



Good Practice

Objective

<p>Team Information Sessions</p>	<p>To bring together the various strands of information and share updates on areas of work, feedback from conferences and seminars attended, and to encourage individual officers to work collaboratively.</p>
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Detail

The team information sessions are held monthly and focus on individual topic areas. In terms of affordable housing in rural areas this has provided an opportunity to explain the related delivery challenges and issues. The Housing and Social Policy Team also have periodic information sharing sessions with the Planning and Highways Officers, and with the Housing Register Officers to improve their understanding about rural exception site schemes. Site visits to completed exception site schemes provide an opportunity to see first hand the benefits of local homes for local people.

There are capacity issues around bringing together officers that have busy work schedules and deadlines to work to, but the benefits of sharing information outweigh these issues. The practice of scheduling meetings well in advance, having a clear agenda to work to and a limit on the length of time that each session will last, encourages other officers to commit their time to attending.

Outcomes

Helps to remove the constraints of any inflexible interpretations of planning policy that may delay delivery. The knowledge gaps between officers delivering different roles within a single department have been reduced.

In general the capacity of the department has been expanded as there is commonality in the understanding of the functions and officers are able to provide a consistent message to the public.

Among the benefits seen from this approach of building a common understanding among Officers has been an increase in the confidence Parish Councils have in the commitment of the Council to providing local homes for local people. Feedback from the Parish Clerk for the community involved in a recent Exception site development was that they were pleased that the Planning Officer clearly understood the issues and the importance of the Local Lettings Policy.

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