



Rural Housing Alliance

Pledged to work with and for rural communities

The Rt Hon. Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

14th May 2020

Dear Secretary of State

Rural Recovery and Renaissance – The Role for Affordable Homes

As the Government makes plans to recover society and the economy from the unprecedented impact of Covid-19, the potential role of rural communities is stronger than ever. But rural communities can only turn this potential into success with increased support for and investment in homes, most critically affordable homes. The rural organisations named in this letter write to extend their offer of support and partnership to the Government as the nation unites at this challenging time.

The resilience of rural communities over recent months has shown both strengths and weaknesses. With villages coming together to support each other through self-help groups, but this being driven by necessity given dispersed family networks and poor access to services. The interdependent relationship between town and country has been illustrated, with one dependent on the other for supplies, livelihoods and wellbeing. During the crisis, eyes have been opened to new ways of working, serviced by increased broadband and technology. This showing the potential of rural living in a way not previously seen.

Housing associations have the capacity to work in partnership with rural communities and the Government to invest in building new rural homes, supporting local businesses and supply chains in uncertain times. The homes provided by housing associations stimulate local economies by creating jobs, customers for local businesses, and somewhere for a local workforce to live. They keep family and support networks intact, reducing isolation and risks to vulnerable households. Importantly, the focus on affordable homes supports low-income essential workers, whose value has come to the fore over recent months.


The Government has a strong record of supporting housing delivery and recognising the different roles that can be played by those that share its housing ambitions. Rural housing associations stand ready to work with the Government to achieve a shared ambition of building more and better-quality homes. Homes that are genuinely affordable to essential workers and local people, for both rent and affordable home ownership.

As economic recovery plans take shape, we would ask the Government to help rural housing associations by supporting the following:

- 1) Through its agent Homes England, invest grant proportionately in rural housing delivery;
- 2) Empower, encourage and aid rural local authorities to invest in enabling rural housing where this does not already happen;
- 3) Permit local determination of affordability and tenure;
- 4) Safeguard the scarce affordable rural homes that currently exist;
- 5) Factor rural proofing within policy making and recovery planning.

We would be pleased to engage further with you and your department on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



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The [Rural Housing Alliance](#), which works in partnership with the Rural Services Network and National Housing Federation, is a group of leading housing associations that develop and manage affordable homes in rural areas across England.

The [National Housing Federation](#) is the voice of housing associations in England. With almost 800 housing association members, providing homes for around six million people.

The [Rural Services Network](#) membership is 154 local authorities (counties, unitaries, districts and boroughs) from across England and over 85 other public, private and civil society sector organisations, such as fire and rescue authorities, housing associations, bus operators and land-based colleges