



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

Report on Housing Needs Surveys

RURAL ALLIANCE

North Devon – September 2012



Arlington

Bratton Fleming



Challacombe

East Down



Goodleigh

Kentisbury



Loxhore

Marwood



Shirwell

Stoke Rivers



Trentishoe

RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

Exmoor, North Devon & West Somerset

The Rural Housing Project has been running since 2002 and is a partnership between Exmoor National Park Authority, North Devon Council, West Somerset Council, English Rural Housing Association, Falcon Rural Housing, Hastoe Housing Association, North Devon Homes, Devon and Cornwall Housing Association and Magna Housing Association. It has been working hard to address the shortage of affordable housing within a predominantly rural area. The area covered by the project displays an extreme disparity between incomes and house prices, which makes it hard for many to gain secure footing within the housing market.



Colin Savage, Rural Housing Enabler

The Rural Housing Project is designed to help promote and deliver affordable rural housing strategically across the project area and helps deliver Exmoor National Park housing policies within the Park. This is being achieved by informing people about affordable rural housing, providing help and advice, carrying out research at parish level to assess the affordable housing need and bringing together the community and various partners to help deliver housing where it is needed.

One of the tasks for the project is to work with the Parish Council and the local community to assist them in carrying out a housing needs survey, in order to identify whether there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish.

Introduction

The “**Rural Alliance**” is made up of the North Devon parishes of **Arlington, Bratton Fleming, Challacombe, East Down, Goodleigh, Kentisbury & Trentishoe, Loxhore, Marwood, Shirwell** and **Stoke Rivers**. It was formed to provide a framework for the future development of the area it serves, and to assess whether it was feasible for parishes to work together to provide facilities that one small parish could not deliver alone. A Parish Plan was drawn up in 2007 following the response to surveys sent to all parishioners in the alliance covering the following issues:

- *Access to Services (Social, Health, Learning and Employment)*
- *Communication*
- *Community Facilities*
- *Development*
- *Environment*
- *Housing*
- *Local Employment*
- *Local Produce*
- *Policing*
- *Social and Community Activities*
- *Tourism*
- *Transport*
- *Young People*

The following descriptions of parishes in the Rural Alliance are taken from the published Parish Plan:

Arlington

6 miles NE of Barnstaple, Arlington parish covers approximately 2,000 acres, with a population of approximately 150 people. At 14 per cent, it has the lowest percentage of people over 60 years in the Alliance. Due to its size, there are few amenities: no schools, no post office and no village hall. It has a high proportion of leased and rented houses as a consequence of National Trust presence: 59% of the respondents were tenants of the National Trust.

Challacombe

The lofty parish of Challacombe is located in Exmoor at the edge of North Devon, bordering with Somerset. Much of it sits on the banks of the River Bray, protected from the weather by woodlands and sloping fields. Totalling approximately 5,430 acres, it has a well-known public house – The Black Venus, a busy shop that is also a post office, Exmoor Information Centre and a petrol station, and the Church of the Holy Trinity. The community enjoys a number of popular annual events, including the Sheep Dog Trials and Annual Gala. The main occupation of the majority of parishioners continues to be farming.

Bratton Fleming

The parish of Bratton Fleming is located on the fringe of Exmoor and is largely based around a single street. By far the largest village in the Rural Alliance, Bratton Fleming has a population close to 1000. It has a primary school, shops and post office, village hall, youth club and public house. There is also a sports ground to the west of the village, with football pitches, a cricket ground and tennis courts. Land around Bratton Fleming is actively farmed.

East Down

The picturesque parish of East Down covers 3,643 acres and is made up a number of small hamlets: Ashelford, Bugford, Churchill, Clifton, East Down, Holwell, Indicott, Okewill, Shortacombe and Stonecombe. It is bordered to the North by rising hills. It is served by a village hall, a church and a public house. The population has been fairly steady since the 1960s at around 220. Only 12% of the population are under 20 years of age, the smallest percentage for parishes in the Rural Alliance. Work on the infrastructure of the tourism industry indicates continued investment in the life of the parish.

Goodleigh

The parish of Goodleigh is fairly compact, covering 1,180 acres, with two outlying hamlets in Northleigh and Snapper. It has the highest percentage of people under the age of 20 years of all the parishes of the Rural Alliance, at 29%. Its amenities include a church and a Methodist chapel, a post office, a Church of England primary school with approximately 40 pupils and a public house. It has a thriving village hall that is very well used. Goodleigh also has the joint highest percentage of people over 60 years of age, at 26%.

Loxhore

As Devon Village of the Year 2006, Loxhore is proud of its close-knit community of 180 people. Covering only 1,250 acres, it has few amenities other than a village hall, a church and a chapel. There are 3 main hamlets – Loxhore Cott, Lower Loxhore and Loxhore Town - as well as a number of outlying working farms. There is some industry, with a bed and breakfast, IT company and haulage firm.

Shirwell

Located to the North of Barnstaple, the ancient parish of Shirwell covers 4,747 acres. It is bordered by Bradiford Water to the west, the National Trust Estate of Arlington Court to the north and the River Yeo to the east. The village of Shirwell is divided into two: One half is around the former Methodist Church at Shirwell Cross; the 15th century church of St Peters stands at the heart of the second. The community is well served with amenities for young people, including a playgroup, primary school and youth club. The adult population stands at 315. The working population is mainly employed in agriculture and tourism.

Kentisbury & Trentishoe

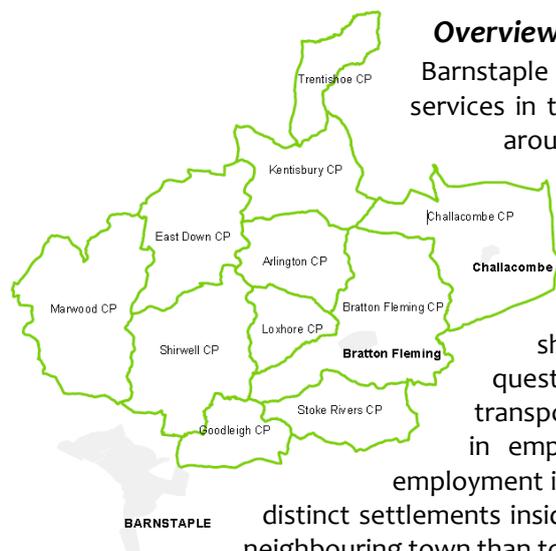
The parish of Kentisbury & Trentishoe is 4 miles from the coast at Combe Martin and has a population of around 300 people scattered across a few hamlets – Patchole, Kentisbury Town, Kentisbury Ford, Millham, Blackmoor Gate, Dean, Easterclose and Wistlandpound. Over half of the 3,148 acres that make up the parish are within the boundaries of Exmoor National Park. It is well served with two churches, a village hall, public house, primary school, shop, post office, garage and youth club. Employment is mainly through agriculture and tourism.

Marwood

The 5,596-acre parish of Marwood has a relatively large population of over 800 that is dispersed across several villages. Some of the farmsteads date back to Saxon times and are recorded in the Domesday Book. Parish life centres around a well-used primary school that doubles as a community centre.

Stoke Rivers

Stoke Rivers in a parish 6 miles north-east of Barnstaple. The parish is made up a lofty village at its heart and a number of scattered farmsteads in the deep river valleys below. There are few facilities, no shop or school, but the village boasts a fine Medieval Parish Church of St Bartholomew and a small Baptist Chapel. There is a small village hall, formerly the Parish school, owned by an educational charitable trust. There are a number of small family farms and the kennels and home of the Dulverton West Foxhounds are based in the Parish.



Overview of Parishes

Barnstaple - as the major centre of employment, commercial activity and services in the area - has a very strong pull upon the rural communities around it. This is most noticeable in those parishes closest to Barnstaple, such as Shirwell, and also has an impact on concerns about traffic movement through the parishes. To a lesser extent, Ilfracombe and South Molton are also important to the communities nearer to them. The most obvious ways in which this influence shows is upon shopping and place of employment, which some of the questionnaires asked about. Where travel is easy and public transport is available, there tends to be a larger proportion of people in employment than in the more remote parishes, where self-employment is more significant. This effect can also be felt in Parishes with distinct settlements inside them where these communities have stronger links to the neighbouring town than to the “centre” of their parish.

The Survey

The Rural Housing Project carried out a housing needs survey at Goodleigh parish in 2012, at the request of housing enablers at North Devon Council and in collaboration with the Parish Council. It was then agreed that we look at adjoining parishes, and this was extended in the end to the whole of the Rural Alliance.

Survey forms were sent to every household in the parishes of the Rural Alliance, as follows:

Parish	No. sent out	Part Twos returned
Arlington	45	6
Bratton Fleming	448	24
Challacombe	66	7
East Down	102	2
Goodleigh	178	4
Kentisbury	120	2
Loxhore	79	6
Marwood	338	12
Shirwell	178	9
Stoke Rivers	74	2
Trentishoe	30	0
Total	1658	74

Housing Need Identified by first choice Parish

Parish	Affordable Rented Housing			Affordable Home ownership				Open Market Housing		
	1 or 2 bed 3 person	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	2 bed 3 person	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	4 bed 6 person	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	5 bed
Bratton Fleming Ward										
Bratton Fleming	6	2		2	5	3	1	2	1	
Stoke Rivers		1							1	
Loxhore					2	1				
Goodleigh			1		1	1				
Arlington	2	2	1		1					
Challacombe	3	3						4		1
Marwood Ward										
Marwood	4	4	1		1	1		1	1	
Shirwell	1		2		2				1	
East Down	1	1								
Kentisbury		1			1					
Trentishoe										
Total for each house type	17	14	5	2	13	6	1	7	4	1
Total for each tenure	36			22				12		

Seven other households completed forms but indicated a preference for relocating outside the Rural Alliance parishes.

Housing Need

The following table shows the number of households in parishes of the Rural Alliance indicating housing need where they would like to live. Some households quoted several parishes, these are all included. (For example, in Arlington all six of those in housing need wanted to stay in Arlington but two would also consider Shirwell and one Goodleigh.)

Parishes	Total identified need in the parish	Arlington	Bratton Fleming	Challacombe	East Down	Goodleigh	Kentisbury	Loxhore	Marwood	Shirwell	Stoke Rivers	Trentishoe	Not specified
Arlington	6	6				1				2			
Bratton Fleming	24		22										2
Challacombe	12		6	8					1	1			2
East Down	2	2			2				2	1			
Goodleigh	4					3							
Kentisbury	2	2					2	1					
Loxhore	6						1	3					3
Marwood	12								12				
Shirwell	9							1	2	7			1
Stoke Rivers	2										2		
Trentishoe	0											0	
Totals:	79	10	28	8	2	4	3	5	17	11	2	0	8

Rural Housing Enabler's Comments and Recommendations

There is a high level of housing need identified by this survey, from people demonstrating long term local connection. The vast majority of households identified are stable, long term households likely to remain in the locality. Of particular significance is the higher than is usual level of need for low cost home ownership from households that appear able to afford this tenure but cannot afford open market owner occupation.

Several households indicated an interest in self-build housing on land owned by their family. The Rural housing project will investigate these options with Planning Officers.

The remaining households will be dependent on housing being provided by others. Some proposals will be brought forward through the planning process, and the Rural Housing Project will support these where appropriate. In addition the Rural Housing Project will investigate the potential for delivering two or three reasonably large schemes across the Rural Alliance Parishes. These are likely to involve a mix of open market and affordable housing, with the open market housing there to cross-subsidise the affordable housing. The Rural Housing

Project will seek to do this working closely with communities and Parishes, with the preferred approach being to bring these schemes forward to a deliverable position before engaging with developers. That way we can achieve the aim of maximising the delivery of affordable housing with the minimum open market housing.

The survey asked for suggestions of potential sites. The Rural Housing Project will consider these in conjunction with Parish councils and Planning Officers during April and May 2013.

Broadly the Rural Housing Project aims to seek delivery of the full level of rented housing need identified- 36 homes. A more cautious approach will be taken with regard to low cost home ownership, as some people will in practice be unable to afford this, and others will not be ready to proceed at the time these are delivered. As an initial target, the Project will aim to see 12 low cost home ownership properties delivered. Both these targets will be monitored and reviewed against delivery, and account will be taken of the numbers of people in need at the point of allocation or sale.

The survey was designed to identify local people wanting new owner occupied housing and 12 households came forward. As this form of housing will need to be provided to help fund the affordable housing, it is encouraging that in itself this may also meet a local housing need.

Target Provision

	1 bed or 2 bed 3 person	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	4 bed 6 person
Affordable rented	17	14	5	0
Low cost home ownership	0	6	6	0

Colin Savage
Rural Housing Enabler
26 March 2013