

A photograph of a residential building in a rural setting. In the foreground, there is a stone wall and a wooden bench with a metal frame. The building is a long, two-story structure with a gabled roof and several windows. A white car is parked on the left side of the building. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape.

# **To Hills and Beyond – Taking Forward Affordable Rural Housing**

**Peter Dixon**  
**Chairman, Housing Corporation**

Photo: Home HG, Kielder Village, Northumberland

# Rural Housing Advisory Group

- Chaired by Corporation
- First meeting 22 May 2007
- Members – rural stakeholders from many organisations
- Aims
  - Advising the Government on delivery mechanisms for affordable rural housing,
  - Identifying and promoting innovative approaches,
  - Promoting joint working



# Rural Housing Advisory Group (2)

Key actions agreed:

1. Development of website
  - to bring together good practice in delivering affordable rural housing
  - to promote work of the group
  - to communicate with stakeholders
2. Hastoe Project
3. Looking at successful schemes - 'on the ground' experiences



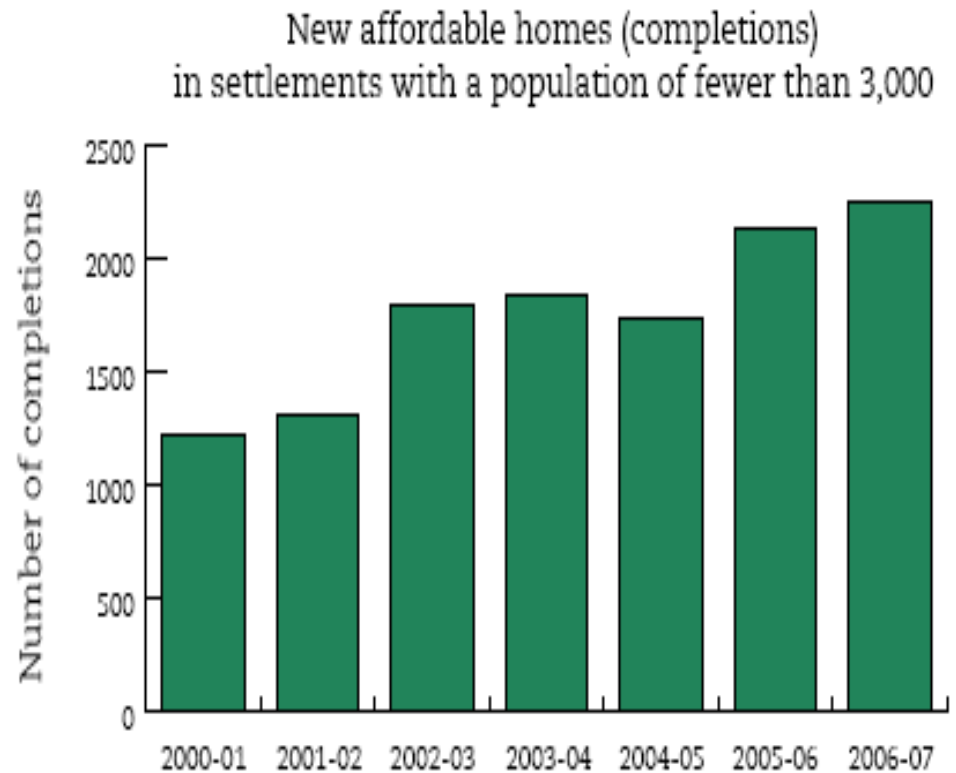
# The Changing Role of Housing Providers: Hills Report

- Mixed communities key for existing & future social housing — good housing, areas, schools, services
- Aim to get social and geographic mobility
- Infrastructure
- Build links of housing and employment bodies
- Varied menu of social housing products to serve these aims
- Refers to Affordable Rural Housing Commission Report



# What we've done so far

- 11,000 homes in rural settlements under 3,000 since 2001
- Contribution growing - 9% of all homes in 2006/08 programme will be in rural settlements
- 5,500 homes in 2006/08 programme in settlements under 10,000



# ‘Communities and the Countryside’

- Refreshed Rural Housing Strategy
- Engaging with Planning authorities to identify and disseminate good practice
- Encouraging lower thresholds for requiring affordable housing
- Continuing to invest in research
- Joint work with Defra on Existing Stock in rural areas



# Joint research with Defra

- Important to understand existing stock in rural areas
- University of Birkbeck have looked into levels of stock
- We will be looking at research to decide on how we can focus next steps
- Key part of strategy to improve our data sets/knowledge



# Hastoe Project

- Funded by IGP
- Looking at:
  - Improving land availability
  - New models of funding affordable rural housing
  - Little or no SHG
  - Report will detail innovative schemes that have either never been tried or have been trialled only once
  - Will report to the Rural Advisory Group at September meeting



# Going forward into 2008/11

- Prospectus for the 2008/11 Affordable Housing Programme
- Encouraging regional housing boards to set regional targets for settlements <3000
- Looking at cap on plot values for exception sites
- Support for maintaining staircasing restrictions on exception sites



# Communities England – Working with Our Partners

- Local Government Protocols
- Developing joint pipeline plans
- Reflecting local PPS3 priorities
- Section 106
- Presence at Regional Assembly level, working to keep rural targets a priority:
  - Regional Spatial Strategies
  - Regional Housing Boards



# Design Quality

- 'Building for Life' – working with CABE
- HC's recent Design Week
- Design Champion's Networks – engaging with rural providers
- Active in 3 regions, SW, SE and Central



# The Future – Leaner and Greener

- Delivering more affordable rural housing & improving existing stock
- Driving efficiency and unlocking RSL capacity = more for less
- Successful bid for funding under CSR2007, based on record of delivery and promise of more to come
- Improving environmental standards
  - ‘Procuring the Future’
  - Code for Sustainable Homes





**AFFORDABLE HOMES STRONG COMMUNITIES**