

Partnership Agreement

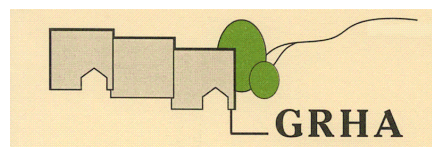
For the

Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership

2008-2009



Stroud District Council



Background

The GRHP was formed in 2001 in response to directed Housing Corporation funding for rural housing. It achieved 220 new dwellings in rural areas over its initial three year period, as well as ensuring that the properties were of a high standard of design and construction. This success has continued and in more recent years (2006-2008) there have been 240 affordable homes delivered in rural Gloucestershire. The partnership also spelt out the role of the Rural Housing Enabler, and brought in funding from the Countryside Agency and the Housing Corporation to fund the post of a Rural Housing Enabler to work independently of the local authorities and specifically work to identify local housing need and bring forward opportunities for rural housing development. Funding for the RHE was also provided by local housing associations, and subsequently by some local authorities.

The GRHP Charter outlined the guiding principles for the partnership and still continues to do so.

It states that the GRHP will work together to provide quality, affordable, secure homes that enhance and benefit the wider rural community.

This will be achieved by:

- Employing a “Rural Housing Enabler” to work alongside local communities and facilitate the provision of affordable housing.
- Consulting with the key stakeholders in the rural communities in which homes are provided to ensure projects best meet the needs of those communities.
- Contributing toward social inclusion and provide access to training and employment for local people, particularly in construction skills.
- Delivering each housing project to budget, timetable and quality standard, ensuring continuous improvement.

- Delivering and managing the projects with a responsible attitude towards the environment.
- Demonstrating teamwork, trust, respect, fair dealing and openness with every partner involved in the projects.
- Ensuring a co-ordinated housing management service across the partnership.
- Ensuring that rural housing issues and the success of rural housing projects are better understood across the county.
- Monitoring performance and providing feedback to all parties.

The partnership now consists of the 4 rural local authorities in Gloucestershire, 6 local housing associations and Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

Purpose

- Early indications from the Draft Gloucestershire Strategic Housing market Assessment 2008, suggests that in the four rural local authority areas of Gloucestershire, the annual net shortfall of affordable housing units required to meet current and future need is approximately 1,528 (subject to change final report).
- The responsibility for meeting housing needs lies with each local authority
The GRHP a partnership to enable the development of affordable rural housing and a forum to share best practice.
- All partners work towards meeting targets as set out in national, regional and local strategies and Policies in addition to meeting individually identified corporate priorities. There are clear targets set in the RHE Work Programme (see appendix one).
- The working relationship between GRCC and funding partners is set out in the Terms of Reference (see appendix two).
- The GRHP is a recognised partnership with expertise in rural housing delivery and ensures that the profile of affordable rural housing remains

high. It steers the work of the Rural Housing Enabler, based at Gloucestershire Rural Community Council GRCC)

Timescales

The GRHP is reviewed annually in accordance with the GRHP Terms of Reference. Its operation reflects current local government priorities and funding streams. The GRHP will continue in 2008-2009.

All partners will seek to maximise opportunities to secure funding to deliver affordable rural housing to meet identified needs and to support the role of the RHE.

Funding

The RHE budget will be agreed by the GRHP annually.

Membership

The GRHP consists the following members:

Organisation	Named Representative	Position	Contact details
Bromford Group	Trevor Rowe	Regional Business Development Manager	Trevor.Rowe@bromford.co.uk 07912 775 040
Gloucestershire Housing Association	Neil Bailey	Regional Development Manager	baileyn@glosa.co.uk 01452 541607
Gloucestershire Rural Housing Association	Mandy Day	Operations Director	daya@glosa.co.uk 01452 5411814
Severn Vale Housing Society	Laurence Aston	Development Manager	laurence.aston@svhs.org.uk 01684 272789
Two Rivers Housing	Vicki Wright	Development Manager	vicki.wright@2rh.org.uk 01594 546268
Wyedean Housing Association	Neil Pascoe	Chief Executive	neilp@wyedean.fednet.org.uk 01594 838000

Cotswold District Council	Gwen Russell	Principal Strategic Housing Officer	gwen.russell@cotswold.gov.uk 01285 623408
Forest of Dean District Council	Keith Chaplin	Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer	Keith.Chaplin@fdean.gov.uk 01594 812491
Stroud District Council	Pippa Stroud	Housing Strategy Manager	pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk 01453 754099
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Frances Evans	Housing Enabling and Policy Manager	Frances.Evans@tewkesbury.gov.uk 01684 272162
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council	Martin Hutchings	Rural Housing Enabler	martinh@grcc.org.uk 01452 528491

Appendix One

Rural Housing Enabler Work Programme - April 2008 - March 2009

AIM 1: To enable the provision of affordable housing in Gloucestershire		
OBJECTIVES	TARGETS	STATUS (To be continuously updated)
Facilitate Housing Needs Surveys.	12 surveys completed and reports written (3 per district)	
Support parishes in community development and engagement	20 parish councils actively supported RHE to ensure ongoing contact maintained for all parties throughout process of providing affordable housing. 262 parish and town councils provided with up to date information about rural housing	
Work with stakeholders as appropriate to identify and release land for development.	Assessments on 25 suitable sites Suitable land for development identified with at least 6	

	<p>communities</p> <p>Increased contact with landowners</p>	
<p>Regular meetings with partners and individuals where appropriate</p>	<p>Service the quarterly GRHP meetings (take minutes and provide financial report and activity report in advance)</p> <p>Meet with / shadow individual partners where appropriate</p>	
<p>Promote new and innovative ways of providing affordable housing</p>	<p>Develop innovation and share good practice. Investigate and evaluate innovative ideas</p> <p>Give advice to at least one parish who wants to meet local housing need independently</p> <p>Build and maintain relationships with Community Trusts wishing to develop affordable rural housing.</p>	
<p>Regular meetings with other RHEs and GOSW to promote good practice and more efficient ways of working.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with SW RHEs</p> <p>Cross boundary working with RHEs for Worcestershire and Herefordshire</p>	

Promote sustainable as well as affordable housing development	As appropriate	
AIM 2: To influence regional and local strategies that impact on affordable housing		
OBJECTIVES	TARGETS	STATUS (To be continuously updated)
Participate in any local, county or regional meetings that are relevant to the provision of affordable housing	As appropriate	
Respond to policies and strategies as appropriate and be involved in their creation where possible	Respond to RSS. Respond to local authority housing strategy consultations when appropriate	
Build effective partnerships and networks to address affordable housing matters	Facilitate regular steering group meetings. Have regular meetings with planners and housing officers throughout the year as appropriate. Organise / run 1 partnership event per year.	
Attend GRCC team meetings. Work with GRCC staff as appointed to increase their awareness of affordable housing.	GRCC meetings each month. Develop and maintain an	

Integration of affordable housing issues into all community consultation	affordable housing page on GRCC's webpage with links to partners. Discussion with other community development workers in GRCC and other organisations.	
AIM 3: Work with local authorities to contribute to their statutory duty to provide housing advice, information and awareness to rural residents.		
OBJECTIVES	TARGETS	STATUS (To be continuously updated)
Work with local authorities to identify gaps in service provision	Provide written information to partners for publications / websites.	
Provide advice to parish councils and residents wherever possible	Answer all queries or signpost to appropriate organisation Ensure that the needs of all disadvantaged groups are considered.	
Encourage those who are identified as being in housing need to register on housing waiting lists	Write to all households who are not on waiting lists and provide contact details	

AIM 4: Provide information to help national issues relating to affordable housing in rural areas.		
OBJECTIVES	TARGETS	STATUS (To be continuously updated)
Review work of RHE	Report to GRHP against the work programme.	
Attend regional and national RHE events	As appropriate	
Provide information on good practice on affordable housing both to government bodies and through effective use of the media	Forward information to GOSW Three articles in newsletters / RCC magazine	
Provide response to national initiatives	Respond where appropriate	

Appendix Two

Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership

Terms of Reference

GRHP VISION

A countywide partnership to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in the rural areas of Gloucestershire

GRHP AIMS

To provide support and a strategic steer to the Rural Housing Enabler for Gloucestershire (RHE)

To fund and direct the work of the RHE, to deliver the vision in accordance with the approved Service Level Agreement and Partnership Agreement.

To promote the above Partnership and secure resources to ensure its continuation and improvement.

To identify common themes and issues relevant to the partnership, explore solutions and agree joint action where appropriate.

To assist the RHE in setting priorities for the project, agreeing the programme of work, identifying the targets to be achieved and monitoring those targets.

To review and agree on an annual basis, the financial contributions from all Partners.

To seek to ensure that the work of the RHE benefits all Partners equitably.

To share good practice on rural affordable housing and to lobby on related issues providing all Partners agree.

To be the recognised Partnership with expertise in rural housing delivery and ensuring the profile of affordable rural housing remains high.

PARTNERS

- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council - RHE and Chief Executive
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Stroud District Council
- Bromford Housing Group
- Gloucestershire Housing Association
- Severn Vale Housing Society
- Two Rivers Housing Association
- Wyedean Housing Association
- Gloucestershire Rural Housing Association

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

GRHP will appoint the chair at the beginning of the meeting. There will be no fixed term for chair.

RHE will provide secretariat.

Agendas will be issued 7 working days prior to any meeting.

Minutes will be circulated within 10 working days after the meeting.

The Group will meet quarterly (or as otherwise agreed) to review the progress of rural housing work throughout the county and relevant national, regional, sub-regional and local rural housing initiatives, policies and issues. Members of the GRHP Working Group will also be present at each meeting to provide an update on progress, Partnership and RHE roles (**Appendix Three**) and any agreed projects in accordance with its terms of reference. See Workflow chart attached (**Appendix Four**)

The Partners will be nominated 'named lead people' from their respective organisations. They will have responsibility to nominate another person to attend GRHP meetings on their behalf and undertake any necessary actions as agreed.

Decisions are usually made by consensus of opinion however if there are any contentious issues, the outcome will be based on the majority vote of partners.

Appendix Three

The Role of RHE

- To develop a good understanding of the principles of affordable housing development.
- Ensure that RHE time allocated to each partner is equitable and an appropriate number of Parish Housing Needs Surveys are carried out as agreed within each Local Authority or as otherwise agreed by the GRHP.
- To carry out work strategically.
- To organise/run one Partnership event per year, subject to be identified by the GRHP, and to seek sponsorship to cover any additional costs.
- Service Partnership and Working Group meetings.
- Regional and national involvement where appropriate and to prepare informed responses to national, regional and sub-regional consultation documents as required.
- To be proactive in identifying and undertaking training commensurate with the role.
- To produce reports as appropriate and these to be produced and circulated to the GRHP or Working Group 7 days in advance of any meetings where they are the topic of discussion. These include financial reports and progress against the work programme.
- To work within the constraints of the available funding.
- To ensure Parish council/Community involvement – by attending parish council meetings as appropriate, maintaining RHE independence (the RHE will notify the relevant Local Authority in advance of their attendance).
- To contribute to site identification through landowner contact, discussions with parish councils and planners in conjunction with Local Authority Enablers.
- Ensure that communities are consulted with regard to development possibilities and that consultation is ongoing.
- To keep parish councils and all stakeholders informed at all times.

- To maintain accurate records of RHE involvement and database of all contacts.
- Maintain involvement during the development and disseminate good news stories.
- Maintain the profile of rural affordable housing through involvement in strategic partnerships.
- Investigate and promote alternative models of affordable housing.
- To keep up to date with national and regional initiatives and policy changes and disseminate information equitably to the GRHP in the form of a summary document.
- To maintain an overview of all rural housing developments in order to ensure that opportunities for rural affordable housing are maximised.
- To advise on good practice models and develop and highlight case studies, both sub regionally and regionally.
- Maintaining confidentiality - within the GRHP and with outside stakeholders.
- To build and maintain relationships with Community Trusts wishing to develop rural affordable housing.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with individual Partners.
- To ensure that the GRHP considers the needs of all groups e.g. those with general needs; physical or mental disabilities; gypsies, travellers, show and boat people; BME Groups; Religious Groups etc.
- To take part in an induction involving all partners.
- To shadow partners as appropriate.
- To provide written information to partners for publication/websites.
- To develop and maintain an affordable housing page on the host's website with links to partners.
- To participate in the development of and consultation on housing Policies and Strategies that requires a rural perspective.

Partners' Role

- To direct RHE through development and monitoring of an agreed SMART annual work programme.
- To provide strategic direction for the project (3 – 5 years).
- To attend partnership meetings fully briefed.
- Exchange information within the partnership openly where possible.
- Identify opportunities for RHE involvement.
- Maintain the profile of rural affordable housing.
- To ensure that rural affordable housing is included within Housing Strategies both District and Countywide.
- To set realistic expectations.
- To agree annual budgets.
- To source funding for RHE role.
- To agree on a subject for the annual event and to support & promote it.
- To be open to innovative solutions
- Embrace best practice.
- Highlight rural affordable housing issues to elected and board Members as appropriate.
- To be actively involved in recruitment and induction programme for newly appointed RHEs.
- To raise any concerns within the partnership promptly and appropriately.
- To carry out an annual review highlighting successes and ways to work better and make changes as appropriate.
- To review membership of partnership on an annual basis.

- To actively source funding for both for promotion and development of rural affordable housing.
- To consult with the RHE in the development of S.106 Agreements where appropriate.

Appendix Four

