



Promoting Rural Exception Sites





What is a Rural Exception Site

- Primarily an all-affordable housing scheme to meet identified local housing needs on small sites adjoining a development framework boundary
- Land values –
Kept at agricultural values
- Typical size
10-20 homes
(dependent on the housing
need and size of village)





What is a Rural Exception Site

- Must remain in perpetuity
 - Shared ownership – restricted staircasing to 80% or buyback provisions
 - RTB for council properties – Government Announcement reforms to include exemption of New Build properties from RTB for 35 years, increased time to qualify from 5 to 10 years and a reduction in discounts.
- Will consider some market housing to make a scheme viable or deliverable
- Policy H/11 within Local Plan





Granting of planning permission usually depends upon

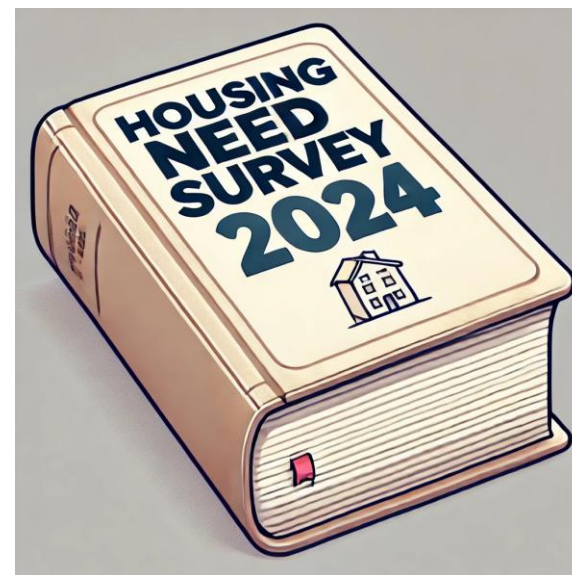
- The number, size, design, mix and tenure meet identified local needs
- Is of a scale and location appropriate to the size, facilities and character of the village
- Sites within or adjoining the Green Belt – sequential testing to ensure no other sites available in the village
- There must be evidence of a local housing need





Evidence of Local Need

- Work with Cambridgeshire Acre to undertake a standardised housing needs survey
- Rural Housing Partnership
- Generally commissioned and paid for by the registered provider (RP)
- Engage with parish council





Priority Allocations for Local Connection

- The applicant has worked (paid employment) in the village for the last 12 months for 16 hours or more per week
- The applicant has lived in the village for a least 5 years out of the last 8 years; or
- The applicant has family members who are resident in the village – parents, children or brothers or sisters who have been resident for a period of 5 years or longer
- Other close family ties will be considered or where there are special circumstances



Challenges

- Land Availability
- Financial Viability
- Engagement with parish councils
- Stigmatisation of affordable housing
- Slow-burner
- Developer-led rural exception sites





How are we doing?

- In the past five years, we have successfully completed 16 projects, delivering a total of 156 homes across various housing types, including social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, and rent-to-buy.
- We are actively working with 14 parish councils, at different stages, some who are undertaking housing needs surveys, and others who are at site finding stage which involves working with the registered provider to identify potential sites.



St Neots Road, Eltisley

- Hastoe Housing Association developed this scheme to include 9 affordable rental homes and 2 shared ownership properties.
- These homes were constructed to meet the latest building standards, achieving high energy efficiency and aligning with the Government's [Future Home Standards](#) and [net-zero carbon targets](#).



2025 Future Homes and
Buildings Standard





The Housing Enabling Service

The Council strongly believes that the best way to deliver affordable housing in rural areas is by working in partnership with key stakeholders, and with local communities and their parish councils.

The Council has a key role in assessing and meeting local housing needs, including the enabling of new affordable housing where appropriate. The Council's Housing Enabling team is keen to respond to approaches from Parish Councils and to advise on affordable housing issues.

You can contact the team:

strategic.housing@scambs.gov.uk



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Any questions?