

Rural Innovation
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Rural Housing
Strategy and
Action Plan

Action Plan

September 2011



**1. Revitalise
Communities
by Enabling
Growth**

**2. Delivering
Housing to Meet
Specific Needs**

**3. Realising
the Potential
of Existing Stock**

4. Enabling Innovative Approaches to Delivery

STRATEGIC HOUSING OBJECTIVES

Action Reference	Project / Initiative	Strategic Alignment (SMART Objectives)	Timeline / Milestones	Target Outputs / Outcomes	Resources / Funding sources	Lead Department / Section	Key Partners
Strategic Housing Objective 1: Revitalise communities by enabling growth							
SHO1: 1	'Wave Approach'-To draw up a list of priority parishes to be next targeted for delivery of Neighbourhood Plans (following Vanguard) based on scoring of key factors	1c, 1d, 1f	Scoring and list of priority parishes to be drawn up June 2011.	Full list of Parish timescales publised March 2012.	CW&C Staff time, Parish Councils	Rural/Market Towns, Housing	
SHO1: 2	Programme of awareness training around the delivery of affordable housing to local councillors – enabling them to become 'local champions'	1c	Project will need to be initiated early in 2011 to run in parallel with emergence of first round of Neighbourhood Plans. Ongoing to 2014 (final NP deadline)	To complete awareness training with all councillors alongside the completion of Neighbourhood plans	CW&C Staff Capacity	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling	Parish Councils
SHO1: 3	Promote, support and monitor the 'allocation' of exception sites – enabled through the revision of PPS 3 – with the support of local parish councils	1f	Early engagement with spatial planning - ongoing assistance in development of LDF policy - link to publication / adoption milestones	To complete a process of site identification and prioritisation to inform the Local/Neighbourhood plans	CW&C Staff Capacity	Strategic Planning	Parish Councils
SHO1: 4	Locate suitable development sites in those areas where supply fails to match demand with partners (rural RSLs / rural community bodies / parish councils). This should include consideration of policies that allow flexibility to be exercised in Neighbourhood Plans to make minor Greenbelt amendments.	1d	Work alongside early phases of the neighbourhood planning timescale. Project will need to be delayed until post ratification of the Localism Bill	Work alongside key partners to identify areas of acute need. Complete an audit of suitable development sites with defined areas of need with associated delivery timescales.	CW&C/Parish Councils	Strategic Planning / Growth Point Team /Housing	CW&C, RSLs, Local Community Bodies, Parish Councils
SHO1: 5	Consider the use of CPO powers to release key identified sites – establish true value of land	1d	Timescale to be implemented upon identification of potential applicable sites	A review of all key sites and potential to use CPO power for release.	CW&C Staff Capacity	Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning/ Legal advisors / Property Services
SHO1: 6	Neighbourhood Profiling: Create a comprehensive information pack for every 'neighbourhood' or settlement benchmarking key indicators against the borough and national averages	1e	Evidence base to be drawn together in 2011. Online and available following piloting by December 2011.	A thorough and updated Neighbourhood Profile to accompany each Neighbourhood Plan. Profiles to be easily accessible via the Council's online data system.	CW&C	Strategic Planning/Housing/ Rural/Market Towns Team	

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SHO1: 7	Examine, linked to the work of the Growth Point team, the current pipeline of planning applications across the rural area to identify potential blockages to delivery and a reassessment of timetable for development (2011)	1b	Initial review by summer 2011 and where necessary undertake a process of engagement with landowners, developers, representatives complete by December 2011.	To produce a review of rural sites by December 2011. Growth Point team to identify priority sites and next steps.	CW&C growth point team	Growth Point Team	Housing Strategy / Strategic Planning
SHO1: 8	Hold annual developer engagement events, focussed on the rural area, to promote key sites and disseminate information on CW&C's housing priorities	1a	First event to be held October 2011 (year on from rural housing strategy developer and RSL workshop). Consideration of other scheduled events required.	Creation of contact database, completion of engagement workshop and establish annual event in calendar.	CW&C/Key RSLs Potential to attract private investment	Housing Strategy Team and Growth Point Team	Key RSL partners
SHO1: 9	Identification of a lead officer responsible for Rural Housing in the authority and nominated strategic housing officers to act as key contacts to stakeholders and communities. This could also include a dedicated officer in lead RSL.	1c	Assessment of remit and demands of strategic housing enablers with a rural remit through initial stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process to December 2011.	Review of resource requirements in relation to the role.	CW&C Staff Capacity	Strategic Housing Team	
SHO1: 10	Work with large employers in rural communities to identify and respond to any affordable housing issues, with a view to including such employers into the neighbourhood planning process	1c	Establish/update contact database of key rural employers - establish a relationship where none exists-ongoing	To set up a process of integrating housing and planning matters with other economic development discussions. Identify specific locations of need	CW&C, Cheshire & Warrington Enterprise Commission	Regeneration and Economic Development	Housing & Planning Teams, CWEC, Key Employers
SHO1: 11	Ensure a process of 'Rural-Proofing' is undertaken regarding all Local Authority Strategy documents	1b	Complete review of existing policy by March 2012. Programme of awareness of rural issues to those charged with formulating new policy.	Ongoing and consistent approach to raising rural agenda during process of strategy consultation.	CW&C Staff Capacity	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling	Consultants
SHO1: 12	Implement a Neighbourhood Planning communications campaign with rural communities and parish councils, focusing on those who are willing to embark on the first stage of the process.	1c	Roll out alongside Neighbourhood Plan vanguard and wave approach	To use Tattenhall Vanguard to form a Case Study to inform future engagement	CW&C	Spatial Planning, Regeneration, Strategic Housing	Cheshire Community Action, Registered Providers
SHO1: 13	Review schemes delivered to Design Standard requirements in the rural area of CW&C and / or other neighbouring authorities	1c	Review of design standards on schemes recently delivered by March 2012	Ongoing process of assessment	CW&C staff capacity	Strategic Housing	Developers/RSLs/QS

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Strategic Housing Objective 2: Delivering housing to meet specific needs							
SHO2: 1	Audit and improvement project of data collected through waiting lists.	2b	Required in 2011 to underpin Neighbourhood Planning processes. Should be aligned with Strategic Partnering project noted in the Housing Strategy (Section 9)	Complete assessment of housing need alongside each Neighbourhood Plan	CW&C Staff capacity, RSL partners	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling	RSLs
SHO2: 2	Analyse the results of the recent completed Movers Survey to understand the perceptions of households in the rural area regarding their current and future requirements	2b	Establish appropriate spatial level for analysis and collate data as Mover Survey completes.	A broad analysis of rural need at a level at which the data sample will allow	CW&C Staff capacity, RSL partners	Strategic Housing	RSLs
SHO2: 3	Benchmark local income information and lower quartile house prices / market rents to understand the propensity of a settlement / neighbourhood plan area to contain high numbers of households in hidden need (not picked up under SHO2: 1 project)	2b	Work undertaken alongside Neighbourhood Planning process	To complete benchmarking exercise alongside preparation of Neighbourhood Plans	CW&C staff capacity	Strategic Housing	CACI data
SHO2: 4	Development of a Best Value review of Elderly Accommodation in the rural area - full stock audit	2d	Complete Review by March 2012	To identify key issues and interventions to improve provision of older persons housing in rural area	Care providers with support from 'Supporting People'.	Strategic Housing	Local public and private care providers, RSLs
SHO2: 5	Internal Audit of current older person housing schemes available through CW&C	2c	December 2011	Identify successes and failures of current schemes and action accordingly	CW&C staff capacity time	Strategic Housing	RSLs
SHO2: 6	Attend and use housing surgeries in villages to provide accessible advice and to encourage all households in need to register on the Housing Registers.	2b	Role out alongside Vanguard in the Parish 'Wave Approach'.	Establish venues and timetables to role out surgeries across parishes, prioritising according to the Wave Approach which will be informed by need and ability to deliver	CW&C staff capacity time	Strategic Housing	Rural APB
SHO2: 7	Work with strategic planning colleagues to develop policies to apply a wider settlement boundary (potential cluster of settlements) in considering housing needs and contributions (delivery of wider benefits for sustainability purposes) through S106 negotiations	2a	Role out alongside Vanguard in the Parish 'Wave Approach'.	Agreement and integration of new policies into the planning system to unlock delivery alongside neighbourhood plans	CW&C staff capacity time	Strategic Planning	Housing Team/Rural/Market Towns

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SHO2: 8	Drafting of template development agreements in consultation with communities as a framework for discussions with developers	2c	Assessment of remit and demands of strategic housing enablers with a rural remit through initial stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process to December 2011.	Develop a prototype out of Tattenhall and Eaton Neighbourhood Plan pilots for discussion with locally active developers	CW&C staff and Parish Council capacity time	Strategic Planning	Parish Councils, Local Developers
SHO2: 9	Establish a Rural Exception Site Policy which encourages delivery by removing complex processes and protocols	2a	Develop alongside Core Strategy/ Neighbourhood Planning timetable	Establishment and testing of policy at the stage of Core Strategy delivery	CW&C staff capacity Potential to attract private funding	Strategic Planning	
SHO2:10	Implement an affordable housing target for the rural areas and a variable site size threshold linked to supply/ viability	2a	Best Practice review to be completed before the next iteration of Core Strategy.	An interim position on this should be achieved prior to Core Strategy adoption to inform Neighbourhood Plans.	CW&C staff capacity Potential to attract private funding	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling and Strategic/Spatial Planning.	RSLs
SHO2:11	Establish, for the rural area, a clear prioritisation of affordable housing in relation to other forms of planning gain for negotiations	2a	Work alongside Local Plan timetable.	Agree prioritisation prior to completion of Core Strategy.	CW&C/RSL Staff capacity	Strategic Housing	RSLs
SHO2:12	Coordination and joint-working between housing, health, transport and social care providers to identify, monitor and assess the housing needs of rural communities	2c	Completion of audit alongside completion of Neighbourhood Planning vanguards	To use the Vanguards as a test-bed for full audit of active bodies and information currently held	Partners staff capacity	Strategic Housing	Housing, health, transport and social care providers
SHO2:13	Investigate potential of a hub and satellite olderpersons housing scheme to serve rural communities	2d	Identify areas of specific need alongside Parish Councils Neighbourhood Plan preparation	Full assessment of need and potential completed alongside Neighbourhood plans	CW&C staff capacity/Parish Councils Potential to attract private funding	Strategic Housing	Key care providers, Parish Councils
SHO2:14	Consider establishment of a lead RSL model to facilitate partnership working in the rural areas. This would build on the HCA requirement for creative partnerships.	2c	Outcomes of consultation internally anticipated in Summer 2011. Outcome of process to determine future timescales	New simplified partnering model with RSLs	CW&C staff capacity time initially and then Registered Provider Resources	Strategic Housing	RSLs, HCA
SHO2:15	Consider the partnership arrangements which could be developed to maximise the contribution of RSLs in rural areas. This could be through the LIFE model.	2c	Potentially dependant upon the timescales of SHO2: 15. If no decision was forthcoming regarding RSL partnering arrangements an intensive process of engagement with RSL partners should be undertaken in 2011	Clearly established shared responsibilities between RSL partners and CW&C officers	RSL Partners / CW&C staff capacity at the beginning of the project	Strategic Housing	RSLs

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SHO2: 16	Review of green belt boundaries for villages located within the greenbelt.	2a	December 2011	Full review of potential development boundaries, with focus on areas of acute housing need.	CW&C staff and Parish Council capacity time	Strategic Planning	Parish Councils

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Strategic Housing Objective 3: Realising the potential of the existing stock							
SHO3: 1	Introduce a new waiting list policy which reflects national policy changes and serves to contribute to Objective 1 (classification of need, local preference etc...)	3a	Review to be taken into consideration in upon completion of Rural Housing Strategy-May 2011.	New waiting list policy to be developed alongside initial Vanguards.	CW&C Staff Capacity/RSL Staff capacity	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling	RSLs, Parish Councils
SHO3: 2	Utilise stock condition data collected consistently across the sub-region to benchmark quality of stock and prioritise intervention	3d	Initial audit to be completed June 2011, benchmarking exercise completed by December 2011	Priorisation of intervention completed March 2012.	Sub-Regional partners	Strategic Housing	Sub-regional housing partners
SHO3: 3	Continue to investigate innovative schemes for bringing empty homes, agricultural buildings and commercial properties back into use for residential requirements. This will require the development of supportive planning policy in line with national guidance.	3c	Use Neighbourhood Planning timetable to identify potential opportunities.	Audit of schemes/potential funding approaches completed Autumn 2011.	CW&C Staff Capacity	Strategic Planning/Asset Management Team jointly with Private Sector Homes	Landowners, Parish Councils
SHO3: 4	Evaluate the effectiveness of current forums to engage private sector landlords in rural areas to ensure consistent standards of property	3d	Audit complete March 2012. Engagement with estates within Neighbourhood Planning	Following review, recognition and action-planning around how engagement can be improved across the rural area-March 2012	CW&C Staff Capacity	Strategic Housing jointly with Private Sector Housing	Key local landlords
SHO3: 5	Understand the remit and role, and maximise the input of the Private Sector Liaison Officer within the rural housing area	3a	Progressed in 2011	Clear establishment of relevant roles and responsibilities. Opportunities for Strategic Housing Enabler to assist identified	CW&C Staff Capacity	Strategic Housing	TBC
SHO3: 6	Rural-proof Affordable Warmth Strategy to help alleviate fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of homes in the area-potential integration into Neighbourhood Plan pilots	3d	Develop a specific rural action plan in relation to fuel poverty-Autumn 2011 Conduct a gap analysis of the existing targeting methods to determine overlaps and gaps in rural communities-Autumn 2011	Integration of Affordable Warmth Strategy recommendations into rural housing policy/delivery approaches	CW&C Staff capacity	Strategic Housing	
SHO3: 7	Seek and pursue further opportunities to facilitate village-wide energy audits as a basis for further work on fuel poverty and energy efficiency.	3d	Identify willing Parishes according to timescales of 'wave' approach.	Identification of pilots within initial wave of neighbourhood plans.	CW&C staff capacity/Parish Councils Potential to attract private funding	Rural/Market Towns	

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SHO3: 8	Implement the Empty Homes Strategy within the rural area	3c	Assessment of remit and demands of strategic housing enablers with a rural remit through initial stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process to December 2011.	Prioritisation of intervention and appropriate methods to take issues- Summer 2011.	CW&C Staff capacity	Housing/Asset Management Team jointly with Private Sector Housing	Property, Housing and Planning Teams within CW&C, landlords
SHO3: 9	Continue to monitor the prevalence of empty and under-occupied homes- understand in greater detail concentrations of vacant stock/types/tenures	3b/3c	Update and assessment of particular rural areas affected- May 2011.	Annual updates to ensure issue is continually monitored.	CW&C staff capacity /Parish Council/RSL partners	Strategic Housing jointly with Private Sector Housing	
SHO3: 10	Consult with RSL partners and the HCA on whether there is scope to use Purchase and Repair or Existing Satisfactory procedures to acquire existing empty properties in rural areas	3c	Consultation with RSLs following empty homes audit-summer 2011		CW&C staff capacity /RSL partners/HCA	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling	
SHO3:11	Examine potential to bid into Empty Homes Fund	3c	Align with bidding timetable	Link with SHO2 :7 -identification and prioritisation of acutely affected areas, and assessment of their potential for funding-summer 2011	Regional Growth Fund	Strategic Housing	RSLs
SHO3:12	Promote Homes on the Farm scheme	3c	Identification of potential buildings within Parishes, according to timescales of 'wave' approach.	Full audit of potential of buildings within each parish and promotion of scheme throughout neighbourhood planning process	CW&C staff time Potential to attract private investment	Strategic Planning	Landowners, Parish Councils, local developers
SHO3:13	Explore options for rationalisation of council and partners accommodation	3c	Understand implications of asset review for rural area upon completion of report-Spring 2011	Annual updates to ensure opportunities are continually monitored.	CW&C Assets	Asset Management	Education, Emergency Services and Healthcare partners
SHO3:14	Work alongside Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to identify potential to role out 'Springboard' scheme	3b	Liaise with Age Concern to discuss timeline for deluvery and review potential to integrate services within CW&C .		Cheshire Fire & Rescue, CW&C Staff	Strategic Housing	Care Providers, Cheshire Fire & Rescue
SHO3:15	Redress the balance between Accommodation Based Service and Floating Support across the board.	3a	Identification of nature and amount of flexible support required, particularly using Vanguards to test this.	Integrate and monitor recommendations of needs assessment	CW&C with input from Supporting People	Strategic Housing with input from Supporting People	

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Strategic Housing Objective 4: Enabling innovative approaches to delivery						
SHO4: 1	Evaluation of the potential to use Asset Backed Vehicle or Special Purpose Vehicle targeted at the rural area using public assets.	Work is being done at a sub-regional level looking at the options and potential approach		CW&C and partner assets Potential to attract private investment	Strategic Housing/Growth Point Teams. Input from current CBL provider, Housing Solutions, Housing Management and other partners signed up to the pan-Cheshire CBL system.	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling
SHO4: 2	Work with local large estates (e.g. Grosvenor / Bolesworth) to enable them to deliver their business plans, in particular supporting their ambitions to deliver affordable housing across the estates	Explore potential to sign Memorandum of Understanding-December 2011	Regular (at least bi-annual) engagement with estates to understand delivery aspirations and issues	CW&C Staff Capacity Landed Estates Potential to attract private investment	Strategic Housing	Grosvenor and Bolesworth
SHO4: 3	Explore with RSLs developers and housebuilders a range of new products classified as 'affordable rents'	Soft market testing to be undertaken early-Summer 2011	Regular (at least bi-annual) engagement with estates to understand delivery aspirations and issues	CW&C Staff capacity/ RSL partners & Developers	Strategic Housing	Developers/RSLs
SHO4: 4	Introduce policy to enable a new homes bonus payment to local communities accommodating development	Assess potential alongside Neighbourhood Planning process. Dependant on ratification of Localism Bill	Development of policy alongside Neighbourhood planning process	CW&C Staff capacity Potential to attract private investment	Strategic Planning	Parish Councils
SHO4: 5	Explore the impact of enabling cross-subsidisation of affordable housing on the viability of sites in the rural area to inform potential policy development.	Select sites from SHLAA-Summer 2010, Viability Testing completed March 2012.	Evidenced understanding of the impact of cross-subsidisation across different rural housing scenarios to inform future development.	CW&C Staff capacity Potential to attract private investment	Strategic Housing	Parish Councils/Consultants
SHO4: 6	Utilise surplus potential monies generated as a result of the reform of the Housing Revenue account from stock owned in Ellesmere Port and Neston (over 5,500 properties) to deliver affordable housing in the rural area	Audit complete December 2011. Assessment of reinvestment potential ongoing.		Housing Revenue Account	Strategic Housing	
SHO4: 7	Consider emerging national policy and assess the implications for CW&C and the rural areas, providing written responses where necessary.	Identification of officer-Spring 2011.	Assessment of remit and demands of strategic housing enablers with a rural remit through initial stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process to December 2011.	CW&C staff capacity	Strategic Planning	

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SHO4: 8	Develop Saughall as the exemplar rural affordable housing scheme to use as best practice including sustainable development technologies	Site identification-Summer 2011 Best Practice Review-Summer 2011 Development Brief-December 2011 Procurement exercise-March 2012	Completion of saughall as exemplar site	Private Investment	Strategic Housing	Developers/RSLs
SHO4: 9	Development of an initial viability toolkit to assess benefits of delivery through Community Land Trust model, compared to traditional S106 / exception site etc...	Viability Toolkit completed March 2012.		External consultancy support required	Strategic Housing	Rural/Market Towns Team, Housing Strategy & Enabling
SHO4: 10	Appraise benefits of creating of a Community Land Trust Officer post	Linked to output of SHO4: 11 / SHO4: 14	New post created and successful examples of CLT's delivered	TBC	Strategic Housing	
SHO4: 11	Investigate potential of a community Land Trust (CLT) – If applicable, identify a parish with the relevant factors that may enable a CLT. Carry out feasibility study with parish council on viability of a CLT. If viable establish CLT	This will need to be linked into the 'Wave' approach		CW&C	Strategic Housing	
SHO4: 12	Creation of a network of Community Land Trusts – Umbrella CLT 'affordable housing consultancy' with shared resources / skills upon which others can draw (funding to be sought)	Dependant upon output of project SHO4: 12		CW&C	Strategic Housing	
SHO4: 13	Exploration of role of Council in enabling self-build exception sites.	Discussions and potential development of S106-Spring 2012		CW&C Staff capacity	Strategic Planning	
SHO4: 14	Potential to group together exception sites within or across neighbourhood plan areas	Liaison with developers and potential identification of sites to be grouped-January 2012		CW&C Staff capacity	Strategic Planning	
SHO4: 15	Appraisal of cross-subsidised exception sites. Use of affordable rent / other intermediate products on the basis that there is no land value enhancement	Early viability testing using data held through the SHLAA. Issue to be raised through consultation on the Core Strategy. Impacted by timescales of Localism Bill	Clear policy framework setting out parameters for developing exception sites based on sound viability work	CW&C Staff Capacity. External consultancy support may be required	Strategic Housing/Strategic Planning	

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SHO4: 16	Analysis of the outputs of the Council's review of operational and land assets for the rural area	Identification of potential initial sites-Spring 2011	Ongoing updates and assessments of potential assets for development.	CW&C staff capacity	Asset Management	
SHO4: 17	Prioritisation of rural schemes to be put forward in bids for funding from the HCA/Regional Growth Fund.	Site prioritisation exercise-first cut Spring/Summer 2011, or in line with HCA/RGF timetables	Full updated audit of all potential rural sites to be maintained over the long term	CW&C staff capacity HCA/RSLs	RSLs / HCA	CWEC, Strategic Housing
SHO4: 18	Review of the land holdings of major landowners/estates in rural parishes and their potential contribution to housing delivery	Work alongside landowners to establish potential housing land and associated timescales for development-Summer/Autumn 2011	Maintain strong communications with major landowners to inform database of rural sites	Landed Estates/Key landowners	Strategic Housing/Strategic Planning	Landowners, Parish Councils
SHO4: 19	Engage with RPs to understand scale and location of assets and input into the development of their business plans	Work alongside RPs to establish potential assets-Summer/Autumn 2011		RPs/CW&C Staff capacity	Strategic Housing	RSLs
SHO4: 20	Ensure the use of resources is on the agenda of forums with RSLs, where rural action is being discussed/developed			CW&C staff capacity	Strategic Housing	RSLs
SHO4: 21	Develop s106 / planning condition which enables providers of new affordable housing to "swap" occupancies with existing stock and build some open market housing (for rent) which can cross subsidise new affordable occupancies	This is currently being investigated by Grosvenor on a housing scheme in Alford. The outcome of this will inform the ongoing process.	Ensure planning team and other continue to work innovatively with landowners to secure viable housing development scheme	CW&C staff capacity	Strategic Planning	RSLs