

Special Agenda Item: Star Ground, Station Road, Holt – application PL/2021/09777

At the 8 May WAPC meeting, Cllr Trevor Carbin tabled an urgent agenda item pursuant to the above consented application for ten affordable (rental) dwellings which obtained planning permission on 6 October 2022 following the completion of a s106 legal agreement to deliver the following:

- 2 x 1 bed flats/maisonettes
- 2 x 2 bed bungalows
- 4 x 2 bed houses
- 2 x 3 bed houses

The PL/2021/09777 application site is shown below outlined in red – which itself, followed the completion of an earlier affordable housing exception scheme for twelve dwellings (approved under W/08/03381/FUL – with those homes being readily identifiable within the blue outline below).



The officer's report, decision notice and associated s106 for the 10-house scheme (granted under the 2021 application) are attached as an appendix for additional background information.

The officer's report clearly set out the case for the scheme to be supported as a WCS CP44 Exception site, which had the support of Holt Parish Council. Following the

granting of permission, a material start commenced in February 2023, and it is understood that the homes are now nearing completion, with a July completion date envisaged.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy continues to have primacy as the adopted Development Plan for Wiltshire and the associated development plan policy for the allocation of, or the granting of planning permission for rural exception housing sites for affordable housing continues to be Core Policy 44 which is copied below:

## **Core Policy 44**

### **Rural exceptions sites**

At settlements defined as Local Service Centres, Large and Small Villages (Core Policy 1), and those not identified within the settlement strategy, a proactive approach to the provision of affordable housing will be sought in conjunction with parish councils and working with local communities and other parties. This exception to policy allows housing for local need to be permitted, solely for affordable housing, provided that:

- i. the proposal has clear support from the local community
- ii. the housing is being delivered to meet an identified and genuine local need
- iii. the proposal is within, adjoining or well related to the existing settlement
- iv. environmental and landscape considerations will not be compromised
- v. the proposal consists of 10 dwellings or fewer
- vi. employment and services are accessible from the site
- vii. its scale and type is appropriate to the nature of the settlement and will respect the character and setting of that settlement
- viii. the affordable housing provided under this policy will always be available for defined local needs, both initially and on subsequent change of occupant.

### **Cross-subsidy**

In exceptional circumstances a proportion of market housing may be considered appropriate where it can be demonstrated that the site would be unviable, as an exception site that meets the above criteria, without cross-subsidy. It should be recognised that the inclusion of open market housing will not normally be supported. In these exceptional circumstances:

- ix. the majority of the development is for affordable housing
- x. it has been demonstrated through detailed financial appraisal that the scale of the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the development and is based on reasonable land values as an exception site
- xi. no additional subsidy for the scheme and its affordable housing delivery is required.

At the 8 May WAPC meeting, Cllr Carbin sought a statement of support from the committee to ensure that when it comes to nominations/ property allocation, the affordable homes satisfy the Council's policy in terms of qualifying persons for the 10-house scheme.

As with all affordable housing provision, the nominations/allocation must follow the Council's adopted Allocations Policy, therefore the Provider would need to advertise the property via the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme (Homes4Wiltshire).

The statutory scheme for social housing allocation is contained in Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and a Local Authority **cannot** allocate housing accommodation to a person who does not qualify to join the register.

The Homes4Wiltshire / Wiltshire Council Allocations Policy (Allocations Policy) provides the framework for Wiltshire Council and its partners for the registration and assessment of applicants for affordable homes and sets out the prioritisation criteria to ensure that those in the greatest housing need are offered affordable housing.

Section 3.7 of the Allocations Policy states that:

*'Wiltshire Council's allocation scheme considers applications from people in housing need only. Housing need is based upon current housing circumstances and any change of housing circumstances will affect housing applicants' entitlement to priority for re-housing.'*

Section 8.6 of the Allocations Policy, details the banding criteria and determines a households need as follows:

<b>Housing Register</b>	<b>Eligible to Bid for all properties</b>
Band 1 (Emergency Need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Requirement</li> <li>• Emergency Medical or Welfare need</li> <li>• Care Leavers</li> <li>• Corporate Duty</li> </ul>
Band 2 (High Need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under-occupying and suffering financial hardship (transfers only)</li> <li>• Social Care</li> <li>• Injured, sick or disabled serving or former Armed Forces personnel</li> <li>• Move on from supported accommodation</li> <li>• Urgent medical and welfare need</li> <li>• Relief of homelessness duty</li> </ul>
Band 3 (Medium Need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Fixed Abode &amp; Insecurity of tenure</li> <li>• Temporary Accommodation</li> <li>• Seriously overcrowded</li> <li>• Medical and Welfare need</li> <li>• Hardship</li> <li>• Under-occupying in social housing</li> <li>• Prevention of homelessness duty</li> <li>• Other Statutory requirements</li> </ul>
Band 4 (Low Need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacking or sharing facilities</li> <li>• Overcrowded</li> <li>• Armed Forces</li> <li>• Intentionally homeless</li> <li>• Sheltered or Extra Care</li> <li>• Specialist accommodation for those with specific needs</li> <li>• Connections to <b>Rural Exception Sites</b> and Community Land Trust sites</li> </ul>

Not relevant to the Star Ground scheme, but the same section includes the following for open market register interest:

<b>Open Market Register</b>	<b>Eligible to bid on selected properties</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Cost Home Ownership / Home Buy</li> <li>• Shared Ownership</li> <li>• Starter Homes</li> <li>• First Homes exception sites</li> <li>• Market rented properties</li> </ul>

If an applicant meets the parish connection criteria for affordable homes on Rural Exception Sites with no other housing need (as listed above), it is possible to be admitted to the housing register provided the applicant can show that they have a parish connection to the site.

Paragraph 9.1 of the Allocations Policy defines Parish Connections as follows:

### **9.1 Parish Connections**

9.1.1 Homes will be allocated to applicants with a connection to a town or parish or where an area has an adopted neighbourhood plan priority will be given to applicants with a connection to the designated neighbourhood area as defined within the neighbourhood plan. A parish connection will be based on the following criteria:

- A person who is resident in the parish, town or city and has been resident in the same parish, town, or city for the past 12 months, or
- A person who is in permanent paid employment or has a fixed term contract for a minimum of one year or an offer of paid employment for a contract for a minimum of one year or is self-employed and works predominantly in the parish
- A person with close family (grand-parents, parents, legal guardian, adult children or brothers and sisters) who have lived in the parish or town for 5 years or longer. However, for extra care properties the connection criteria will be defined within the extra care procedure to ensure that those in rural locations are not unfairly disadvantaged as all extra care schemes are located in towns and large villages.

As set out within the s106 Legal Agreement for the Star Ground development (a copy of which is attached to this report), Schedule 3 paragraph 1, refers to the Nomination Rights, which confirms that nominations/allocations are done in accordance with the Council's Allocation Policy. Therefore, the Registered Provider (Stonewater) would need to advertise the property via the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme (Homes4Wiltshire).

Paragraph 4 of Schedule 3 confirms that the Council has 100% nomination rights for the initial allocation of each dwelling therefore reaffirms the requirement to advertise the property through Homes4Wiltshire.

Therefore, it is the Provider (Stonewater) who would need to specify in the contents of the property advert (advertised through Homes4Wiltshire), detailing it is Rural Exception Site and that that the successful applicant **must** have a local connection to the parish where the properties are. This would then allow them to skip applicants who do not have a connection to the particular parish, when they shortlist for the property.

Following on from the May WAPC meeting, a series of discussions have taken place involving WC legal, the Housing Property and Support Team, the Housing Enabling Team and Alison Parry (the senior new homes executive officer at Stonewater - being the appointed housing registered provider for the Star Ground Holt scheme) with the latter confirming on May 20th that the Council's local letting plan and advert wording would be followed and the local connection requirement would be a critical elevated part of any nominations.

The Council's housing enabling team also confirmed that they will continue to liaise with Stonewater to allocate the houses in accordance with the legally agreed tier provision process where applicants with a connection to the parish would come first.

Once the homes are ready to be advertised by Stonewater, anyone with a local connection that has an interest in any of the ten properties can contact the Housing Solutions Service to express an interest in a property and they will be admitted to the housing register so long as they meet the criteria.

The following is taken from the Council's website - [New housing - frequently asked questions - Wiltshire Council](#)

---

## What does local connection mean?

✕

- Local connection refers to the restrictions that exist on who may be eligible for some affordable homes.
- Only people with an established connection to the local area are entitled to obtain affordable housing in that area.
- This could include a connection through family members living in the area, or through your employment in the area.
- Local connection applies to some affordable housing developments in order to ensure that local people have access to housing in the area.
- For more detailed information in relation to local connection criteria please see our [Homes4Wiltshire allocations policy](#).

### Who does not qualify for the Housing Register?

- Those subject to immigration control (except those entitled to apply for housing under regulations set out by the government)
- A person is not in housing need if s/he is considered to be adequately housed under Wiltshire Council's Allocation Policy
- Homeowners are not in housing need unless they cannot afford to pay their mortgages and the mortgage term cannot be extended to make it affordable
- People with unmanaged housing debt
- Those found guilty of Anti-Social Behaviour within the last 12 months

### Open Market Register

The Open Market Register is aimed at those who are interested in exploring other housing options, such as Low-Cost Home Ownership including discounted sale or shared ownership property and low demand affordable rented properties including older people's accommodation.

The procedure for registering on the Open Market Register is the same as for the Housing Register.

# Site Location – Star Ground, Holt

