

Housing Enabling Across Rural Gloucestershire

An introduction to GRCC's work, barriers to delivery, and the importance of partnership working and early stakeholder engagement

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The Affordable Housing Crisis in Rural England

- Lack of affordable housing for economically active compounds service accessibility for ageing population
- Proportion of over-65s in Stroud District rose from 19.5% in 2011 to 23.3% in 2021
- Earnings gap between rural and urban households
 - It costs more to live rurally and wages are lower
 - De-incentivises young people to remain within rural communities, instead seeking job opportunities in urban hubs
 - Rural voters earn on average £2,000 per year less than urban
 - Rural voters pay £74 per week more in household expenditure



The Affordable Housing Crisis in Rural England

- Lack of choice:
 - Housing tenures and house types are exclusionary
 - Difficulty in downsizing means existing housing stock is under-occupied
 - Pervasiveness of second homeowners and short-term holiday lets
- Benefits of promoting downsizing to older individuals:
 - Enhance affordability for families / younger generations
 - Use of existing properties to address broader housing demands



Lack of Meaningful Housing Options Inhibits Sustainability

- **Social:**

- Lack of community diversity / inclusivity; lost cultural exchange
- Declining populations
- Social isolation and mental health issues
- Impact on service provision

- **Economic:**

- Rural economy cannot reach its potential; services are harder to fund: schools, public transport, social care
- 23% of all registered businesses in England are rural
- Without housing there is a structural ceiling to the rural economy; brain-drain to urban centres

- **Environmental:**

- Ageing / listed housing stock large contributor to UK's carbon emissions
- UK homes contribute to 26% of UK's carbon emissions – mainly gas boilers
- Rural household emissions 19% higher than in urban centres
- Potential for rural housing to take advantage of microgeneration / renewable energy solutions



Role of Affordable Housing Within GRCC

- GRCC works to progress much-needed delivery of rural affordable housing across Gloucestershire
- In partnership with ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England), DEFRA, Homes England and GRHP (Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership)
- We are Rural Champions with the strategic, multi-sector presence that enables the voice of rural communities to be heard
- We are a dynamic and nimble VCS organisation that empowers communities to identify priorities that matter to them
- Our Housing Need Survey work develops an evidence base that increases opportunities for community-led action and a bottom-up approach to the affordable housing crisis



Three Pathways or Hybrid?

- RHE via GRHP – consisting of SDC, CDC, FoDDC, TBC, and Registered Provider (RP) Delivery Partners, with Homes England as permanent observer
- Community Led Housing (CLH) – SDC Pilot
- Private Developers (SMEs) – s106 Agreements and On-site Affordable Provision

GRCC believes in creative solutions to the housing crisis. We work collaboratively with communities to build a bespoke approach in order to build consensus and support for the principle of development.



Barriers to GRCC's Delivery

- **Funding and Resource:**
 - Shortage of skill within the Construction Sector
 - Land availability and acquisition costs
 - Build inflation – particularly acute in smaller developments without economies of scale
- **Community interest / engagement during (potentially) protracted planning process**
 - Planning is a democratic process that is inherently uncertain
 - Community champions and good communication (including digital inclusivity) will improve likelihood of successful outcomes



Overcoming Barriers to Delivery

- **Holistic Approach:**

- Multifaceted partnership working is important; housing does not exist in a silo
- Poor housing exacerbates a wide array of wellbeing issues
- Good quality housing improves wealth indicators, aspiration, sense of place, community cohesiveness

- **Cross-stakeholder Early Engagement:**

- Make housing an issue your organisation wants to understand / get involved in
- Request awareness and education sessions from GRCC
- Close working with residents / landowners to manage expectations

- **Being Bold and Visionary:**

- Make housing a strategic objective within corporate strategies to direct focus
- Political will / influence matters as well as funding initiative
- Housing Champions



Some examples of Housing Schemes enabled by GRCC across Gloucestershire



Minchinhampton



Rodmarton



Bibury



References

- <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/winning-the-rural-vote>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000082/>



Questions?



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