

Rural Housing Enabling Update

Since the last HSEG in May 2021, the update is below:

- 5 housing need surveys undertaken - currently 6 more booked to April 2022 which is likely to increase
- English Rural online consultation event for Newington and Peene held
- 2 schemes still on site – Hernhill and Staple
- A RES in Seal has gained planning consent
- There are a number of site searches taking place which include at least 2 option agreements made
- Hever Parish Council pulled out of a good site due to very determined objections from a small group of local people
- There is a recognition that apart from English Rural, there is a lack of other RPs willing to work on small sites such as rural exception schemes (same can be said for community led housing)
- With regard to First Homes, there are concerns that they will have a negative impact on Rural Exception Sites in terms of supply and land value. The government are going to monitor this potential impact.

Kent Community Housing Hub Update

The Hub is coming to the end of its funding period (end September 2021). We were originally funded by MHCLG under the community housing fund Enabling Hubs Programme. This funding is no longer available although government is being lobbied to renew it.

The Community Housing Fund is now open for schemes that can prove their deliverability and are at the later stages of pre-development. Revenue funding only - £4m. This fund is likely to be used up quickly so groups are being encouraged to apply asap.

We have met and, in most cases, exceeded our project deliverables set by funders (see table below for activity).

DELIVERABLES	ACTUAL TO DATE
1. No of Advisors	9
2. No. of events held	12
3. Advisor time (No. of hours)	148.07
4. No. of promotional attendees	293
5. No. of community groups supported	12
6. No. of councils engaged at level of senior officers/council members	14

Going forward from October onwards, we have raised sufficient funds to continue and are awaiting the outcome of 3 bids. We will be able to update more on the level of service we can offer once we know the outcome of these bids. Generally, very pleased with the achievements made especially in challenging Covid-19 conditions since start of project. We have seen an increase in demand from new groups – two having approached us so far during September.

We will be running more events including a Network meeting open to all in October/November and will ensure everyone is made aware of dates.