

Wanted - Land for Affordable Housing in Cambridgeshire

Do you own a piece of land just outside the village development envelope which is suitable for affordable housing? It could be agricultural land or wasteland, a piece of land owned by an individual, a parish council or a church or village hall. The land must be opposite or adjacent to existing houses. It would be best if it did not contain buildings, either intact or fallen down. It must not be in an area prone to flooding or an area designated of historical significance, although if you are unsure, please contact me so that I can investigate further.

An acre of land would be sufficient for around 10 dwellings. The land is purchased at below market value but above agricultural land value. The actual level depends on market circumstances and is done on a case by case basis.

As a result of the different pressures on land and local economies, rural areas are suffering from a severe shortage of affordable housing. Surveys in the Cambridgeshire area show a rising level of need as people are facing long queues for affordable housing, in some cases they may have been on a list for years with no hope of finding local affordable accommodation.

Through the Rural Housing Project, people who want to live in rural areas and ensure communities continue to thrive are given the opportunity to state their needs and as a result of this new housing has come forward to enable people to stay in the place they have lived for many years. Affordable housing enables people on low income to afford suitable accommodation for their needs and for people working in essential services to live in the area where they work.

The average age of the first mortgage is now 38, with some help from the family it is 28. For those people who still have their children at home, even though they are grown up and in their 20s or 30s it may prove a vital opportunity for them to move on to more suitable homes.

Key issues

- Rural areas suffer from affordability problems for first time buyers and young families, older people who are homeless or in unsuitable accommodation and cannot afford privately rented accommodation.
- Landowners can sell land for affordable housing development at below market values but above agricultural land values to enable affordable housing to be developed.
- Affordable homes will be protected to ensure they remain available and do not enter the general for sale market.

Comments from a recent housing survey

"It would be nice if new housing could be for young couples."

"Of course, surely everyone would be in favour if they have the village needs at heart."

"I would like to see houses to rent, which is more important than houses for people to buy."

"Starter homes, small family homes and key worker housing is needed for a generation of children trapped in service industry jobs and a bleak economic outlook for the next 5 - 10 years. People with degrees and diplomas are working in low paid service sector jobs. They cannot afford normal rents or save for their own house."

If you are in need yourself

If you are in need of affordable housing and would like to find out if you qualify, then visit HomeLink at <http://www.home-link.org.uk/> or speak to your local district council. It is important that you register; it helps to gauge the true level of need for each village and to plan for the future.

Contact details

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All queries will be dealt with in confidence.