

Proposed steps to delivering affordable homes in Great Alne

In planning terms, Great Alne is a Rural Exception Site (RES). Rural Exception Sites are small sites located on the edge of existing rural settlements. They allow land to be provided for residential development – provided it is used to build affordable housing for local people. The following text sets out the principal steps for delivering a rural exception site scheme in Great Alne. It is presented as a linear process though in practice some of the steps may happen in a different order. However, all these elements will occur during the development of a rural exception site scheme. It describes the steps taken where a scheme is developed and owned by a housing association (HA). We are currently at Step 3 in the process.

It takes on average 4-6 years from start to finish, although that is a very general timeframe as each scheme is unique and is dependent on location-specific circumstances and different parties involved. For example, the Linfoot Oaks development took nearly 10 years from identification of the need for affordable homes to build completion and residents moving in.

Step 1 Community/parish council raises the need for affordable housing in the community

This may be through the Parish Council or by a small group formed from members of the community. For the Linfoot Oaks development a need was identified during preparation of the Parish Plan. The current programme was triggered when the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) brought to the attention of the Parish Council the level of the housing waiting list for Great Alne

Step 2 Community identifies the level and nature of housing need

The RHE then assisted the Parish Council in the preparation of a housing needs survey which was circulated to residents; specifically targeted at those with a local connection to the parish or who would like to return to live in this parish. The results were shared with the Parish Council and have been publicised through the Parish Council newsletter, the Parish Council's Facebook page and on the webpage dedicated to Rural Affordable Housing in Great Alne which is on the Parish Council's website: (<https://www.greatalne-pc.gov.uk/rural-affordable-housing-in-great-alne.cfm?source=left>). The survey identified a need in Great Alne for sixteen homes for households with a local connection. Eleven of these were housing association rental properties and five were owner occupier.

Step 3 A suitable site is identified

A total of five possible sites were identified by the RHE , and she has made approaches to the landowners, setting out a proposal in principle (any detailed site negotiations will be conducted by the HA). These sites have been subject to consultation with residents (see Table below for the scoring methodology and results). The Parish Council will now give further consideration to the top three preferred sites resulting from the community consultation, and devise a set of criteria against which it will assess these three sites as the next stage of the process. Once this list of criteria has been agreed, the details will be shared with the community before any assessment of the sites is carried out by the Parish Council and presented for consultation at a public meeting.

Step 4 Selection of a housing association

If a housing association has not already been involved, the community can seek advice from the RHE or Local Authority of a suitable housing association to work with. In practice, there are few housing associations willing to develop small rural schemes- so in Great Alne we shall look to the RHE to recommend a suitable HA partner.

Step 5 Capital finance is raised for the scheme

This is the responsibility of the HA and/or developer. This will include ensuring there is loan finance in place and negotiating and securing any grant funding. Often small rural HAs will work with a larger HA, with the rural HA taking ownership of the units at completion.

Step 6 Scheme design

The HA will work with the landowner and community to agree a site layout and design that will comply with local policies and criteria. There will be public exhibition event/s to share the proposed design with residents. The RHE will work with the community to ensure events are well publicised and that there are opportunities for all sectors of the community to be involved.

It is possible at this stage that there may be a verification of the level or nature of need, with allocation staff on hand to advise potential residents and encourage them to register with the HA or LA agents.

Step 7 Planning permission is given

The HA will submit the planning application, and they will be the principal agent involved in any pre-application discussions. The community will be kept informed of progress by the RHE and/or HA and the community can comment along the way. The RHE may be called upon to act as a broker between the community and the HA where there are differences of view and the RHE can, when needed, also act as a broker between the HA and LPA.

The S106 Agreement will include requirements that the homes are retained as affordable housing in perpetuity and will include criteria that ensure the homes are occupied by people with a local connection to the community; usually defined either by residency, family connection or employment. In some cases, it will have a local lettings policy as an addendum. The community will not be a signatory to the S106, but they will be involved in discussions on the Heads of Terms and in the design of any Local Lettings Policy.

Step 8 The scheme is built

The development stage is completely managed by the housing association. The Parish Council will ensure that the HA keeps the community informed of progress and give reasons for any delay.

Step 9 The homes are allocated

Potential residents will have registered on the LA's Choice Based Lettings. The LA will advertise the properties, noting that these are subject to a S106 Agreement and that local occupancy criteria apply. The LA will nominate potential residents to the HA who will then handle the actual nominations.

The local parish newsletter/website will be used to advertise and make people aware that the properties are being let and encourage potential residents to register.

Step 10

The residents move in - time to celebrate!

SCORING TABLE FOR SITES FOLLOWING THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MARCH-APRIL 2024

5 points Most preferred site

4 points 2nd preference

3 points 3rd preference

2 points 4th preference

1 point Least preferred site

Site	1 st preference		2 nd preference		3 rd preference		4 th preference		5 th preference		Total points
	Votes	Points	Votes	Points	Votes	Points	Votes	Points	Votes	Points	
1	33	165	7	28	9	27	5	10	12	12	242
2	9	45	20	80	9	27	19	38	7	7	197
3	1	5	6	24	23	69	11	22	22	22	142
4	7	35	21	84	14	42	17	34	9	9	204
5	22	110	16	64	10	30	8	16	13	13	233

In summary, the results from the community feedback indicate that the top three most preferred sites are:

- Site 1
- Site 5
- Site 4

A copy of the site map showing the location of these sites is [attached](#) for ease of reference.