



**Good Practice**

**Objective**

<p><b>Parish Affordable Housing Surgeries</b></p>	<p>To improve communication links with communities over a wide rural geographical area and demonstrate that officers are approachable and willing to listen and engage wherever possible. To provide advice and assistance on housing issues. To increase awareness of and access to other housing initiatives provided by the Council. To enable the development of more affordable housing.</p>
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**Detail**

There are a number of smaller villages who may not receive a site allocation within the Local Development Framework and therefore may want to encourage an Exception Site to come forward. The Parish surgeries provide the opportunity for these discussions to take place on an informal basis and in turn may feed into our programme of housing needs surveys.

Setting up and attending the surgeries are the responsibility of the 2 Enabling Officers who will bring in other Council officers as and when needed. For example, the last surgeries were attended by an officer from our Private Sector Housing team who advised on the new Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy which supports existing work aimed at improving the condition of the housing stock through a combination of targeted grants/loans, education and enforcement. A large proportion of the community can benefit from the assistance available which includes [Disabled Facilities Grants](#) to enable people to live independently in their own homes and free or heavily subsidised help to provide insulation measures.

Usually two days per quarter are set aside. It is up to the Parish Councils how we spend time with them - we do not set an agenda and the meeting is very much a shared learning process.

## Outcomes

East Portlemouth Parish Council attended the Affordable Housing Surgery in January 2009 to seek clarification on planning policy and to determine if their Parish was to receive an allocation in the Local Development Framework. Officers advised the Parish that East Portlemouth was not considered a sustainable village in planning policy terms and therefore would not be receiving an allocation within the Local Development Framework. The only realistic way to provide affordable housing in that Parish was by way of an [Exception Site](#).

The Parish explained that they were working with a local charity, Isobel Waterhouse Trust, with an intention to progress an Exception Site in their Parish. Following on from the surgery the affordable housing team continued to work closely with East Portlemouth Parish Council and Isobel Waterhouse Trust on the [section 106](#) and nominations agreement for 6 affordable homes. Planning permission was granted in August 2009 and construction has commenced with completion due in May 2010.

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Rural Affordable Housing  
Project

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