

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

6 June 2023

Housing Allocation Policy Task Group

Background

1. In January 2023, the council commenced a review of its allocation policy. The policy confirms the way in which social housing across Wiltshire are let, to ensure that people have homes that meet their needs, giving priority to those in greatest need and making best use of limited social housing stock. The review will look at who is housed and why, what is working well and what needs to change. Following a formal three-month consultation in the autumn the council will implement the new policy during 2024, following full council approval.
2. The select committee agreed to set up a Housing Allocations Policy task group following the report presented to the committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023.

Membership

Cllr Ian McLennan
Cllr Iain Wallis
Cllr Bob Jones
Cllr Jerry Kunkler
Cllr Jonathan Seed
Cllr Mike Sankey

Draft terms of reference

- a) To support the development of a Housing Allocations policy which aims to house those in greatest need, create realistic expectations about being housed for those on the register and makes the best use of the councils limited housing stock.
- b) To review how well the current Housing Allocations policy is working.
- c) To consider the following areas and to make recommendations on whether:
 - To retain local connection as a priority for re housing and the impact of this policy.
 - To retain, increase or develop the four bands.
 - To increase the financial affordability threshold.
 - To introduce a time limit for those awarded the highest band.
 - Sharing facilities is a housing need.

- Individuals who are homeless have choice or should the council be placing bids for them when in temporary accommodation to facilitate a rapid move.
- d) To make recommendations to the Environment Select Committee by 19 September 2023.

Note that one of the first responsibilities of the task group will be to review and refine the draft terms of reference.

Climate Emergency Task Group

Background

3. The Climate Emergency Task Group (CETG) is a standing task group reporting to the Environment Select Committee. The task group's initial terms of reference were endorsed by the Select Committee on 3 September 2019 and were revised on 9 November 2021.
4. The task group has produced two reports with recommendations:
 - Energy and Transport & Air quality (29 September 2020)
 - Planning (13 January 2021)
5. At its meeting on 14 June 2022 the Select Committee approved the continuation of the task group 2022/23.
6. The task group's last update to the Select Committee was on [4 January 2023](#).

Membership

7. The membership of the task group from July 2021 is as follows:

Cllr Clare Cape
Cllr Sarah Gibson
Cllr Tony Jackson
Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Brian Mathew
Cllr Nick Murry
Cllr David Vigar
Cllr Ian Wallis
Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman)

Terms of Reference:

8. The task group's revised terms of reference were endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on the 9 November 2021. These are:
 - a) To help shape and influence the development of Wiltshire Council's programme (in all relevant areas) for meeting its objective of making Wiltshire Council carbon neutral and seeking to make the county of Wiltshire

carbon neutral by 2030 (excluding the geographical area administered by Swindon Borough Council).

- b) To scrutinise the delivery of this objective through the Climate Strategy (2022-2027) and its delivery plans, as well as key plans, policies, and programmes, such as the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Including the way in which the Council is measuring progress and how it is performing and reporting against baselines.
- c) To provide recommendations on other aspects of decarbonising the county including partnership working and community-led approaches as well as acting as a national role model.

Recent Activity

Rollalong Visit (24 January 2023)

9. Members of the task group visited [Rollalong](#) in Dorset which is where new build council houses are made as modules off-site, before being constructed on-site.

Workshops – offsetting Wiltshire’s greenhouse emissions (23 January / 9 February 2023)

10. The task group has been involved in a number of workshops facilitated by the Anthesis consultancy discussing approaches to offsetting the council’s emissions. Offsetting will occur only when other options have been exhausted.
11. The task group discussed the following:
 - The challenges facing developing an effective offsetting plan particularly the limited supply of local offsets and how to monitor their effectiveness.
 - Projects should be delivered to defined rules and delivered locally.
 - How the council’s involvement in projects will be varied as a fundraiser, developer, and partner.
 - Potential projects such as tree planting, renewable energy assets and energy efficiency.
 - Potential opportunities and initiatives, such as the Salisbury river park.

Update on the council’s response to the climate emergency (28 April 2023)

12. The task group received the update report before it went to Cabinet (2 May 2023) and Full Council (16 May 2023).
13. The task group were updated on the following:
 - The council securing funding from the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUGS2) to upgrade houses energy efficiency, mostly those in rural areas, but county wide.
 - Funding having been awarded for an expanded tree planting programme.

- The Solar Together scheme delivering 700 solar panels, another round will be launched soon.
- More re-usable items are being collected at recycling centres. There is also a pilot recycling scheme at four leisure centres.
- The [Bikeability](#) programme is on-going with children in Wiltshire. Electric vehicle (EV) charge points feasibility studies are being undertaken across the county.
- The [Warm & Safe Wiltshire](#) service will be extended.
- Libraries now have more resources available relating to climate change.
- Carbon Literacy training is on-going, and Councillors will receive the opportunity to take part.
- Solar and air source heat pumps have been added to leisure centres.
- A socially responsible procurement programme has been introduced, the highways contract was tendered in this way.
- There is now telematics in all fleet vehicles.
- The Climate Team will increase its capacity shortly.

14. The task group raised the following issues:

- The potential to sequester carbon from the atmosphere by changing agricultural practices.
- The next reports to include future activity, particularly potentially larger programmes.
- Solar panels on schools and how to encourage uptake.
- Consideration to be given to mapping activity, which could help in identifying local communities that are not engaging.

Briefing – offsetting Wiltshire’s greenhouse emissions (23 May 2023)

15. Members of the task group were invited to a briefing by the Anthesis consultancy regarding approaches to offsetting the council’s emissions. Offsetting will occur only when other options have been exhausted.

16. The following was discussed:

- The purpose of offsetting and the objectives of the report i.e., mitigating emissions that cannot be avoided or reduced.
- The three principles of offsetting: permanence, additionality, and verification.
- The difference between compliance and voluntary offsetting
- The recommendation that any offsetting programmes, in the main, be local and therefore retain investment and co-benefits locally.

Helping fuel-poor households improve home efficiency / funding retrofitting (25 May 2023)

17. The task group received an update on the council’s programmes to support fuel-poor households. This is part of the council’s Climate Strategy.

18. The task group were updated on the following:

- The range of different schemes being delivered to assist fuel poor households e.g., Warm & Safe Wiltshire, Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2).
- The lessons learnt from the HUG1 programme.
- The funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund for two programmes in Wiltshire – a retrofitting and a green skills programme.
- The Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP) and work being undertaken separately by Housing Associations.

19. The task group raised the following issues:

- How the programmes might be publicised more widely.
- Support for vulnerable people
- Dealing with houses that are too expensive to retrofit.
- What measures were being undertaken to ensure that damp and condensation did not become an issue in retrofitted homes.

Forward work plan

20. The Climate Emergency Task Group forward plan is attached at Appendix 2.

Proposals

That the select committee:

- 1. Appoints the membership of the Housing Allocation Policy Task Group as listed in the report.**
- 2. Notes the draft terms of reference of the Housing Allocation Policy Task Group.**
- 3. Re-appoints the Climate Emergency task group and the membership listed in the report, with the commencement of the 2023/24 Council year.**
- 4. Notes the update on the Task Group activity provided above.**
- 5. Notes the activity of the Climate Emergency Task Group (June 2022/June 2023), see Appendix 1.**
- 6. Notes the Climate Emergency Task Group's draft forward work plan, see Appendix 2.**

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group

Report author: Simon Bennet, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 01225 718709,
email: simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Climate Emergency Task Group – Activity June 2022 / June 2023

5 August 2022	Climate Strategy – delivery plans The task group scrutinised the draft delivery plans for the Climate Strategy.
2 September 2022	Local Cycle & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) The task group received an update on the Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and allied design guides.
16 September 2022	Use of council land for environmental mitigation The task group received a briefing regarding a review of council land ownership.
20 November 2022	Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan The task group reviewed and commented upon the current Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, which was revised in 2016, ahead of re-drafting the plan.
24 January 2023	Rollalong Visit Members of the task group visited Rollalong in Dorset which is where new build council houses are made as modules off-site, before being constructed on-site.
23 January 2023 9 February 2023	Workshops – offsetting Wiltshire’s greenhouse emissions The task group has been involved in a number of workshops facilitated by the Anthesis consultancy discussing approaches to offsetting the council’s emissions.
28 April 2023	Update on the council’s response to the climate emergency The task group received the climate strategy update report before it went to Cabinet (2 May 2023) and Full Council (16 May 2023).
23 May 2023	Briefing – offsetting Wiltshire’s greenhouse emissions Members of the task group were invited to a briefing by the Anthesis consultancy regarding approaches to offsetting emissions.
25 May 2023	Helping fuel-poor households improve home efficiency / funding retrofitting. The task group received an update on the council’s programmes to support fuel-poor households.

Climate Emergency Task Group – Forward Work Plan

Oct 2023	Update on council’s response to climate emergency To receive the update report going to Cabinet (Oct 2023)
tbc	Climate Change Adaptation Plan To review the council’s draft plan.
tbc	Zero-carbon housing To understand how local authorities have addressed this in local planning.
tbc	Local Plan To understand the key elements of the plan addressing the climate emergency agenda and the overall relationship to Neighbourhood Plans.
tbc	Local Transport Plan To understand the future strategy in particular active travel, electric vehicles charging.
tbc	Update British Army Sustainability To update task group following briefing on 6 May 2022.
tbc	Natural England Funded Pilot Meeting to consider the pilot projects looking at rolling out local nature recovery planning, bio-diversity net gain and the environmental toolkit.
tbc	Biogas To explore the potential for biogas as a replacement for natural gas and use in vehicles.