**PRESS RELEASE**

30th April 2024 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Some good news to help fight the rural housing crisis**

There is a crisis in the availability of affordable housing in rural areas.  Whilst 17% of development in urban areas is considered affordable, only 9% of development in villages is affordable.  This inequality is stifling economic growth in rural areas and undermining the social fabric of many communities.

Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD) has received a new package of government funding to begin a new project to help communities in Derbyshire unlock affordable housing opportunities in rural areas.

Rural villages can be transformed by small schemes of well designed, affordable rented homes which are only available only to people with local connections.  This means the people can live where they want to live, whether to be close to family, for work or because they are rooted in their community.

These schemes do far more than provide homes for local people.  They invigorate the local economy, provide essential key workers in schools, care homes and a local workforce for rural businesses in shops, pubs, farms, and tourist attractions.

For many villages, Rural Exception Sites are the only form of residential development allowed under local planning rules to meet the needs of local residents. Some villages have produced a Neighbourhood Plan and identified suitable sites. Others may not have considered what their local housing needs are. In either case, RAD’s Rural Housing Enablement team can help to help deliver the Government’s goal of increasing the supply of affordable homes in rural areas, set out in their 2023 *Unleashing Rural Opportunity* strategy.

RAD will be working with Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) to organise a series of events over the next 6 months. Parish Councils, community groups and landowners will be able to find out how they can work with RAD to identify local housing needs and suitable sites for the development of affordable homes in rural areas.

Beverley Parker, CEO at Rural Action Derbyshire said “We are pleased that Defra has made funds available to address the shortage of affordable homes in rural areas. Young families and older people often find that they cannot afford homes in the village where they have spent most of their lives. Building more affordable homes in rural areas for local people helps make communities stronger and more sustainable. We are looking forward to working with Midlands Rural Housing to help bring forward new schemes in Derbyshire.”

If you want to know more, register your interest by emailing [info@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk) or visit the RAD website to sign up for Rural Housing News to receive newsletters and information about events. RAD is keen to identify rural communities around Derbyshire to work with on affordable housing needs and identifying potential Rural Exception Sights.

### ENDS

### For further information please contact Emma Simpson, RAD Communications on 07540 736118, [e.simpson@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk](mailto:e.simpson@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk) or Beverley Parker, CEO on 07738 983656 [b.parker@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk](mailto:b.parker@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk)

**Notes to editors:**

[**Rural Action Derbyshire**](https://www.ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk/Default.aspx) **(RAD)**, formerly Derbyshire Rural Community Council, is an independent organisation and registered charity operating across the county since 1924. RAD aims to improve the life of those living and working in rural Derbyshire, by providing direct services to help people and groups in rural communities, and by raising awareness of the issues faced by rural communities. For more information go to the [RAD website](http://www.ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk/). RAD is a network member of ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).