



**Good Practice**

**Objective**

<p><b>Exception Sites Project</b></p>	<p>To increase the development of affordable homes in rural areas to meet local need</p>
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**Detail**

The project team consists of a partnership between RDC Housing Development, Planning Development Control, Legal, Action in Rural Sussex Rural Housing Enabler, [Hastoe Housing Association](#) and [English Rural Housing Association](#). The project has been identified as a corporate priority and therefore the reporting framework is well defined. Added to this, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined across all project members.

The project team includes the senior rural housing enabler at [Action in Rural Sussex](#) who has led on liaison between the Parish Councils and communities and the LA. This piece of work is paramount to the success of the project and enables the LA to focus on other areas of the project. Planning and Legal Officers are part of the Project team. Both understand the priority of the project and have been fully involved in its delivery. The Planning Officer in particular is involved in suitable site identification.

A significant part of the project is to understand the level and type of housing need in our rural communities.

## Outcomes

The launch event was very well attended and provided a kick start to the project as it led to several Parish Councils coming forward to volunteer their villages for the project. Since that point we have engaged with 16 Parish Councils. The project includes a rolling programme of housing needs surveys which are used to inform our rural delivery targets.

To date we have completed 11 parish Housing Needs surveys since 2007/08. The current target is to complete 5 parish housing needs surveys per year. Raising awareness of those issues is an integral part of the project and we have developed a Communications plan which includes regular communication through village events, including a dedicated web-site.

The project is partnership led (not Local Authority) and this is an important way of improving public perception and appealing to a larger cross-section of the community. The Rother Rural Affordable Homes website is the tool the project team uses not only inform and gain support but also tackle misinformation and correct any misconceptions that often arise in villages when the idea of affordable housing becomes a reality.

**Update – 2012** Whilst we have yet to get a scheme completed we are nearly there in the following parishes:-Brede: Following a very successful and positive public consultation an outline planning application was submitted (and approved) for 12 affordable homes. As the site is unregistered with no known owners (and with no other suitable sites in the parish), the Council agreed to CPO the land and to initiate proceedings early next year. Once the CPO completes (est early 2013), it is our intention to sell the site in a back to back deal with English Rural HA who will build out, own and manage the scheme. Ewhurst: A planning application was submitted recently for 8 affordable homes. Subject to planning being approved this should give us our first exception site scheme - we aim to be onsite Feb 2012.

Rother Rural Affordable Homes website can be found at:

[www.rotherruralaffordablehomes.org.uk](http://www.rotherruralaffordablehomes.org.uk)

[Exception Site Project -  
information leaflet](#)

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Rural Affordable Housing  
Project

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