

PRESS RELEASE



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Development of farm buildings under the new 'Home on the Farm' initiative

The creation of affordable housing within rural communities is one of the main aims of the coalition government. One of the ways in which this is sought to be achieved is through the new 'Home on the Farm' initiative, announced by The Department for Communities and Local Government, which is being supported by DEFRA.

The main aim of this initiative is to form a relationship between the local councils and farmers to ensure that farm buildings that are currently 'redundant or underused' for various reasons can be redeveloped in to affordable housing. These buildings will then be deemed to serve a more 'constructive' purpose than at present.

The affordable housing will be aimed towards the local communities' population; this is to include farm workers and non farm workers in the community. The initiative will therefore tackle the issues of declining sustainability, and aims to help decrease the problems associated with it. At present, many rural communities are under threat due to high property prices and increasing demand.

Communities Minister Andrew Stunell added that "One small step for councils will offer a significant opportunity for communities to get the new and affordable homes their villages need."

The government has therefore advised that under the construction of the local planning authorities newly developed Local Plans, they should consider the 'Home on the Farm' initiative. This therefore suggests a shift in approach of many local planning authorities, with rural areas seeing development that was traditionally restricted. Applications of this nature should be seen more favourably by local councils, and approval under the scheme more appealing.

The initiative will create an opportunity for farmers and the local communities to help reduce the problems that many rural people and their economies are facing, combined with maximising the use of many farm buildings.

Alastair Wilson of BCM commented "There is a real shortage of affordable dwellings in our rural communities and this is an opportunity for farmers to utilise redundant buildings, which are unsuitable for employment purposes. We just hope that local authorities embrace the initiative and actively encourage farmers to bring forward suitable sites".

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