

## EXTRACT OF CABINET HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2013

Key Decisions Matters defined as 'Key' Decisions and included in the Council's Forward Work Plan are shown as 

### **Minute 106 Wiltshire Council's New Housing Allocations Policy**

Cllr Keith Humphries presented a report which reported on the outcome of consultations and sought Cabinet approval of a new Housing Allocations Policy effective from April 2014.

The proposed new Allocations Policy would help to deliver on the Council's vision to create stronger and more resilient communities by focussing on local homes for local people. This would also help bring communities together to enable and support them to do more for themselves which was a key priority within the Council's Business Plan.

The Policy would remain a choice based lettings scheme covering the Wiltshire Council area. It would include eligible and exclusion criteria for registration, property size criteria, a new banding structure that determines how applicants would be assessed and prioritised and how homes would be allocated. Cllr Clewer, Portfolio Holder explained points of detail on the Policy.

Scrutiny engagement had taken place at key milestones in developing the revised policy. A Rapid Scrutiny exercise was held on 28 October, the outcome of which had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 5 November 2013. Cllr Simon Killane, Chairman of the Management Committee explained the Scrutiny recommendations.

Cllr Humphries acknowledged the helpful input from Scrutiny, with many of their recommendations taken on board. Key points from the consultation had been incorporated in the robust policy. This included allocation to people with a local connection, which 71.8% of respondents to the consultation requested.

Concern was raised by Cllrs Tony Deane and George Jeans over the allocations policy being too prescriptive. It was suggested that the Policy should include provision for those with a local employment connection as in need, if they are not able to afford accommodation within the village or parish in which they work. It was also suggested that those building affordable housing should also be happy with the Council's Allocation Policy. A suggested form of wording was proposed.

Cllr Humphries explained that whilst he was not prepared to accept the suggested wording without first examining the implications, he would be happy to discuss the matter further with Cllrs Deane and Jeans and make any minor changes if considered appropriate. It was also agreed to delete the word 'existing' from paragraph 9.3 of the policy to read:

### 9.3 *Existing Planning agreements and former exception sites*

It was noted that work would take place to promote and explain the revised Policy to members, the public and parish councils.

The proposed Policy as amended was proposed. An amendment was also made to change the delegation from the Associate Director to the Corporate Director.

#### **Resolved:**

**That Cabinet approves the new Allocations Policy to be implemented from April 2014 and delegates to the Corporate Director with responsibility for Housing any necessary final minor amendments (including the deletion of the word 'existing' from paragraph 9.3) in consultation with the Cabinet member for Public Health, Protection Service and Adult Care and Housing.**

#### Reason for decision:

The Housing Act 1996 Part VI (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and Localism Act 2012 requires the Council to have a scheme which determines how allocations and nominations will be made. In Wiltshire we operate a Choice Based Lettings policy called Homes4Wiltshire which was adopted shortly before unitary.

The purpose of the Council's Choice Based Lettings Policy is to set out clear guidelines to ensure that affordable housing is allocated fairly and according to an applicants' need for housing while at the same time taking into account effective management of the affordable housing stock across Wiltshire. Following the introduction of the Localism Act we had the opportunity to review our allocations policy to consider some of the new freedoms that the act introduced. Following extensive consultation we have proposed some fundamental changes to our policy and have taken full advantage of our new freedoms to ensure we make best use of our limited affordable housing stock and give priority to local people.

These decisions were published on the 2 December 2013 and will come into force on 10 December 2013
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