

# RURAL HOUSING ADVISORY GROUP

## BUSINESS PLAN 2009-11



	TASK	LEAD	RHAG TASK			RESOURCES	TIMESCALES AND MILESTONES
			Delivery	Influencing/lobbying	Awareness & good practice		
<b>Evidence base</b>	<p><b>1A</b> <i>Quarterly monitoring and review reports on housing market conditions and delivery of the Rural Programme</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> To ensure that action is taken to secure delivery of 2008 -11 programme.</p> <p>To provide part of the evidence base to secure rural targets and funding for 2011 - 14</p>	<p><b>HCA Matt Dodd</b></p> <p><b>Key partners</b> CLG – Helen Kelly CRC – Graham Russell NHF – Cameron Watt</p>		<p>RHAG to receive and use evidence to: Influence future investment decisions and targets through meetings with relevant officials and Minister, through funding &amp; evidence task group</p> <p>Identify areas of pressure and non-delivery leading to call for explanation and where necessary change in approach, through HCA rural champions/meeting with HCA Director of Investment</p> <p>Identify gaps in evidence base and press for these to be filled by central government and more robust local evidence collection</p>		<p>RHAG – member time</p> <p>HCA resources: Staff time to analyse and report on HCA investment data</p> <p>HCA staff to provide secretariat for RHAG task group</p>	Quarterly reports to RHAG

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<b>Evidence base</b>	<p><b>1B</b> <i>Recommend sources of data for rural housing needs identification by LAs</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> The rural evidence base is weak and local authorities often are unsure or do not have access to relevant data sets. A robust evidence base is essential to the design and adoption of planning and funding policies for rural affordable housing.</p>	<p><b>NHF Cameron Watts</b></p> <p>NHF have commissioned a project to provide advice on how local authorities can develop a robust rural evidence base</p>			<p>RHAG to promote the outcomes of this work to improve the rural evidence base, which will be a critical component of the 'Single Conversation' process</p>	RHAG member time	Agree programme of promotional work

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<b>Site supply</b>	<p><b>2a</b> <b><i>Increase landowner engagement in site supply</i></b></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> As part of its response to the Matthew Taylor report, Government has set up a working group which will report in September on incentives that will encourage private landowners to release sites. These will need promoting.</p>	<b>CLG Helen Kelly</b>		RHAG to set up task group to promote changes in policy if identified as needed by CLG working group		<p>RHAG members time</p> <p>HCA resources to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time already given to working group</li> <li>• Staff time to provide secretariat time to support task group</li> </ul>	<p>Working group report</p> <p>Follow up action plan agreed by RHAG</p> <p>Consultation paper due 18 Feb.</p> <p>Publish CLG response and guidance spring /summer. RHAG lobbying, influencing role.</p> <p>Promote new changes.</p>

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<b>Site supply</b>	<p><b>2b</b> <b><i>Better supply and alignment of sites and funding.</i></b></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> New HCA approach to investment will require development of programmes /pipelines that draw together public, private, community resources. Existing models are not responsive to rural circumstances, particularly in terms of geographic scale, partner capacity and two tier LA structure.</p>	<b>HCA Matt Dodd</b>			RHAG role to raise awareness of these approaches through their constituent members	<p>RHAG member time</p> <p>HCA resources to: Staff time – Regional Rural Champions to encourage development of programme approaches for rural delivery</p> <p>Staff time – national rural team in collaboration with Rural Champions to assemble/evaluate progress and identify opportunities and barriers</p>	<p>Two programme approaches established for rural areas by March 2011.</p> <p>Training/seminars for HCA investment staff: 2 by April 2010, further 1 by June 2010.</p> <p>HCA Rural Champions seminars in 4 regions by April 2010.</p>

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<b>Funding &amp; tenure</b>	<p><b>3a</b> <b><i>Producing a rurally relevant S106 for affordable housing</i></b></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> An obstacle to raising loan and mortgage for LCHO in rural areas is the lack of consistency and complexity of S106 agreements. Work underway looking at this generically has not to date addressed the rural perpetuity issue. This could disadvantage rural schemes in the future that do not comply to the standard S106.</p>	<p><b>CLG Helen Kelly</b></p> <p>Key partners: NHF – Cameron Watts HCA – Graham Geddes &amp; Matt Dodd CML – Karen Doran</p>		RHAG to feed into review /development of standardised S106 to make sure it is relevant and workable in rural areas.		<p>RHAG member time</p> <p>HCA staff time to provide secretariat support for RHAG task group</p>	<p>Collate model rural s106s currently being used successfully.</p> <p>Group to review models.</p> <p>Site suitable models for public use (maybe on website?)</p>

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<b>Funding &amp; tenure</b>	<p><b>3b</b> <b><i>Meeting the Code for Sustainable Homes in rural areas in a cost effective way</i></b></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> Tackling climate change is an imperative. However, meeting the CSH can be difficult and expensive in rural areas. Examples of eco-efficient schemes have been expensive to deliver and sometimes complex for the resident to manage.</p>	<p><b><i>Review of Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)</i></b> <b>CLG Helen Kelly</b></p> <p>Key partners HCA – Matt Dodd NHF – Cameron Watt NHF Rural Alliance – Sue Chalkley</p> <p><b><i>Demonstration project: achieving CSH in rural areas in a cost effective manner</i></b> <b>Prince's Foundation, James Hulme</b></p>		RHAG to rural proof review of CSH	RHAG to support demonstration project and agree/implement programme to promote good practice	<p>RHAG staff time</p> <p>HCA resources: Staff time to provide secretariat support for RHAG</p> <p>Funding to support Prince's Foundation project</p>	<p>CSH promotes sustainable construction in ways that are deliverable and cost effective in rural areas</p> <p>Demonstration project</p>

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<b>Funding &amp; tenure</b>	<p><b>3c</b> <i>Identify and promote flexible tenure to provide affordable housing in perpetuity on which it is possible to raise a mortgage</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> Delivering LCHO in rural areas which is affordable in perpetuity and mortgageable is a longstanding problem, heightened by the credit crunch. It has also resulted in 100% social rented schemes being built, which reduces the options for those unable to buy in the market.</p>	<p><b>CiH – Debbie Wheatley</b></p> <p><b>Key partners</b> CLG – TBC NHF – Cameron Watt HCA – Matt Dodd NHF Rural Alliance – Sue Chalkley</p>		<p>RHAG task group to feed into CiH research on flexible tenure</p> <p>RHAG to influence policy if necessary</p>		<p>RHAG member time</p> <p>Possible cash funding</p>	<p>Bring paper on flexible tenure to RHAG meeting</p> <p>If RHAG support the principle seek £30,000 funding to produce a model.</p> <p>Funding has been raised and consultants instructed</p> <p>Communication plan for model produced.</p>

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<b>Funding &amp; tenure</b>	<p><b>3d</b> <i>Identify/test alternative sources of funding eg Bond finance</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> Public funding and traditional sources of private finance are and will be under pressure. Potentially, there are other forms of long term investor that could help fund rural affordable housing.</p>	<p><b>Hastoe HS – Sue Chalkley</b></p>		<p>RHAG = watching brief of Hastoe Bond project</p> <p>If necessary RHAG to take up lessons learnt-barriers with HMT</p>		<p>Hastoe Investigating Racing Welfare Bond – RHAG watching brief.</p>	

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<b>Skills &amp; capacity</b>	<p><b>4a</b> <i>Programme that provides advice and guidance through range of media on how to secure the support of rural communities for rural affordable housing</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> Matthew Taylor's report and the Government response, promote a community led approaches to bringing schemes forward. Yet, one of the main barriers to delivery is community opposition.</p>	<p><b>ACRE – Sylvia Brown</b></p> <p>Key partners: CRC – John Coleman CPRE – Neil Sinden</p>			RHAG task group helps ACRE to develop and support a communication strategy for dissemination of ACRE work	RHAG member time	Communication strategy agreed

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<b>Skills &amp; capacity</b>	<p><b>4b</b> <i>Explore areas of work to promote training and advice to assist rural local authorities improve their delivery of rural affordable housing</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> Rural local authorities operate with very small staff teams and limited resources. This can impact on their capacity to develop and implement policies and practices that would increase the delivery of rural affordable housing.</p>	<p>HCA – Matt Dodd and ASC</p> <p><b>Key partners</b> CLG – Helen Kelly LGA CPRE – Neil Sinden Helen George - IDeA</p>		LGA, HCA. CLG to support this programme	RHAG members to be available as peer mentors if programme is established	RHAG member time  HCA resources: Staff time to develop programme	Securing funding to support delivery of the programme from Academy for Sustainable Communities and Regional Investment and Efficiency Partnerships

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<b>skills &amp; capacity</b>	<p><b>4c</b> <i>Bi-annual conference with national and regional stakeholders to review progress in relation to the business plan targets and to explore new ways of working</i></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> Small rural LAs often do not have the time or staff resources to enter into the national housing competitions. In consequence, positive practice in rural affordable housing delivery does not receive the profile that would help encourage other rural LAs.</p>	<b>RHAG task group led by Matt Dodd</b>	Explore opportunities for promoting a rural award within the Academy for Sustainable Communities awards			RHAG member time  HCA – funding to support conference	Group establish guidelines for awards.  RHAG group shortlist for award.

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Rural proofing	<p><b>5a</b> <b>Establish formal process for RHAG to feed into HCA policy and practice and the development of relevant Government policy</b></p> <p><b>Rationale</b> There are concerns that more needs to be done to rural proof Government and HCA policy and practice, including the single conversation so that they are sufficiently sensitive to rural needs and circumstances, particularly in two tier or metropolitan areas. Similarly, that the</p>	<p><b>CPRE Neil Sinden</b></p> <p><b>Key partners:</b> CLG – Helen Kelly Defra - Helen Kelly CRC – Crispin Moore</p>		<p>All activities under this theme are influencing and lobbying</p> <p>Range of activities that draw on expertise within RHAG and the other work it is undertaking. This will include:</p> <p>Preparation of rural proofing checklist for 'single conversation' in association with CRC</p> <p>Respond to relevant Government consultations</p> <p>Twice yearly Ministerial meetings</p> <p>Formal process for RHAG to act as a 'sounding board' for HCA proposals to support HCA rural proof its future policies and practices</p>		<p>RHAG resources – member time</p> <p>RHAG will need to identify champions for specific pieces of work/responses</p> <p>HCA resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding to support development and use of 'single conversation rural proofing checklist'</li> <li>Staff time to:</li> </ul> <p>Draft protocol for 'rural proofing' process</p> <p>Providing briefing on consultations etc.</p>	<p>Draft protocol</p> <p>Adopted strategic narrative to RHAG BP</p> <p>Checklist for single conversation</p> <p>Annual meetings with Minister</p>