

Rural affordable housing in Cambridgeshire

We'll support you to deliver the affordable homes that people in your community need.



What is rural affordable housing?

The rural affordable housing that Cambridgeshire ACRE helps deliver is normally built on 'rural exception sites'. These are sites outside the village development boundary on land not otherwise suitable for development. The schemes are small and in keeping with the size, scale and character of the village.

The resulting homes are made available for social rent^a, affordable rent^b or shared ownership^c. Very occasionally, a small number of open market homes may be permitted to make the scheme financially viable. The homes are provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Rural affordable housing is a valuable community asset, bringing forward the affordable homes that local people need. The homes have a local connection criteria, meaning that they are for people who live, work or have family connections to the parish. The homes will also stay affordable in perpetuity and will not become open market homes in the future.

^a Low cost rent set by a government formula.

^b Rent set at up to 80% of market rent.

^c Where you buy a share of between 10% – 75% of a property and pay rent on the remaining share.



Our offer of support

Cambridgeshire ACRE can support your parish council to bring forward a small rural affordable housing development that is right for your community.

Our experienced rural housing enablers will work with you throughout the development process.

These are the ways we will support you:



By explaining rural housing and the rural affordable housing process

It is important that you understand how this could work in your parish. We will visit you to talk about this and answer any questions you might have about rural exception sites, housing tenures, local connections and allocations policies.



By undertaking a housing needs survey

We will establish the demand for affordable housing in your parish by carrying out an independent housing needs survey and report back to you on the results.



By bringing the right delivery partners together

We will facilitate conversations and partnership working between you and your local District Council, potential housing association partners and potential landowners.



By identifying potential sites for affordable housing development

We will help organise and facilitate parish walks to identify potential land for development and can also support you through the process of issuing a call for land.



By working with you and your local community

We will work closely with you throughout the entire process by attending meetings, presenting findings and supporting engagement with your wider community.

Free dedicated support for your parish council

Our rural housing enablers provide dedicated support to parish councils that are interested in embarking on a rural affordable housing development. This offer of support is available to any parish council in Cambridgeshire. Support is available by phone or email and, where appropriate, we will also visit you in person. This is what we do at each stage:

Initial engagement

- Visit to the parish council.
- Explain process and answer questions.
- Gain agreement to proceed with a housing needs survey.

Finding a site

- Work with the parish council, housing association and local authority to find a site.
- Support the housing association with negotiations with landowner.
- Support discussions over plans for site.
- Support continued community consultation.

Allocating homes

- Remind the community of the need to apply to the housing register if they wish to apply to live in the homes.
- Note how homes are allocated.

- Find a housing association to sponsor the survey.
- Conduct the survey.
- Present the findings.

Establishing need

- The housing association applies for planning permission and a grant to fund the development.
- On site development starts.
- Support the parish council to keep the community engaged

Plan and build

About Cambridgeshire ACRE

Cambridgeshire ACRE is an independent charity and part of the national ACRE Network.

Our vision is of thriving rural communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We provide advice and help to rural communities to enable them to seize opportunities and drive their community projects forward.

Through our leadership of the Cambridgeshire Rural Affordable Housing Partnership, we help communities bring forward new affordable homes. Our partners include four local authorities and six housing associations across Cambridgeshire.

We act as an impartial broker, supporting the best interests of the community and ensuring that any development meets the needs of the area. This is important in protecting and maintaining the character of our rural communities whilst supporting current and future housing demand.

Since 2013, we have undertaken 70 independent housing needs surveys and, as a result, almost 400 affordable homes across more than 30 schemes have been delivered.

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How do I find out more?

If you would like more information on how Cambridgeshire ACRE can help your community meet local housing needs, then please get in touch.

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Keep up to date on Cambridgeshire ACRE's work by visiting our website www.camsacre.org.uk or find us on social media by searching for [@camsacre](https://www.instagram.com/camsacre)

