

**ITEM 7**

**Appendix 2: Action Plan – Proposed Improvements to Rural HeLP Project arising from Mid-term Review**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Improve Housing Needs Survey Process	Look at ways to improve Parish Councils' confidence in survey findings	Discuss with Parish Councils their concerns over survey and consider ways to adapt survey to increase confidence in findings	Affordable Housing Officers (AHOs)/ Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK)	By January 2010
	Review housing needs survey methodology, timing, questions and layout/information provided in the report; Review formula used to decide on number of units being built and use of formula in report	Update housing needs survey methodology, timing, questions and final report and produce a new rural housing protocol	AHOs/Planning	By February 2010
	Agree shelf-life of surveys/updating through second stage survey and regular updating through Joint Housing Register data	Agree shelf life of surveys, future programme of undertaking surveys and action in the event that a site cannot be found or where a new survey is due and no houses have been built as a result of the last survey	AHOs/Planning/ ACRK	By April 2010
	Consider action to be taken to address housing needs where cannot find a site that is suitable and available and approach to be adopted in relation to undertaking future surveys if site outcome will be the same	Approach adopted	AHOs/Planning	By April 2010
	Consider way forward when a parish is due to have a new survey carried out if there are no	Way forward agreed	AHOs/Planning	By April 2010

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	homes built following the last survey			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>Maximise opportunities for finding sites and to speed up the site selection process</p>	<p>Consider ways to improve information provided to landowners to encourage them to come forward with sites</p>	<p>Produce information sheet for landowners/ land agents on rural exception housing and information on prices RSLs will pay</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By March 2010</p>
	<p>Identify sites through a more efficient procedure that will ensure that there is more chance of an initial agreement with the Parish Council regarding the suitability of sites</p>	<p>Contact all Parish Councils requesting that they send details of any sites they wish to be considered</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By November 2009</p>
	<p>Review site selection process – timing of site assessments/selection, process of looking at sites/dismissing sites, involvement of Parish Councils and KCC Highways in the process and transparency of record keeping; Consider ways to be more flexible to site issues and finding sites; Improve paperwork/audit trail as to choice of sites to be shared with partners</p>	<p>Produce site selection process methodology with details of resources/partners involved and timescales</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By February 2010</p>
	<p>Improve consistency of decision-making in relation to site selection and in changes in decisions regarding sites; Decision-making by senior managers needs to be more speedy and better communicated</p>	<p>Agree referral mechanism for difficult decisions on site issues to be referred to a higher level with processes and timeframe for decision-making and involvement of Housing and Planning Liaison Meeting</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By January 2010</p>
	<p>Improve communication with KCC on highway matters</p>	<p>Discussion at senior management level between TWBC and KCC Highways regarding highway/footpath issues; Seek to agree protocol with KCC to ensure that all sites for rural affordable</p>	<p>Head of Housing &amp; Health/Head of Planning Services</p>	<p>By January 2010</p>

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<b>Objective</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>Maximise opportunities for finding sites and to speed up the site selection process (continued)</p>	<p>Consider how rural exception sites will be found/allocated under the LDF and if necessary look at the use of CPO powers to back up any possible allocation of rural exception site sites in Local Development Framework</p> <p>Investigate land in TWBC, RSL and other relevant organisations' ownership (including other public bodies and utility companies) and which might be suitable for affordable housing</p>	<p>housing across Kent are assessed in a consistent way; Invite Highways Officers to Rural Issues Meetings</p> <p>Discuss at Affordable Housing Policy &amp; Delivery Group possible use of CPO powers</p> <p>Carry out land audit</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p> <p>AHOs/Planning/RSL's</p>	<p>By November 2009</p> <p>By February 2010</p>
<p>To raise the profile of rural affordable housing across the Council and improve the delivery of rural affordable housing</p>	<p>Raise Member awareness in respect of the rural programme</p> <p>Increase Ward Member involvement in the process</p> <p>Rural programme needs to be given equal priority by both Housing and Planning and sufficient resources dedicated to work</p> <p>Review existing rural targets</p>	<p>Appoint an elected Member who will be a 'rural champion' to get more involved in process and help to raise awareness/profile of rural affordable housing amongst members</p> <p>As part of the process, make contact with local Ward Members when a rural housing needs survey is to be commenced in their area and provide regular updates on progress</p> <p>Agreement reached on level of staff resources to be dedicated to supporting rural programme</p> <p>Agree new, joint targets between housing and planning for timely delivery</p>	<p>Head of Housing &amp; Health/Head of Planning Services</p> <p>AHOs</p> <p>Head of Housing &amp; Health/Head of Planning Services</p> <p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By November 2009</p> <p>2010/11 rural housing needs surveys onwards</p> <p>By January 2010</p> <p>By January 2010</p>

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To review role of Parish Councils in the process and improve ongoing communication with Parish Councils	<p>Review level of involvement of Parish Councils in the process and improve information provided in respect of their involvement</p> <p>Raise awareness/maintain level of knowledge of Parish Councils on rural housing issues</p> <p>Consider ways to improve communication with Parish Councils when a housing needs survey is to be carried out and maintaining communication throughout the process</p>	<p>Produce rural housing protocol providing details of process and level of Parish Council involvement, mechanisms for resolving issues etc.</p> <p>Provide regular training to Parish Councils on affordable housing, rural exception sites, local connection criteria, allocation issues, planning issues/constraints etc.</p> <p>Produce an information sheet for Parish Councils detailing process, involvement and level of communication throughout the process. Produce a quarterly Parish Council newsletter providing an update on progress of schemes across the borough</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p> <p>AHOs/Planning</p> <p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By April 2010</p> <p>To commence January 2010</p> <p>To commence January 2010</p>
To assist our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners to deliver timely local needs housing schemes	<p>Have clear policy on shared ownership units</p> <p>Review timing and method of RSL selection process</p> <p>Include a specialist rural RSL on preferred partner list</p>	<p>Produce policy on shared ownership on rural exception sites</p> <p>Change RSL selection process to offer Parish Councils the choice to just select an RSL or to go through selection process</p> <p>Invite English Rural Housing Association to become one of the Council's RSL preferred partners on rural exception sites (as Sevenoaks DC has done)</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p> <p>AHOs</p> <p>AHOs</p>	<p>By February 2010</p> <p>With immediate effect</p> <p>With immediate effect</p>

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Objective	Desired Outcome	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>To assist our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners to deliver timely local needs housing schemes (continued)</p>	<p>Consider benefits of tendering rural work to one/a couple of RSLs</p>	<p>Decision made about using one/couple of RSLs</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By January 2010</p>
	<p>Encourage RSLs to be consistent in their pricing of land offers for rural exception sites</p>	<p>Agree a pricing approach with the RSLs and discuss with District Valuers</p>	<p>AHOs/RSLs</p>	<p>By January 2010</p>
	<p>Improve information provided to RSLs to assist them in putting together complete and timely planning applications; Encourage RSLs to use architects with previous experience of rural exception sites</p>	<p>Put together information pack for RSLs including information on selecting architects, use of land/designing schemes, surveys to be undertaken and timing of these and information to be included in planning application etc and KCC contributions</p>	<p>AHOs/Planning</p>	<p>By January 2010</p>
	<p>Improve pre-application advice. All contact to be through Development Control Officer who will regularly update other officers in relation to progress and issues</p>	<p>Hold pre-planning application meetings to discuss planning application process, contact officer and way forward for submitting application</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>With immediate effect</p>
	<p>Improve information post-planning application stage</p>	<p>Hold meeting/send email to RSLs providing information in respect of conditions to be discharged and agreeing project plan for way forward</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>With immediate effect</p>
<p>To raise awareness of the need for and how to access affordable housing</p>	<p>Improve information provided to public on rural exception site housing</p>	<p>Raise awareness/hold information days/ provide more information when housing needs survey is to be carried out to advice on local needs housing/local connection criteria</p>	<p>AHOs/ACRK</p>	<p>2010/11 rural housing needs surveys onwards</p>

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To regularly review the process and look at ways of improving delivery	Look at examples of best practice from other local authorities approached under the review	Agree approach and timescale for incorporating new ideas into current programme	AHOs	By January 2010
	Learn from our own experiences and discussions with partners what is working well and what needs to change.	Carry out post development reviews after every scheme to look at what went well/what needs to be improved	AHOs	With immediate effect
	Review and learn from best practice of other local authorities	Contacting one high performing local authority per year	AHOs	2010/11 onwards

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