

**West Wiltshire District Council**

**Cabinet**

**24 November 2004**

**West Wiltshire Housing Strategy 2004 to 2009**

**1. Purpose**

To consider the final draft of the Housing Strategy for the five year period 2004 to 2009, to give approval for that draft to be submitted to the Government Office for the South West, and to recommend it to full Council

**2. Background**

The Government requires each housing authority to develop a strategy that is 'fit for purpose'. In November 2003, the Cabinet agreed to set up a Policy Project Group to help develop the new strategy. It was originally intended that it would be submitted to the Government Office in July 2004 - however, to ensure that it dovetailed with the new Community Strategy and Corporate Plan, it was agreed to delay its submission until November 2004.

Cabinet is now being asked to consider the draft housing strategy. The full version will be made available on the Council's website and in the members' room from 17 November 2004. However, the action plan - which distils the aims of the strategy into a list of actions - is attached at Appendix 1.

**3. Key issues**

The Policy Project Group (PPG) met seven times over the last year and members were drawn from a wide range of interests. Those who were invited are set out in Appendix 2. In considering the content of the strategy, the PPG divided the main body of the strategy up into four main sections:

- The context - how the strategy must relate to local, regional and national aspirations
- Needs - an understanding of the district's housing needs
- Resources - identifying the resources that are available to those needs
- Options and Action Plan

The group also considered performance against our targets in the last housing strategy, and a summary is included in the new draft. A representative of the Government Office sat on the group and offered helpful feedback on our drafts in order to point us in the direction of a fit for purpose strategy. It should also be noted that the Government Office was pleased with the breadth and depth of experience that members of the PPG were able to bring to the project.

**Wider consultation:** In addition to the PPG, drafts of the developing strategy were sent out to a very broad group of stakeholders, including all housing associations working in the district, support providers and other interest groups. We also held a conference that was very well attended and provided useful feedback for the new strategy. Conference guests highlighted a number of important issues including:

- The need to address the shortage of affordable homes
- The need to have policies that do not exclude diverse groups - particular care needs to be taken in developing our choice based lettings policy
- Support for the Council's approach to delivering s106 affordable housing without public subsidy - it was suggested that we need to consider ways of delivering low cost home ownership

Some feedback also paralleled discussions in the PPG, for instance the need to make good quality housing advice a priority and the need to produce housing information in plain language.

**Important messages and influences:** Our consultation has had an important role in shaping the new strategy. For example, the need to have our advice achieve Quality mark standards and bringing forward the target date for eliminating all B&B are both prompted by our partners.

At a national level, the withdrawal of support for Local Authority Social Housing Grant has driven the need to develop robust affordable housing supplementary planning guidance. An aspiration shared by local councillors and national government is the need for balanced housing markets and opportunities that include affordable homes to rent and also low cost home ownership.

Consultation over the last year has told us that those people seeking housing association homes want to have choice, and not simply be forced into a home or an area they don't want to move to. An important message from our CPA inspection was the need to address the decent homes standard across all sectors, and our draft action plan reflects this.

**Financial implications:** Adopting this strategy does not have any financial implications for the Council. It sets out a programme of aspirations that can reasonably be achieved if resources become available. Where action cannot be achieved within existing resources, the service will prepare bids as part of the service & resource planning process that is taking place this year and in future years.

**Legal issues:** There are no legal implications arising from adopting this strategy.

**Corporate spotlights:** The strategy and action plan have been put together in a way that gives priority to those aspirations that meet a number of corporate spotlight aims.

**Human rights:** There are no human rights implications arising from adopting the draft strategy.

#### **4. Options**

There were a number of options considered for inclusion in the housing strategy and these are detailed in chapter 4 of the strategy. This will be available through the website and in the member's room from 17 November 2004.

#### **5. Key decisions**

This is not a key decision as it is a recommendation to full Council.

#### **6. List of background papers**

#### **7. Recommendation (s)**

That Cabinet recommend approval of the draft housing strategy to full Council and that the draft housing strategy be submitted to Government Office by 30 November 2004.

#### **Plain English guidance given**

##### **Authors**

Cllr Virginia Fortescue

Graham Hogg

Housing Services Manager

Date of preparation of report: 1 November 2004

#### **List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy**

**Appendix 2 – Persons invited to take part in the Housing Strategy Policy Project Group**



## Appendix 1

### Draft Housing Strategy Action Plan

<b>Housing Strategy Action Plan</b>								
<b>Action number</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Milestones action</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<b>Responsible Agencies/ groups</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Linked strategies</b>	
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - MEETING HOUSING NEED Objective 1: Understand the housing need and the effect of the housing market so that the Council and its partners can work to introduce more choice and develop sustainable communities</b>								
1	Identifying Local Housing Needs	Carry out a District-wide Housing Needs Assessment to update the needs evidence to back Local Plan policies on affordable housing <sup>1</sup>	July 05 & July 09	Housing Enabling Manager	District Council	40000 for each full survey	Local Plan	42
2		Carry out update to Housing Needs Survey <sup>1</sup>	Jul-07	Housing Enabling Manager	District Council	£10,000	Local Plan	42
3		Continue rural needs assessments in partnership with Wiltshire Rural Enabler - Broughton Gifford, Holt, Codford, Hawkeridge, Sutton Veny and Corsley	Dec 05 - ongoing	Housing Enabling Manager/Rural Enabler	District Council Wiltshire Rural Housing Partnership	Continuation of funding for Rural Enabler Post approx £5,000 per year	Local Plan	1 & 19
4	Understanding the Housing Market	Continue to develop local market database to effectively monitor trends in land and development costs - review quarterly. <sup>1</sup>	Half yearly Reviews	Housing Enabling Manager	District Council/Local Agencies also M4 Corridor group	Staff Time		41
5		Understand the role and impact that Local Planning Policy can have on the local housing market <sup>1</sup>	Half yearly review	Housing Services Manager	District Council	Staff Time	Local Plan	NEW
6		Publish our 5 year programme for developing affordable homes, showing types of homes required in each area and the role of partners in delivering	Jul-05	Housing Enabling Manager	Preferred Development Partnership/ Planning Policy	Staff time	Local Plan/Housing Needs survey	

		those homes <sup>1</sup>						
7	Increasing choices	Explore alternative options for securing affordable housing - including options for different tenures - produce an annual report setting out numbers achieved in different tenures and options considered <sup>1</sup>	Jan 05 - ongoing	Housing Enabling Manager/ Housing Register and Support Team leader	District Council/PDP	Staff Time	Local Plan	NEW
8		Meet the Structure plan target for the delivery of new homes <sup>1</sup>	Ongoing	Planning Policy Manager	Development Control/Planning Policy/Developers	Staff time and effective policies and procedures	Local Plan/Structure Plan	
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - MEETING HOUSING NEED Objective 2: Provide additional rented housing for people on low incomes who cannot afford housing in the local private sector market</b>								
	New Build Social Housing	To deliver units of social housing at:		Housing Enabling Manager	District Council/Preferred Development Partnership	<b>Housing Corp Council</b>	Financial Strategy/Local Plan/Development Programme	
9	General Needs <sup>1</sup>	Bowerhill, Melksham (32)	Mar-05			£1,662,502		
10		Mill Street, Trowbridge (18)	Mar-05			£932,039		
11		Poulton, Bradford on Avon (6)	Nov-04			£296,997		
12		St. Johns Hospital, Trowbridge (12)	Mar-06			£612,000		
13		Leigh Park R1, Westbury Leigh (33)	Mar-06			£165,031		
14		Hatcheries, Hilperton (6)	Mar-06			£1,623,000		
15		Leigh Park R2, Westbury Leigh (24)	Mar-07			£427,692		
16		Paxcroft Mead, Trowbridge (20)	Mar-07			£352,075		
17		Beanacre, Melksham (14)	Mar-07			£1,040,000		
18		County Way, Trowbridge (14)	Mar-07			£382,620		
						£250,000		
						£268,000		
						£200,000		
						£313,195		
						£200,000		

						£259,000		
19		Purchase & Repairs (2)	Mar-05			£72,000		
20	Supported Housing <sup>1</sup>	Young Single Persons Project, Trowbridge (6)	Mar-05			£321,457		
21		Mental Health Scheme, Bradford on Avon (10)	Nov-04			£767,328		
22		Drug & Alcohol Project, Trowbridge (6)	Nov-04			£430,000		
23	Low Cost Market Rental <sup>1</sup>	Staverton Marina, Staverton, Trowbridge (12)	Mar-06			Nil Subsidy		
24	Low Cost Home Ownership <sup>1</sup>	Staverton Marina, Staverton, Trowbridge (2)	Mar-06			£42,000		
25		Homebuy (4)	Mar-05			£120,000		
26		Deliver the PFI Project (500)	Jan-09					
27	Affordable Housing through the Planning Process <sup>1</sup>	Seek to achieve up to 30% affordable housing provision on all allocation and windfall housing sites within towns on sites of more than 1 hectare or 25 dwellings; and up to 50% provision on sites within villages (500)	Mar-10	Housing Enabling Manager	District Council/Preferred Development Partners	Staff time , well drafted policy, Housing needs data	Local Plan	35
28		Completion of Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance <sup>1</sup>	Jan-05	Housing Services Manager/Planning Policy & Conservation Manager	District Council/Consultation with housing associations, developers and landowners	Staff time	Local Plan	38
29		Develop a housing partnership for new homes that reflects up to date government and housing corporation policy plus local market conditions	Jul-05	Housing Enabling manager	Preferred Development partnership Housing Corporation	Staff time	Regional Housing Strategy	
30		Research the capacity for moves to Affordable Home Ownership to generate vacancies in existing social rented housing	Dec-05	Housing Enabling Manager/Register & Support	District Council	Staff time	Local Plan/AH SPG	

				T/Leader			
	<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - MEETING HOUSING NEED Objective 3: Prevent homelessness, reduce the number of people who are homeless, stop the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households, and reduce the Council's use of other forms of temporary accommodation</b>						
31	Eliminate the use of Bed & Breakfast	Sustain the elimination of B&B for families	On Going	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time ODPM Funding	Homelessness Strategy
32		Eliminate total use of B&B by March 2005 except in an emergency	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time ODPM Funding	Homelessness Strategy & Corporate Plan
33		To increase our current Private Sector Leasing Scheme to at least 100 properties to inc District Council properties	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager	Sarsen	Staff Time ODPM Funding	Homelessness Strategy
34		Creation of a letting pack to encourage local landlords with the take up of homeless families	Dec-04	Homelessness Team Leader		Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy
35		Resolve the future of the council's current hostel temporary accommodation provision	Mar-05	Housing Services Manager		Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy & Corporate Plan
36	Prevention of Homelessness	Reduce the amount of accepted homeless cases from the previous year	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time	Corporate Plan & Homeless Strategy
37		Encourage the take up of benefits & ensure all staff have the required training	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time & Benefits take up training officer	Corporate Plan NEW
38		To introduce a mediation service	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager		£15,000	Homelessness Strategy
39		Create a resource pack for primary schools within West Wiltshire	Sep-05	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time & publication costs	Homelessness Strategy & Corporate Plan
40		Reduce the amount of homeless applicants against the three main	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time	NEW



		causes of homelessness						
41		Regularly monitor level of rough sleeping to ensure it stays at zero	On going	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy	
42	Improve quality and access to housing advice	To start pilot outreach housing advice surgeries within the five town	Dec-04	Homelessness Team Leader	Local Job Centres		Homelessness Strategy	
43		Creation of a Survival Guide	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager		£5,000 staff time	Homelessness Strategy	
44		Develop a Public Service Agreement Target for a young persons housing standard to ensure that 16 & 17 year olds receive life skills training, necessary support and do not use B & B	Mar-05	Housing Needs Manager/Chief Exec Officer North Wilts District Council	All Wilts Council's and main housing providers	Staff Time		NEW
45	Improve Inter agency working	Update the role of the landlords forum	Nov-04	Homelessness Team Leader	Housing Benefit, Local estate agents and landlords	Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy	
46		Creation of a homelessness forum	Oct-04	Homelessness Team Leader	Local agencies with an interest in homelessness	Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy	
47	Increase housing opportunities for all housing applicants	Look into the need for low cost home ownership and develop the required policies	Jun-05	Housing Register and Support Team Leader		Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy	
48		Introduce a Choice Based Lettings system <sup>2</sup>	Mar-05	Housing Register and Support Team Leader	District Council WWHS Policy Group	Staff Time £100,000	Homelessness Strategy	
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - MEETING HOUSING NEED</b> Objective 4: Ensure that the Government's targets for decent homes are met or exceeded and make the most of the existing housing stock to meet housing need								

49	Maximise use of Empty Properties	Reduce the number of long-term vacant houses from 650 to 350, (average 50 per annum) <sup>2</sup>	Mar-10	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council/PDP	Staff time, financial incentives, costs of enforcement of management orders or CPOs	Empty Homes Strategy, Housing Renewal Strategy
50	Decent Homes in the RSL Sector	Work with RSLs to ensure that they have adequately resourced and realistic plans based on firm information to bring 100% of their stock up to the Decency standard <sup>2</sup>	Mar-10	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council/PDP/all RSLs	RSLs to fund from their own resources	28 &29
51	Decent Homes in the Private Sector	Increase from 67% to at least 70% the proportion of vulnerable households in the private sector living in a decent home <sup>2</sup>	Mar-10	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council/EEAC/HIA	Capital resources from the Council's Housing Assistance budget. Financial support for the EEAC, currently £5,500 per annum. Grants and discounts from WarmFront and Energy Efficiency Commitment schemes of the energy supply companies. Financial support for the Home Improvement Agency, currently	Financial Strategy, Housing Renewal Strategy, Affordable Warmth and HECA strategies

						equivalent to £46,000 per annum.	
52	Increase the proportion of properties meeting the minimum housing standard	Reduction of at least 15% (130 houses) in the number of houses failing the minimum housing standard (equivalent to 3% per annum) <sup>2</sup>	Mar-09	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council	Capital resources from the Council's Housing Assistance budget. Financial support for the Home Improvement Agency, currently equivalent to £46,000 per annum. Staff time for regulation of standards in the private rented sector	Financial strategy, Housing Renewal Strategy

53	Improve standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation	Undertake risk assessments to identify all Houses in Multiple Occupation falling within the scope of proposed mandatory licensing scheme.	Sep-05	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council, Fire Service	Staff time	Housing Renewal Strategy
54		Ensure that all high-risk Houses in Multiple Occupation comply with relevant legal standards <sup>2</sup>	Mar-08	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council, Fire Service	Staff time	Housing Renewal Strategy
55		Carry out a District-wide House Condition Survey to inform the Housing Renewal and Empty Homes Strategies, and assess progress towards the Decent Homes Targets <sup>2</sup>	Nov-07	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council	Estimated cost of consultancy work is £50,000	Empty Homes Strategy, Housing Renewal Strategy, Affordable Warmth Strategy
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - IMPROVING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL Objective 4:</b> Support and contribute towards service objectives, particularly in relation to affordable housing, market town regeneration, sustainability and community safety							
<sup>1</sup> These items also support the objective of improving development control							
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - IMPROVING OUR MARKET TOWNS Objective 3:</b> Help to develop sustainable communities in each of the 5 market towns							
56		Identify areas of the district where housing resources are best targetted alongside resources from other service areas	Mar-06	Housing Renewal Manager	Local Strategic Partnership	Housing Renewal resources in particular	Community Strategy
<sup>2</sup> These items also support the objective of improving our market towns and developing sustainable communities							
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - PUTTING CUSTOMERS FIRST Objective 1:</b> Enable easy access to the Council recognising the needs of different customers							
57		<i>Develop Housing Needs Website</i>	Oct-04	Homelessness Team Leader		£5,000	Homelessness Strategy
58		<i>Increase literature available to all housing applicants</i>	Nov-04	Homelessness Team Leader		Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy
59		<i>Complete a user satisfaction survey</i>	Dec-04	Homelessness Team Leader		Staff Time	Homelessness Strategy

60	Informing our customers	Increase education and promotion of housing knowledge in the District through holding a stand at the West Wilts Show	Summer 2005, 2007 and 2009	Housing Enabling, Renewal and Needs Managers	District Council	Staff Time	Communications Strategy
61		Increase education and promotion of housing knowledge in the District - West Wilts Matters	Quarterly	Housing Enabling, Renewal and Needs Managers	District Council	Staff Time	Communications Strategy
<b>SPOTLIGHT AREA - PUTTING CUSTOMERS FIRST Objective 2:</b>							
Provide consistent and fair treatment to all customers							
62		<i>To obtain Quality Mark from the community legal services</i>	Jun-05	Housing Needs Manager		Staff Time	NEW
63		Research Black and minority ethnic housing needs	Jan 05 - ongoing	Housing Register and Support Team Leader	Wiltshire Race Equality Council	Funding for Wiltshire Race Equality Council to carry out interviews and surveys £5,000	Hidden voices  9



## Appendix 2

### Persons invited to take part in the Policy Project Group

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mr David Thornton	Regional Chair	Persimmon Homes
Ms Sarah Cardy	Manager	West Wiltshire CAB
Linda and David Kavanagh		Kavanaghs Residential Property Management
Ms Catherine Brabner	Local Campaigns Officer	Shelter
Mr Phil Yorke	Deputy Chief Executive	West Wiltshire Housing Society
Cllr Virginia Fortescue	Housing Portfolio Holder	West Wiltshire District Council
Cllr Eli Manasseh		West Wiltshire District Council
Cllr Gordon Cox		West Wiltshire District Council
Cllr Tom James		West Wiltshire District Council
Cllr Chris March		West Wiltshire District Council
Mr Ian Gallin	Corporate Director	West Wiltshire District Council
Mr Joe Sang	Director	Wiltshire Race Equality Council
Mr Martin Fortune		Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network
Ms June Sadd	Director	Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network
Mrs Julie Newitt	Housing Enabling Manager	West Wiltshire District Council
Mr Paul Yeomans	Housing Renewal Manager	West Wiltshire District Council
Mrs Nicole Smith	Housing Needs Manager	West Wiltshire Council
Mr Mike Frost		Government Office for the South West
Mr Tony Mitchell	Chair	West Wiltshire Tenants Executive Council
Mr Abdul Bouterfas		Wiltshire Race Equality Council
Mr Michael Guest	Consultant	
Cllr Jackie Wells	Councillor	West Wiltshire District Council
Cllr Michael Mounde	Cabinet Member	West Wiltshire District Council
Cllr Bill Viles	Councillor	West Wiltshire Council