



## Housing

The shortage of affordable housing in rural areas impacts on the opportunities and choices for all rural people. Without a range of suitable properties within a village or small market town it is difficult to encourage sustainable communities and maintain a vibrant, living countryside. Developing affordable housing is one of the crucial issues that influences the economic and social strength of rural communities, and is a major contributor to long-term community sustainability.

The attractiveness of rural areas as places to live has over decades pushed up the price of market accommodation to purchase and rent.

This combined with planning restrictions on new development and lower average incomes has meant that even the cheapest market housing is unaffordable to many local people. This is set alongside the historic problem that there is proportionally much less affordable accommodation in rural areas especially social rented housing (caused partly by the Right to Buy policy) means that there is a shortage of rural affordable housing.



However positively there is an increasing understanding of the issues and higher profile for the debate through for example [the Taylor Review of rural housing and the economy \(2008\)](#). The challenge is to find solutions that are sustainable that address the problem effectively.

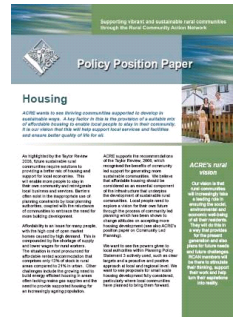
Affordable rural housing can be summarised in the following way:

- built with a subsidy by a housing association and made available for rent or shared ownership
- priority in allocations is given to households with a local connection to a village
- remains affordable for local people in perpetuity.

### ACRE Policy Position Papers: Housing

ACRE has compiled a number of Policy Position Papers reflecting the issues of importance to rural communities and how our members in [RCAN](#) respond to them. The text below summaries ACRE's [Housing Policy Position Paper](#).

*ACRE wants to see thriving communities supported to develop in sustainable ways. A key factor in this is the provision of a suitable mix of affordable housing to enable local people to stay in their community. It is our vision that this will help support local services and facilities and ensure better quality of life for all.*



For more information, please contact [Martin Hawkins, Rural Services Officer](#).

### Notice Board

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) rural e-learning course and toolkit

The course "Affordable Rural Housing – Bringing affordable homes to rural areas", is a free online module offering participants the opportunity to learn about a range of topics. Please see the [HCA Website](#)

ACRE is working on a three year national project [Over the hill?](#) to raise awareness of the issues facing older people living in rural communities especially in relation to housing and social exclusion. The project has produced a good practice DVD for policy makers and practitioners and a short film aimed at the public will be released in March.

