



A grant-making partner for the social housing sector

Project title: The role of social housing in the rural context - building homes and resilience in communities - research brief

The absence of sufficient affordable rural homes means that many households are unable to afford to remain within their communities – resulting in the breakdown of support networks and economies. Truly affordable homes help to maintain schools, shops, and pubs - they keep families and support networks intact reducing isolation and risks to vulnerable households.

1. Introduction

The absence of sufficient affordable homes in our rural communities is not a new problem but it has got worse in recent years. High property values, increased aspirations to live in the countryside, especially since the rise in remote working, and limited development of new homes have all had an impact, resulting in many local households now being unable to afford to remain within the rural community where they have grown up and have support networks.

It is vital that villages attract and retain a balance of income earners and household types which in turn provide and stimulate local economies by creating jobs, customers for local businesses and somewhere for a local, often low-income, workforce to live. Truly affordable homes help to maintain schools, shops, and pubs - they keep families and support networks intact reducing isolation and risks to vulnerable households.

The findings will be used to raise the profile of the challenges for social housing residents living in rural communities, and the wider rural community context – identify the solutions and ultimately assist social landlords to better meet the needs of rural communities.

2. Objectives

Longleigh Foundation is seeking to commission research that will:

1. Understand the suitability of existing stock to meet the needs of existing rural social housing communities, (for example exploring energy efficiency in a rural context)
2. Summarise how the widely recognised barriers to rural housing development—such as planning restrictions, challenges in delivering

projects after planning consent, and limited funding—affect the ability to provide homes that support community resilience.

3. Then, outline the necessary changes to ensure that the right homes are built to enable rural communities to flourish, building on the successes of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) other rural specialists as well as non specialists (such as Stonewater and Livewest as well as others) who are building in rural areas as parts of their programme, that will be deliverable at a national scale.
4. Identify what the key 'Ask(s)' is of the government in order to support rural development that in turn supports a thriving community.

The research will include:

- Desktop studies of existing research on the issue, and summaries of existing government policies, and issues with planning and development.
- Conversations with expert organisations in the field
- Consultation with diverse social housing residents, and wider low income community members.
- Potentially convening a steering group of experts in the field, to volunteer to act as a sounding board for the research as it progresses.

3. Timescales

We would like to commission an organisation who is experienced and knowledgeable about the sector to carry out this research and are inviting tenders from interested parties.

We are inviting organisations to tender for this work by midday Monday 20th January 2025. We expect to meet with shortlisted organisations week commencing 3rd February 2025 and make a decision by 11th February 2025

We would like to conduct and conclude this research as soon as possible, and would like the report finalised by midday on 16th June 2025., in time to share the results in rural housing week 2025 (first week in July 2025).

4. Budget

We are keen to hear from organisations who think they can deliver excellent value for money in carrying out this research.

We are open to considering tenders based on a range of options and prices, but our overall budget for this work is £55,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses).

5. Assessment criteria

Evaluation of bids will be made as follows:

- 45% - Please outline in detail how you plan to deliver the required outcomes and outputs as listed in the brief including a detailed timeline.
- 10% - Please provide a relevant case study.

- 15% - Please set out your team's experience/background and who will make up the project team.
- 30% - Total expected costs.

Particular attention when evaluating bids will be given to the following factors:

- Deliverability
- Credibility and track record
- Robustness of methodology, including proposed consultation with tenants

While no formal weighting will be applied to these criteria, proposals on how the feasibility study will source and take account of as wide and diverse a range of tenant views as possible will be of particular interest.

Based on initial scoring we expect to invite the top-scoring organisations to an interview with the selection panel, following which an appointment decision will be made.

6. Contact

Lead contact on the initial commissioning of the research project is Aileen Edmunds Chief Executive, Longleigh Foundation.

We will advise the appointed research organisation of day-to-day contact.

7. Proposals submission:

Bids for this work should be provided to research@longleigh.org setting out the details listed below, **in the response document provided below**, to achieve the outcomes above by midday on 16th June 2025.

- Please outline in detail how you plan to deliver the required outcomes and outputs as listed in the brief including a detailed timeline.
- Please provide a relevant case study.
- Please set out your team's experience/background and who will make up the project team.
- Breakdown of costs.