

## Rural Housing Advisory Group

### Minutes of the RHAG Meeting held on 23 January 2014 at HCA 2 Rivergate Bristol.

<b>Members Present</b>	
Professor Peter Roberts	Independent Chair (by telephone)
Colin Molton	HCA
Arlene Kersley	Community Council Berkshire
Danielle Troop	Country Land and Business Association
Fiona Forgham	Defra
Matthew Dodd	HCA
Neil Sinden	CPRE
Nigel Stone	Association of National Parks
Andrew Dack	DCLG
Sue Chalkley	Hastoe Housing

<b>Apologies</b>	
Keith House	HCA Board
Caryn Innes	4 Homes
Pippa Read	NHF
Jake Berriman	Shropshire Housing
Caroline Green	LGA
Jim Harker	LGA

<b>In attendance</b>	
Cherida Warner	HCA
Claire Bevan	Defra

<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Welcome</b>	Colin Molton (CM) took the chair as Peter Roberts (PR) had joined the meeting by telephone. CM introduced Andrew Dack and Claire Bevan and welcomed them to the meeting.	
<b>2. Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	The minutes of the meeting held 22 October 2014 were agreed as an accurate record with a correction to the name of the Country Land and Business Association	
<b>3. Matters arising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>John Gummer</b> – PR has invited him to attend a meeting and is awaiting a response.</li> <li><b>Planning Guidance Review</b> – Neil Sinden (NS) stated that RHAG did not submit a response to the PGR as a group but following the RHAG discussions, individual organisations submitted their own papers.</li> <li>NS had spoken to Caroline Winter who explained that technical problems had delayed publication of the Guidance.</li> <li>It was AGREED that the next Learning Event should focus on the Planning Guidance. Cherida Warner (CW) reported that Lord Taylor has offered to speak on 21 October 2014. CW was asked to consult on a suitable venue and confirm the date</li> </ul>	CW

	with Lord Taylor.	
<b>4. Monitoring and Challenging</b>	<p>Matt Dodd (MD) reported on the latest statistics released by the HCA for the period April 2013 – September 2013.</p> <p><b>Affordable Homes Programme - Rural Completions</b> 684 representing 10.8% of all completions</p> <p><b>Affordable Homes Programme - Rural Starts on Site</b> 826 representing 9% of all Starts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that the HCA is pushing hard for more SoS before the end of the financial year.</li> <li>• Nigel Stone (NSt) stated that affordable rent which is charged at up to 80% of private market rent is often unaffordable in rural areas as market rents are very high.</li> <li>• Arlene Kersley (AK) stated that in one Local Authority one RP calculates that 81% of all the properties they have converted to Affordable Rent are now in arrears.</li> <li>• In response to questions about the Affordable Homes Programme 2010-2015, CM stated that the HCA has had some success in resisting attempts by developers to leave their rural delivery (which is often more difficult to deliver) until the end of their programmes.</li> <li>• CM stated that the Prospectus for New AHP was due to be published in the next few days and he believed that it would be more positive for rural communities.</li> <li>• AK said she was concerned that Registered Providers (RPs) are not developing in rural areas and CM reassured her that the HCA will be aiming for a balance in the Programme and that Community-led housing is driving the numbers up in rural areas.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Future of Farming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claire Bevan (CB) presented an overview of the Future of Farming report and stated that the report was commissioned to look at the blockages to people coming into or leaving farming. One of the issues identified was the lack of affordable housing on or near to farms. A number of attempts have been made to address this e.g. home on the farm and barn conversions, although most of these have been too expensive for farm workers.</li> <li>• 5 recommendations have been made that RHAG was being asked to follow up.</li> <li>• It was noted that the previous RHAG meeting had considered that the LGA may be the appropriate body to look at recommendations i) and iv) and that Sue Chalkley had been invited to present on Recommendation iii) The Racing Industry Scheme. The Addington Fund (recommendation v) was unable to attend this meeting.</li> <li>• DT AGREED to send a link to the papers on Incentivisation for Landowners to CW to circulate.</li> </ul>	DT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that some local authorities use Local Lettings Policies that can help people secure affordable housing in their communities. It was AGREED to ask Rural Champions and RHAG to find out which LAs have Local Lettings Policies and for MD to collate and to recommend good policies at the next meeting.</li> <li>DT offered to re-circulate the CLA response to the DCLG consultation on Local Lettings</li> </ul>	Rural Champ All MD  DT
<b>6. The Lyons Commission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PR stated that the Labour Party has commissioned a Review of Housing and Planning by Sir Michael Lyons. The Labour Party ambition is to build 200,000 homes [per annum by the end of the next parliament.] It was NOTED that this is mainly an urban focussed report and PR believed that the need for high volume may squeeze rural housing out. Members were asked to submit comments by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014. SC stated that Hastoe has prepared a response and will circulate it for information.</li> <li>PR offered to collate responses and send them directly to Sir Michael. It was AGREED that PR should talk to Jim Harker (JH) and ask for help from the LGA.</li> </ul>	All  SC  PR PR
<b>7. RHAG Site Visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CW outlined an offer from the Midlands for a site visit to North Littleton Evesham to see 10 zero carbon Code 6 family homes built off-site by the LoCal factory. The site is close to a refurbishment of 3 Black and White Timber framed buildings and it was AGREED to visit both sites on 21 May 2014. CW was asked to liaise with the Midlands OA to set up the visit.</li> </ul>	CW
<b>8.</b>	<b>The Racing Bond Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SC made a presentation outlining the Racing Industry Scheme which intended to provide affordable housing for people employed in the racing industry. The scheme was not launched due to the financial crisis. However, it planned to sell the right to nominate employees for affordable rural housing. Hastoe is considering re-launching the scheme and they will write to large rural employers and ask them to invest and provide land. SC AGREED to send financial details of the scheme and DT offered to send legal advice on leases.</li> </ul>	SC DT
<b>9. Notice Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was NOTED that Peter Moore has been appointed as Chair of the Rural Housing Alliance (RHA).</li> <li>The Princess Royal will speak at a conference highlighting the importance of rural housing in Cheltenham on 21<sup>st</sup> February. The conference is being organised by the Rural Services Network.</li> <li>AK reported that the Defra, ACRE, RCAN Housing and Planning Report has the potential to be a powerful tool for collecting evidence from a wide</li> </ul>	

	<p>number of sources, including RHEs and other fieldworkers on the ground as well as more strategic information. It can also be used to review how neighbourhood plans are being used to bring forward rural housing, and whether or not that is having an effect on traditional rural exception sites or not. ACRE is keen to ensure that this report is of use to a wider network of organisations. It would be helpful to have input from stakeholders of exactly what evidence would be useful for them to have, and how they would like to see it presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiona Forgham (FF) AGREED to send the report for circulation.</li> <li>• NS stated that the Rural Coalition has updated its Manifesto which will be published in May. There are recommendations on housing, the economy and health.</li> <li>• DT stated that the Planning Inspectorate has a Housing Policy Presentation in its library.</li> <li>• CM stated that he would like to take a paper to the HCA Board on RHAG to include an updated Work Programme. This item is to be added to the next agenda.</li> </ul>	
<b>10. Date of next meeting</b>	<p><b>Dates of Next Meetings</b></p> <p>21<sup>st</sup> May – RHAG meeting in the morning</p> <p>21<sup>st</sup> May – Site Visit in the afternoon</p>	