

TOGETHER FOR RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BRIEFING SUMMARY
DEC 2025



**RURAL
HOUSING
ENABLER**



Community First
Building better communities
in Herefordshire & Worcestershire

Agenda

Time	Activity
10:30	Welcome, Session objectives & Context
10:45	Framing the Problem: Key Issues
11:00	Break - Coffee pump discussions & Networking
11:10	Framing the Problem: Overview
11:20	Forming Solutions
11:50	Break - Coffee pump discussions & Networking
12:00	Making Solutions
12:25	Identify Priorities & Next Steps
12:45	Thank you & Close



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Welcome

Community First Herefordshire & Worcestershire has invited you to join us as part of our Rural Housing Enabler Project to contribute to the work and formation of our Herefordshire Rural Affordable Housing Steering Group

MAIN OBJECTIVES TODAY

- Understand the rural housing problem
- Hear multiple stakeholder perspectives
- Begin shaping practical solutions



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Context

Herefordshire faces a critical rural affordable housing shortage, and communities across the county are feeling the impact. Young people are forced to move away, older residents become isolated, and essential workers — carers, teachers, healthcare staff, farm workers — are travelling long distances because they cannot afford to live near where they work. This is holding back our economy, education, health, and community resilience.

KEY FACTS

- 1,957 households on the affordable housing waiting list
- 67 households need wheelchair-accessible homes
- Need for ~597 new affordable homes each year.
- ~2,500 homes delayed in planning, including 1,000 affordable.
- High number of Neighbourhood Development Plans, showing strong community engagement, yet lower availability of Rural Exception Sites.
- Rising second home ownership reducing availability of local housing.
- Herefordshire Council has made strong progress — 276 affordable homes in 2024/25, 65 empty homes brought back into use, and 1,100+ affordable homes built over the decade. But the need continues to outpace delivery.



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Strengths

OUR RURAL STRENGTHS

- A strong “Here You Can” attitude
- Proven partnership working and committed local communities
- High uptake of NDPs showing local willingness to shape growth
- The Rural Housing Enabler to connect land, need and delivery
- Rural Exception Sites enabling genuinely affordable homes for local people
- Community-led housing, overcoming RP limitations and keeping homes locally owned
- Local SME builders and materials ready to support rural-sensitive development
- NMITE, offering innovation, engineering expertise, and a future rural construction skills base
- The Community Foundation and philanthropic landowners backing community solutions



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What's Blocking Delivery?



- A planning system that stalls rural schemes despite low rural environmental impact
- Lack of infrastructure investment due to not collecting CIL
- Rural stock disposal and limited rural engagement from some Registered Providers
- A national housing system built for cities, not villages
- Second homes further restricting supply
- Over-focusing on problems and blaming instead of collaborating



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Our Opportunity

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

The redrafting of the Local Plan is a once-in-a-generation chance to embed:

- Rural Exception Sites
- Community-led housing
- Small-site delivery
- Local builders and materials
- A rural construction skills pipeline with NMITE

The time for action is now

Let's turn frustration into action. Let's unite providers, communities, builders, landowners, and policymakers.

Herefordshire can lead the way in rural affordable housing — if we do it together.



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Our Call to Action



JOIN FORCES - JOIN THE RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING GROUP

- **Purpose:** Establish a collaborative group to create practical, sustainable solutions for affordable housing in rural Herefordshire.
- **Need:** Rural areas face housing shortages, high costs vs. incomes, infrastructure challenges, and risks to community sustainability.
- **Objectives:** Map housing needs, identify delivery barriers, explore innovative models, develop design frameworks, consider wellbeing factors, and produce an options report with a strategic action plan.
- **Scope:** Focus on rural Herefordshire (excluding Hereford city and large towns), covering all affordable tenure types (social rent, shared ownership, community-led, self-build).
- **Membership & Working:** Includes councils, housing providers, developers, community groups, health, economic partners, and academics; quarterly meetings, chaired by Frank Myers, taking an evidence-led approach.
- **Key Deliverables (Year 1):** Evidence & Options Report, Strategic Action Plan, pilot project identification, and recommendations to inform local strategies.



A sign up form can be found at
www.comfirst.org.uk/rural-housing



SCAN ME

THANKS FOR JOINING US TODAY.

MAKE SURE YOU SECURE YOUR PLACE FOR 6TH FEB



A link to event booking can be found
at www.comfirst.org.uk/rural-housing



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