

Allocation of affordable housing

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide a briefing in response to a request from the local area regarding the allocation of affordable housing.

2. Background

- 2.1 Homes 4 Wiltshire was launched in March 2009 to coincide with the unification of the five councils. This service replaced the previous housing allocation service for Westbury; known as Homes 4 West Wilts.
- 2.2 Homes 4 Wiltshire provides a county wide service for housing registration, assessment and allocation of all affordable housing, allowing customers across the whole county to see available properties throughout.

3. Allocation of Housing within Town and Villages

- 3.1 The Homes 4 Wiltshire policy states that “in some rural locations, further local connection restrictions may apply”, and this is due to the requirements contained within planning policy. The West Wilts local plan allows for two types of local connection restrictions.
- 3.2 Rural Exception Sites, which is for sites outside village policy limits and the criteria for this is set out within planning policy H22. Policy H22 (Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites) defines the need that has to be demonstrated before planning permission for an exception site can be given. All properties would then need to be advertised through the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership and all adverts would request a local connection requirement to be eligible to bid for any property from an exception site.

A local connection in this instance constitutes one of the following:-

- The applicant has a permanent job there
- The applicant has lived in the area
- There is a connection by way of family – a parent, grand parent, sibling or child. (all must be over 18)
- There are special circumstances, for example a long term need to receive specialist health care, education or support services that are only available in that area.

There have been no allocations to an exception site during this financial year and we currently have one being processed at the moment in Semington.

3.3 Secondly Village policy limits, which allows us to allocate certain village properties to those with a local connection to that village with a cascade to surrounding villages and towns.

3.4 Properties that are not developed within these restrictions are built for the allocation to all applicants on the housing register. This is the general basis for most town or city developments.

3.5 The Homes 4 Wiltshire policy will prioritise those applicants with a local connection to Wiltshire above those applicants without a local connection to Wiltshire within the relevant bands.

4.0 Westbury area housing allocations

4.1 Within the Westbury Community Area we advertised a total of 102 properties from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 and 53 from 1 April 2010 to date. The chart below shows how many of those advertised properties were allocated to a household who had a local connection to Westbury

Local Connection	April 2009 - March 2010 Households		April 2010 – To date Households		Total % since April 2009
Currently live in the area	47	46%	12	23%	38%
Relatives in the area	7	7%	5	9%	8%
Employed in the area	3	3%	4	8%	5%
Lived in surrounding town or village to westbury	34	33%	20	38%	35%
Lived within Wiltshire	7	7%	6	10%	7%
Lived outside of Wiltshire	3	3%	3	6%	4%
No Fixed Abode	1	1%	3	6%	3%
Total	102	100%	53	100%	100%

4.2 It clearly shows that even without a local connection restriction being imposed, 51% of allocations within Westbury since April 2009 were made to households who have a local connection to the area and 86% to households who either have a local connection to Westbury or a surrounding town or village.

5.0 Homes 4 Wiltshire data analysis

5.1 On 6th September 2010 there were 12,030 households registered with Homes 4 Wiltshire for affordable housing, of which 1,902 households expressed a desire to live in the Westbury Community Area

5.2 Below is a chart which shows the breakdown of banding for both Westbury and Wiltshire

Band	Westbury area	Wiltshire
Platinum	30	200
Gold plus	53	319
Gold	393	2662
Silver	488	3343
Bronze	938	5506

5. Implications

This report is for information only

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

The area board note the information provided regarding housing allocation in Wiltshire and the Westbury community area.

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