5-Star Plan for rural housing

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A backdrop of rural service decline

121 rural schools closed over the past 10 years – 1 per month
1,894 rural post office branches closed over the past 10 years – 16 per month
2,500 rural shops closed over the past 10 years – 21 per month
1,464 rural pubs closed over the past 3 years – 41 per month
Average age of farm holder is 59, with only 14% being under 45
A cycle of decline which more homes can help to end
Competition in for rural property means on average prices 25% higher than in urban areas;

Rural incomes are lower, averaging £19,700 in rural districts compared to £26,000 in urban areas;

Much less affordable housing, 8% of rural stock compared to 20% of urban;

A fair share of affordable rural homes would be 7,500 each year – current starts are just shy of half of this at 3,758, but up on last year by 25%!

“We have to conclude that the position facing the next generation who need to live and work in rural areas has become even tougher in recent years.” Lord Richard Best
• How to build more rural homes?

• 5-Star Plan for Rural Housing!
The founding principles…

A challenge to do more with existing opportunities and innovate;
Aiming for a fair deal for rural but not asking Government for new money;
A succinct ambition for a wide range of rural stakeholders and providers;
Support a *living working countryside*;
A five year ambition with continued momentum.
Work with and for rural communities, in accordance with the Rural Housing Alliance pledge

Work closely with the local community and Parish Council to find the right site;
Always give qualifying local people in housing need first priority for every home;
Ensure that affordable homes always remain affordable;
Build sensitively designed, high quality homes to high environmental standards;
Provide good quality and locally sensitive management services to our residents;
Always respond positively to the local community.
Increase the current level of housing supply in rural communities by 6% each year for each of the next five years

More focus on counting rural completions to understand delivery and impact of 6-star plan;
A reasonable target to aspire to, but supporters are not accountable for;
Linked to the Ambition to Deliver.

“If you want a great place to live come to a housing association”
Bid for **at least 10%** of Homes England investment to deliver new homes in rural areas

No rural target and unlikely one will be introduced;
A reasonable base figure, by comparison Lord Best called for 13% as a fair proportion in Rural Housing Policy Review;
An opportunity for housing associations to set their own target and change the conversation about investment;
Get our own house in-order and maximise rural activity through business plans, development programmes and strategic local partnerships.
Ensure that homes delivered benefit the local economy, including the farming and food economy.

Do more to support a *Living Working Countryside*;  
Time to rethink the allocation priorities to better support local services and economy?  
A link with farmers with the potential to increase land supply, tackle access into farming and support food security.
Meet the needs of rural communities and contribute towards five key tenure, as appropriate – homes for affordable rent, market rent, affordable homes ownership, self-build and market sale.

A generational investment that secures benefits for all; Responding to a low-grant environment by using planning flexibilities to deliver more for the same or less where opportunities exist; A time for the sector to lead, work together, innovate and learn from each other.
Leading role for the Rural Housing Alliance and key partners;
Develop an action plan to address some of the major challenges;
Review and report on what is being achieved;
Build a strong coalition to support, deliver and expand the reach of influence;
Recognise the value of all parties who can contribute towards the ambition;
Work individually and together to make a difference in rural areas!

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Rural life report

- Importance of affordable housing for sustainable communities
- Housing associations built 3,030 new homes in rural areas last year
- 52 schools closed down in rural areas over the last 5 years
- 360 pubs closed down between March and December 2013-7 per week
- 81 post offices closed down over the last 5 years
• Bernicia built 4 three bedroomed properties on Holy Island of Lindisfarne.
• School threatened with closure was able to remain open due to the children from these new homes attending the school
Local pub

• Pheasant pub- run down and threatened with closure- one of only two community buildings in village

• S Shropshire HA built 7 homes for sale and shared ownership and profit used for acquisition and refurbishment of pub.

• Community owned.
• Local post office in village in West Dorset closing because of expiry of lease.
• Aster HA built 6 affordable rented homes with the local CLT and a post office on same site.
• Great community asset.