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**COUNTRYSIDE
ALLIANCE**

Love the countryside

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 HRS THURSDAY 4th AUGUST 2011

THE CRITICAL SHORTFALL IN AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING IN BRITAIN

How local councils have failed to meet provision targets on average by over 76 per cent in the past year

Key Findings:

- Among the councils in England, Wales and Scotland with responsibility for housing, there will be **an annual shortfall of 76 per cent or 176,360 affordable units in 2010/11**
- For rural and semi-rural councils in England, on average, **only 29 per cent of the identified need for new affordable housing was planned to be built in 2010/11**
- There are **significantly fewer first-time buyers in rural areas, accounting for 27 per cent of all buyers compared with 45 per cent in urban areas**
- **Rural housing remains less affordable than in urban areas** where average prices are **5.4 times the UK average annual earnings in the countryside**
- Average wages for **people working in rural communities are £4,655 lower than the national average**

Alice Barnard, Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance, said:

“Even in the current difficult economic climate, meeting rural housing need must continue to be a priority for the Government, its agencies and local authorities.

“The Countryside Alliance’s research highlights that affordable housing provision is a huge challenge in both urban and rural areas. But if the rural need for affordable housing is not addressed, and urgently, many of those communities upon which our countryside depends will shrivel and die.”

INTRODUCTION

The shortfall in affordable housing is a major challenge facing both urban and rural communities. The issue was a key part of the Countryside Alliance Rural Manifesto published in May 2009, which stated that rural housing need must be seen as a priority for any incoming government.

The importance of creating inexpensive housing in the countryside has been identified by several different government agencies.

THE PROBLEM

The availability of affordable housing is vital for all communities. However, because rural areas are different economically, structurally and geographically the solutions required need to take account of these differences.

A lack of affordable homes creates a vicious cycle which if not broken leads to the break-up of communities, a loss of services and results in villages that have no long term future.

With the movement of population from cities to the countryside the rural population has grown by 800,000 people in the last decade, twice the rate of urban areas, driving up house prices and pricing young families out of the communities in which they work and in which they have often been brought up. This problem is one of particular concern in the agricultural sector and among key workers.

Rural housing remains less affordable than in urban areas where average prices are 5.4 times average annual earnings in the countryside. Those young people unable to find homes often move to urban areas, placing a further strain on affordable housing in these areas. This can also increase the distance people travel to work with the negative environmental consequences.

Homes and jobs need to go together. Without homes and jobs there is no community to support local shops, schools and services.

THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

There is, at last, widespread recognition that adequate provision of affordable rural housing is key to the future of the countryside and its communities, and a growing consensus as to the way forward. A number of steps have been taken in the light of the report of the Affordable Rural Housing Commission (ARHC) 2006, and the 2008 Taylor Review.

1. Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing (PPS3) which requires planning authorities to take a positive approach to the provision of affordable rural housing, and it emphasises the need for well designed housing and that in considering sights account should be taken of the

contribution that growth can bring to meeting social, economic and environmental needs of small communities.

2. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Tenants Services Authority (TSA) were established in 2008 and local authorities have been vested with additional powers and responsibilities, including working more closely with other public and private sector interests through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).
 - This year the HCA has exceeded its housing target by 65 per cent
 - It will also surpass its three year rural housing target of 8,500 homes to deliver a total of 8,993 between 2008 – 2011

However, not enough is happening or fast enough and the problem continues to worsen year on year. The 'achievement' of the HCA of meeting its target to build 8,500 rural homes over a three year period is pitiful – considering the identified housing need in 2010/2011 in England alone was 76,532 homes.

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESEARCH

Research undertaken by the Countryside Alliance across the country in both urban and rural areas shows the enormous shortfall in affordable housing provision. We undertook a Freedom of Information request asking all local authorities how many affordable homes were identified as needed in the latest Housing Needs Survey, and the date of that survey and how many affordable homes they planned for 2010/2011.

The Results are summarised below:

England, Wales and Scotland

- Of the 384 councils in England, Wales and Scotland, with responsibility for housing, 311 or 81 per cent responded of which 306 or 79 per cent provided data which could be used.
- Based on the latest Housing Needs Surveys/Strategic Housing Market Assessments for these councils, there was an identified need for over 230,547 new affordable units.
- In 2010/11 the councils hoped to create just 54,187 new affordable housing units, representing only 24 per cent of identified need.
- This would be an annual shortfall of 76 per cent or 176,360 affordable units in 2010/11.
- On average, councils only planned to meet 36 per cent of their shortfall in the financial year 2010/11.

England – Rural and semi-rural

- Of the 158 rural and semi-rural councils in England, 135 or 85 per cent, responded.
- Of those councils which responded there was an identified annual need of 76,532 new affordable units.
- The delivery targets set for 2010/11 amounted to 17,208 or 22 per cent of the identified need.
- On average rural and semi rural councils targets for new affordable housing only amounted to 29 per cent of identified need in 2010/11.

Wales

- In Wales 18 of the 22 councils, 82 per cent, responded.
- The annual identified shortfall in affordable homes was 10,713.
- In 2010/11 the councils planned 3,348 new affordable homes, representing only 31 per cent of the identified need.
- On average rural targets for new affordable housing in Wales only amounted 49 per cent of identified need in 2010/11.

Scotland

- Of the 32 councils in Scotland, 21, 66 per cent, responded. The remaining 11 councils did not respond or did not provide useable data.
- Of those councils which responded there was an identified annual need of 8,095 new affordable units.
- The delivery targets set for 2010/11 amounted to 4,456 or 55 per cent of the identified need.

APPENDIX

Table showing response of rural and semi-rural councils to FOI request

**Where there is no value in the table it shows that the council did not respond to the request*

Local authority	Date of Housing Needs Survey	Annual Need - Number of Homes	Number of Homes Planned 10/11	% of need 10/11
Allerdale Borough Council				
Amber Valley Borough Council	2008	567	50	9%
Ashford Borough Council	2005	655	440	67%
Aylesbury Vale District Council	2008	790	150	19%
Babergh District Council	2008	369	222	60%
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	2007	580	200	34%
Bassetlaw District Council	2007	591	106	18%
Bath & North East Somerset Council	2009	847	142	17%
Bedford Borough Council	2003	200	200	100%
Central Bedfordshire Council				
Bolsover District Council	2007	310	110	35%
Boston Borough Council				
Braintree District Council	2008	697	110	16%
Breckland Council	2007	964	100	10%
Brentwood Borough Council	2005	576	43	7%
Broadland District Council				
Bromsgrove District Council	2008	70	58	83%
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	2005	720	154	21%
Cannock Chase District Council				
Carlisle City Council	2006	221	116	52%
Cherwell District Council	2008	500	200	40%
Cheshire East Council		978	526	54%
Cheshire West and Chester Council				
Chichester District Council	2009	360	124	34%
Chiltern District Council	2008	272	66	24%
Chorley Borough Council	2008	379	50	13%
Colchester Borough Council	2008	1082	136	13%
Copeland Borough Council	2009	255	41	16%
Cornwall Council				
Cotswold District Council				
Council of The Isles of Scilly				
Craven District Council	2005	288	148	51%
Dacorum Borough Council	2004	710	197	28%
Daventry District Council				
Derbyshire Dales District Council	2007	263	123	47%
Dover District Council	2009	1489	126	8%
Durham County Council	2008	551	450	82%
East Cambridgeshire District Council	2008	570	135	24%
East Devon District Council	2007	250	164	66%

East Dorset District Council	2008	440	23	5%
East Hampshire District Council	2007	280	60	21%
East Herts Council	2005	484	79	16%
East Lindsey District Council	2006	1112	120	11%
East Northamptonshire District Council	2007	255	70	27%
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	2007	1400	125	9%
East Staffordshire Borough Council	2008	293	43	15%
Eastleigh Borough Council	2006	672	150	22%
Eden District Council				
Epping Forest District Council	2003	642	317	49%
Fenland District Council	2008	527	113	21%
Forest Heath District Council	2005	239	100	42%
Forest of Dean District Council	2009	298	152	51%
Fylde Borough Council				
Great Yarmouth Borough Council				
Guildford Borough Council	2009	1194	86	7%
Hambleton District Council	2004	113	100	88%
Harborough District Council	2009	264	107	41%
Harrogate Borough Council	2009	830	160	19%
Hart District Council	2008	419	111	26%
Herefordshire Council	2008	1113	275	25%
Hertsmere Borough Council	2005	351	66	19%
High Peak Borough Council				
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	2009	290	103	36%
Horsham District Council	2009	260	166	64%
Huntingdonshire District Council	2008	1000	200	20%
Isle of Wight Council	2007	1595	147	9%
Kettering Borough Council	2007	481	157	33%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council	2007	797		0%
Lancaster City Council	2008	495	63	13%
Lewes District Council	2005	566	60	11%
Lichfield District Council	2008	581	50	9%
Maidstone Borough Council	2005	962	186	19%
Maldon District Council	2008	301	31	10%
Malvern Hills District Council	2007	81	54	67%
Melton Borough Council	2008	143	28	20%
Mendip District Council	2009	324	85	26%
Mid Devon District Council	2007	223	100	45%
Mid Suffolk District Council				
Mid Sussex District Council	2009	357	62	17%
Mole Valley District Council	2007	1070	50	5%
New Forest District Council	2007	600	100	17%
Newark & Sherwood District Council	2003	614	38	6%
North Devon District Council	2008	821	48	6%
North Dorset District Council	2008	399	110	28%
North East Derbyshire District Council	2006	442	63	14%
North Hertfordshire District Council	2006	634	120	19%
North Kesteven District Council				

North Lincolnshire Council	2008	373	86	23%
North Norfolk District Council	2006	921	100	11%
North Somerset Council	2009	756	150	20%
North Warwickshire Borough Council	2008	281	60	21%
North West Leicestershire District Council	2008	355	178	50%
Northumberland County Council				
Purbeck District Council	2008	409	13	3%
Redcar & Cleveland Council	2009	53	55	104%
Ribble Valley Borough Council	2008	264		0%
Richmondshire District Council	2008	83	28	34%
Rother District Council	2005	256	92	36%
Rugby Borough Council	2008	245	99	40%
Rushcliffe Borough Council	2009	320	50	16%
Rutland County Council	2008	133	36	27%
Ryedale District Council	2007	292	34	12%
Scarborough Borough Council	2007	640	83	13%
Sedgemoor District Council				
Selby District Council		409	111	27%
Sevenoaks District Council	2008	948	71	7%
Shepway District Council	2009	1318	144	11%
Shropshire Council	2008	1585	456	29%
South Bucks District Council	2008	459	32	7%
South Cambridgeshire District Council	2008	1109	310	28%
South Derbyshire District Council	2008	396	115	29%
South Hams District Council	2006	606	113	19%
South Holland District Council	2008	475	140	29%
South Kesteven District Council	2006	646	117	18%
South Lakeland District Council	2006	685	142	21%
South Norfolk District Council	2006	121	233	193%
South Northamptonshire Council	2004	672	57	8%
South Oxfordshire District Council				
South Somerset District Council	2009	659	255	39%
South Staffordshire Council	2008	547	100	18%
St Albans City & District Council	2006	722	105	15%
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	2005	284	174	61%
Stafford Borough Council	2004	536	80	15%
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	2008	429	80	19%
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	2009	532	37	7%
Stroud District Council	2008	298	71	24%
Suffolk Coastal District Council	2006	569	77	14%
Swale Borough Council				
Tandridge District Council	2008	449	110	24%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	2008	584	200	34%
Teignbridge District Council	2007	303	100	33%
Tendring District Council	2008	1579		0%
Test Valley Borough Council	2007	280	537	192%
Tewkesbury Borough Council	2005	1598	112	7%
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	2008	432	100	23%

Torrige District Council	2008	400	80	20%
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2008	290	100	34%
Uttlesford District Council	2004	570	139	24%
Vale of White Horse District Council	2008	497	120	24%
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	2007	971	354	36%
Warwick District Council	2008	356	51	14%
Waveney District Council				
Waverley Borough Council	2008	515	61	12%
Wealden District Council	2005	874	200	23%
Wellingborough Borough Council	2007	133	85	64%
West Berkshire Council	2007	560	139	25%
West Devon Borough Council	2008	354	134	38%
West Dorset District Council	2007	653	110	17%
West Lancashire District Council				
West Lindsey District Council	2007	518	100	19%
West Oxfordshire District Council	2008	567	110	19%
West Somerset District Council				
Wiltshire Council	2006	2731	590	22%
Winchester City Council	2007	310	177	57%
Wychavon District Council	2007	292	46	16%
Wycombe District Council	2008	425	150	35%
Wyre Borough Council	2008	570	206	36%
Wyre Forest District Council	2009	269	48	18%
Identified affordable housing need		76532	17208	22%
Average affordable housing need		566.9037037	130.3636364	29%