

Rural exception housing

PROJECT FACTS

Client:	Arena Housing Association and McInerney Homes
Location:	Tattenhall, Cheshire
Proposal:	14 affordable homes
Site area:	0.42 ha.
Local Authority:	Cheshire West and Chester



Mosaic has experience in working with residential developers, housing associations and communities to provide rural housing to serve local needs. 'Rural exception' policy allows for planning approvals on sites within or adjoining villages which would not be released for market housing, due to restrictive planning controls in the open countryside. This reduces the need for local people, especially the young, to move way to find housing. It therefore preserves the vitality and viability of rural services and communities.

This case involved fourteen 2 and 3-bedroomed affordable houses to be managed by Arena Housing Association, on a greenfield site adjoining the village boundary of Tattenhall in Cheshire.

As an exception to the planning policies which would otherwise apply, these schemes present a number of challenges:

- Convincing evidence must be provided of need, including the number, size and tenure of dwellings
- An acceptance of need by the wider local community does not prevent objections from affected adjacent residents
- Ensuring an appropriate scale and design in an often sensitive setting

After Mosaic successfully obtained planning approval, the houses were completed in 2010. All were then offered to residents who could demonstrate a local connection. The Parish Council went on to record its satisfaction with the scheme.

We were able to achieve this through:

- Compiling evidence of need by using published data, engaging with the Council's Rural Housing Enabler and analysing a questionnaire produced for an open evening
- Agreeing controls by which occupancy would be limited to those with a genuine local connection through a legal agreement
- Demonstrating to the Council the suitability of the individual site compared with alternatives which had been considered
- Undertaking consultation with the Parish Council and local residents to ensure the scale and design of the scheme is appropriate to its surroundings



Mosaic can provide the expertise required to help residential developers overcome the specific obstacles associated with obtaining permission for 'rural exception' housing schemes. Their location is such that a more sensitive approach to that required for sites within urban areas is necessary.