



Good Practice

Objective

<p>Rural Housing Needs Surveys</p>	<p>To ensure that hidden housing need is addressed.</p>
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Detail

All applicants who have specified a village as an area of choice are surveyed as well as all of the residents of the village. The Council also interacts with the Parish Council throughout the process. The surveys can be completed within approximately 10 weeks, which ensures that delivery is not delayed.

The Council’s surveys receive a high response rate. The Council surveys are carried out using the existing resources of the Senior Housing Enabling Officer. The surveys do affect internal officer resource, however it is felt that this is balanced against the benefits, because of the improved relationship with the Parish Councils.

The Council prepares regular media briefings on affordable housing, ensuring positive publicity around completed sites.

Outcomes

Case study illustration: Code 5 Affordable House in South Somercotes, Lincolnshire.

South Somercotes is a small community of 254 residents. A suitable site was identified. The demand on the housing register showed 1 applicant in need. It was therefore decided that a full Housing Needs survey should be carried out. This was despite some doubts of planning officers who questioned the viability based on issues of sustainability.

The survey demonstrated 13 respondents being identified in housing need with a local connection to South Somercotes. The survey was used to help make a case for development with the local planning authority and the application would potentially have been refused without it.

This example supports the Council's aims of delivering good quality affordable homes for its residents, no matter what size settlement they live in. It highlights the need to be positive around rural affordable housing and not to rule out those settlements that at first investigation may appear to be in 'unsustainable' locations.

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