



Good practice

Objective

Rural Working Group	To address the needs of rural communities surrounding a major urban centre
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Detail

Peterborough is a city facing extensive growth in housing, population and employment over the coming years. The urban core is surrounded by over 20 parished rural communities that fall within the boundary of Peterborough City Council. The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets a vision for ‘a city that grows in the right way’ and the importance of addressing the rural communities’ needs has been identified.

In 2008 a group of rural parish councillors, community groups, local authority representatives and strategic partners (the Rural Working Group) came together to develop the Rural Vision and Strategy which would become part of the SCS. The Rural Vision and Strategy sets out a number of clear priorities including Environment, Accessibility/Transport, Rural Economy and Housing. The Rural Working Group meets bi-monthly to monitor progress and drive activity.

The [Rural Working Group](#) is chaired by a parish councillor and supported by the Local Strategic Partnership (Greater Peterborough Partnership). The Greater Peterborough Partnership and Peterborough City Council have worked with the Rural Working Group to develop a Rural Housing Strategy which sets out a number of key priorities. Delivering Rural Affordable housing is a major theme of this strategy and partners are now working to implement an action plan.

Outcomes

Peterborough is still to develop an [exception site](#) but feels that this programme of work is building the foundations to future success, placing the ownership and opportunity in the hands of the communities themselves.

During 2010 a number of sessions covering exception sites and [community land trusts](#) are planned.

The Rural Housing Partnership has been formed so Registered Providers, Peterborough City Council, [Cambridgeshire ACRE](#) and parish councils can work together to identify parishes with specific housing needs and address them accordingly.

Update – 2012 Rural working group. Unfortunately, the Rural Working Group ceased to exist once Nick Goodman left in 2010. Liaison with rural communities is now primarily handled through the city council's Neighbourhood committees. However, whereas the RWG was exclusively for parish councils, the neighbourhood committees consist of ward councillors. Efforts by officers involved in affordable housing delivery to replicate a similar forum for parish councils have been successful. Peterborough City Council is, however, a member of the Peterborough Rural Housing Delivery Partnership. This partnership consists of two local housing associations, one rural 'enabler' charity and the city council. The partnership, which focuses upon working with parish councils to bring about exception site development, is nearing the end of its second year. The City Council has also produced a draft Housing Strategy which sets out how the council will seek to enable and assist in the creation of community land trusts.

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Rural Affordable Housing
Project

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