).

The handful of properties within their portfolio - situated in three counties; Cornwall, Worcestershire and Ceredigion, West Wales, are available to rent to anyone currently working in, or retired from, an agricultural or a land based industry, or anyone working in a rural and land based occupation.

Find out more at: <http://www.addingtonfund.org.uk/>



Case study

CORNWALL



Cornwall Rural Housing Association (CRHA) is a community based and community focused organisation formed in 1985 to develop affordable homes throughout Cornwall and on the Isles of Scilly. Over 40% of Cornwall's population lives in settlements of less than 3,000 and that is where CRHA has concentrated its efforts.

We heard from Peter Moore, their Chief Executive, that this year will mark the 30th anniversary of the completion of CRHA's first homes at Pentor Court – a development of two houses and four bungalows at Blisland, a pretty village on Bodmin Moor.

CRHA is a founding member of the Rural Housing Alliance (RHA), and the RHA Rural Pledge informs and frames their work. We learned that it has built 336 homes across 49 developments in 31 separate villages and on 4 islands. They are currently on site with what will be their 50th development –

8 homes at Poundstock, near Bude. In addition, CRHA has also built 3 homes for discounted sale and 28 homes for community land trusts around Cornwall. Management services are also provided to properties owned by a community land trust.

Nearly 20% of CRHA's residents are over the age 65, compared with a 22% for Cornwall as a whole. From their anecdotal experience, we learned that it appears that many older people would prefer to stay in the villages where they have lived and worked. This can be because it is where they have family or other social networks, and also the desire to maintain a "rural" way of life. However, this is often unreported.

CRHA have engaged with older people locally about why they may not have registered on local authority waiting lists. A common response has been the fear of being forced to accept an offer of accommodation



of a small flat on an estate in the nearest town. As a result, this may mean that the demand from older applicants for rural homes could be understated and can often only be identified once new homes are under construction or completed. It also means that the general needs homes built in rural areas need to be capable of being flexible and adaptable enough in terms of size and design to accommodate a range of needs.

CRHA do not manage any extra care housing or sheltered housing schemes. Instead, the flexibility of their building design is capable of dealing with the changing needs of households. Developments are typically 6 to 8 homes, built to a mix of property types, including bungalows, to meet a broad spectrum needs. We heard that this is especially required in rural communities to remain useful for current and future tenants to maintain and



strengthen existing family and community support networks, and on occasion delayed or avoided the requirement for some older residents to move to a residential care home, which typically would be located some miles away in the nearest town in Cornwall. For example, we learned that the value of this type of home was recently demonstrated by a tenant of one of these homes being able to be discharged from hospital more quickly than if the bedrooms and washing facilities had not been present on the ground floor.

Completed in 1988, the attractive 2 three bedroom houses and 4 two bedroom bungalows at Pentor Court in Blisland were the first properties to be constructed by CRHA.

Case study

RURAL HOUSING ENABLING – LESSONS FROM KENT

The Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) post is employed by local charity, Action with Communities in Rural Kent. The enablement service operates across rural Kent & Medway, financed principally by 8 local authorities, 3 housing associations, Defra, and a recently-created Community-led Housing Hub (in West Kent).

We learned from RHE Tessa O’Sullivan that the Charity undertakes housing needs surveys in rural areas to identify levels of need, primarily for affordable housing³⁹. We heard that this is mostly to inform Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Parish and Neighbourhood Plans, and specific assessments on exception sites for affordable housing development.

The RHE reported that over the past 10 years, a growing number of older owner occupier households now respond to surveys because they have specific housing requirements that are not being met in the local rural housing market. They want to downsize or move to more suitable housing for their needs and stay in their community, but state they are unable to access this type of housing locally. As a result of this, all the surveys conducted by the RHE now include the need for older households of all tenures. Furthermore, she explained that identifying this need also helps other issues; for example, funding and whether cross subsidy is needed to meet the costs of other affordable local needs housing. The following example provided a helpful illustration.

Goudhurst, Tunbridge Wells – a housing needs survey undertaken in 2017 identified a need for 18 general need affordable homes and 22 homes for older households, 4 of which were affordable. Respondents were asked to explain why they needed to move and what prevented them doing so. They reported:

- “There is a lack of suitable properties in the parish to downsize to, anything that is sold rarely comes to the market”
- “I need to be near village shops in the event that we lose our driving licences”
- “The house is too big. We have to pay bedroom tax and we cannot afford electricity or food because we have to pay the bedroom tax”
- “We would prefer to move from a big friendly but inefficient home to a smaller eco-friendly home laid out for old people”
- “As I age my mobility is diminishing. I need to move to a smaller easier house within walking distance of amenities”
- “Progressive disease, currently managing but in future will not manage house without more help. Nothing suitable locally”

The majority of respondents said they wanted a 2 bedroom bungalow or level access accommodation, with 5 respondents said they would also like housing with support.

And using a sample of surveys taken over the past year in 5 larger villages, the RHE explained that she identified a need for 96 homes for older households; 33 of which were for affordable housing.



³⁹ <http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/assets/uploads/2017/02/Final-KHG-Rural-Housing-Protocol.pdf>

Drawing on this needs analysis, she identified some of the following solutions in rural Kent:

- An extra care scheme developed in Aldington by Housing and Care 21, in partnership with Ashford Borough Council. A survey specific to older housing need was undertaken in clusters of villages in the Ashford Borough. The scheme is built on an exception site for people with a connection to Aldington and 3 or 4 surrounding villages. Provides rented and shared ownership flats with care/nursing facilities available as and when needed. A similar scheme is to be developed in Charing.
- In Egerton, the community plans to develop around 10 units for older residents of the village who want to downsize to 'semi-sheltered' housing. They will be mainly single storey homes with 2 bedrooms (but some with either 1 or 3) clustered around shared open spaces but with private gardens at the rear, within walking distance of the shop and bus stop. They will be built to a high standard so as to be wheelchair accessible (and with wet rooms etc.) and capable of easy adaptation to meet the needs of different disabilities. The majority will be to purchase but there will be some rented units. Interestingly, a Community Interest Company will



be set up so that the homes can be sold on a shared equity basis thereby ensuring that future sales go to appropriate households in line with initial purpose. The homes will be built on an exception site which is being donated by the landowner. It is intended that care services will be provided by a central hub based in a larger village nearby. Ashford Borough Council may allow exception sites to be used to meet this type of local housing need (especially as the village already has two affordable local needs housing developments providing 19 units of affordable housing).

And lastly, we noted that those older social housing tenants living in larger general needs social housing properties have a similar need to downsize or move to more suitable housing and stay in their community, but that this type of social housing is also largely not available. It was highlighted that if it was available it could free up larger social housing properties for families, an equally pressing housing shortage in most rural areas.

8 Planning for later life housing in rural areas



“It is unfair that to expect that people who have lived in an area all their lives should move into more urban areas for the convenience of planners rather than themselves”

Cheryl Tyler, Community Voices on Planning

Introduction

Our Inquiry raised a number of significant issues relating to the present planning system and land supply in rural communities. They dovetail with the CLG Committee's recommendations in *Housing for Older People*.

We heard from Cheryl Tyler, Chair of Community Voices on Planning (CoVoP) who expressed concern over the inadequacies of the planning system. She claimed that local authorities in many rural areas have struggled to get Local Plans adopted and, for reasons which are often beyond their control such as slow build-out rates, to prove a five-year housing land supply. She pointed out that they have, therefore, been at the mercy of a system which is specifically designed to boost the housing supply and not to promote specific housing in specific areas.

This was echoed by Mark Thompson, Head of Planning at the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). He pointed out that the National Planning Policy Framework's⁴⁰ (NPPF) 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', combined with a focus on meeting housing demand, results in new homes work for developers in the countryside often on suburban extensions and Green Belt, rather than within existing communities. He stated that in response to the government's planning consultation, the CPRE has called for:

- Housing 'need' to be treated differently from 'demand'.
- Priority to be given to meeting actual 'need', including 'groups with particular needs' such as older people and people with disabilities.
- Focus on smaller 'age proofed' homes to facilitate 'downsizing'.
- Options for solutions, particularly for those with social care needs, that take account of the nature of rural areas

However, he also questioned whether there is a really need to define 'older people' in national planning policy? He considered that there is a need for a clearer distinction between:

- **Age inclusive:** Accessible, adaptable general needs housing built to HAPPI design principles – age-friendly, downsizer homes, and
- **Age-exclusive:** purpose-built housing only for 'older people that can accommodation support or care needs – specialist housing such as extra care, assisted living or retirement villages for older people.

National planning objectives – it's about the numbers game!

CoVoP explained that the preferred business model for the dominant top ten mass-housing providers in the country is for village-edge new estates of two/three/four/five bedroom houses and these same developers have used the system to their advantage to achieve this. An example of the possibly unintended effects of this can be found in the town of Congleton in Cheshire East where she stated that the Neighbourhood Plan team have not been able to find any land close to the town centre to promote a much-needed extra-care scheme and retirement bungalows. Despite the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stating:

"To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should: plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)." ⁴¹

⁴⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

⁴¹ NPPF (2012) ibid

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government is currently undertaking a review of the National Planning Policy Framework for England and the Neighbourhood Planning Bill introduced a new statutory duty to produce guidance for local planning authorities on how their local development documents should meet the housing needs of older and disabled people. It is expected that guidance produced will place clearer expectations about planning to meet the needs of older people, including supporting the development of such homes near local services.

In the meantime, this has not allowed councils to either safeguard land allocations or to direct the kind of housing that is built. Furthermore, build-out rates on the existing permissions can be painfully slow, possibly because the housebuilders' models for family homes do not find a ready market in a town with a significantly high ageing population. The experience of CoVoP is that there is nothing uncommon about this situation in rural England. It seems that developers have no appetite to build homes for older people, particularly bungalows which take up more land.

The case was also put by the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), which represents 30,000 landowners, farmers and rural businesses in England and Wales, to see a living working countryside that prioritises homes for those with a strong connection to rural life. It highlighted that the NPPF should also take account of the different roles and character of different areas. In relation to rural areas it stated:

"planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and support thriving rural communities within it".⁴²

It has also called on Government to support farming families by recognising in planning policy for England that building a new 'key worker' home in the countryside is justified when it will enable a farmer to retire and transfer a farm to the next generation⁴³.

⁴² NPPF (2012) ibid

⁴³ <https://www.cla.org.uk/sites/default/files/CLA%20StrongFoundations-RetiringFarmersPaper-2018.pdf>

⁴⁴ https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.17%20-%20Housing%20our%20ageing%20population_07_0.pdf

Similarly, we heard from the FCN that landowners could successfully diversify into care provision. For example, developing 'rural friendly' retirement homes or on-farm sheltered accommodation for retiring farmers, a form of 'Men's Sheds' approach.

Better local strategic planning

A recent Local Government Association (LGA) report⁴⁴, estimates a substantial shortfall in housing and care provision by 2035 of nearly 400,000 units of purpose built housing for older people. It calls on councils to be better equipped to fully understand the needs of older people across all types of housing and tenures in their areas in order to facilitate a more consistent implementation of locally agreed planning priorities and plans for housing their ageing populations.

One of the examples cited in the report is the approach adopted by Worcestershire County Council. With its rural district and urban borough council partners, the county council has developed a housing strategy for older and disabled people. The strategy sets out the framework for future development of housing for older people across the county until 2026. Through this strategy, the council's intention has been to make a range of different housing provision available, both in the social and private sectors, available in every district in Worcestershire. The intention has been to shape and manage the market to maximise choice for people who want to buy or rent, as well as those who want to stay put. We specifically heard about the leadership shown at Wychavon District Council. Managing Director, Jack Hegarty, explained how the county's corporate strategy and framework is now delivering the council's ambition plan to secure new housing and coordinate an improvement of the rural housing choices for older people (see case study on p44).

Unlocking local authority land for older people's housing

The government's response to its consultation on planning permissions, local authorities and development plans on their land and the amendment to the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992⁴⁵ in England is welcome, especially for upper tier authorities (many of which are County Councils) this will give County Councils the same flexibility as unitary authorities to proactively promote development of their land holdings by selling on 'development-ready' land, thereby reducing planning risk for developers – including small-scale and custom builders. This move could positively assist councils and partners unlock 'parcels' of their land where they have prioritised in their development plans for housing for older people, including specialist provision such as extra care housing or a retirement village, CLT or cohousing.

We also heard that landowners are essential to providing affordable homes whether by providing land or developing and managing the homes themselves. And, as our visit to the Bolesworth Estate highlighted (see p19-20), we learned that there are many examples of their involvement that has resulted in high quality homes.

In their most recent rural report⁴⁶, Strutt and Parker state that there are three main reasons why landowners may choose to become involved:

- **To benefit their community** – awareness of the housing pressures experienced to access rural housing. For example, homes for young people and families or older and disabled people who cannot find a home more suitable to their specific needs.
- **To benefit their business and community** – providing homes that can help to increase the resilience of rural communities. For example, as part of an estate 'stewardship' plan, by accommodating the local workforce.
- **To benefit their business** – releasing some capital by selling land to re-invest in other parts of their businesses. For example, by developing affordable homes to rent or helping a retired employee who cannot find a home they can afford.

Using Section 106 arrangements

Section 106 is a mechanism to deliver affordable new homes. Nationally (in both rural and urban areas) 45% of affordable completions are through Section 106 agreements. However, this proportion is much higher in rural areas (68%), suggesting that this supports wider community infrastructure requirements in rural areas. It was noted that the omission of an affordable housing quota from small sites disproportionately impacts on rural housing delivery.

We were interested to hear from Anthony De Ritter, The Almshouse Association, that the use of special exception sites could provide new low rented housing exclusively for older people as part of a private development. He claimed that if the provision of Almshouse accommodation could be partly funded through Section 106, there is no reason why this element of a larger project would need to be contiguous with the private development, say on the urban 'fringe' to meet the authority's housing targets. This could mean that the donation of a single field for six almshouses or affordable housing⁴⁷ in a smaller rural settlement or 'rural exception' site could form part of the Section 106 development elsewhere, thereby reducing local opposition and preserving the rural areas from large scale development.

⁴⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678919/Disposal_of_LA_land_with_permission_govt_response.pdf

⁴⁶ https://2391de4ba78ae59a71f3e3f5161196526a8a7b5af72d4961ee5.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/5715/0357/7205/land-owner_guide-final.pdf

⁴⁷ Some planning authorities interpret the NPPF definition of "affordable housing" to mean that an almshouse charity which is not a Registered Provider should be treated as if it were not a provider of "affordable housing" for section 106 purposes. 75% of almshouses charities are not registered providers but they are nevertheless providers of social housing.

‘Rural exception’ sites

These sites are small plots of land which would not be considered appropriate for open market housing, but can be developed to provide affordable homes that meet the needs of local residents. The current National Planning Policy Framework defines them as:

“Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.”⁴⁸

At the time of writing, the House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities heard:

“that the delivery of housing on such sites has been jeopardised by the introduction of a “right to buy” for housing association tenants. Although currently voluntary, this policy overrides the exception site requirement that housing should be affordable in perpetuity. CPRE told us that evidence suggested that the extension of the voluntary right to buy to housing association tenants was causing landowners to hold back land that they otherwise might provide for rural affordable housing, on the basis that housing brought forward may not remain affordable for the longer term.”

The CLA advised this inquiry that the introduction of permitted development rights to convert agricultural buildings into residential properties is one of the steps government has taken in recent years to support housing need in rural areas. The policy has the potential to increase rural housing and is a platform on which to build other policies that make more efficient use out of previously developed sites.

Grand designs for a rural HAPPI

Despite the demographics, we noted that an ‘age-friendly’ housing market is still embryonic and there is an urgent need for a Grand Designs ‘makeover’ to make HAPPI fully consumer enabled both in rural and urban settings.

There was concern that much of the new mainstream housing built in rural areas only meets basic accessibility requirements (if set out in local Plans at all), is not ‘age-inclusive’ in the long term nor designed to the HAPPI principles. We heard from architect Richard Morton that, except in very rural locations, there should be a mix of ‘rural proofed’ HAPPI dwelling types and sizes, including bungalows, to meet the housing preferences of a rural ageing population (see **Appendix Three** for specific features).

He also pointed out that architecturally materials for external cladding and renewables i.e., wind, solar and ground source heat pumps, should be in keeping with the local build and/or landscape characteristics of the rural areas and should not negate achieving HAPPI design principles.

We also visited, heard evidence and received examples of ‘age-exclusive’, accessible new build housing for older people in rural communities, such as purpose-built extra care housing and retirement housing. These have been designed to HAPPI principles as illustrated in the example below.

ELKER MEADOWS EXTRA CARE HOUSING, BILLINGTON, LANCASHIRE



Situated on Elker Lane between the villages of Whalley and Langho in the beautiful Ribble Valley District of Lancashire, Elker Meadows is a scheme of 19, two-bedroomed apartments developed by Mosscares St Vincent's Housing Association with Homes England and Department of Health capital funding.

The homes offer a new style of 'HAPPI' living available for both rent and shared ownership sale, designed with character yet all the comforts of modern life. Positioned not far from both Whalley and the thriving market town of Clitheroe, the scheme offers the opportunity for peaceful living

whilst being close to nearby local amenities including supermarkets, surgeries, restaurants, bars and leisure activities. Elker Meadows offers excellent transport connections, being just a stone's throw away from the A59 with convenient bus and rail connections.

With specific regard to rural consideration of the HAPPI design principles, the materials used were particularly sensitive to the site's location and the building has enhanced the local environment. 'The materials used on the new development are in-keeping with the local vernacular which includes nearby stone-built farm buildings.

And lastly, it was noted that converting, refurbishing, remodelling existing buildings, or self-build, to HAPPI design principles might currently prove technically difficult or too costly to achieve in rural areas. However, with developments in off-site manufacturing, we heard that there is a market opportunity to specifically retrofit accessibility and HAPPI compliance into existing properties whilst, at the same time, minimizing environment impact.

Case study

Wychavon District Council – Demonstrating strategic leadership



Wychavon is located in the West Midlands area. The district covers the south and eastern parts of Worcestershire and is the largest of the six districts within the county.

The district is pre-dominantly rural with three market towns. There are an estimated 122,943 people living in the district and over 57% of these people live in rural areas. Within the overall population, 23.9% are aged 65 or over, and this is set to increase to 28% by 2026.



In terms of tenure status, we learned from the council's Managing Director, Jack Hegarty, that many of the older residents are living in owner occupied accommodation, above the national average.

However, for many older people there is a shortage of suitable, affordable housing to buy and rent, to enable people to 'downsize' as they become older and perhaps need a different type of accommodation which is more accessible and manageable for them.

As noted by Inquiry members, many older people have long term health conditions, experience loneliness and isolation, may need to receive support or relocate to accommodation where support and/or care is provided. In particular, we heard that by 2035 the district will see an increase of people living with dementia (<1,600); with limiting long term illnesses whose day to day activities are limited a lot (<3,500); predicted to have a fall (<4,000); unable to manage at least one mobility activity (<3,350); and unable to manage one domestic task (<6,800).

This evidence supports the need for a range of accommodation options to be made available for older people including general needs housing, housing related support, need for adaptations to ensure accommodation is accessible, as well as supported housing and Extra Care Housing, dementia-friendly accommodation with support and/or care and working with the county council to ensure care needs are also met. We learned that Council's corporate plan 2016-2020 includes measures to secure better housing choices for older people in rural areas and to meet local needs that have a positive role in improving their health and social care outcomes. They include:

- Identify local housing needs and support the delivery of a new Extra Care Housing in Broadway this year by Rooftop Housing Group and the redevelopment of two sheltered housing schemes into Extra Care Housing provision
- Using Better Care Funding, work with Worcestershire Care & Repair to help vulnerable residents on a low income to remain warm and healthy in their homes through replacing inefficient broken boilers, installing heating controls and loft and cavity wall insulation, as well as a new Dementia Dwelling Assistance programme to provide small grants of up to £750 to provide equipment to help make daily living easier for dementia sufferers and their carers, and
- Worcestershire Telecare to enable older people to be able to access alarms, monitoring and additional telecare devices

to support daily living for vulnerable people and to enable them to be able to call for help in an emergency.

To address some of these issues, the council has been keen to kick start community-led development within the district to empower local residents to work together with officers from the council to achieve their local aspirations and be involved in key decisions within the process. For example, working with Rooftop Housing Group and Tibberton Parish Council, the council is looking to develop a Community Land Trust to access the government's Community Housing Fund to fund an Enabler post and realise a new village hall, ten affordable homes (including 2 two-bedroomed bungalows) as well as four private homes and allotments.

And lastly, at a strategic level, the local Rural Communities and Economic Advisory Panel provides the council's Executive Board advice and support to help inform high-level decision making, including the impact of new housing development and plans have in its rural areas. For example, the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP20) encourages the provision of housing to meet the needs of older people on all sites of 5 or more units – e.g. the provision of bungalows, flats and smaller houses to more specialist extra care housing. The policy also permits the provision of schemes of C2 accommodation for older people where:

- Evidence demonstrates that there is a need for the accommodation
- The development benefits from good access to public transport, healthcare, shopping and other community facilities or, alternatively, the scheme provides both significant benefits to the local community in its proposed location and on-site services and facilities and tailored transport services to meet the needs of residents.

The council's policy SWDP20 also recognises that schemes may need to come forward outside of the development boundaries to help meet the need for C2 extra care accommodation and SWDP20 is listed as a possible policy exception to development in the open countryside.

9 Prescribing better rural health and social care



“Providing care to rural populations entails unavoidable additional costs due to diseconomies of scale, additional travel time and related costs, and the effects of caring for an older population”.⁵⁰

All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Affairs

Introduction

A new report by Rural England calls for greater focus on rural-proofing in NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plans. It found older people living in the countryside face major challenges in terms of access to health services and home-based social care due to demographics and the high costs of more dispersed service provision.

In general, centres dealing with acute illness and emergencies and specialist treatment are further away.

- 80% of rural residents live within 4km of a GP surgery, compared with 98% of the urban population.
- Only 55% of rural households compared to 97% of urban households are within 8km of a hospital.
- 57% of rural residents live within 4km of an NHS dentist, compared with 98% of the urban population.

These longer distances mean that rural residents can experience ‘distance decay’ where there is decreasing rate of service use with increasing distance from the source of health and social care. It states:

“We urgently need government and service providers, at all levels, to work together to find a solution to the delivery of good quality social care in rural areas and to stave off what will otherwise become a crisis situation. Those living in rural areas deserve better.”⁵¹

The health and wellbeing of farming communities

We heard from The FCN’s Chief Executive, Charles Smith, who explained that farming is not a homogeneous industry. It can include a diverse portfolio of activities such as managing livestock, agriculture, land, leisure enterprises, workforce and constantly adapting to new skills and techniques. The majority are single farmers and they are anxious about retiring and succession planning.

“Farming is their whole life. It defines them and their value to society”.

Many ‘keep hold of the reins’, continuing to farm into old age as their home and income, such as the EU’s Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)⁵², is linked. Once a farmer retires, BPS ceases if there is no succession. Concern was also raised about what the BPS arrangements will be after Brexit.

Furthermore, they rarely take their health seriously, live in remote and isolated communities and only access healthcare when absolutely necessary, often only in a crisis. Anecdotal FCN findings also suggest that pressure on farmers is leading to increasing concerns over:

- Work-related accidents – farming is a high risk industry
- Their physical health – excessively hard work / long hours impacts on general health
- Their mental health – increased pressure reduces resilience to mental health issues (there is growing incidence of mental health issues in FCN casework e.g. farming is a high risk occupation for suicide)

⁵⁰ <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/images/files/appgdfunding-summary-260310.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://ruralengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Launch-Report-Issues-Facing-Providers-Social-Care-in-Rural-England.pdf>

⁵² https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/direct-support/direct-payments_en

In addition, as our rural population ages, the impact of dementia is becoming more apparent amongst older farmers. This impacts on families and has major implications on farm safety.

"Friends and neighbours are aware of dementia. People in rural communities talk to each other more than in bigger areas. There isn't much of an awareness of dementia in rural areas because there's limited services and no presence... [T]he more rural communities need to come together and need more in terms of raising awareness."⁵³

We also learned that autism in its various forms/levels is having a proportionately large impact on farming families. For example, farmers often experience difficulty in coping with change, dyslexia and poor social interaction.

Increasing dependency levels

We also found that faced with reduced funding levels generally, local authorities are having to restrict funded social care to individuals with more pressing needs, instead of being able to fund preventative care. As a result, there was concern that this could increase the risk of social isolation experienced by older people in rural communities and their quality of life; for example, have a negative impact on their mental wellbeing.

Rural councils, on average, pay significantly more (13%) than urban councils when commissioning adult social care services. We heard pressures on local government and NHS resources are also compounded by the fact that population sparsity leads to higher delivery costs, such as demands on travelling around more sparser rural areas, and this can make it more difficult for health and care agencies to recruit and retain staff.

More integrated, 'hub and spoke' models

As referenced earlier, we saw from our visits and heard evidence presented that 'hub and spoke' models of housing and care in rural settings can be a sustainable 'place based' approach. For example, not only do they offer older residents an affordable housing choice close to their existing social ties, they also provide access to a social infrastructure of on-site care and support, and other social

facilities without having to travel. They also encourage wider community use so that a scheme becomes fully integrated within the local area. And for commissioners of social and local NHS services, they can help manage interventions by targeting provision to those most in need and reducing the reliance on more costly dispersed services.

Boris Worrall, Chief Executive of Roof Housing Group, drew our attention to an affordable rural extra care housing scheme in Coleford on the edge of the Forest of Dean, which also provides 24/7 support to those with dementia and/or a disability. Built with the concept of 'your home', Dora Matthew House (see below) also has been designed with a range of community facilities, including an external facing restaurant/café and on-site wellbeing centre (a mini HEAL). Services are open to both residents and the local community, operated by a social enterprise that supports young people with learning difficulties.



He described the complexity of funding arrangements for such schemes and how they have to increasingly operate on a 'combination' model: a cocktail of self-finance, self-funders, housing benefit, additional housing management income, personal budgets and care funded by the local authority. He explained that higher levels of frailer older people, the pressures on local commissioners to allocate extra care housing to those with highest dependency levels – often as an alternative to residential care – is also putting a strain on retaining a more 'balanced' housing community' approach for those older residents across the housing and care needs spectrum.

Social prescribing

'Social prescribing' is a form of community development increasingly used by LAs. This involves linking people to activities in the community that they might benefit from or connecting them to local sources of support to become more resilient. We heard about local examples of social prescribing that:

- assist people to overcome chronic illness and unhealthy lifestyles
- enable people to learn new skills
- support people to become less grant dependent and to find work
- provide the tools to create an enterprising community
- deliver better social and wellbeing outcomes for older and vulnerable people and their carers
- allow more cost efficient and effective use of NHS and social care resources
- provide a wider, more diverse and responsive local provider base

See the Shropshire and Gloucestershire case studies on p50-51 and p52-53 respectively.

Volunteering and mutual support

We also found that there are opportunities for increased support to older people from community and voluntary groups as set out in the Royal Voluntary Services (RVS) 'Bring People Together' campaign⁵⁴. However, we noted that the recent Community Life Survey indicates that levels of volunteering decreased between 2016-17; notably, the fall in any volunteering was most noticeable amongst pre-retirees, 50 to 64 year olds.⁵⁵

Whilst the above national figures show a decline, we saw how in rural communities the commitment and contribution of volunteers is an essential lifeline to our local economies, providing invaluable support to many isolated and/or lonely older and vulnerable people.

The RVS's campaign seeks to encourage and empower more people to volunteer, particularly those in this age group. Whether offering companionship at home or running a lunch club to giving a lift the nearest shops i.e. chemist, bank, post office or café or to accompany someone on a vital GP or hospital appointment, the reciprocity of volunteers are key ingredients in maintaining rural connectivity.

Getting connected – broadband and technology enabled care

And finally, we heard that the importance of reducing isolation through use of broadband and digital technology, such as technology enabled care (TECs) is amplified in rural communities.

Ahead of the digital switchover by 2025, the government⁵⁶ is currently investing £1.7 billion of public money in superfast broadband coverage across the UK, including hard-to-reach rural areas to ensure people there get the connectivity they need. However, as reported by Age UK⁵⁷, the coverage and speed of internet access in rural areas remains much patchier than it is in urban areas.

We heard that for many dispersed rural communities, broadband is a lifeline. It enables isolated people to 'stay connected' both with friends and family through email and Skype and a vital online platform for utilising TECs that support their self-care and/or the way services are designed to deliver more effective mainstream health and care at home. For example, digital technology such as telehealth, where patients monitor their own conditions through home or wearable devices connected to the internet, could enable local clinicians, families and carers, to remotely support older people in their homes and reduce the need for referrals to more urban based NHS facilities centres for routine care.

We also recognised that one of the HAPPI principles recommended that the building of new homes for an ageing population exhort the role of smarter 'care aware' design which is ready for emerging telecare and telehealthcare technology-related products. We now also call for broadband to also be an essential feature of designing and adapting homes for older people, particularly in rural areas where they may be remote from services.

⁵³ https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/3620/dementia_in_rural_wales_the_lived_experiences.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteer/take-the-lead>

⁵⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638534/Community_Life_Survey_-_Statistical_Release_2016-17_FINAL_v.2.pdf

⁵⁶ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-25/125008/>

⁵⁷ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/brandpartner/global/bedfordshirevpp/older_life_in_rural_england_report_lr.pdf

Case study

Social Prescribing in Shropshire



Ann Sutcliffe, Director of the Independent Trust – part of the Connexus Housing Group, a recently formed from merger of Shropshire & Herefordshire Housing Groups – explained that the Trust operates in these very rural counties on the border with Wales.

She highlighted how inward migration of older retirees, often more affluent, and 2nd home owners has raised house prices, making the housing market unaffordable for local people; in particular, younger people and/or families on low wages or precarious employment contracts. She also pointed out for employers it is also a struggle to retain skilled

workers and attract key workers such as doctors, OTs, nurses and care professionals to work in local GP practices, residential and care home agencies.

She explained that in the local health economy there is a push to centralise and concentrate expertise to rationalise costs often at the expense of more community based health and care services. She noted that the unintended consequences is a 'vicious' circle that puts additional pressures on the NHS. For example, people are admitted to hospital or stay in hospital too long when it would be better for them to receive care at home. In rural areas, this is exacerbated by apparently simple issues like access to transport to and from hospitals and other more local health and care facilities.

At the same time the lack of scarcity of suitable housing with care options for older people in rural settings force more vulnerable people to move from outlying villages to a market town, often a considerable distance from their social networks.

To support build the capacity and resilience of local communities, we heard about the work of Hands Together Ludlow in Shropshire.



HANDS TOGETHER LUDLOW

The primary aim of Hands Together Ludlow, an independent charity, is to provide aid for the vulnerable in and around the town of Ludlow in Shropshire, recognising that existing charities and statutory agencies are increasingly under pressure themselves due to financial restraints. Its vision is:

“Our vision is for a happy, hospitable, compassionate and just community which helps people help themselves and our mission is to provide a more effective community process for achieving this vision. We do this by creating a network of volunteers which works with agencies, charitable organisations, local businesses and churches, to identify and provide relief to people in need and find community building solutions in Ludlow and the surrounding villages in South Shropshire.”

The charity hosted by Ludlow Methodist Church, works through three parallel streams of activity:

1. Networking with existing providers,
2. Coordinating volunteers to provide short-term assistance,
3. Establishing projects to meet longer term needs.

One such project is the Loneliness and Dementia Group. This was set up with the following aims to:

- identify those who are isolated and in need, especially those suffering the effects of dementia.
- attempt to understand the root causes of loneliness and isolation, and develop a strategy to alleviate these problems.
- set up a network of befrienders using existing resources where available.
- provide aid and assistance by signposting existing resources (e.g. luncheon clubs), making referrals to partner organisations, using volunteers and an advocacy advisor.
- publicise these measures in a way that can be easily located and accessed.
- investigate the needs of carers to ensure that they get the support they need.

We also heard how Connexus are part of the Sustain Consortium in Shropshire, is working with the County Council and the 5 LSVTs of the former



District Councils to develop a menu of products and services built around HAPPI aspirations that promote a collaborative and ‘hub and spoke’ wellbeing model of housing and care.

This place-based service operates from existing sheltered housing in every market town to service tenants and the wider community, including home owners and tenants of other social landlords. On offer is access to independent advice and assistance, aids and adaption services, Homelife/ domiciliary care, a falls and mobile responder services, and the aim of a unified community alarm monitoring service.

Case study

Building belonging: Gloucestershire's asset-based and strength-based approaches

Barnwood Trust's vision is to create the best possible environment in Gloucestershire for disabled people and people with mental health problems to make the most of their lives.

We learned of a number of exciting initiatives in the county that they are undertaking to realise their vision. These include:

The redevelopment of Manor Gardens, Gloucester



Barnwood Trust are working with residents to plan a major redevelopment of Manor Gardens and the existing sheltered housing scheme and bungalows to HAPPI design principles, and integrate it into the surrounding neighbourhood.

We heard from Lawrence Miller, Head of Housing & Community Spaces at Barnwood Trust, that Trustees want to create an exemplary, multi-generational place for people to live in the county. This involves developing a joined-up approach that combines high-quality housing with building connected community and strong care and support networks that meet the needs and aspirations of people of all ages and all abilities.

Belonging is at the heart of the new development – for both existing and future residents. They are phasing the redevelopment to make sure everyone who currently lives in Manor Gardens will be able to remain living on site throughout. And working closely with their managing agent Elim Housing, they are developing ways to give residents more choice and control over housing and care provision and create an even stronger sense of belonging.

Your Welcome – the Welcomer's role



We also heard Hannah Allen, from one of Barnwood Trust's 'Welcomers', about her work with individuals who are often isolated and live with a disability across Gloucestershire. Similar to the role of village agents, Welcomers begin a strength-based conversation to explore what someone would like to do or be part of. They then work alongside people to enable these ideas to be brought to life. They offer a personal, responsive, non-service yet boundried relationship.

She gave an example of Jim and the scrabble group. A Welcomer had a conversation with an eighty year old man, Jim, who lived in a housing association property, adjacent to a sheltered scheme with a community room. Jim had multiple health

conditions, lived alone and rarely went out. The Welcomer's conversation was around the things Jim liked to do and as they chatted, Jim developed the idea of starting a scrabble group. Rather than setting the group up for him, the Welcomer encouraged Jim to contact the activities officer at the housing association. Together, the housing officer and Jim identified four others living in the sheltered scheme who were interested in a games group. The housing association allowed the community room to be used and the group was born. Jim now goes to the group weekly, he is less isolated and enjoying increased physical and social activity.

Such conversations around the scrabble board then led to an interest in using the kitchen to serve meals to the wider community. Community members are exploring this with the housing association who are engaging with what the community says it would like. The Welcomer listening to Jim in the first place has led to ripples of growth both in the community and in the culture of the housing association working there.

Community Building in Northway, Tewkesbury



And lastly, we heard about 'Community Building' from Richard Holmes, Head of Inclusive Community Building at Barnwood Trust. He explained that this is essentially about mobilising local residents to take action in their neighbourhood. Community Builders support people to identify their dreams for their community, then help them to discover the assets they have locally to achieve those aspirations. Through this process of discovering strengths, people make connections and start to build capacity in their community. We learned that this approach starts with the premise that "our communities are 'abundant', so when we focus on what's strong, not what's wrong, we can build community capacity."

We were presented with an example of Community Building in Tewkesbury. Northway is a small housing estate on the edge of the town. At the local community fete the Community Builder got chatting to an older couple, Maurice and Margaret. The Community Builder asked the couple about the things they loved doing and what they cared about. Maurice shared that the couple enjoyed caravanning and being outdoors, but since Margaret has needed to use a wheelchair this has no longer been possible. However, the couple still take regular walks around the community to get out and about and stay healthy.

Later at the same event the Community Builder met another gentleman who shared that he would like to join a gentle walking group, but didn't know of any. The Community Builder ran to the other side of the field to introduce Maurice and Margaret to this gentleman. They decided to arrange to go walking every week and set up a local walking group called 'Northway Strollers'. The group now provides friendship, regular exercise and, importantly, reduces isolation.

Appendix 1

Acknowledgements

Our APPG Inquiry would not have been possible without the financial support of Hastoe Housing Association. We are immensely thankful to Sue Chalkley, Chief Executive of Hastoe Housing Association and also wish her a happy forthcoming retirement.

Inquiry members wish to express their special thanks to Jeremy Porteus, Managing Director of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network, for planning the HAPPI 4 Inquiry sessions and crafting the oral and written evidence submitted into this final report.

Our thanks also go to Sarah Hall at Hambleton District Council for organising our North Yorkshire site visits last year – where we had an opportunity to meet residents and staff across different rural housing settings and learn at first-hand about their experiences; Henry Lee at Hastoe Housing Association for his useful research; and Polly Bass (in Lord Best's Office) for her helpful administrative support.

And lastly, we are grateful to those who wrote to us following the APPG's Joint Chair's letter in Daily Telegraph on 5 July 2017, submitted evidence following the Housing LIN's call for information and/or gave permission to use the images in our report. They are too numerous to mention individually but we offer our sincere thanks for all your contributions.



Appendix 2

APPG Inquiry Members and Witnesses

HAPPI 4 Inquiry: Parliamentarians and Panel Members:

Lord Richard Best Chair

Peter Aldous MP

Lord Ewen Cameron

Lord Ben Stoneham

Cllr Izzi Seccombe LGA

Elinor Goodman Hastoe HA

Sue Chalkley Hastoe HA

Julia Thrift TCPA

Bruce Moore Housing & Care 21

Neil Revely ADASS

Mark Tufnell CLA

Evidence in person:

Hannah Allen Barnwood Trust

Anthony De Ritter Almshouse Association

Kathleen Dunmore Retirement Housing Group

Catherine Harrington National CLT Network

Jack Hegarty Wychavon DC

Richard Holmes Barnwood Trust

Lawrence Miller Barnwood Trust

Richard Morton RM Architects

Peter Moore Cornwall Rural HA

Tessa O'Sullivan Rural Housing Kent

June Rowberry Resident, Rooftop Housing

Charles Smith Farming Community Network

Paul Smith Foundations

Ann Sutcliffe Connexus Housing Group

Matt Thomson CPRE

Cheryl Tyler Community Voice Planning

Boris Worrall Rooftop Housing Group

Inquiry Secretariat:

Jeremy Porteus (Secretariat), Housing LIN

Polly Bass (Office of Lord Best)

Written submissions:

We are also grateful for the letters and submissions received. They are too numerous to name individually but we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge your contribution to this Inquiry.

Appendix 3

Additional HAPPI Features



Nearly ten years ago, the very first HAPPI report, ‘*Housing our Ageing Population, Panel for Innovation*’ (HAPPI 1), and its panel of distinguished architects, building and housing experts, identified ten key design elements that can characterise attractive and successful housing for an ageing population. They have been adapted by Jeremy Porteus, Housing LIN, and Rachael Gaunt, Poynton Bradbury Wynter Cole Architects, for this Inquiry to incorporate additional features, as highlighted in *italics* below:

	The ten HAPPI design principles	Rural proofed HAPPI features
i	Generous internal space standards	Generous internal space standards not least <i>to allow for overnight visitors / carers</i>
ii	Plenty of natural light in the home and circulation spaces	Plenty of natural light with <i>varied views and vistas</i>
iii	Balconies and outdoor space, avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats	Accessible private balconies or private outdoor space <i>at ground floor</i>
iv	Adaptability and ‘care aware’ design which is ready for emerging telecare and telehealthcare technologies	Adaptability and ‘care aware’ design which is <i>digitally / technology enabled</i>
v	Circulation spaces that encourage interaction and avoid an ‘institutional feel’	Circulation and break out spaces that encourage interaction and avoid ‘institutional feel’
vi	Shared facilities and community ‘hubs’ where these are lacking in the neighbourhood	Access to outward facing on-site shared facilities or community ‘hubs’ <i>within easy reach</i>
vii	Plants, trees, and the natural environment	<i>Easy access to green space – village green – natural landscape with resting and sitting places</i>
viii	High levels of energy efficiency, with good ventilation to avoid overheating	<i>Fabric first approach, draught-free affordable warmth, ease of control and energy efficient</i>
ix	Extra storage for belongings and bicycles	Extra storage for personal belongings and ease of access to mobility aids
x	Shared external areas such as ‘home zones’ that give priority to pedestrians	<i>Close proximity of accessible public transport and level access for private transport drop off areas</i>

More information on HAPPI, including case studies on new purpose-built homes for older people that have been influenced by the HAPPI design principles, can be found at: www.housinglin.org.uk/HAPPI/

Appendix 4

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Copies of this report can be downloaded from the APPG website – www.housingandcare21.co.uk/about-us/appg-housing-and-care-for-older-people/ – and the HAPPI page on the Housing Learning and Improvement Network's online 'design hub' at: www.housinglin.org.uk/HAPPI4/

To access copies of the previous HAPPI reports, visit: www.housinglin.org.uk/HAPPI/

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This APPG Inquiry is supported by Hastoe Housing Association.

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Established by the Sutton Dwellings Trust in 1962, Hastoe now owns and manages over 7,500 homes in over 70 local authority areas. Our homes are spread across the south of England from Norfolk down to Cornwall. After almost 30 years of supporting rural communities, we are the leading specialist rural housing association. We specialise in providing sustainable, affordable homes to enable local people to remain within their communities.

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