



Good Practice

Objective

<p>Partnership with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust</p>	<p>To build capacity so that the Council can carry out a work plan that helps to inform planning decisions, increases engagement with Parishes and communities, and raises the awareness of affordable housing among rural communities.</p>
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Detail

The Council has entered into a 3 year contract with [Cumbria Rural Housing Trust](#) (CRHT) to carry out parish housing needs surveys across the District. The purpose is to assess the housing needs of each Parish, to engage with local Parish Councils and Community groups, and to open a dialogue with those communities regarding enabling affordable housing for local people based upon identified need. This arrangement is in response to the Councils corporate objectives to improve the housing need evidence base and to increase the supply of affordable housing. The Trust is working to an agreed programme of surveys which will ensure that all Parishes within the District will have a housing needs assessment within 3 years.

The terms of the agreement between the Council and CRHT define roles, responsibilities, methodologies, timescales and costs. The performance of the Trust is reviewed by regular meetings between the Councils Housing Enabling Officer and the Manager of the Trust. Adjustments to the survey, programme, methodology etc can be mutually agreed at this level. Major changes to the contract must be approved by the Housing portfolio holder. On a day to day level the arrangement works well, as there is regular dialogue between key officers from both organisations which serves to keep meetings to a minimum.

Outcomes

This is a key project for the Council as it serves to inform planning decisions, increases engagement with Parishes and communities and raises the awareness of rural communities around the pathways that are available to meet the need for affordable housing.

The financial implications of this project are significant. It was recognised that the Council did not have the in house capacity to conduct the parish surveys and to meet with all Parish Councils to achieve both the surveys and any enabling work that resulted from them.

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