

## AGENDA

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**Meeting:** Environment Select Committee  
**Place:** Council Chambers, County Hall, Trowbridge  
**Date:** Tuesday 11 May 2010  
**Time:** **9.30 am**  
**(PLEASE NOTE: the meeting will commence at 9:30am and NOT 10:30am for this meeting only)**

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Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Sharon Smith, of Democratic and Members' Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, direct line (01225) 718378 or email [sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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### Membership:

Cllr Chuck Berry	Cllr Alan Hill
Cllr Rosemary Brown (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Chris Humphries
Cllr Nigel Carter	Cllr Tom James MBE
Cllr Brian Dalton	Cllr Ian McLennan
Cllr Peter Doyle	Cllr Stephen Oldrieve
Cllr Jose Green	Cllr Leo Randall
Cllr Mollie Groom (Chairman)	

### Substitutes:

Cllr Chris Caswill	Cllr George Jeans
Cllr Peter Colmer	Cllr Julian Johnson
Cllr Nick Fogg	Cllr Howard Marshall
Cllr Russell Hawker	Cllr Anthony Trotman
Cllr Charles Howard	

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## **PART I**

### **Items to be considered while the meeting is opened to the public**

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *(Pages 1 - 8)*

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 2 March 2010.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4. **Chairman's Announcements**

5. **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. The Chairman will, however, exercise her discretion in order to ensure that members of the public have the opportunity to contribute.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question should give written notice (including details of any question) to the officer named above by **12:00 noon on Friday 7 May 2010**.

6. **Waste Disposal** (Pages 9 - 12)

A report is attached from the Service Director for Waste Management which provides an update on 2 key waste management projects within Wiltshire – the Mechanical Biological Transport plant in Westbury and the Joint Procurement with Swindon Borough Council.

**Proposal**

The committee is asked to note the report and comment as appropriate.

7. **Empty Private Sector Homes - Update**

The Committee at its meeting in March considered a report from the Head of Private Sector Housing, which provided an overview of the measures being developed to bring vacant private sector housing back into use. Whilst discussing the report concern was raised that the part time status and salary bracket for the vacant Empty Homes Officer did not reflect the needs of the role and the Committee requested an update on the recruitment for this post. The Head of Private Housing has confirmed that it has been placed on hold temporarily whilst ongoing work takes place with Human Resources. Reflecting the Committee's concerns it has been agreed that the post should be full time and in addition the job specification is being reviewed to increase the attractiveness of the post.

In the absence of an Empty Homes Officer progress has still been made, with questionnaires sent to half the owners of vacant homes.

**Proposal**

The Committee is asked to note the update.

8. **Housing - PFI Update** (Pages 13 - 28)

The Committee at its meeting on 3 November considered a report on the proposed Housing PFI Scheme in West Wiltshire. It was predicted that contractual negotiations with Silbury Housing Ltd would be completed by March 2010, however this has been extended to July 2010 as detailed in the attached two reports taken to cabinet in March and April respectively.

The portfolio holder for Housing and PFI Project Manager will provide the committee with an update on progress towards finalisation of the agreement.

**Proposal**

The committee is asked to note the update and comment as appropriate.

9. **Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review** (Pages 29 - 96)

The Committee will recall that Laura Young, Head of Homes 4 Wiltshire, gave a presentation before its meeting on 3 November. Members noted that a review of the service was taking place and expressed an interest in the results being fed back into the work programme.

The Homes 4 Wiltshire review has now been completed and was approved by Cabinet on 20 April, see attached report from the Service Director for Housing. The Committee is asked to consider the action plan which emerged from the review and outlines the improvement targets up to 2011.

**Proposal**

To note the report and consider any potential involvement in reviewing the action plan proposals.

10. **Housing Commission - Request to Scrutiny**

The Audit Commission recently inspected the Housing Landlord Services in Salisbury, the results of which will be made public on 13 May. In order to respond to the findings the Cabinet Member, Cllr John Brady, will be forming a Housing Commission to take ownership of making improvements across Housing Services, focusing on the improvement plan for housing.

The commission will include the following membership: -

Cllr John Thomson, Cllr John Brady, Cllr Howard Greenman, Mark Boden, Carlton Brand, Graham Hogg, Bjorn Howard (Group Chief Executive Aster) and John Hinnis (Tenant Panel Chair).

It is intended that the commission will meet monthly for a minimum of 6 months and then bi-monthly depending on progress made.

The Cabinet member has invited a member of scrutiny to sit on the Board. As the first meeting is being held on the 12 May, the chairman and vice-chairman approved an approach to Cllr Ricky Rogers, who was identified as a potential scrutiny representative because of his excellent local housing knowledge and experience of representing scrutiny on similar boards. Cllr Rogers has subsequently volunteered to serve if approved by the Committee.

**Proposal**

The Committee is asked to nominate a member to sit on the Housing Commission Board.

11. **Climate Change**

The Committee, at its last meeting, considered an update on progress made against climate change objectives. Following debate the Committee resolved:

To recommend to the Cabinet member responsible for staffing that job specifications should include responsibility to the authority's corporate climate change targets.

Cllr John Noeken's response is included below:

**Response from the Cabinet Member**

Wiltshire Council is committed to ensuring that employees understand their responsibilities regarding protecting the environment. The HR department are currently working closely with the Workplace Transformation Programme, which aims to reduce the number of under utilised desks and improve our office buildings to make them more environmentally friendly.

HR have considered placing a statement regarding climate change responsibilities in the Job Description for each post, but have concern that this would be missed in the already crowded form.

The council currently begins the climate change and carbon management education process in the Employee Guide which is sent to all new staff with their welcome packs. This contains a section on "Being Environmentally Friendly" which includes information on protecting the environment and working towards a greener organisation. This is again comprehensively covered in the e-induction session called "About Us". All new employees should therefore be aware of their responsibilities from the start of their employment.

Whilst at work, we encourage employees to reduce waste by printing double-sided and re-using scrap paper. Employees are provided with recycling opportunities within the workplace and recycling bins are provided in most of our main offices. We encourage employees to use the Car Share scheme to help reduce congestion and we have fuel efficient pool cars for business travel. HR have also introduced the Cycle to Work scheme which encourages staff to purchase a bicycle through sacrificing some of their salary, and using this mode of transport to come to work rather than using their car.

**Proposal**

The Committee is asked to note the response from the Cabinet member.

12. **Scrutiny of Corporate Plan**

The draft Corporate Plan was considered by the O& S Organisation and Resources Select Committee at its meeting on 25 March, in advance of submission to Cabinet and ultimately Full Council on 18 May. During this scrutiny work the select committee recognised that further detail would emerge from the supplementary departmental delivery plans and the new business plan for the council. The committee felt that future scrutiny work programmes should be aligned to the priorities identified within these documents but with some flexibility to recognise that the plan would be subject to regular review.

The key document for the Environment Select Committee will be the Neighbourhood and Planning departmental delivery plan, which it is hoped will be available for consideration by September.

**Proposal**

The Committee is asked to note the update and to add the Neighbourhood and Planning Delivery Plan to its work programme.

13. **Forward Work Programme** *(Pages 97 - 102)*

A copy of the draft Forward Work Programme is attached for consideration.

14. **Date of next Meeting**

6 July 2010.

15. **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which the Chairman agrees to consider as a matter of urgency.

**PART II**

**Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed**

NONE

## ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2010 AT COMMITTEE ROOM III, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Rosemary Brown (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Mollie Groom (Chairman), Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Chris Humphries, Cllr Tom James MBE, Cllr Stephen Oldrieve and Cllr Leo Randall

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr John Brady, Cllr Peter Colmer, Cllr Linda Conley, Cllr Tony Deane, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr Dick Tonge

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#### 49. **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Cllr Nigel Carter.

#### 50. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 January 2010 were approved as a correct record.

#### 51. **Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interest were received.

#### 52. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reported that George Batten, Corporate Director Transport, Environment and Leisure would be leaving the authority this month. Following his departure an organisational restructure would take place. Transport, Environment and Leisure and Economic Development, Planning and Housing would be replaced by the department for Neighbourhood and Planning headed by Mark Boden. The Committee would be responsible for scrutinising this department.

#### 53. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

54. **Making Best Use of Existing Housing - Empty Private Sector Home**

The Budget and Performance Task Group considered the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) at its last meeting and recommended that the Environment Select Committee considered the way in which the Council managed affordable housing across the County.

A report by the Head of Private Sector Housing was submitted which provided an overview of the measures being developed to bring vacant private sector housing back into use.

Cllr John Brady, Cabinet member for Economic Development, Planning and Housing; Graham Hogg, Service Director, Housing and James Hudson, Head of Private Sector Housing attended the meeting to answer any questions arising from the report.

Ensuing discussion included an acknowledgement of the need and challenge to recruit to the post of Empty Homes Officer. This included whether the Job Evaluation Questionnaire, part-time status of the post and salary provided a true reflection of the needs of the role. Options on ways to resolve the issue included the possibility of sharing the resource with neighbouring authorities and investigating whether the job description could be amended.

Further discussion included the rights of private landlords and the need for their cooperation to reduce empty homes numbers and ways in which private landlords could be incentivised to work with the Council to bring empty homes back in to use. It was also noted that empty homes information was currently generated from the four different Council Tax systems in place within the four hubs although an integrated system would be procured to address this.

The issue of vacant homes within the housing authorities' arena was also raised although this was understood to be an issue for discussion outside of the meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. **To note the report.**
2. **To receive an update on the key issues raised by Councillors at the May meeting of the Committee.**



55. **Climate Change Update**

A report was submitted by the Service Director Economy and Enterprise which provided an update on progress made against climate change objectives, the proposed work programme and resources available to deliver the objectives.

The report follows consideration of the item at the November 2009 meeting where a further update as outlined above was requested.

Cllr John Brady, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Housing, Alastair Cunningham, Service Director Economy and Enterprise and Ariane Crampton, Head of Climate Change attended the meeting to answer any questions arising from the report.

Ensuing discussion included clarification that the carbon management plan was on track to be delivered to Cabinet in April and that work was taking place with the Energy Saving Trust to produce an action plan to reduce the authority's carbon footprint. Note was also made that the installation of smart meters (to include the use and maintenance of meters in schools and other council buildings) would achieve an energy bill saving of 2% and that installation should be concluded by March 2011.

An acknowledgement was provided that in order to achieve climate change targets it would be necessary for all Officers to work together with the Climate Change team and a proposal was subsequently made that job specifications should therefore include responsibility to adhere to the authority's corporate climate change targets.

Further discussion included that collaborative working was already taking place with the Army (acknowledged to be the largest employer within Wiltshire at present) to find ways to encourage those living and working within Wiltshire to reduce the carbon footprint. Wiltshire Council had already taken part in a carbon trading simulation exercise and would continue with a more sophisticated exercise for the following year as a measure to meet the mandatory Carbon Reduction Commitment which would come into force on 1 April 2010.

Finally a request that the work programme should be recirculated to members of the committee based on time-frame rather than objective was received.

**Resolved:**

- 1) **That the Committee notes the information in the report on:**
  - a) **progress made against climate change objectives**
  - b) **the proposed work programme for 2010/11**

- c) **resources available to deliver against climate change objectives.**
- 2) **That a revised work programme will be circulated in time-frame order.**
- 3) **That a further update on the Climate Change Strategy will be submitted for consideration by the Committee in July.**
- 4) **To recommend to the Cabinet member for Staffing that job specifications should include responsibility to the authority's corporate climate change targets.**

56. **Flood Risk Management**

A report from the Corporate Director Transport Environment and Leisure was submitted which provided details of the current position regarding flood risk management and response arrangements within Wiltshire.

The report follows consideration of the item in September 2009 where a further update was requested for March 2010.

Cllr Dick Tonge, Cabinet Member for Highways and Maintenance, Tracy Carter, Service Director Waste Management Services and John Edwards, Deputy County Emergency Planning Officer attended the meeting to answer questions arising from the report.

Cllr Tonge clarified that following the amalgamation of the Transport, Environment and Leisure (TEL) and Economic Development, Planning and Housing (EDPH) departments, Parvis Khansari would take over responsibility of the Flood Risk Management Group. Clarification was also provided that the Pitt Review and Flooding and Water Management Bill would require a greater investment of resource amongst the team.

Ensuing discussion included the need for landowners to take responsibility of land maintenance with clarification that the legal services team were investigating how this could be achieved, that a list of schemes was currently being compiled to establish work concluded for release through Community Area Information Packs and that work was being done with water companies relating to flooding as a result of water run-off into sewers.

The flooding questionnaire (attached as Appendix 2 of the Report and circulated to all parish and town councils) was acknowledged as a good example of collaborative working to address flooding issues. The Committee also recognised the importance of the forthcoming Flood Fair mentioned within the report and requested further details on when and where this would take place.

It was hoped that the Flood Risk Management Plan would be available for consultation in August/September 2010.

**Resolved:**

- 1) **To note the report.**
- 2) **To receive an update on progress in December following the amalgamation of the TEL and EDPH Departments.**

57. **Gypsy & Traveller Strategy - Progress Report**

In September 2009 the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy Project Group was formed to create a strategy which would incorporate processes to deliver a coordinated and effective approach to service provision for and interaction with the gypsy and traveller communities.

Cllr Jose Green, as the appointed Select Committee representative, provided an overview of the work of the Project Group. A report by the Service Director for Housing (and Chair of the Gypsy and Traveller Corporate Project Team) and Head of Equality and Diversity was also presented which provided details of the progress, aims and objectives of the strategy.

Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member Waste, Property and Environment, Graham Hogg, Service Director Housing and Rachel Goff, Project Manager were in attendance to answer any questions arising for the report.

Ensuing discussion included a request for clarification on the report submitted to Cabinet on Gypsy and Traveller site allocation and the outcome of this meeting. Cllr Toby Sturgis clarified that Cabinet had agreed to the methodology behind site allocation within Wiltshire and not site location.

Further discussion included that those living on canal boats with a cruising license were included within the gypsy and traveller community category, that the existing cost of enforcement of unauthorised sites was likely to be significantly reduced following clarification of the methodology behind site allocation and that the training organised for 19 March was now to be reorganised.

The Committee also discussed their future involvement in the scrutiny of this subject and agreed to delegate continued responsibility to Cllr Jose Green as the Scrutiny representative on the Project Group.

**Resolved:**

1. To note the progress, aims and objectives of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy project.
2. That the Committee recommends acceptance and adoption of the approach and commitment to the strategy to Cabinet in April.
3. That future updates on the work of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy Project Group will be received by Cllr Jose Green as and when appropriate.

58. **Waste Strategy**

The Committee was asked to note the response received from the Cabinet member on the recommendations received from the Environment Select Committee as outlined in the blue sheet papers.

Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet member for Waste, Property and Environment attended the meeting to answer any questions arising from the response.

Ensuing discussion concluded that waste collection and disposal would be reconsidered following the anticipated General Election.

**Resolved:**

- 1) To note the response provided by the Cabinet member for Waste, Property and Environment.
- 2) To defer any scrutiny activity into waste collection until after the general election when future national policy would be determined.

59. **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Plan.

60. **Date of next Meeting**

The Committee is asked to note that the date of the next meeting has been re-scheduled to 11 May 2010 and not 18 May 2010 as previously advised.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Sharon Smith, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01225) 718378, e-mail [sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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## WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE 11 MAY 2010

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#### **WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform the Committee of the current position with regard to two key waste management projects within Wiltshire.

##### **Background**

2. As Members are aware, the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) introduced in 2004 provides decreasing annual allowances for Waste Disposal Authorities to landfill residual waste until 2020. Those Councils which exceed their allocations could be fined £150 per tonne for each tonne of biodegradable waste that they landfill in excess of their allowance. Since 2004 Wiltshire Council (and the former County Council) has been working to secure suitable arrangements for the diversion from landfill of a minimum of 100,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW) each year. This will enable the Council to manage its waste in a more sustainable way and considerably reduce the risk of the Council incurring fines.

##### **Lakeside Energy from Waste Plant**

3. A significant milestone was reached in March 2007 with the signing of a contract with Hills Waste Solutions for the delivery of 50,000 tonnes of waste each year to the Lakeside Energy from Waste facility at Colnbrook near Slough. Deliveries to this plant commenced in June 2009 and the facility received its independent certification in January 2010. Operation of this contract has proceeded as planned and there are no issues of note to report at this time.
4. This report has been prepared in response to a request from the Committee for updates on the contract to deliver waste to a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant (MBT plant) in Westbury and the joint project with Swindon Borough Council (SBC) to manage residual waste in the north of the County.

##### **Main Considerations for the Council**

##### **Mechanical Biological Treatment Plant**

5. In 2005 the Council confirmed its commitment to proceed to the award of a second waste diversion contract, based upon a Hills/Entsorga tender for treatment of 60,000 tonnes of residual waste each year for a period of 25 years. Negotiations have continued with Hills Waste Solutions for the construction and management of a MBT plant at Westbury with planning permission being granted by Wiltshire County Council's Regulatory Committee on 18 March 2009.

6. This contract will provide for the delivery of 60,000 tonnes of MSW, predominantly from the West and North of Wiltshire to the plant which will, in turn, produce a solid recovered fuel (SRF) to be delivered to a plant in either Germany or the Netherlands by means of a sub-contract for the early years of the main contract. The SRF will initially be used as fuel to produce electricity but in future may be used as fuel for a cement production facility.
7. The plant will be managed and maintained by Hills who will also provide landfill capacity for any outputs that cannot be either recycled or used as fuel. The contract will specify production of a minimum of 20,000 tonnes of SRF per annum. However, there is scope for the target to be exceeded given that technical modelling indicates the potential to produce in excess of 30,000 tonnes of SRF from the contracted delivery of 60,000 tonnes of MSW each year.
8. Cabinet, at its meeting on 23 March 2010, gave approval for negotiations on this contract to be concluded by the Service Director Waste Management and for the contract to be awarded, subject to appropriate Member and Officer approval, to Hills Waste Solutions for a period of 25 years. Taken together with the Hills/Lakeside contract, this will enable the Council to achieve one of the priorities set out in the new Corporate Plan – to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to 25% of the MSW total.
9. It is currently anticipated that contract signature will follow within six weeks of the consideration of this report.

#### **Joint Procurement with Swindon Borough Council**

10. The combined impact of the Lakeside and MBT contracts should allow the Council to avoid incurring penalties until approximately 2019. To guard against the likelihood of exposure to fines after 2019, the probability of increasing cost pressures of landfilling, and the possibility of further restrictions (possibly an outright ban) on certain types of waste being deposited in landfill, Wiltshire Council and SBC commenced work on a joint project.
11. An Outline Business Case (OBC) was developed and subsequently approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 October 2009. This OBC identified the preferred technology options (following evaluation against a range of technical and other criteria) which would allow each Council to meet anticipated landfill diversion requirements until 2035. Procurement was authorised with a view to the new facility becoming operational in 2016, subject to SBC Cabinet agreeing that the procurement project commences.
12. However, subsequent to Wiltshire Council Cabinet approval, the Council was notified that SBC would be seeking an alternative arrangement in conjunction with its in-house service provider, Swindon Commercial Services. This decision was confirmed by SBC Cabinet at its meeting on 20 January 2010, so this collaboration is effectively terminated.
13. The Waste Management Service will soon commence a project to investigate alternatives to the former joint procurement that will replace the existing landfill and recycling contract from 2016 and will allow Wiltshire to remain LATS compliant beyond 2019. Consideration will be given to a solution that would also provide the flexibility for the Council to divert significantly more residual waste from landfill, than would be necessary simply to avoid LATS penalties. Such preparations would be consistent with the suggested ambitions of each of the main national political parties to move (to varying degrees) toward a zero landfill policy for MSW.



### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

14. Landfilled waste includes a significant proportion of biodegradable matter which produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas which is more than 20 times as harmful to the environment as carbon dioxide. Each of these diversion projects will substantially reduce methane emissions.
15. Each initiative entails the transportation of waste and in the case of the MBT plant, the output will be transported abroad, at least during the early years of the contract. However, these impacts are viewed as unavoidable if Wiltshire is to reap the greater benefits of reduced methane emissions and longer term mitigation of the increasing costs of disposal of waste to landfill.

### **Equalities Impact**

16. There are no known impacts at this point.

### **Risk Assessment**

17. Whilst Landfill Tax will rise at a predetermined rate of £8 per tonne each year to 2014/15, there is a possibility that it will continue to rise beyond that date as the government seeks to divert more waste from landfill. Failure to plan for and commit to diversion projects could result in the Council incurring significant additional costs in the future as landfilling would remain a necessity. Government is also consulting on banning certain types of waste from landfill which would expose the Council to further increases in costs were arrangements not in place to manage these types of waste more sustainably.

### **Financial Implications**

18. The precise implications, in terms of contract costs, are bound by considerations of commercial confidentiality. However, financial modelling to develop Benefit Realisation Profiles for both Lakeside and MBT projects has been carried out with input from the Treasurer. The most realistic scenario for the Lakeside Profile assumes a cumulative benefit of £5.9m by 2016/17. Similarly, the MBT Profile shows a projected cumulative benefit of £6.5m by 2016/17.
19. Financial modelling to determine future cost benefits to the Council is based upon certain assumptions, including future LATS fines of £150 per tonne, where applicable, and Landfill Tax continuing to increase at £8 per year from its current rate of £48 per tonne to £80 per tonne in 2014-15. Thereafter, the tax is projected to continue rising, albeit at a slower rate. These costs must be added to the contract prices of depositing waste in landfill sites in order to establish the total cost of landfill.
20. External financial advisors have reviewed the Council's and Hills' financial models. Financial implications of awarding the Lakeside and MBT contracts have been considered by Cabinet. The Council's Chief Finance Officer will be fully briefed prior to advising the Leader of the Council on approval of the final terms of the proposed MBT contract.

### **Legal Implications**

21. External legal advisors have worked with officers to develop the documentation for the proposed MBT contract and to provide support during negotiations. Specific legal implications have been considered by Cabinet and approval of the final terms of the contract will be sought from the Leader of the Council after receiving advice from the Solicitor to the Council.

**Proposal**

22. That the Committee notes this update.

**TRACY CARTER**

Service Director

Waste Management

Department of Neighbourhood & Planning

Report Author

**JOHN GEARY**

Head of Waste Management Transformation

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:**

None.

## WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

**CABINET**  
**23 MARCH 2010**

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**Subject:** **HOUSING PFI SCHEME – UPDATE REPORT**

**Cabinet member:** **Councillor John Brady – Economic Development, Planning and Housing**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update Cabinet on the progress of the project.

### **Background**

2. We are negotiating the contract with Silbury Housing Ltd (SHL), a consortium led by Sarsen Housing Association in partnership with Barclays Private Equity. Sarsen and Persimmon Homes are providing approximately half of the land for the project and Westbury Partnerships (part of the Persimmon Group) will be the building contractor.
3. A detailed report was considered by Cabinet on 24 November 2009. At that meeting it was agreed to proceed with a reduced scheme of around 350 homes in total, on a phased basis, with approximately 242 homes being provided in Phase 1. It was also agreed to submit a final business case with the intention of signing the PFI contract by the end of March 2010 and to request a further report before entering into the contract.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

4. The project has been further delayed, due to land issues and ongoing commercial negotiations with SHL, such that it will no longer be possible to sign the contract in March. An update on the key work areas is set out below.

#### **Land issues**

5. Regrettably, due to previous uncertainty over planning permissions and the risk of the project not proceeding, SHL's due diligence work on Council provided development sites was not started until late 2009, when planning permissions were in place. This has identified a number of title issues, which, while they would not normally be problematic for housing developments, are perceived as having an increased level of risk within the PFI contractual framework.
6. We are currently working with SHL to resolve these issues in the most expedient way, while not increasing the Council's risks unnecessarily. This could involve a combination of appropriation of rights, insurance, planning amendments and site fencing works. Potentially this could lead to some sites being rolled into Phase 2 or dropped altogether. This has inevitably diverted

resources away from other work areas and there will be cost and risk implications for the project.

### **Project Agreement**

7. Final negotiations on the contract (known as the Project Agreement) are nearing completion. This has been delayed, in part, due to the land issues referred to above. Once commercial agreement has been reached, the Project Agreement, derogations report and supporting papers will be submitted to the government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for review. This process should take approximately six to eight weeks to complete. It is not known at this stage whether our contract will be agreed by HCA or if a further round of negotiations is required.

### **Final business case**

8. It has been agreed with HCA for the final business case to be submitted incrementally. Key elements of this are the Project Agreement (see above), and value for money and affordability information (see below).

### **Value for money**

9. It is necessary to demonstrate that the project provides value for money (VfM). We have submitted the required VfM information to HCA, based on Phase 1, including a comparison of key cost elements with available benchmarks. This will be carefully scrutinised due the single bidder situation. We believe that overall VfM is being provided. However, it is inevitable that, once the costs are broken down, certain areas will demonstrate better VfM than others.

### **Persimmon land**

10. Our specification requires approximately 50% of the homes to be on private sector land, the majority of which is being provided by Persimmon Homes. At the outset of the project the company made it clear that it was only prepared to release this land if the price included compensation for the profit that it would otherwise have received if it had developed the land for private housing.
11. The impact of this is that Persimmon's land price is substantially higher than current market values and at least double the value of the Council's sites in terms of price per acre and price per unit. Persimmon is not prepared to negotiate any further on this element of the transaction even though its' sister company will be constructing the PFI homes.
12. The Council's Project Board has considered the commercial agreement between Sarsen and Persimmon in respect of the private sector land. While it is acknowledged that the Persimmon land purchase may not represent value for money as a stand alone transaction, the Board has recognised that the Council is, in fact, procuring completed units via Persimmon i.e. land and build. In the Council's view and as verified by our external advisers, the average unit capital cost of approximately £156,000 provides value for money, including against the Department for Communities and Local Government's (CLG) benchmarks.

### **Affordability**

13. The project is supported by a maximum PFI credit allocation (central government subsidy) of £83 million to deliver the reduced scheme of around 350 homes. The actual credit level will be dependent on the final number of homes provided. If we are only able to deliver Phase 1, there will be significantly less than £83 million. In addition to providing approximately 50% of the required land at nil cost, the Council will be making an annual index linked revenue contribution of approximately £220,000 at current prices for 30 years. Our full revenue contribution will be committed once Phase 1 of the project is signed, regardless of whether subsequent phases can be delivered.
14. We are in the process of submitting affordability information to HCA. It is anticipated this will demonstrate that Phase 1 of the project is affordable to the Council with the total PFI credit being allocated on a pro-rata basis from 350 to 242 homes.
15. The affordability of the project has been modelled on the basis that Phase 2 will not be contractually committed until after service delivery (the date on which the first homes are ready for occupation) has commenced on the first phase and, therefore, the PFI credit will be allocated in two tranches. If the second phase were to be committed prior to initial service commencement on Phase 1, this would have a positive impact on the project's affordability, so more homes could be provided.

### **Phase 2**

16. Work has commenced to identify sites for the remaining 100 or so homes. Ideally these would be brought forward quickly for the reason outlined above; also due to the challenges of securing planning permission. However, the current priority, in terms of resources, is to close Phase 1.

### **Programme**

17. It is no longer possible to sign the PFI contract in March 2010. The revised date will depend on how quickly land issues can be resolved and commercial agreement reached with SHL. This could potentially take until the summer.
18. Further slippage in the programme could result in loss of government support for the project. This is due to be discussed with HCA/CLG on 12 March and a verbal update will be provided at the Cabinet meeting. Delay could also cause Persimmon to withdraw its land
19. Additionally, there is a degree of uncertainty about the impact and outcome of the general election on timescales. However, officers are working to minimise the impact of 'purdah' on external approvals and consents required.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

20. Provision of around 350 new homes will inevitably have an environmental impact on individual localities. However, it is anticipated that at least 150 of the homes will be located on previously developed 'brown field' land.

21. All PFI homes will meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, meaning they achieve 25% reduction in energy consumption from Building Regulations standards. A number of environmentally sustainable features will be incorporated including low water consumption fittings, energy efficient lighting and photovoltaic roof tiles.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

22. All general needs homes will be allocated through the Homes4Wiltshire choice based lettings (CBL) system. The CBL policy ensures that nominations are made in a fair and transparent way. Allocations to the temporary accommodation units will be managed outside of CBL.
23. The homes will also be built to Lifetime Home standards meaning they are suitable for a wide range of tenants and are capable of adaptation to meet the changing needs of residents due to age and disability etc.

### **Risk Assessment**

24. The project has recently benefitted from an internal audit and identified risks are being managed. The risk of project failure is regularly reviewed when updating the corporate risk register.
25. There is a risk of further slippage in the programme resulting in loss of government support for the project or causing Persimmon to withdraw its land. This compounded by uncertainty about the impact and outcome of the general election on timescales. However, officers are working with SHL to bring forward financial close as quickly as possible. A verbal update will be provided at the Cabinet meeting.
26. There are further risks identified within this report in respect of the land issues currently being resolved; the potential for additional set up costs to be incurred, including on Phase 2 and; of HCA not approving the negotiated Project Agreement.

### **Financial Implications**

27. Indications at this stage are that Phase 1 of the project will provide value for money, though the Council has to work through a number of issues regarding land, which could potentially impact on the position. There are also a number of uncertainties regarding Phase 2. The Persimmon land cost should be appraised within the overall land and build price.
28. Phase 1 is likely to be affordable to the Council, even if Phase 2 does not proceed, on the basis of £83 million PFI credit being allocated on a pro-rata basis from 350 to 242 homes. There is a strong incentive for Phase 2 to be committed prior to initial service commencement on Phase 1, due the credit being allocated in a single tranche. However, to be prudent, it has been assumed that the credit will be allocated in two tranches.
29. Barclays are providing all senior debt for Phase 1 and funder's due diligence work is currently underway.

30. There has been no significant change to the Council's total set up costs estimate of some £2 million, of which £1.3 million has been spent to date and is irrecoverable regardless of whether the project proceeds. A budget of £350,000 has been identified for 2010/11. Future set up costs are dependant largely on timing issues, including with regard to Phase 2.

### **Legal Implications**

31. The Project Agreement is still being finalised between SHL and the Council. This needs to be submitted for approval by HCA. There is a risk that HCA may not agree our negotiated position and this could delay financial close.

### **Options Considered**

32. The Council's Project Board has reviewed progress of the project and the preferred way forward is to ensure that sufficient resources are deployed in order to achieve financial close as quickly as possible, without compromising the Council's commercial position unnecessarily.

### **Conclusions**

33. The project has been further delayed due to land issues and ongoing commercial negotiations, with consequential risk implications. As previously agreed, a final report will be brought before Cabinet prior to financial close.

### **Proposal**

34. It is proposed that Cabinet notes the report.

### **Reason for Proposal**

35. To ensure that Cabinet is updated on the progress of the project.

**Graham Hogg, Service Director, Housing**

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Report Author:

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23 March 2010

### **Background Papers**

None.

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## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

20 April 2010

---

**Subject:**                    **Housing PFI Scheme – Appropriation  
of Land for Planning Purposes**

**Cabinet member:**   **Councillor John Brady – Economic Development,  
Planning and Housing**

**Key Decision:**        **No**

---

#### **Executive Summary**

The PFI bidder's due diligence work on the PFI development sites to be provided by the Council has identified a number of title issues. While these would not normally be problematic for housing developments, they are perceived as having an increased level of risk within the PFI contractual framework, which is not acceptable to the bidder without resolution.

In relation to two sites affected by rights and covenants, the proposal is to appropriate that land for planning purposes. This has the effect of overriding a party's rights or covenants in favour of a party to prevent development of that land in accordance with the planning permission. It does not remove their right to compensation for interference with such rights or covenants, but it removes the potential for excessive claims and the potential for the development being frustrated by the grant of an injunction to prevent the interference with such rights.

#### **Proposal**

That Cabinet:

- a) appropriates land at Broad Street car park, Trowbridge (as shown on the indicative plan in Appendix 1 of the report) for planning purposes under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- b) appropriates land at Paxcroft Mead, Hilperton (as shown on the indicative plan in Appendix 2 of the report) for planning purposes under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- c) agrees to dispose of such land at Broad Street car park, Trowbridge under section 233 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, subject to the Secretary of State's consent for disposal at less than best consideration and

d) agrees to dispose of such land at Paxcroft Mead, Hilperton under section 233 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, subject to the Secretary of State's consent for disposal at less than best consideration.

**Reason for Proposal**

To ensure the risks, in respect of rights and covenants affecting two PFI development sites to be provided by the Council, can be resolved.

**Graham Hogg**  
**Service Director, Housing**

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**20 April 2010**

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**Subject: Housing PFI Scheme – Appropriation  
of Land for Planning Purposes**

**Cabinet member: Councillor John Brady – Economic Development,  
Planning and Housing**

**Key Decision: No**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To seek Cabinet's agreement to appropriate and dispose of land, as identified in the report, for planning purposes, for the housing PFI scheme.

### **Background**

2. An update report on progress of the scheme was provided to Cabinet on 23 March 2010. As set out in that report, the PFI bidder, Silbury Housing Ltd (SHL), has recently completed its due diligence work on the PFI development sites to be provided by the Council.
3. SHL's due diligence work has identified a number of title issues. While these would not normally be problematic for housing developments, they are perceived as having an increased level of risk within the PFI contractual framework, which is unacceptable to SHL without resolution.
4. We have been working with SHL to resolve these issues. The preferred way forward involves a combination of appropriation, planning amendments and site fencing works.
5. This report considers the proposed appropriation of two Council owned sites, for planning purposes, where it has been identified that the PFI development proposals will interfere with certain rights and covenants attached to the land. The principle of appropriating these sites has been endorsed by the Housing PFI Project Board on 15 March 2010.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

#### **Site specific issues**

6. In relation to Broad Street car park, Trowbridge (see Appendix 1 for an indicative site plan), there are entries on the title register for part of the site relating to a 1960 conveyance, referring to rights and easements, if any,

and a 1955 deed of exchange containing a covenant limiting the use of part of the site to use as either a single residential dwelling house or a public house. The re-development will breach the covenants in the 1955 deed, since the site will be re-developed for flats. In relation to the 1960 conveyance it is not clear whether there are any rights and easements that would affect the re-development of the site and, if so, the nature of them. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the likelihood that they will be breached.

7. In relation to land at Paxcroft Mead, Hilperton (see Appendix 2 for an indicative site plan) there is an assent dated 10 July 1953, which relates to part of the site. This states that that part of the site is subject to any tithe redemption annuity, stipulations, restrictions and to all easements and covenants made on the part of the deceased and the personal representatives and provisions binding on any of them or rights granted by any of them. Again, without knowing the terms of the covenants it is difficult to assess whether or not they would be breached.
8. In order to deal with these title issues and having taken external legal advice, it is proposed that the above sites be appropriated for planning purposes. SHL has confirmed this to be its preferred solution.

### **Legal powers**

9. "Appropriation" is a term given in local government legislation to an internal process of a council designed to allow that council flexibility in its use of land. It allows a council to use land that has been acquired for one purpose for a different purpose. Under local government legislation, a council must acquire land under statutory powers.
10. Under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council can appropriate land for any statutory purpose for which we are authorised to acquire land. Under section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Council is authorised to acquire land if the Council thinks that either the acquisition of the land will facilitate the development, re-development or improvement of the land or the land is needed for some other reason that is necessary to the proper planning of the area.
11. Where land is appropriated for planning purposes, it will then be held by the Council under the statutory provisions within Part 9 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The practical consequence of this (by virtue of Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended) is that the erection, construction or carrying out of any maintenance of any building or work on the land and subsequent use of the land is authorised under those planning powers, if the works are done in accordance with planning permission, even if they interfere with third party rights.
12. The purpose of Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) is to ensure that where land has been appropriated for planning purposes, then existing rights, which could prevent the development of that land from proceeding in accordance with the planning

permission, can be overridden. The rights will be overridden whether the Council or a party deriving title from us undertakes the development.

13. The power contained in Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) does not remove the legitimate rights of parties to compensation, which may arise from the interference with their rights, but it does remove the potential for excessive claims and it also removes the potential for such parties to frustrate the development by obtaining an injunction to prevent the interference with their rights.
14. If any affected parties claim compensation, then the Council will be liable to pay such compensation. It may be possible to obtain insurance against compensation claims, if required.
15. Once the land has been appropriated for planning purposes, the Council will need to use an appropriate power to dispose of the land, when required. Section 233 of the 1990 Act authorises the disposal of land that is held by the Council for planning purposes, subject to the Secretary of State's consent for any disposal at less than the best consideration that could reasonably be achieved.
16. Any decision of the Council can be judicially reviewed. Any judicial review must be lodged as soon as possible after the decision is made and, in any event, not later than three months after the date of the decision. Housing PFI guidance is that judicial review periods should have expired before the contract is entered into. The earliest date for signing the PFI contract will therefore be three months after this decision to appropriate the land.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

17. There are no known environmental impacts of the proposal.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

18. There are no significant equalities impacts of the proposal.

### **Risk Assessment**

19. By appropriating the land the Council is, in effect, transferring risk from the PFI scheme to the Council's general risks. However, in doing so, the overall level of risk is significantly reduced and this is considered to be the appropriate course of action. As stated above, it may be possible to obtain insurance for the Council's retained risks.

### **Financial Implications**

20. If any owners do claim compensation under Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), then the Council is liable to pay such compensation. However, the power removes the potential for excessive claims and it may be possible to obtain insurance against compensation claims, if required.

## **Legal Implications**

21. The Council has taken external advice on its legal powers for appropriating and then disposing of land for planning purposes. Those powers are summarised in the body of the report.
22. There are no significant human rights or ethical governance implications affecting this report.

## **Options Considered**

23. The alternative to appropriating land as set out in this report would be for SHL to seek insurance in the event of any beneficiaries of the rights or covenants preventing or delaying development of the sites. Within a PFI scheme this would have significant consequential impacts in terms of loss of income as well as, potentially, of breaking the funding agreement or leading to contract termination.
24. However, any such insurance could not prevent the worst case scenario of homes being lost from the scheme and, therefore, the appropriation route is preferable.

## **Conclusions**

25. The proposed appropriation and disposal, for planning purposes, of two PFI development sites to be provided by the Council is the recommended way of resolving the risks, in respect of rights and covenants, affecting those sites.

**Graham Hogg**  
**Service Director, Housing**

---

Report Author:

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20 April 2010

## **Background Papers**

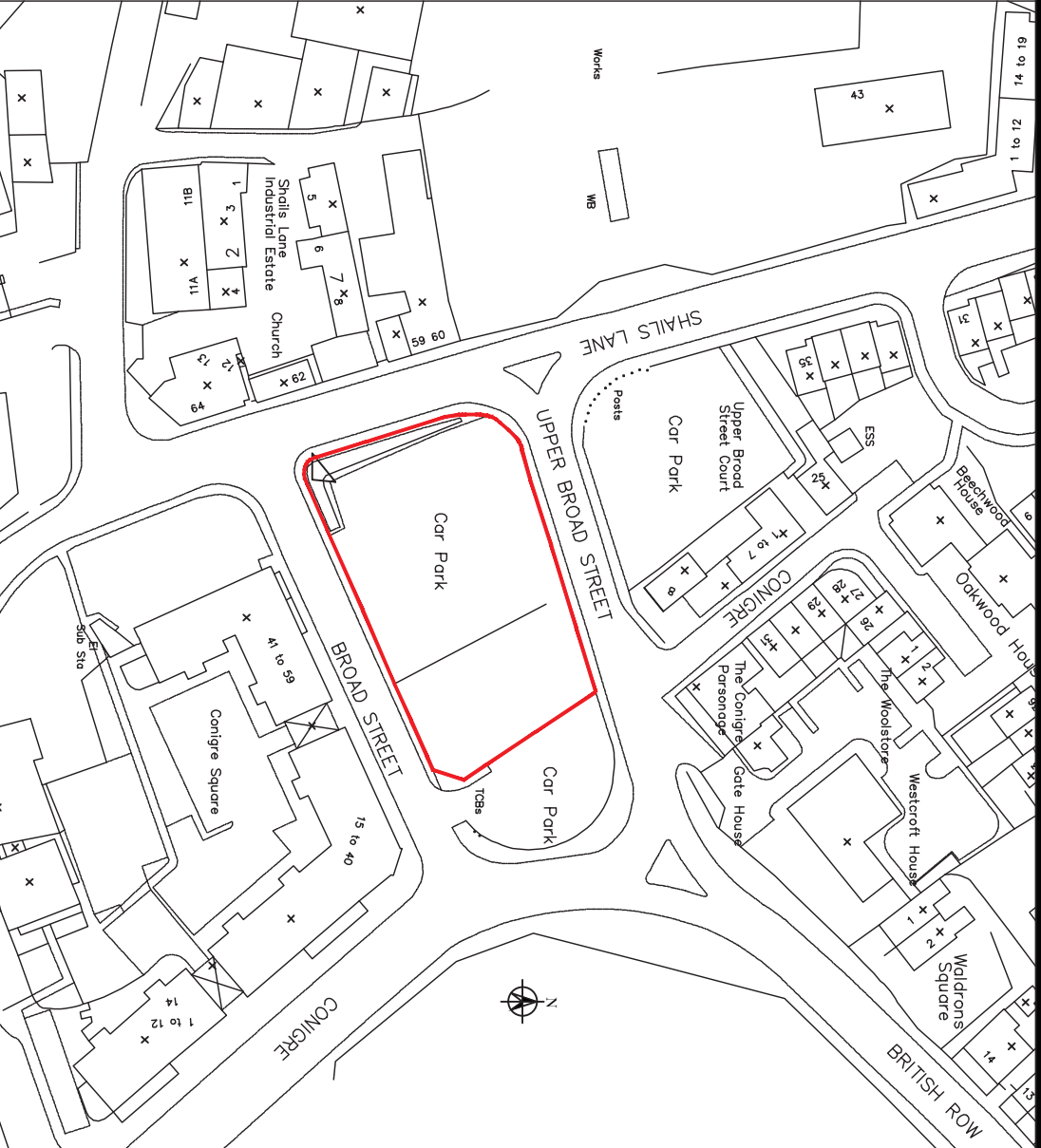
None.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Broad Street car park, Trowbridge indicative site plan

Appendix 2 – Paxcroft Mead, Hilperton indicative site plan

# Broad Street, Trowbridge

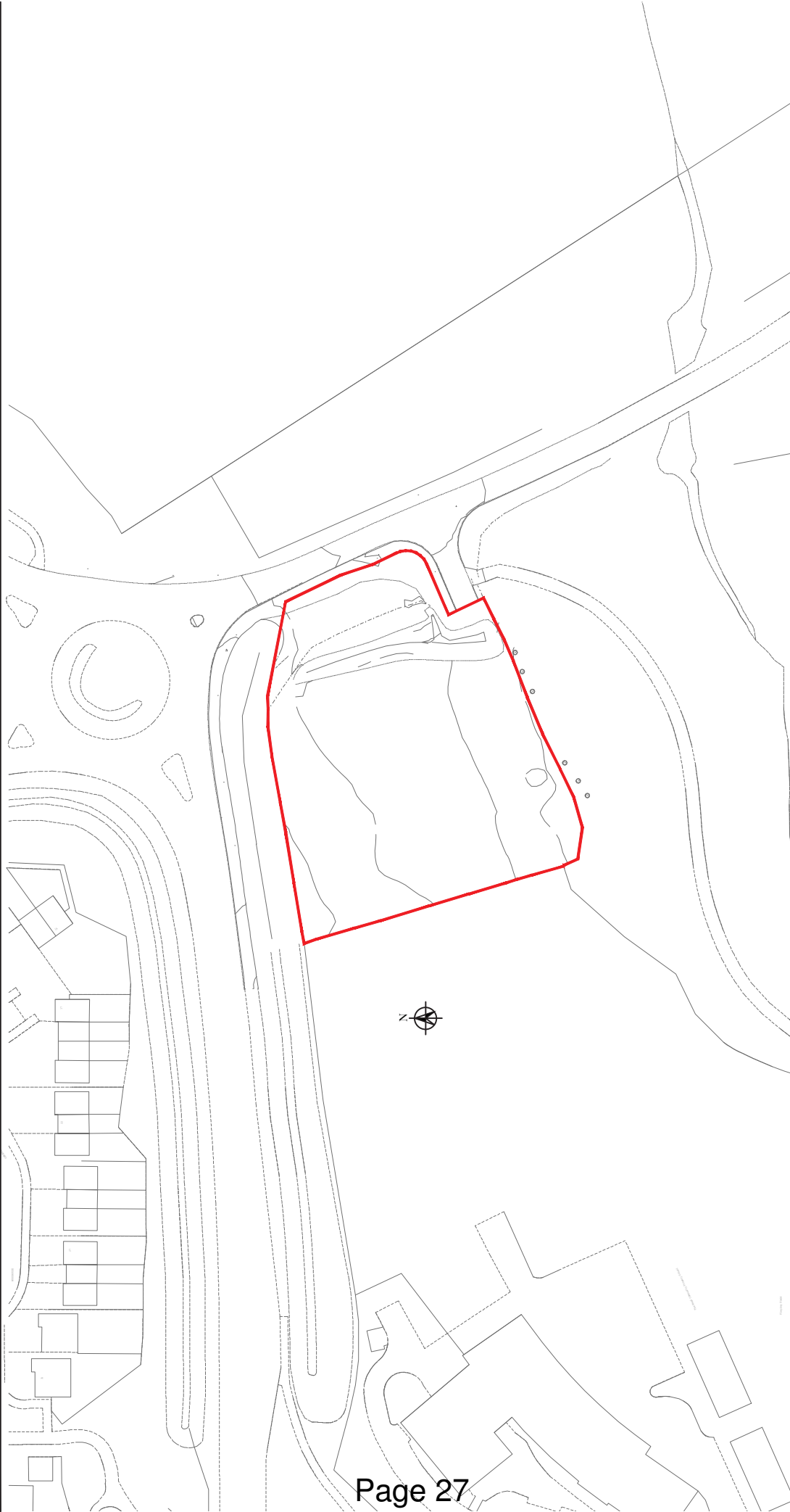


## Title Plan

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DATE: March 2010  
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Title Plan  
Paxcroft/115  
March 2010  
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**Wiltshire council**

**Cabinet**

**20 April 2010**

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**Subject: Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review**

**Cabinet member: Councillor John Brady  
Economic Development, Planning and Housing**

**Key Decision: No**

---

## **Executive Summary**

The Review of the Homes4Wiltshire service has been carried out in consultation with the Homes4Wiltshire Partnership, stakeholders and service users to address issues arising during the first 12 months of operation.

Recommendations from this review have informed proposed revisions to the Homes4Wiltshire Policy, together with further recommendations for how to progress the operation of the Homes4Wiltshire service in order to provide an efficient service to partners and service users. An action plan is attached, setting out the proposed process for implementation of the recommended changes.

## **Proposal**

That Cabinet:

- a) approves the amended Homes 4 Wiltshire policy and agrees the implementation of the Action Plan
- b) gives delegated authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for Economic Development, Planning and Highways to make further amendments to Sections 6.7 and 6.8 of the Homes 4 Wiltshire policy if the Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership decides that landlords should carry out the shortlisting function

## **Reason for Proposal**

To enable amendments to the Homes4Wiltshire Policy, following an extensive consultation, which will enable Homes4Wiltshire to provide a better and more efficient service to customers and partners alike.

In order to retain credibility with our partners, stakeholder, service users and the general public, it is important that we act upon recommendations resulting from the public consultation that formed a part of the Review.

**Graham Hogg  
Service Director, Housing**

**Wiltshire council**

**Cabinet**

**20 April 2010**

---

**Subject: Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review**

**Cabinet member: Councillor John Brady  
Economic Development, Planning and Housing**

**Key Decision: No**

---

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To advise Cabinet of the outcome of the Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review and to seek endorsement of the resulting revisions to the Homes 4 Wiltshire Policy.

**2. Background**

2.1 Following the successful launch of the Homes 4 Wiltshire county wide allocations service in March 2009, it was felt that an early review of the service would assist in the way we give access to council and housing association homes.

2.2 An extensive consultation exercise was carried out earlier this year, in which service users, landlords, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders were asked for their views about how the service was working and any suggested improvements that could be made.

2.3 A publicly available consultation document was drawn up from this initial consultation, and responses were invited from Wiltshire residents.

2.4 Another driver for this early review was the publication in December 2009 of a new Code of Guidance, "Fair and Flexible", and we were eager to ensure that our service acts in accordance with this latest guidance.

**3. Main Considerations for the Cabinet**

3.1 Homes 4 Wiltshire works in partnership with social landlords across Wiltshire to allocate social housing fairly and transparently. The proposed policy changes and recommendations in the attached Action Plan have been drawn up following a review of the service, following consultation with partner landlords, stakeholders, service users and the general public.

3.2 The proposed policy changes take account of the new Code of Guidance for the allocation of social housing by local authorities, "Fair and Flexible".

3.3 Implementation of the changes recommended in the Action Plan will lead to an improved service for partners and customers alike.

#### **4. Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

4.1 Not considered applicable

#### **5. Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal**

5.1 The attached policy aims to deliver quality services without prejudice and discrimination to meet the needs of all the community, regardless of age, cultural or ethnic background, disability, gender, marital status, religious or political persuasion or sexual orientation and will adhere to the equality and diversity policy developed by Wiltshire Council.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out during the Review of the Service (Appendix 3 attached), and recommendations from that Assessment have been incorporated into the policy amendments.

#### **6. Risk Assessment**

6.1 The potential risk of not approving the amendments to the Homes 4 Wiltshire Policy are that:

- Wiltshire Council would not have an allocations policy that complies with the latest Government Code of Guidance
- Homes 4 Wiltshire would lose credibility with partners, stakeholders, service users and the general public if it carried out a consultation exercise and failed to act on the recommendations resulting from that consultation

#### **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 None of the recommendations put forward by the Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership are expected to increase costs in the revenue budgets of Wiltshire Council.

#### **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 All Housing Authorities must comply with the provisions of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and must have and publish an allocation scheme determining the priorities and the procedure to be followed in the allocation of Social Housing.

8.2 Under the act all Housing Authorities must also have regard to Guidance issued by the Secretary of State from time to time.

#### **9. Options Considered**

9.1 See Appendix 4 – Outcome of proposals considered as part of the Homes 4 Wiltshire Review.

## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1 It is requested that Cabinet approve the amended Homes 4 Wiltshire policy and agrees the implementation of the Action Plan.
- 

### **Background Papers**

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002  
Part VI of the housing act relating to the allocation of accommodation

Code of Guidance for local housing authorities – Allocation of Accommodation

Code of Guidance for local housing authorities – Allocation of Accommodation:  
Choice Based Lettings

Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities  
in England

Homes 4 Wiltshire Policy 2009 (Version 8)

### **Appendices**

1. Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review Action Plan
2. Amended Homes 4 Wiltshire Policy
3. Equality Impact Assessment
4. Outcome of proposals considered as part of the Homes 4 Wiltshire Review
5. List of agencies involved in consultation

**Graham Hogg**  
**Service Director, Housing**

---

Report Author: Kate Evans  
Head of Homes 4 Wiltshire  
01380 734734

Date of report: April 2010

## Appendix 1 – Action Plan for Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review

	Action	Target Date	By Whom	Progress	Completed Date
1	Establish a Marketing Working Group as a sub-group of the H4W Partnership, to look at general marketing issues including advertising properties in local newspapers, reviewing the application form, provision of information to applicants and the inclusion of an interactive map on adverts	Jun-10	All partners		
2	Set a program of bi-monthly H4W Partnership meetings for the next 12 months	Apr-10	KE/TR		
3	Ensure links are readily available from each partner landlord's website to H4W website	Apr-10	RSLs		
4	Refer issues around local connection priority for particular areas to Wiltshire Housing Partnership for consideration		Housing Strategy		
5	Build up stock of photographs of properties for inclusion in adverts	Oct-10	Landlords		
6	Carry out evaluation of Westlea pilot on RSL shortlisting and report back to H4W partnership	May-10	KE/TR		
7	Carry out a mystery shopping exercise to assess any areas of concern with information provided by Customer Services	Jun-10	KE/TR		
8	Provide information to H4W on areas of concern with information provided by Customer Services	Jun-10	RSLs		
9	If necessary, carry out targeted training to address areas of concern	Sep-10	KE/TR		
10	Include as agenda items on future H4W partnership meetings discussion on possible areas of commonality e.g. debt and occupancy levels across partners	Ongoing	KE/TR		
11	Landlords carry out pre-void inspections wherever possible	Immediate	Landlords		
12	Arrange a rolling programme of training for staff across Wiltshire Council, RSLs and stakeholders	Sep-10	KE/TR		
13	Raise issue of research into alternative methods of achieving a mixed, sustainable community balance (as per "Fair and Flexible") with the Strategic Housing Management Group	Sep-10	Derek Streek		
14	Carry out research into incorporating employment (e.g. need to move to take up employment) into the banding structure as per "Fair and Flexible"	Mar-11	Housing Strategy		

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>
15	Agree a standard reciprocal agreement to facilitate referrals in case of urgent moves	Sep-10	Landlords		
16	Agree a comprehensive information and data exchange protocol	Sep-10	KE/TR		
17	Amend application form to ensure applicants are fully aware of the extent to which personal data may be shared	Sep-10	KE/TR		
18	Carry out research into housing 16 and 17 year old applicants in the light of the Southwark ruling	Sep-10	Housing Strategy		
19	H4W and Housing Options ensure all support plans and information are up to date and accurate	Ongoing	KE/TR/AR		
20	Performance Monitoring information will be amended to include: Ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, faith and disability with regard to numbers of applications, bids and allocations	Mar-11	KE/TR		
21	In order to ensure both the delivery of the improvements outlined in this report, and to begin to develop better co-ordination with stakeholders, it is recommended that we create a Housing Commission whose existence will carry on beyond the implementation of this report to pick up improvements and stakeholder involvement generally in the Housing Service over time		Housing Strategy		

	<b>Abritas / website actions</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>
22	Create a link from H4W to Homeswapper, with clear advice that this option is only available to social housing tenants	Sep-10	TR/Abritas		
23	Change recent lets data to provide information on the successful applicant rather than the highest ranked bidder	Sep-10	TR/Abritas		
24	Include information on website about usual timescales and possible delays in void process	Sep-10	TR/Abritas		
25	Include information on website to advise applicants that RSLs operate separate allocations policies (available by following links to RSL websites) and policies on mixed communities	Sep-10	TR/Abritas		
26	Improve search facilities on website to allow applicants to search for properties across a wider area	Sep-10	TR/Abritas		



	<b>Policy changes</b>	<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>
	<b>Amend policy to include:</b>					
27	Applicants who unreasonably refuse 3 properties for which they have bid will be demoted into the Bronze band for a period of 6 months	6.9	Apr-10	KE		
28	Advertisements will include as much information as possible about available properties, especially regarding the accessibility / adaptations of the property	6.3	Apr-10	KE		
29	Up to 20% of properties may be labelled for Transfer applicants only, in order to make best use of social housing stock in the County	6.4	Apr-10	KE		
30	Households found to be intentionally homeless will be placed in the Silver band as a result of their homelessness. This will not be taken into consideration when assessing multiple needs	4.1	Apr-10	KE		
31	Wiltshire Council will make a decision about whether a homeless applicant's refusal of an offer is reasonable within 3 working days of being notified of the intended refusal	5.4.1	Apr-10	KE		
32	The criteria relating to Sensitive Lets may be applied to the property and immediate surrounding area for a fixed period, and not just to a specific property	6.3	Apr-10	KE		
33	A clause will be added to read "Consideration will be given to extend both the notice period given to accept or reject an offer of accommodation and/or the tenancy commencement date in circumstances where a disabled person(s) requires such additional time on account of their personal circumstances"	6.10	Apr-10	KE		
34	Paragraph 5.5 to be amended to read "housing related debt" instead of arrears	5.5	Apr-10	KE		
35	A clause will be added to read "Applicants who fail to do this may be overlooked by the landlord under their own allocations policy"	5.5	Apr-10	KE		
36	A paragraph will be added to 6.6 Excluded Dwellings to cover technical allocations that are not made through H4W e.g. non-statutory succession	6.6	Apr-10	KE		

	<b>Policy changes</b>	<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>
	<b>Amend policy to include:</b>					
37	RSLs operate their own allocations policies in addition to the H4W policy, and different criteria may apply. These policies are available from the RSL on request, and on their websites	1.1	Apr-10	KE		
38	Outcomes - information will be provided about the successful applicant rather than the highest ranked bidder	7	Apr-10	KE		

# Policy 2010

## Homes 4 Wiltshire

Version 9

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## **STATEMENT ON CHOICE**

This policy has been developed to offer a choice of housing options to the widest number of applicants, including those with specialist needs. Applicants are given the opportunity to express their choice of accommodation and this choice will be maximised to cover a wide range of housing options, including RSL vacancies, private rented tenancies, mutual exchanges, supported housing and low cost home ownership options. General affordable housing has been advertised from the launch of the scheme, with the other aspects of the housing options taking a phased approach to advertising. The policy meets the statutory requirements for the allocation of social housing by ensuring that appropriate priority is given to applicants with multiple needs and that reasonable preference is given to those with the most urgent housing need.

The partnership advertises the majority of their vacant stock through the scheme. Applicants are given advice and assistance to allow them to make informed choices about the type of accommodation which best meets their housing needs and aspirations.

The partnership is committed to ensuring that their approach to letting properties is fair, accountable, provides equality of opportunity and maximises the potential for making the best use of all the available housing.

The property adverts provide valuable information about the property attributes, together with links to information about the local neighbourhood, to enable applicants to make informed decisions about which accommodation they want to be offered.

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS**

A partnership of Wiltshire Council and housing associations within Wiltshire has come together to develop a shared vision and policy for letting and selling affordable housing in Wiltshire. Wiltshire Council together with the housing associations providing affordable homes in Wiltshire have adopted a shared approach to providing a Choice Based Lettings service. This has led to an integrated service across the Wiltshire, which has improved access for housing applicants, created better opportunities for mobility for tenants and housing customers and created opportunities to share advertising and other services. The partnership is called the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership.

#### **1.1 The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership is made up of the following:**

Wiltshire Council  
New Futures  
A2 dominion  
English Churches HA  
Version 8 Page 4  
Fosseway HA  
Guinness Trust  
Hanover HA  
Hastoe HA\*  
Housing 21 HA

James Butcher HA  
 Jephson HA  
 John Groom HA  
 Kennet Housing Society\*  
 Kingfisher HA  
 Knightstone HA  
 New Downland HA  
 Orbit HA  
 Raglan HA  
 Ridgeway Community HA  
 Salvation Army HA  
 Sarsen HA  
 Somer Community Housing Trust  
 Sanctuary Shaftesbury HA  
 Signpost Housing Association  
 South Western Housing Society  
 Sovereign HA  
 Swaythling HA\*  
 Westlea HA  
 Western Challenge HA  
 West Country HA  
 Selwood Housing\*  
 Wiltshire Rural HA  
 \* Housing Associations without Charitable Status

Each RSL has its own Allocations Policy, which complements this policy. Applicants should note these different policies mean that different landlords may have different rules about who is eligible for a property. The Allocations Policy for each RSL is available on their website, or by contacting their offices.

## **1.2 The Aims of Homes 4 Wiltshire**

The Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership has met the Government target of having Choice Based Lettings Services in operation in all districts by 2010 and has simultaneously developed a countywide Choice Based Letting Scheme.

The objectives of the shared service are:

- To help meet the housing needs of households across Wiltshire, in the most effective way.
- To maximise housing opportunities for households across Wiltshire by eliminating artificial boundaries, at the same time promoting the principle of creating sustainable communities by reducing areas with concentrations of households with high needs.
- To meet the statutory requirements of Wiltshire Council, whilst working genuinely in partnership with the partner landlords to deliver a common vision for a fair and accessible service.
- To have a Common Housing Register
- To provide a simple to use, customer-friendly lettings service for affordable housing vacancies in the County.
- To set up joint services which will improve the experience for our customers and simplify the application process.

- To widen the choice of properties for customers beyond the previous district boundaries and provide seamless access to one housing register across Wiltshire.
- To give preference to those with a local connection to Wiltshire.
- To simplify processes and procedures for landlord organisations advertising their vacancies so that it does not matter which part of Wiltshire a home is located in the procedures and lettings policy will be the same.
- To take full advantage of the economies of scale available through joint commissioning and procurement of services to generate savings.

## **2. EQUALITIES STATEMENT**

Homes 4 Wiltshire is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services.

We aim to deliver quality services without prejudice and discrimination to meet the needs of all the community, regardless of age, cultural or ethnic background, disability, gender, marital status, religious or political persuasion or sexual orientation.

The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership members will adhere to the Commission for Racial Equality's "Code of Practice in Rented Housing."

The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership will offer a translation service to anyone who needs to access housing services.

The Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership will adhere to the Equality and Diversity policy developed by the Wiltshire Council.

Effective monitoring of homelessness, the register and lettings outcomes will be regularly undertaken and the evaluation of this fed back into policy and service developments.

## **3. APPLYING TO REGISTER**

Housing Authorities have a duty to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities, and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation.

Homes 4 Wiltshire operates an open housing register; all members of the public are able to apply for housing within the Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership; however there may be some occasions where a customer is not eligible for housing. This is clarified in point 3.1.

Applicants aged 16-17 will be entitled to register and will be considered for young persons supported accommodation. 16/17 year old applicants will only be considered for general needs housing if applicants have a support package in place and have engaged in life skills training. A guarantor could be requested although a landlord is expected to accept a young person who has a support package in place and has embarked upon life skills training for a tenancy.

### **3.1 Who is ineligible**

Applicants are ineligible for the Housing Register if they are:

(i) Persons from Abroad (s.160A(1) of the Housing Act 1996) That is persons who are subject to immigration control and do not have refugee status or exceptional leave to remain in the UK

(ii) Persons whom the Authority have decided to treat as ineligible (s.160(1)(b) of the Housing Act 1996) – see below

Three requirements must be satisfied by an Authority to treat an applicant as ineligible:

- (i) the applicant, or a member of his/her household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant of the landlord;
- (ii) The unacceptable behaviour must be behaviour which would (if s/he were a secure/assured tenant of the landlord) entitle them to a possession order under s.84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to that Act (other than ground 8). The Code advises that such conduct should be such as to justify an immediate order for possession ([4.22(ii)]); and
- (iii) The circumstance at the time his/her application is considered, he/she is unsuitable to be a tenant of the landlord by reason of that behaviour.

The applicant will be entitled to be notified in writing of the decision and the grounds for it (s.160A(9)of the Housing Act 1996). The applicant may (if he/she considers that he/she should no longer be treated as ineligible by the authority) make a fresh application to the authority.

### **3.2 How to apply**

Homes 4 Wiltshire has one joint housing application; this application gathers information about the customer's housing circumstances, future requirements and preferred areas of choice within the Homes 4 Wiltshire area.

On receipt of the customer's application, the Homes 4 Wiltshire team will administer the application, assessing the applicant's circumstances to ascertain the level of need that the household has.

This may at times require further assessment or investigation which will take place over the phone or by a home visit.

Customers will be advised in writing the outcome of their application with details of their band and the accommodation they are eligible to bid for.

At the registration process customers are required to provide a number of forms of identification and proofs. An application cannot be activated for bidding if the necessary information has not been provided. Point 3.4 indicates the information required, this information is also clearly highlighted on the application form.

Applicants can apply for housing in a number of ways, these are detailed below:  
- In person at the council or Housing Association offices



- Completing an online application at [www.homes4wiltshire.co.uk](http://www.homes4wiltshire.co.uk)
- Completing an application and returning it to the Council or housing association partners

Officers will be available to provide assistance in completing the application form if required.

### **3.3 Local Connection**

Homes 4 Wiltshire covers the whole Wiltshire Council area.

A local connection to the Wiltshire Council area is:

- Normal residence in the Wiltshire Council area for at least 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years (with the exemption of those referred to and living in Supported Accommodation from outside the area)
- Close family association with, for example, parent, grandparent, sibling or child of at least 18 years old who has been living in the Wiltshire Council area for at least 6 out of the last 12 months
- Permanent employment in the Wiltshire Council area

Applicants with a local connection to the area covered by Homes 4 Wiltshire (please refer to appendix 4 for map) will be given preference over applicants with no local connection within the same band.

In some rural locations, further local connection restrictions may apply to properties subject to planning conditions, restricting occupancy to people from a particular village or locality. (Section 106 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990)

### **3.4 Identification required**

3.4.1 The following evidence is required at the point of applying to activate and assess the banding:

- Proof of identification for every applicant on the register (drivers licence, birth certificate, or passport)
- Proof of address, (Utility bill, bank statement council tax statement/bill, drivers licence).
- Proof of residency of children (Child Benefit award letter, Child Tax Credit award letter, court order)
- Proof of pregnancy (maternity notes, letter from GP)
- Proof of income/benefits (bank statement, wage slips, DWP documentation)
- Proof of savings/stocks and shares (bank statement, relevant paperwork)
- If owner/occupier of property, most recent mortgage statement
- Confirmation of immigration status and workers registration certificate (if relevant) for persons from abroad
- Medical evidence (GP or occupational therapist report assessing the suitability of the applicant's current accommodation)
- Notice of eviction (notice to quit from landlord)

### **3.5 Change in circumstances**

If a customer's circumstances change, it is their responsibility to advise Homes 4 Wiltshire of the change. The customer will be required to evidence any change in their circumstances e.g. birth of child, birth certificate required; being threatened with eviction from their accommodation, notice to quit required. If a customer fails to inform Homes 4 Wiltshire of a change in their circumstances and are subsequently offered accommodation the offer may be withdrawn.

If any member of the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership is unable to contact an applicant using the information provided, that application will be suspended until such time as up to date contact information is provided. If this is as a result of a change in circumstances, the application will remain suspended until proofs of the change are provided.

### **3.6 Fraudulent Applications**

If an applicant/tenant does not disclose the full facts, gives false information or does not inform Homes 4 Wiltshire of any important changes to their situation between the first contact and the time a decision about their case is made, the applicant may be breaking the law as set out in s171(i) of the Housing Act. Anyone doing so may be prosecuted by the relevant landlord and if found guilty may be ordered to pay a fine. The applicant may also lose any property that has been allocated to them.

### **3.7 Deliberately Worsening Circumstances**

Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify for higher banding on the Homes 4 Wiltshire register, the application will be placed in bronze band.

Examples of (but not limited to) where someone may have deliberately worsened their circumstances would include:

- Selling a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant's needs in order to qualify for higher bands on the register.
- Moving from an assured/assured shorthold tenancy to insecure, overcrowded accommodation with family or friends in order to qualify for higher band.
- Moving family, friend and/or any other household into the property in order to qualify for higher band.

For an applicant to have deliberately worsened their circumstances there must be evidence that it would have been *reasonable* for the applicant to have remained in their original accommodation.

Deliberately worsening circumstances, also accounts for applicants who have a history of arrears (past or present) with a landlord (social or private) or antisocial behaviour, where the applicant's circumstances are not unacceptable to the level that they have been made ineligible for housing.

Where an applicant's housing need is assessed as platinum band, this level of need will override history of rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.

Where an applicant has made no attempt to rectify their previous behaviour (arrears or ASB) they will be considered to be deliberately worsening their circumstances and will be placed in bronze band, until efforts have been made to rectify the circumstances.

## **4 BANDING**

Full banding definitions will be outlined in pages 10-14

### **4.1 Banding Structure**

### **4.2 Multiple Needs**

An applicant in silver band who has two or more needs categories will be moved into the gold band in the Multiple Needs category.

An applicant in gold band who has two or more needs will be placed in the gold plus band.

### **4.3 Banding Categories**

The criteria for each band are detailed below.

#### **Platinum**

All applicants within platinum band will be reviewed after 3 months to ensure their circumstances haven't changed. The Homes 4 Wiltshire IT system will flag all customers within the platinum band after 3 months to enable the Homes 4 Wiltshire staff to review the customer's needs for housing.

Applicants within platinum band will be expected to actively bid for accommodation due to the urgency of their housing need. Applicants within this band will be regularly monitored. If no bid has been made within 3 months the Housing Options Team will work with the customer to actively bid for accommodation. Consideration will be given to the households' requirements and the availability of the relevant stock.

#### Exceptional circumstances

Such as a medical emergency, applicants under the Witness Protection Programme, extreme harassment, some tenancy successions, ADHAC (Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committees) referrals, and applicants who need to move to a suitable adapted property as a result of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.

#### Statutory Requirements

Applicants who meet the statutory requirements of Wiltshire Council:

Statutorily Homeless  
Statutorily overcrowded

Applicants living in a property assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team in accordance with the HHSRS as being sufficiently serious that a prohibition notice might be appropriate.

Applicants who are lacking 3 bedrooms or more will be assessed by a Home Visiting Assessment Officer and once confirmed as being statutorily overcrowded will be placed in platinum band.

Move on (priority need)

This applies to applicants in shared or supported accommodation where there is a move on protocol in place with Homes 4 Wiltshire. The applicant must have been assessed as ready to move into independent living accommodation by the Housing Options link worker. The Housing Options Advisor will then make their recommendations to the Homes 4 Wiltshire Assessment Officers.

### **Gold Plus**

Applicants meeting 2 or more criteria within gold.

Applicants within gold plus band will be reviewed after 6 months to ensure their circumstances haven't changed. The Homes 4 Wiltshire IT system will flag all customers within the gold plus band after 6 months to enable the Homes 4 Wiltshire staff to review the customer's needs for housing.

### **Gold**

Seriously Overcrowded

Applicants living in overcrowded accommodation (in need of at least two additional bedrooms)

Hazards

Applicants living in a property assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team in accordance with the HHSRS as having 3 or more category 1 hazards that cannot be remedied.

High medical needs

Applicants assessed as having high medical needs, who are living in unsuitable accommodation and medical condition would be improved by being re-accommodated.

There are 2 levels of Medical Need; an assessment will be required to establish the level of need.

Applicants assessed as having a high medical need will be reviewed after 6 months to ensure their circumstances haven't changed.

Insecurity of tenure

Where an applicant is under written notice to leave their accommodation and this has been verified by a Homes 4 Wiltshire officer. This includes armed service

applicants with priority need and local connection to the Wiltshire Council who have insecurity of tenure i.e. 93 day notice to vacate married quarters.

Applicants assessed as being insecure in their accommodation will generally be under a 2 month or 93 day notice to vacate their accommodation. After 6 months all customers will be reviewed to establish their continued eligibility for this band.

#### High welfare or support needs

Where an applicant has an identified support need which cannot be alleviated in the current accommodation.

Applicants may need to live closer to family or support networks to give or receive support. Consideration will be given to the obstacles relating to the applicants need, such as the distance and transport links between the two areas.

There are 2 levels of support need; an assessment will be required to establish the level of need.

Applicants assessed as having a support need will be reviewed after 6 months to ensure their circumstances haven't changed

Applicants who are receiving support from a recognised support provider may be awarded welfare needs if their need to move is evidenced by that support provider, at the discretion of the Assessment Team Leader or the Head of Homes 4 Wiltshire.

#### Move on

Applicants who need to move from residential care homes into alternative affordable accommodation

Applicants who are ready to move on from supported accommodation where there is no move on protocol in place with Homes 4 Wiltshire. The applicant must have been assessed as ready to move into independent living accommodation by the Housing Options link worker. The Housing Options Advisor will then make their recommendations to the Homes 4 Wiltshire Assessment Officers.

#### Harassment

Applicants who are suffering from serious harassment, violence, or threat of violence at their current property, providing evidence exists to substantiate their claim.

#### Underoccupation

Current partner RSL and Council tenants under-occupying accommodation and willing to move into a smaller home. For example an applicant in a partner RSL property not occupying all of the bedrooms and wishing to move to smaller accommodation. This criterion will only apply to tenants of a partner RSLs who are listed at the beginning of this document and does not apply to households in flats or maisonettes, except in exceptional circumstances with agreement between Homes 4 Wiltshire and the landlord.

#### Multiple needs

Applicants meeting more than two needs criteria within silver band.

#### No fixed accommodation

Applicants who have no fixed accommodation, who are not considered to be in priority need. This includes prisoners with a confirmed release date but no suitable accommodation.

#### Split households

Applicants whose family have formerly lived together as a household unit, with dependent children or expecting a child, who are unable to live together because of factors beyond their control, and as a result are living in separate households.

### **Silver**

#### Medium medical needs

See Gold Band "High Medical Need" for definition

#### Medium welfare or support needs

See Gold Band "Welfare or Support" for definition

#### Serious Disrepair

Applicants living in a property assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team in accordance with the HHSRS as having 1 or 2 category 1 hazards that cannot be remedied.

#### Overcrowded

Applicants living in overcrowded accommodation (in need of one additional bedroom).

#### Children in flats

Applicants with a child / children under 10 and living in a flat above the ground floor.

#### Sharing Facilities

Applicants sharing facilities - e.g. kitchen, bathroom, and toilet - with people who are not included on the housing register application form. This does not include applicants who choose to share their home with someone who is not included on the housing application.

#### Armed Forces

Applicants from armed forces with a local connection to the Wiltshire Council area, due to be discharged within the next 12 months and in need of affordable housing.

#### Tied Accommodation

Applicants living in accommodation tied to their employment.

#### Intentionally Homeless

Applicants who have been found to be intentionally homeless by the Housing Options Team. Please note that this category will not be considered when assessing Multiple Needs, as the applicant will be considered to have deliberately worsened their circumstances.

### **Bronze**

Adequately Housed

Applicants who are currently housed in a property that is appropriate for their needs in terms of size and facilities.

Deliberately worsening circumstances

See 3.7

Financial capability

See 5.8

#### **4.4 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) clarification**

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is a way of assessing properties to calculate the level of hazard or risk to a household of living in that property. It was introduced across England and Wales in 2006, and is used by all Local Authorities.

For the purposes of the HHSRS assessments, “cannot be remedied” is explained below:

Wiltshire Council would look to ensure that the owner of the property makes the necessary improvements to alleviate category 1 hazards. This may be through informal negotiation or formal action.

Where the property is occupied by the owner, the Private Sector Housing Team will ask the applicant prove or disprove that they are able to get financial assistance from the council or borrow the money commercially.

To evidence this the applicant should be required to see if they can get a loan or remortgage to raise the necessary funds.

Once this has been established the Private Sector Housing Team will advise Homes 4 Wiltshire if they property “cannot be remedied”.

For the purposes of HHSRS assessments, the Private Sector Housing team will not include overcrowding when considering the hazards as this is assessed in a separate way.

### **5. HOMES 4 WILTSHIRE HOUSING REGISTER**

#### **5.1 Assessment of applications**

The scheme will assess all applicants according to their level of housing need whilst facilitating more choice of accommodation to its applicants. Upon registration, eligible applicants will be placed into one of five bands in accordance with the guidelines set out in this chapter and in the light of appropriate advice.

Reasonable preference will be given to the following categories of people, as set out in s167 (2) of the 1996 Act:

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act); this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds; and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

**However, there is no requirement under the Act to give equal weight to each of the reasonable preference categories.**

Factors that may be taken into account include:

- The financial resources available to the applicant.
- The behaviour of the applicant (or any member of the household) which affects his/her suitability to be a tenant. Examples may be unacceptable behaviour or rent arrears.
- Any local connection between the applicant and the area covered by the allocations scheme

Additional preference can also be given to people with an urgent housing need, such as victims of domestic violence, racial harassment, witnesses of crime and victims of crime at risk of intimidation amounting to violence and people with urgent medical reasons.

## **5.2 General Need Applicants**

General need applicants are customers seeking affordable housing who are not currently a tenant of a partner RSL or Council within the Homes 4 Wiltshire area; and who are have not been accepted by Wiltshire Council as statutorily homeless.

Once a general need applicant has applied for housing and provided the relevant information they will be advised of their band and allowed to bid.

If a general need applicant has previous arrears with a private or social landlord the applicant may be deemed to have deliberately worsened their circumstances, and may be placed in the bronze band. If, however, the applicant has been making regular payments in an attempt to clear the debt they may be eligible for bidding. Please see section 5.5 for further information.

General need applicants are advised of the number of bedrooms they can bid for at the point of applying.

## **5.3 Transfers**



All existing Housing Association / Council tenants living in the area covered by Homes 4 Wiltshire can register for a transfer and will be assessed and banded accordingly.

At the point of applying, the Homes 4 Wiltshire team will contact the landlord and request that a landlord reference is completed. A transfer applicant will not be activated and eligible to bid until the reference is completed. The landlord reference will include:

- Right to transfer
- Clear rent account
- Satisfactory condition of the property
- Anti-social behaviour

If an applicant is a joint tenant of a housing association/council and wishes to give up their part of the tenancy to live elsewhere, they will be registered and eligible to bid for accommodation. If they are successful in bidding, they will be required to relinquish their interest in the tenancy before a formal offer can be accepted.

#### **5.4 Homeless Applicants**

Applicants who are homeless, or believe they are under threat of losing their home will be assessed under a separate housing approach.

The Housing Options Team will identify the applicant within one of the following categories:

##### **5.4.1 Statutorily Homeless**

Applicants with a homeless duty accepted will be placed in platinum band and will be expected to actively bid for suitable accommodation. The applicants will be monitored and where an applicant is not bidding for accommodation a member of staff will actively work with them to ensure they bid when suitable properties become available.

Applicants with a homeless duty will be considered to have an urgent need for accommodation and will, therefore, be expected to accept an offer of a property they have bid for. Should they refuse a property the homelessness duty will cease unless the applicant has a valid reason for refusal. The applicant must put their reasons for refusal in writing within 2 working days of viewing the property to Wiltshire Council who will assess within 3 working days if it is unreasonable to accept.

When a homeless applicant's duty ceases due to one offer being refused, they will be re banded accordingly and still allowed to bid, however, any temporary accommodation provided by Wiltshire Council will be withdrawn.

Applicants who are owed the main homelessness duty and occupying temporary accommodation provided under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996:

Temporary accommodation is in short supply throughout the county and Wiltshire Council is under pressure from government targets to reduce the number of households and amount of time spent in temporary accommodation.

If the homeless applicant has not bid successfully within a 3 months period a bidding assessment will take place. The assessment will take into account the pressure on social housing in the area of their choice, the applicants' reasons for not bidding and any special requirements.

If working with the customer to encourage involvement in the bidding process is unsuccessful, the Housing Options Team may then bid on the applicant's behalf in order to make them a final offer of accommodation under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and discharge the duty owed to them. Housing Options will aim to bid for a property in one of the 5 preferred areas of the applicant's choice but this cannot be guaranteed.

Where the applicant has been accepted under the homelessness legislation, Wiltshire Council will cease to be subject to the homelessness duty if the final offer of accommodation is considered to be suitable and reasonable to occupy following a review of suitability by a senior member of staff.

#### **5.4.2 Homelessness & Insecurity of Tenure**

Applicants who have insecurity of tenure or are unintentionally homeless, but do not have a priority need, will be assessed and placed in gold band. Their circumstances will be monitored every 6 months to identify if they still require this priority.

#### **5.4.3 Intentional Homelessness**

Applicants who have been found to be intentionally homeless can register their need and will be placed in silver band unless they or a member of their household has been found guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant (see point 3.1 ineligible applicants). This category will not be considered when assessing Multiple Needs, as the applicant will be considered to have deliberately worsened their circumstances.

#### **5.5 Rent arrears and anti-social behaviour**

All eligible applicants will be considered for suitable accommodation through Homes 4 Wiltshire, including applicants who have an outstanding housing related debt (current or previous) to any landlord (private or social) or who have a history of anti-social behaviour.

Applicants with current or previous housing related debt to the landlord however, will be required to maintain a consistent repayment plan. Applicants who fail to do this may be overlooked by the landlord under their own Allocations Policy.

Any applicant with a history of anti-social behaviour, (which is not serious enough to make them ineligible for housing but has led to action being taken by the landlord) will have to have maintained a successful tenancy for 1 year since

behaving anti-socially or demonstrate that the person who had been guilty of such anti-social behaviour is no longer part of the applicant's household.

If applicants' do not meet the above requirements then they may be considered under the criteria for deliberately worsening their circumstances (see 3.7) which may lower their priority.

Partner landlords will be expected to consider all applicants for their properties where they are placed in platinum band.

The landlord will also be expected to consider any applicant who has housing related debt, where there is evidence to suggest that the housing related debt accrued as a result of insufficient support being provided or where the rent has been shown to have been unaffordable.

If an applicant with housing related debt or a history of anti-social behaviour is successful in bidding for accommodation, and the managing landlord is minded to refuse the application due to its exceptional nature, the landlord must advise Homes 4 Wiltshire their reasons for refusing the applicant.

The managing landlord will be required to write to the successful applicant advising them why they are not being considered for the property and setting out the process of appeal as indicated in section 9.

Landlords will be expected to set out their intentions through the advertising process.

## **5.6 Waiting Time**

The date of application will be determined by the date the application has been received by the local authority. Applicants who are subsequently reassessed and are moved to a higher band will begin a new start date (the date moved into the higher band) and those applicants who are moved to a lower band will retain their original start date.

## **5.7 Vulnerable Applicants Assessment**

Homes 4 Wiltshire will identify applicants who may need support from the information contained in the application form.

Where it is evident from the application form that a person may require support, contact will be made to establish what support or advice is required. This may in some cases require a home visit to assess a person's need.

A vulnerable applicant's policy and procedure has been produced to enable Homes 4 Wiltshire to identify potentially vulnerable people who may have difficulties in accessing suitable accommodation.

The policy aims to highlight vulnerable applicants when initially assessing the application and from this the local authority will contact the applicant to arrange an assessment.

Please refer to the policy for full terms, which is attached at the end of the policy as Appendix 2

## **5.8 Financial Capability**

The aim of the Homes 4 Wiltshire scheme is to provide affordable housing for people who need it most. People who have the financial means to purchase a suitable property in the open market (including home owners with sufficient equity in a property they currently own and are able to sell) will be placed in the bronze band on the register.

All applicants will be asked to provide evidence of their income, savings and capital assets, which will be assessed against an affordability matrix. The affordability matrix based on government affordability criteria will assess the families current income and the Wiltshire average house prices to ascertain whether the applicant is financially capable. A copy of the matrix is available on request.

Homes 4 Wiltshire reserve the right to check an applicants financial capability at the point of offer.

Any home owner housed from the Housing Register will be expected to sell their property within 12 months of accepting a tenancy unless there are legal grounds preventing the sale. This will be monitored annually; any cases failing to meet this requirement will be investigated in line with the fraudulent applications process.

## **6. FINDING A PROPERTY**

The majority of properties will be advertised through Homes 4 Wiltshire. The properties will be advertised on the website, in the local authority's and housing associations main reception areas and at information points across the County.

For a full list of advertisement points, please contact Homes 4 Wiltshire.

### **6.1 Bidding Cycle**

The properties will be open for bidding on Thursday 00:01am and will close on Monday 23:59 pm.

### **6.2 Bidding Method**

- Online – [www.homes4wiltshire.co.uk](http://www.homes4wiltshire.co.uk)
- By phone – Bid line 0845 270 2500
- In person at Local Authority offices
- In person at your local library
- By phoning 01380 734734

#### **6.2.1 Assisted bidding**

Staff are available to take bids over the phone for vulnerable applicants who have no way of accessing any option of bidding.

Training will be given to external agencies that would also be in a position to help their clients with bidding.

Vulnerable applicants will be identified from the application form. Homes 4 Wiltshire staff will contact potentially vulnerable clients and offer them a home visit or interview. Staff will seek to establish what the support needs are, and identify ways of enabling the applicant to participate in the lettings system. If the applicant agrees, staff will contact any family member, professional or voluntary worker from health or social services with whom the applicant is involved; to ensure that they understand the procedures and that necessary support is provided. All agencies funded through Supporting People will be able to provide their clients with help on housing issues.

### **6.2.2 Autobid**

Where an applicant is identified as vulnerable and unable to actively participate in bidding for accommodation, the autobid function is available to automatically bid for suitable properties.

This option will be used as a last resort as it reduces the element of choice for the customer and goes against the ethos of choice based lettings.

### **6.3 Advertising**

All properties are advertised to all active bands and customers will be invited to bid for the properties they are eligible for. The order of banding is platinum, gold plus, gold, silver, bronze. However, there may be occasions when platinum may not have the highest priority. This could be because of one of the following:

- The Landlord wants to let a property sensitively. This is where there is a single property on a street, estate or within a block of flats that has been a cause of significant problems and the landlord wants to be sensitive to the neighbours with the new tenant. This approach may also be taken for properties in the immediate vicinity of the property in question, for a fixed period, by agreement with Homes 4 Wiltshire.
- On new schemes, lettings with a new build letting plan will be agreed to ensure the sustainability of the new development. For example, child density may be evaluated to allow for some natural growth of the families housed. This means that some homes, particularly flats, may be allocated to individuals or families without children. This will also include letting the properties to a mixture of bands.
- A local lettings plan may be developed for any neighbourhood where it is considered that the community will benefit from such a plan. The local lettings plans will be drawn up in consultation with the Homes 4 Wiltshire and all local lettings plans will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- In extra care schemes where a balance of care needs are sought in order to make such schemes sustainable.

Occasions where properties will not be allocated to applicants within the highest band will be at Homes 4 Wiltshire's discretion in agreement with the landlord.

Landlords will provide as much information as possible in the property advertisements, in order to allow applicants to make informed choices. This

particularly applies to the accessibility of a property, and to any adaptations that have been carried out to or installed in the property.

## **6.4 Property Labelling**

Landlords will advertise their properties as they become aware of imminent vacancies.

The landlord will input the following information into the advert for the customer to view when bidding.

- Type of property
- Location of property
- Number of bedrooms
- Any adaptations done to the property
- Any services provided (e.g. warden)
- Rent level
- Council tax band
- Energy rating for the property
- If you are able to have pets
- Heating type
- If it is a shared ownership property
- Service charges
- If the property is only suitable for an applicant with a local connection to that village
- Any restrictions to applying (i.e. age restrictions for sheltered housing)

In order to make best use of housing stock, landlords may label up to 20% of properties for Transfer applicants only (i.e. for current tenants of that landlord). Overall, in line with legislation, priority must be given to applicants in the Reasonable Preference categories.

Please see appendix 4 which refers to the household make up and the property types they are eligible to bid for.

### **6.4.1 Adaptations**

General needs properties that have been adapted to meet the needs of disabled people will be offered in the first instance to those applicants requiring adaptations. If no such person is available and the property is considered to be suitable it may be used as temporary accommodation for a homeless household until such a household is identified.

## **6.5 Monitoring of labelling and its effects on lettings**

Both Homes 4 Wiltshire and individual landlords will be responsible for monitoring the effect of labelling to ensure that communities are sustainable and that there is consistency and fairness throughout the letting process by monitoring;

- Number of properties advertised by type, area and landlord
- Number of properties with s106 (exception site)
- Number of bids and method of bidding
- Number of bids for each property by band
- Profile of those bidding, i.e. ethnicity, transfer, vulnerable, homeless applicant

- Number of accepted offers by band and application type
- Number of tenancies refused and reasons
- Number of properties re-advertised due to hard to let
- Number of properties for new households

## **6.6 Excluded Dwellings**

There are some exceptions to the Policy based on Primary and Secondary Legislation:

Part 6 of the 1996 Act does not apply to Mutual Exchanges between tenants of RSLs or Councils (including those arranged via national schemes such as Homeswapper)

The following cases are also exempted:

- Where a tenant dies (whether secure, assured or fixed term) and a succession takes place under the Housing Act 1985
- Where a secure or assured tenancy is granted by order of a Court under Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, or Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, or Children Act 1989
- Where an Introductory Tenancy, Assured Shorthold Starter, or Probationary Tenancy becomes an assured or secure tenancy
- Where a Tenancy is demoted by Court Order, or, following the expiry of the Demotion period, where a Demoted Tenancy reverts to Assured Tenancy status

Occasionally the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership will exclude properties from the letting system. This will include the following occasions:

- Where a property is allocated to a relative or carer of a tenant who has died, but there is no statutory right for that person to succeed to the tenancy
- Changes to a tenancy that do not result in a vacancy e.g. from joint to sole or sole to joint tenancy
- A vacancy is required to enable Wiltshire Council to discharge their duty to statutorily homeless households.
- A vacancy is required for a customer with acute support needs from supported housing
- A landlord needs to temporarily rehouse an existing tenant in order to carry out repairs, renovation or refurbishment.
- A vacancy is required under the high risk offenders' protocol.
- A vacancy is required because a Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership member has management reasons to provide accommodation.
- Other exceptional circumstances agreed by the partnership.

At the end of each year, the partnership will publish how many excluded dwellings have accrued.

## **6.7 Short listing**

When the bidding cycle concludes on Monday night at 23:59 a shortlist of all bidders is available to Homes 4 Wiltshire.

The process involved in short listing is simplified by the IT system which automatically places customers into their correct position and generates the list ready for the Homes 4 Wiltshire team.

On a Tuesday, Homes 4 Wiltshire will aim to match the applicants who have come top of all of the properties. This information will be sent to the landlord to enable them to accept or reject the successful bidder. A list of reasons detailing why Homes 4 Wiltshire may not match the top bidder and a list of reasons detailing why the landlord may not accept a bidder are shown in section 6.8.

The list of bidders is based on the standard short listing criteria indicated below:

- 1 – Band
- 2 – Local Connection to Homes 4 Wiltshire area
- 3 – Use of accommodation
- 4 – Effective date

#### 1 – Band

All lists are prioritised in order of band. Generally platinum will be given the highest priority (see 6.3 for an explanation of when platinum will not be the highest priority). For example, applicants within platinum band will come above applicants within gold plus and applicants in gold plus coming above applicants in gold etc.

Within the banding priority there have to be other methods of identifying the applicant who is successful otherwise all applicants in platinum will be of the same priority and the decision would not be fair, transparent and consistent. Therefore other prioritising criteria must be in place as per points 2, 3 and 4.

#### 2 - Local Connection

Where a customer has a local connection to the Homes 4 Wiltshire area, they will be prioritised above those who do not have a local connection to the Homes 4 Wiltshire area but are within the same band.

There are two types of local connection that Homes 4 Wiltshire refers to:

- Local connection to Homes 4 Wiltshire. This relates to the short listing criteria and those who have a local connection to the Homes 4 Wiltshire area will be prioritised above those with no local connection to the area who are within the same band.
- Local connection to a particular village or parish. This relates to the eligibility criteria. Properties with a s106 planning restriction will be advertised to only those who have an identified connection to that village or parish. If a customer does not have a connection to the advertised village or parish they will be restricted from bidding for that property.

For the purpose of this short listing section of the policy the first point is how local connection will be assessed.

#### 3 – Use of accommodation

Customers are given a minimum and maximum bedroom allowance. In some cases this minimum and maximum allowance is the same and in other cases it is different. When a customer's maximum is higher than their minimum allowance



this enables customers to bid for a property larger than their minimum requirement. This is to allow for growth into the property resulting in sustainable tenancies.

However, due to the large demand for housing it would be unacceptable to allow couples to occupy all 2 bed houses or couples with 1 child to occupy a high percentage of 3 bed houses. Therefore Homes 4 Wiltshire needs to ensure that the household who best suits the accommodation is prioritised above those who will not need all of the bedrooms. Therefore the “use of accommodation” considers a family with 3 children for a 3 bed house, before considering a family with 1 child.

This “use of accommodation” criteria sorts the maximum, minimum bedroom requirement in descending order. A number of examples have been provided later in this section.

#### 4 – Effective date

When a customer applies for housing, they are given an effective date. This is the date that the application is received by Homes 4 Wiltshire. If an applicant’s circumstances change and they move into a higher band, the effective date will become the date that they have moved into the higher band.

The date is used to prioritise those applications that have the same criteria allowing for the time customers have accrued on the register to make a difference to their success in being offered accommodation.

If two or more applicants have equal band, local connection priority, use of accommodation and effective date, the date that they applied for housing (if different from their effective date) will be the deciding factor. If this date is also equal, Homes 4 Wiltshire will consider the personal circumstances of each applicant to assist in making the decision.

An example based on this standard short listing criteria.

The order for a 2 Bed House:

Name	Band	Min bed	Max bed	Local Connection to Homes 4 Wilts area	Effective
Smith	Platinum	2	3	Y	19/08/2005
Lewis	Platinum	2	3	Y	22/09/2005
James	Platinum	2	3	Y	31/10/2005
Richards	Platinum	1	2	Y	30/04/2005
Ford	Platinum	1	2	Y	21/09/2005
Small	Platinum	2	3	N	28/06/2005
Jones	Platinum	1	2	N	25/06/2005
Brown	Gold +	2	3	Y	21/07/2004
Hills	Gold +	2	3	Y	25/01/2005
Price	Gold +	2	3	Y	19/02/2005
Lewis	Gold +	2	3	Y	22/09/2005

Davis	Gold +	1	2	Y	30/11/2004
Edmund	Gold +	2	3	N	28/06/2005
Phillips	Gold	2	3	Y	31/08/2004
Robins	Gold	2	3	Y	30/04/2005
Cole	Gold	1	2	Y	21/02/2005
Sharp	Gold	2	3	N	21/09/2004

The above shortlist, places those with a local connection above those with no local connection within the same band. However those in platinum that have no local connection will be placed above those in gold plus with a local connection. This allows for the need of accommodation to be prioritised above those who have been assessed as having less need for accommodation.

As local connection is 2 in the order of priority, this comes above “use of accommodation” therefore if an applicant in platinum had a local connection to the area, but did not make best use of the accommodation they would come above someone who did not have a local connection to the area but made best use of accommodation.

If there was more than one successful bidder who were in the same band; had a local connection and made use of accommodation, they would be distinguished by their effective date, subsequently the person who has been waiting the longest would be placed at the top of the equal applicants.

#### Adapted accommodation

Where a property has been adapted to suit a certain client group, Homes 4 Wiltshire will strive to allocate that accommodation to a household that will best suit the property and make use of the adaptations.

There are two ways to advertise this type of accommodation. One way is to advertise the property and only allow those who have been identified as requiring adapted accommodation to bid. This will restrict anyone who doesn't need this type of accommodation from bidding. Alternatively the property can be advertised to everyone but prioritising those households who require adapted accommodation above those who do not within the same band.

The shortlist criteria would therefore look like this:

- 1 – Band
- 2 – Local connection to Homes 4 Wiltshire
- 3 – Adapted required
- 4 – Use of accommodation
- 5 – Effective date

An example of this short listing criteria is outlined below. This is based on a 3 bed house, with full adaptations for a wheelchair user:

Name	Band	Min bed	Max bed	Local Connection to H4W	Adapted Required?	Effective
Ford	Platinum	3	3	Y	Y	30/04/2005
James	Platinum	2	3	Y	Y	31/05/2005
Small	Platinum	3	3	Y	N	28/06/2005

Richards	Platinum	3	4	Y	N	21/04/2005
Jones	Platinum	2	3	N	N	25/06/2005
Smith	Platinum	2	3	N	N	19/08/2005
Lewis	Gold +	3	4	Y	Y	21/09/2004
Brown	Gold +	2	3	Y	N	22/09/2004

This example shows that if there was a family who had an adapted requirement but didn't make full use of the accommodation, they would come above a household who would make full use of the accommodation. This is because a fully adapted property is very rare therefore it needs to be prioritised to those families in need of this type of accommodation.

#### Ground floor

In some schemes, particularly retirement schemes, ground floor flats will be prioritised to those evidencing a need for ground floor accommodation. To enable us to do this, customers requiring ground floor accommodation will be sorted above those who have not stated a need for ground floor accommodation.

The short listing criteria would be in this order:

- 1 – Band
- 2 – Local connection to Homes 4 Wiltshire
- 3 – Ground Floor required
- 4 – Use of accommodation
- 5 – Effective date

A shortlist for a 2 bed ground floor flat would look like this:

Name	Band	Min bed	Max bed	Local Connection to H4W	Ground floor?	Effective date
Ford	Platinum	1	2	Y	Y	30/04/2005
James	Platinum	1	2	Y	Y	31/05/2005
Small	Platinum	1	2	Y	N	21/04/2005
Richards	Platinum	1	2	Y	N	28/06/2005
Smith	Platinum	1	2	N	Y	19/08/2005
Jones	Platinum	1	2	N	N	25/06/2005
Lewis	Gold +	1	2	Y	Y	21/09/2004
Brown	Gold +	1	2	Y	N	22/09/2004

The above shortlist places those with a local connection above those with no local connection and those with a ground floor need above those with no ground floor need. However evident from this shortlist, those with a ground floor need but with no local connection are below those with a local connection but no ground floor need. This is because local connection is above ground floor need in the order of priority.

Local connection, adapted and ground floor requirements are all identified at the application stage.

Homes 4 Wiltshire will identify the local connection from section 7 of the application form to ascertain the connection that the household has to the Homes 4 Wiltshire area.

Similarly with adapted and ground floor requirements, these are identified from the application form and customers are advised in their registration letters what they are eligible to bid for and what they have been assessed as requiring.

## **6.8 Unsuitable bidders**

As stated above in 6.7, the Homes 4 Wiltshire team, the RSL or the Council may believe that the successful bidder is not suitable for the property.

### **6.8.1 Homes 4 Wiltshire reasons for overlooking an applicant.**

It is Homes 4 Wiltshire's responsibility to advise the household that they have been overlooked for a property, detailing the reason for this.

The reasons that Homes 4 Wiltshire may overlook an applicant will be for one of the following reasons:

- Does not meet the age criteria

On some properties, age restrictions may apply. Generally the IT system will prevent anyone from bidding on a property if they do not meet the age restrictions however if for some reason a customer bids and they do not meet the age restrictions they may be overlooked to enable the Homes 4 Wiltshire team to identify the next suitable bidder.

- Does not meet the Local Lettings Plan

Some properties/developments/estates throughout the area may have a local lettings plan. Local lettings plans can be developed for a number of reasons:

- Sometimes there is a high density of children on a particular street and the landlord wants to limit the number of families with lots of children
- There has been a history of anti-social behaviour in the area and the landlord is working on regenerating the area.

A local lettings plan will be developed by the landlord in agreement with Homes 4 Wiltshire and any property being advertised under such an agreement will be clearly highlighted on the advert. On these grounds if the successful bidder does not fulfil the local lettings plan criteria Homes 4 Wiltshire may overlook the applicant.

- Sensitive Letting

As stated in 6.3, at times a landlord may want to allocate a property sensitively. This could be to protect a prospective tenant or the tenants around the vacant property. The exact criteria will be agreed between the landlord and Homes 4 Wiltshire prior to advertising. However some examples could be:

- There is a block of flats with a known drug problem. The landlord is trying to alleviate the problems and has therefore requested that the vacant flat is not allocated to an applicant with known drug problems who is not engaging with support. On this occasion Homes 4 Wiltshire may overlook the top applicant if they are known to have a drug habit and are not engaging with the relevant support workers.

- A tenant has recently been evicted due to anti-social behaviour; the landlord has spent a significant amount of time on the particular case and wants to ensure the neighbours surrounding the property are not subject to any further anti-social behaviour. In this instance Homes 4 Wiltshire may overlook an applicant with a history of antisocial behaviour.
- Non engagement of services. If an applicant requires support to enable him/her to sustain a tenancy, however they are not engaging in support and there are concerns that the tenancy will fail without engagement. Homes 4 Wiltshire may overlook the applicant and they will not be considered for accommodation until he/she is actively engaging with the required support worker.
- Offered on another shortlist. An applicant can only be considered for one property, therefore if they have been matched to one property they will be overlooked on any subsequent properties.
- Does not meet shared ownership criteria. Generally applicants meeting the shared ownership criteria will be assessed as eligible to bid for all shared ownership properties within their bedroom ranges. However the prices of low cost home ownership vary and although a household may be suitable for one property they may not meet the criteria of all properties. Therefore on occasions Homes 4 Wiltshire may need to overlook a household if they do not meet the criteria.

### **6.8.2 RSL/Council reasons for rejecting an applicant**

RSLs or the Council may need to refuse an applicant for one of the following reasons.

In that case, it is RSL/Council's responsibility to inform applicant of the reasons.

- Area unsuitable/Anti-social behaviour

Where there is evidence that an applicant might endanger the health and safety or well being of neighbouring residents because they have a history of violent or abusive behaviour against particular individuals in the area, the landlord may refuse the right to offer them accommodation in that particular area. However if the client's behaviour is not unacceptable and they are eligible to register, the partnership must agree what areas will be acceptable and ensure appropriate support is in place.

For example, where an applicant has been prosecuted for assaulting a local resident or where the applicant is a Schedule 1 Offender and there are a number of young children living locally.

- Property unsuitable – Health and Safety

Where there is reasonable evidence to suggest a property is unsuitable for the applicant due to health and safety concerns.

For example, where the applicant has mobility needs that cannot be met without making considerable adaptations to the property. Every effort will be made to find a property that meets the requirements of the customer.

- Suspected fraudulent application

Where there is reasonable evidence that an applicant has provided false information in their application for housing, the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership reserves the right not to offer accommodation.

- Does not meet financial criteria

Where an RSL/Council has charitable status, households on certain incomes (varies depending on RSL/Council) may be refused access to their accommodation.

- Rent Arrears

Where rent arrears have accrued since registering and the applicant is unable to clear, the RSL/Council may refuse the applicant

- No vacant possession guarantee

Where an RSL/Council has advertised a property which has since become unavailable

- Where a landlord refuses an applicant because they will not allow underoccupation on the property, the Homes 4 Wiltshire team will not suggest any further matches where the household make-up is the same of the household that has been refused.

## 6.9 Refusals by applicants

Where an applicant refuses an offer of a property for which they have placed a bid, Homes 4 Wiltshire will consider whether or not the refusal is reasonable.

If the refusal is considered unreasonable, the applicant will be advised in writing of this, and given the opportunity to appeal against this decision.

If an applicant unreasonably refuses 3 properties for which they have bid, their application will be placed in the bronze band for a period of 6 months.

Applicants will be advised of the potential consequences of refusing properties after each unreasonable refusal.

This sanction will not apply to applicants for whom the autobid function is used, as they have not specifically bid for the properties in question.

## 6.10 – Disabled applicants

Consideration will be given by the landlord to extend both the notice period given to accept or reject an offer of accommodation and/or the tenancy commencement date in circumstances where a disabled person(s) requires such additional time on account of their personal circumstances.

## 7. OUTCOMES

All outcomes of advertised properties will appear on the website once the property has been let. The details in the outcomes page will be of the applicant who has been offered the property, and has accepted the tenancy.

The outcomes will provide details of the successful applicant, such as the band, bedroom requirements, whether they had a local connection to the Homes 4 Wiltshire area, their effective date and any other information relevant to the property that was advertised. No personal details of the applicant will be displayed. This will give customers an indication of the priority of the successful applicant how long they had been waiting for accommodation.

This information can be used by applicants to assist them in assessing the likelihood of their bidding for a property being successful.

## **8. OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS**

The additional housing options will not be introduced at the initial launch of Homes 4 Wiltshire, but will be implemented in a phased approach.

### **8.1 Supported Housing**

Throughout the Homes 4 Wiltshire area, there are a number of supported housing schemes. These vary from customers with specific needs for the accommodation such as support for customers with learning disabilities or those with mental health requirements to supported accommodation for young people. Following the launch of Homes 4 Wiltshire, the team will be working with the relevant agencies to develop a supported housing module enabling certain schemes to be advertised through choice based lettings, allowing all customers freedom to choose their accommodation, whether that may be general affordable housing or something more specialist.

### **8.2 Extra Care**

Extra care vacancies will be advertised and short listed within the Homes 4 Wiltshire choice based lettings policy. However, extra care schemes in the county have the requirement for a balance of individual care needs in order to be sustainable. Therefore, Homes 4 Wiltshire will make available to RSLs a list of all bidders in order of banding priority. The final decision will rest with the allocations panel for each scheme which includes representatives from Homes 4 Wiltshire, the RSL and The Wiltshire Council Adult Care Department which provides the support packages within the schemes. The customer who the panel decides best meets the care criteria for the vacancy will be allocated the accommodation.

### **8.3 Alternative Affordable Housing**

Homes 4 Wiltshire will not only advertise social rented housing but will also aim to advertise:

#### **8.3.1 Low Cost Home Ownership**

Properties owned or managed by one of the partner RSLs or the Council on a part buy/part rent or reduced market value scheme will be advertised by both the Homebuy Agent and through Homes 4 Wiltshire. It is a requirement of the Homes and Communities Agency that all Government funded Low Cost Home Ownership schemes are allocated through the Homebuy agent. Only those identified as eligible for this type of accommodation will be eligible to bid.

### **8.3.2 Homebuy**

Additional opportunities for alternative affordable housing are provided by Homebuy Agents. The Homes 4 Wiltshire website will provide a link to the Homebuy agents covering this area who are South West Homes. There are a number of schemes available for people who would like to buy a property but lack the financial resources to purchase on the open market.

### **8.4 Short listing of alternative affordable housing**

At the application stage of Homes 4 Wiltshire, any customers requesting low cost home ownership schemes will be advised to apply to the Homebuy Agent and will be considered eligible when they have been assessed and accepted by the Homebuy Agent. When a low cost home ownership property is advertised only those identified as eligible will be able to bid and the list of bidders will be short listed in order of priority which is explained in point 6.7.

### **8.5 Private rents**

Privately rented properties may also be advertised through the Homes 4 Wiltshire system. Landlords accredited with Wiltshire Council can advertise their properties on Homes 4 Wiltshire.

Applicants will not be able to bid for these properties but will need to contact the landlord directly. All information relating to private rented accommodation will be made clear on any adverts.

### **8.6 Mutual Exchanges**

Current housing association or council tenants will be advised of the services offered by Homeswapper. A link to this service will be available on the Homes 4 Wiltshire website and all tenants wishing to exchange will be directed to this service. Where the landlord has signed up to this service their tenants can view the site free of charge. If the landlord is not a member of the Homeswapper scheme the tenant is charged a nominal fee. Homes 4 Wiltshire will work with all RSL/Council partners to encourage them to sign up to the scheme.

There will be no need for the tenant to be on the housing register for this service, however, the tenant must be a secure / assured tenant. Both tenants must have clear rent accounts before an exchange will be granted. Restrictions may apply i.e. s106, household size, adapted properties etc.

**Any mutual exchange must be agreed by both landlords.**

## **9. REVIEWS & APPEALS**

An applicant has the right to request a review of Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership decisions on the following:

- They consider they have not been awarded the correct banding

Any review requests must be in writing to the Homes 4 Wiltshire team and within 21 days of receiving notice of the banding status. Any necessary evidence or information must be supplied at this stage to substantiate the request. Requests



to review banding, will be undertaken initially by the Home Visiting Assessment Officers. If the applicant is still unhappy with the outcome, 2<sup>nd</sup> line appeals will go to the Assessment Team Leader. Customers who are unable to put their appeal in writing can arrange a meeting with a Home Visiting Assessment Officer where the appeal will be heard and any supporting evidence can be provided. Where necessary the customer may bring a support worker or advocate to the meeting.

Where a review is requested on the following grounds:

- Not having their application included on the Homes 4 Wiltshire register or
- Removing someone from the Homes 4 Wiltshire register other than at the applicant's request;

In these cases a senior officer from Homes 4 Wiltshire who has not been involved in the original decision will carry out the review. As above any review request will need to be made in writing and within 21 days of receiving notification. As above, if the applicant is unable to put their review request in writing they can request a meeting for their review to be heard and any supporting evidence to be provided. Where necessary the customer may bring a support worker or advocate to the meeting.

If the applicant does not agree with the outcome of the review, they will be advised of the Wiltshire Council complaints procedure. With further grounds of appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman.

**If an applicant is unhappy with a partner landlord decision to refuse them for a vacant property they will be required to follow the landlord's appeal/complaints procedure.**

## **10. MONITORING**

The scheme will be closely monitored by Homes 4 Wiltshire to ensure that it is operating equitably and fairly. This will include:

- Number of applications received
- Number of applications registered within ten working days
- Number of applications excluded from the register
- Number of inactive applicants
- Number of properties advertised by type, area and landlord
- Number of properties with s106 local connection required
- Number of bids and method of bidding
- Number of bids for each property by band
- Profile of those bidding, i.e. ethnicity, transfer, homeless applicant
- Number of accepted offers by band
- Number of tenancies refused at sign up & reasons
- Number of properties with multiple adverts and no bids
- Number of review requests
- Number of complaints
- Number of properties excluded from choice based lettings
- Mobility across the County

Other information will be collected in order to complete the P1E returns and in order to assess any additional areas of operation, as appropriate. The Partnership will review the policy twice a year and minor amendments may be

proposed. Should any significant amendments be required, consultation would be undertaken with relevant stakeholders prior to a decision being made.

## **11. REFERENCES**

This policy has been framed with reference to:

### **Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002**

Part VI of the housing act relating to the allocation of accommodation

### **Code of Guidance for local housing authorities – Allocation of Accommodation**

### **Code of Guidance for local housing authorities – Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings**

### **Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England**

### **Acts of the UK Parliament**

This policy has been framed with reference to the following Acts of the UK Parliament

### **Data Protection Act 1998**

Homes 4 Wiltshire is committed to adhering to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Individuals are entitled under the Act to request details of their personal data held by Homes 4 Wiltshire. There may be a charge for providing this information.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful for Homes 4 Wiltshire to discriminate against disabled people.

### **Freedom of Information Act 2004**

Homes 4 Wiltshire complies with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2004.

### **Human Rights Act 1998**

In accordance with articles 8 and 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Lettings Policy ensures that the right to respect for applicant's private and family life is taken into account when assessing housing need. The housing need is assessed taken into consideration a variety of factors including support requirements; bearing in mind the need to not discriminate on grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, or association with a national minority.

### **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places the Council under a general duty to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. Homes 4 Wiltshire will not tolerate any form of racial discrimination.

## **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful for Homes 4 Wiltshire to discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in the provision of housing.

## **12. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1. Vulnerable Applicant's Policy**

The Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities has highlighted the fact that certain applicants, for example those with physical or mental impairments, who may have difficulty in making an application for accommodation should not be denied the opportunity of exercising choice over the type and location of property offered.

Housing authorities should therefore ensure that help and support is made available to people who are likely to have problems in making an application without assistance. This is especially the case when the allocations scheme involves the participation of applicants in actively choosing their accommodation and housing authorities must ensure that these, more vulnerable applicants, are offered the assistance and support they require. Those considered potentially vulnerable include people who are or have experienced:

- 16-17 year olds
- Care leavers
- Chaotic lifestyles and those of NFA, including rough sleepers
- Deaf
- Domestic violence and other serious harassment victims
- Dual sensory impairment
- Equality group – religion and belief
- Equality group – sexual orientation
- Families with identified needs
- Homeless or in temporary accommodation (individuals and families)
- Learning disabilities
- Low literacy levels
- Mental health issues
- Offenders/Ex-offenders
- Older people and housebound people
- People in hospital ready for discharge
- People with HIV/AIDS
- Physical disabilities
- Prostitution
- Refugees and others for whom English is not their first language
- Substance misuse
- Teenage parents and lone parents
- Travellers
- Unemployed and those on low incomes
- Visual impairment
- Youth offenders

However, not every person in a vulnerable group will need support in order to participate in this scheme and there will be other individuals, not considered to be in a vulnerable group who will need assistance and support.

### **Identifying Vulnerable People**

There are several ways to identify people who may need assistance in making appropriate choices:

- Identifying those who are supported by a statutory or voluntary agency
- Asking people on the application form to indicate whether or not they are in need of support
- Identified by housing officer at the point of application
- Identifying those either not bidding or bidding for inappropriate properties

For vulnerable applicants there are three main barriers to active participation in Choice Based Lettings:

- Lack of access to advertising / scheme information
- Lack of access to bidding mechanisms
- Difficulty with making or articulating choices

### **Access to advertising/scheme information**

Properties will be advertised as widely as possible throughout the County, this will include the Homes 4 Wiltshire website, all council and housing association reception areas and at information points across the County eg Libraries, Doctors surgeries and Health Centres, Hostels, voluntary agencies and shops.

If the applicant cannot access any of these methods of advertising then the advert will be sent to the applicant's home or to a nominated contact for the applicant.

### **Access to bidding mechanisms**

Applicants are able to bid in person at council and housing association offices, on the website, by telephone through the bidline or by a nominated proxy bidder. There is also an option for the Homes 4 Wiltshire IT system to bid for suitable properties on behalf of the applicant.

### **Difficulty with making or articulating choices.**

Cooperation and good communication between partners in the scheme and all appropriate agencies in Wiltshire is vital to Homes 4 Wiltshire.

Homes 4 Wiltshire officers will establish what support needs the applicant has and how the applicant should be supported in order to participate in the scheme.

Training will be offered to support agencies to enable them to assist their clients in making informed choices.

All agencies funded through Supporting People will be able to provide their clients with help on housing issues.

### **Monitoring**

The effective use of monitoring information can be used to identify people who need assistance in bidding;

- Homes 4 Wiltshire will monitor:
- People not bidding
- People bidding for unsuitable properties
- People needing assisted bidding
- Speed of success for people considered vulnerable, comparing those with and without support

## **Appendix 2**

### **Multiple need matrix**

Multiple needs Gold Plus band  
X 2

Gold band criteria

High medical needs  
High welfare or support needs  
Insecurity of tenure  
Move on  
Harassment  
Under occupation  
No fixed accommodation  
Multiple needs (2 x silver)  
Split household

Multiple needs Silver band X 2

Silver band criteria

Medium medical needs  
Medium welfare or support needs  
Serious disrepair  
Overcrowded  
Children in flats  
Lacking facilities  
Armed forces  
Tied accommodation

### Appendix 3

#### Bedroom eligibility

**Any expected child will be included as part of the household when calculating minimum bedroom requirements**

<b>Household make-up</b>	<b>Minimum Bedroom</b>	<b>Maximum Bedroom</b>
Single person	1 Bed	2 Bed
Couple	1 Bed	2 Bed
Single or Couple with 1 Child	2 Bed	3 Bed
Single or Couple with 2 Children (both under 10yrs)	2 Bed	3 Bed
Single or Couple with 2 Children (one of which over 10yrs)	3 Bed	3 Bed
Single or Couple with 3 Children (all under 10yrs)	3 Bed	3 Bed
Single or Couple with 3 Children (one of which over 10yrs)	3 Bed	4 Bed
Single or Couple with 4 Children (all under 10yrs)	3 Bed	4 Bed
Single or Couple with 4 Children (one of which over 10yrs)	4 Bed	5 Bed
Single or Couple with 5 Children (all under 10 yrs)	4 Bed	5 Bed
Single or Couple with 5 Children (one of which over 10yrs)	4 Bed	6 Bed
Single or Couple with 6 or more Children	4 Bed	6 Bed

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**Appendix 3  
Equality Impact Assessment.  
Homes 4 Wiltshire Review.**

**Stage 1: Screening for Relevance**

Please use the following template to help determine whether an equality impact assessment (EIA) is required.

<b>Name of the Strategy / Policy / Procedure / Practice</b> Homes 4 Wiltshire Review
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Author; Housing Strategy & Support
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Name: Sarah Hartley	Job title and directorate: Performance & Research Officer, EDPH	Date:	Signature:
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**Does the strategy / policy / procedure / practice require an equality impact assessment (EIA)?**

Please answer the following questions.

**1. What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of the strategy / policy / procedure / practice and how do these fit in with the wider aims of the organisation?**

Purpose:

Following on from the successful launch of the partnership's Wiltshire wide allocations service in March 2009 it was felt that an early review of the service would assist in improving the way we give access to council and housing association homes. The partnership currently has around 10,000 customers and over thirty landlords offering over 22,000 homes across the county. We want to be sure that landlords are able to make the best use of their homes and that all customers, including the most vulnerable, have good and ready access to the service.

This fits into the following organisational goals:

- High quality, low cost, customer-focused services;
- Local, open, transparent decision-making;
- Working together to support Wiltshire's communities, building social capital.
- Being inclusive and supporting others

**2. How will these aims affect our statutory duty to:**

1. Promote equality of opportunity?
2. Eliminate discrimination and harassment?
3. Promote good community relations and positive attitudes towards disabled people?
4. Encourage participation of disabled people, including the consideration of more favourable treatment of disabled people?

### 5. Protect and promote human rights?

1. Promote equality of opportunity – enabling all people to have appropriate accommodation for their needs
2. Eliminate discrimination by providing a service open to everyone.
3. Community relations are of course key to social housing – encouraging communication between communities and positive attitudes. The housing criteria within Homes4Wiltshire encourage the development of mixed and sustainable communities.
4. Encourage participation of disabled people – WSUN has been involved in identifying needs, and the Review specifically considers e.g. accessibility to the CBL system, alternative formats to improve access, and the accommodation needs of disabled people, in order to encourage participation in the housing register.
5. Protect and promote human rights – HRA duty to provide (accommodation) support to asylum seekers; to provide equitable treatment for minority groups.

### 3. Are there any aspects of the strategy / policy / procedure / practice, including how it is delivered, or accessed, that could contribute to inequality? This should relate to all areas of our statutory duties.

N/a – this Review is intended to enable equality in housing provision and should not contribute to inequality.

### 4. Will the strategy / policy / procedure / practice have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including members of particular communities and groups? What evidence do you have for this?

The Review has been implemented in order to enable service users, stakeholders and interested parties to comment on the Homes4Wiltshire service. In this sense, the uptake of recommendations made during the consultation period will, it is hoped, positively impact the lives of people in Wiltshire. Assessing the feedback and making changes to the Homes4Wiltshire policy and service in relation to this feedback is an ongoing process (see action plan at end of document).

### 5. Are particular communities or groups likely to have different needs, experiences and attitudes in relation to the strategy / policy / procedure / practice?

The consultation on the Review identified a different attitude between service users and the H4W Partners in regard to the maximisation/minimisation of the housing register; whereby service users on the whole wanted to see a smaller list, thus maximising their own chances of making a successful bid; whereas the Partners wanted to ensure that all in housing need were registered with H4W.

The consultation also identified some competition between the different bands, such that there was a widespread (mis-)conception expressed by applicants not in the platinum band that all available properties were going to applicants in the platinum band.

### Is an EIA required?

If the policy is not relevant to any aspect of the statutory duties or wider equality responsibilities, there is

no need to conduct an EIA. [In this event, please contact the Corporate Equality and Diversity team to discuss this decision](#)

Remember:

'High' relevance will have potential / actual impact on 3 out of the 5 areas under the statutory duties

'Medium' relevance will have potential / actual impact on 2 of the areas

'Low' relevance policies will not have any impact relating to the areas under the statutory duties

The strategy / policy / procedure / practice is assessed as (please delete appropriately):

- HIGH Relevance, therefore a full EIA will be done by 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010

**Author of Screening for Relevance**

Name:	Job title and directorate:	Date:	Signature:
<b>Director Level Sign-off (if EIA will not be done)</b>			
Name:	Job title and directorate:	Date:	Signature:

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## Stage 2: Full Assessment

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### Step 1– scoping the equality impact assessment (EIA)

Building on the material included at the screening stage, you should begin the EIA by determining its scope. The EIA should consider the impact or likely impact of the policy in relation to all areas of our remit, including human rights. The EIA should be proportionate to the significance and coverage of the policy.

**1.1. Name of the strategy / policy / procedure / practice**

Homes 4 Wiltshire Review

**1.2. What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of strategy / policy / procedure / practice and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation?**

Purpose:

Following on from the successful launch of the partnership's Wiltshire wide allocations service in March 2009 it was felt that an early review of the service would assist in improving the way we give access to council and housing association homes. The partnership currently has around 10,000 customers and over thirty landlords offering over 22,000 homes across the county. We want to be sure that landlords are able to make the best use of their homes and that all customers, including the most vulnerable,

have good and ready access to the service.

This fits into the following organisational goals:

- High quality, low cost, customer-focused services;
- Local, open, transparent decision-making;
- Working together to support Wiltshire's communities, building social capital.
- Being inclusive and supporting others

**1.3. List the main activities relating to the strategy / policy / procedure / practice and identify who is likely to benefit from it**

The main activities under the Review are;

- Gauging current service provision for households
- Identifying gaps in the provision of current services
- Identifying methods of improvement to the services.

Those who benefit from it will be

- People on the housing register in Wiltshire
- People in need of affordable housing
- Wiltshire Council and other partner agencies because they will work within a common framework to ensure the smooth and equitable delivery of the Homes4Wiltshire service.
- Homes4Wiltshire staff because they will have clear guidance as result of the strategy that will be developed from this strategy statement

**What do you already know about the relevance of the strategy / policy / procedure / practice? What are the main issues you need to consider?**

*Some things to consider:*

- *How is the policy likely to affect the promotion of equality in the areas of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or human rights?*
- *How do you think that the policy will meet the needs of different communities and groups?*
- *What consultation has already been undertaken which is relevant to the development of this policy?*
- *Are there any examples of existing good practice in this area – such as measures to improve access to the policy among particular groups?*
- *Do you think that your policy presents any problems or barriers to any community or group?*

**1.4. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this EIA?**

**Please note that this Impact Assessment is draft and ongoing – assessment to continue in line with the Review.**

1. The Review is likely to affect the promotion of equality in the areas of age and disability, as it considers the housing needs of elderly, young and disabled service users in relation to the provision of adapted or suitable accommodation.
2. The Review aims to address the needs of these groups by ensuring an equitable provision of housing, suitable to their specific needs, and by ensuring access to the service is catered to user needs.
3. The Review involves an open consultation period which ended on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010; the feedback from this consultation will directly inform the recommendations of the Review.

4. Existing good practice in the area of choice-based lettings identifies access to information and support in bidding as key. The Review expands upon the provision already made in the H4W Policy for providing support to service users unable to make bids on their own, allowing for support in the making of bids and describing the different means of accessing the service.
5. The Review aims to lessen problems or barriers, identified in the consultation process, in accessing the service. The aim is to ensure that all communities and groups are able to access and use the service, with targeted support provided as required. Homes 4 Wiltshire officers will establish what support needs the applicant has and how the applicant should be supported in order to participate in the scheme. Training will be offered to support agencies to enable them to assist their clients in making informed choices. All agencies funded through Supporting People will be able to provide their clients with help on housing issues.

#### **1.5. What further data or information do you need to carry out the assessment?**

As the Review process is taken forward, further data and information needs will be identified so that future impact assessments can be strengthened.

## **Step 2 – Involvement, Consultation and Partnerships**

When considering how you will involve and consult other people in developing the policy, you need to think about internal and external audiences and all areas of the statutory duties.

#### **2.1. Please use the table directly below to outline any previous involvement or consultation which is relevant to this strategy / policy / procedure / practice**

<b>Equality target group</b>	<b>Briefly describe what you did, with whom, when and where. Please provide a brief summary of the responses gained and links to relevant documents, as well as any actions.</b>
<b>Age</b>	Age Concern, WASS4YP (Focus group)
<b>Disability</b>	Mental Health and Learning Disability teams, Housing OT, Reablement and the emergency duty team (Focus group)
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	
<b>Race</b>	WREC (Focus group)
<b>Religion or belief</b>	WREC (Focus group)
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	
<b>Human rights</b>	
<b>Other</b>	DCS, CAB, Community 4, Alabare, Action for the Blind, Splitz (single parents) (Focus group)

#### **2.2. If consultation and involvement of specific groups did not take place, please state why**

Involvement/consultation with agencies other than those listed above has not been directly undertaken as the Policy sets a broad framework which reflects a range of relevant legislation and guidance.

#### **2.3. What do previous consultations show about the potential take-up of any resulting activities or services?**

In the development of the Review, consultation with partner agencies took place which included information gathering days and an open consultation with service users, stakeholders and local agencies.

We achieved a balance of partner and service user input by:

- Using a web-based consultation process supplemented by mail-outs and advertising at local access points in order to increase accessibility to the consultation process by service users.

- Providing regular updates and holding partnership meetings attending by partner RSLs, in order to identify unmet needs and to consider options for service improvement.

**2.4. How are external partners involved, or how do you intend to involve external partners, in delivering the aims of this strategy / policy / procedure / practice? (if applicable)**

The following external partners were involved in consulting on the H4W Review:

New Futures  
 A2 dominion  
 English Churches HA  
 Fosseyway HA  
 Guinness Trust  
 Hanover HA  
 Hastoe HA\*  
 Housing 21 HA  
 James Butcher HA  
 Jephson HA  
 John Groom HA  
 Kennet Housing Society\*  
 Kingfisher HA  
 Knightstone HA  
 New Downland HA  
 Orbit HA  
 Raglan HA  
 Ridgeway Community HA  
 Salvation Army HA  
 Sarsen HA  
 Somer Community Housing Trust  
 Sanctuary Shaftesbury HA  
 Signpost Housing Association  
 South Western Housing Society  
 Sovereign HA  
 Swaythling HA\*  
 Westlea HA  
 Western Challenge HA  
 West Country HA  
 Selwood Housing\*  
 Wiltshire Rural HA

\* Housing Associations without Charitable Status

**Step 3 – data collection and evidence**

**3.1. What evidence or information do you already have about how this policy might affect equality, and what does this tell you?**

*Please cite any quantitative (for example, statistical or research) and qualitative evidence (for example, monitoring data, complaints, surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, meetings, interviews) relating to groups having different needs, experiences or attitudes in relation to this project. Describe briefly what evidence you have used.*

Statistical research and surveying indicates:

- That people with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties are considerably more likely to have difficulties accessing the service (source: Social Exclusion Unit, 'Mental Health and Social Exclusion', 2004).
- The Disability Rights Commission states that when organisations impact assess CBL schemes they need to ask the following questions:
  - is advertising accessible?
  - are a property's accessible features advertised?
  - does a mechanism exist to identify the requirements of disabled applicants?
  - is there a mechanism to allow extra time for disabled applicants [for example to make decisions or view properties] if they need it?
  - is there a mechanism for providing support in making applications?
- The ODPM CBL research document ('Piloting Choice Based Lettings – An Evaluation', ODPM, May 2004) published in May 2004 centred on ten programmes that had operated across the country between April 2001 and March 2003. The research identified that in certain circumstances CBL can have a differential impact on certain vulnerable households, both in registering with the system and taking an active part in the bidding process. In particular, rates of bidding from older persons was low. However, the overall message emanating from the pilot projects was not to underestimate the ability of vulnerable households to actively take part in the system. For example, this same research reported a greater uptake in BME households both registering for and accessing accommodation. The research also found no evidence to suggest that CBL would have a differential impact on account of faith or sexual orientation.
- As an update to the above the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2006 published an updated research programme centred on thirteen case study CBL schemes (*'Monitoring the Long term Impact of Choice Based Lettings*, Department for Communities and Local Government, October 2006'). Whilst the report struggled to obtain the necessary data to make any firm conclusions, where data was available it found that the quantitative share of vulnerable households accessing accommodation was higher in representation when compared against like representation on associated waiting lists. What it could not determine however was whether the CBL schemes had acted to the detriment of vulnerable households in accessing the more popular housing stocks. The paper also reported that by and large most schemes had experienced a rising proportion of properties let to BME households with a growing representation from Afro-Caribbean and 'Other' BME households.

### **3.2. What does available data tell you about the potential take-up of any resulting activities or services?**

Assessing national and local research and data (both qualitative and quantitative) has enabled us to assess the potential take-up of the service, and this has informed the Review's key priorities of ensuring equitable access for all to the service. As described above, some vulnerable applicants are known to have difficulties accessing information / making a bid, and the H4W Policy and Review makes provision for the identification of these service users and for their support by the H4W staff. Rural communities are also known to have difficulties in accessing the service, and there is the aim to address this by instituting the Marketing Working Group, which will examine the accessibility provisions of the service. It was noted that initiatives such as the mobile libraries already serve as H4W access points, with the aim of improving access for those living in rural communities.

### **3.3. What additional research or data is required to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the strategy / policy / procedure / practice? Have you considered commissioning new data or research?**



As the Review process is taken forward, the effects of the Review and of amendments made to the H4W Policy and service as a result of the Review will be monitored by the H4W Partnership Group. Advice will be sought from the Corporate Equality & Diversity Team and from the Housing E&D officer (appointment forthcoming).

In line with CLG good practice guidance, it is a recommendation of this EIA that monitoring take place of the H4W register in order to assess whether specific needs groups are being fairly catered for. Ideally, we should know the type of property bid for, and allocated to, in terms of specific demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability) and monitor bidding and allocations in order to ensure that local trends are equitable.

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## **Step 4 – Assessing impact and strengthening the strategy / policy / procedure / practice**

*What evidence do you have about how the strategy / policy / procedure / practice will affect different groups and communities in relation to equality and human rights?*

### **4.1. How does / will the strategy / policy / procedure / practice and resulting activities affect different communities and groups?**

*Some things to consider:*

- Is there any potential for, or known, adverse or positive impacts of the policy?*
- You should consider how the policy might affect communities with small populations; people affected by discrimination in multiple areas of equality (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation); specific interest groups such as small businesses, voluntary sector agencies and other service providers.*
- Are there examples of good practice that can be built on?*
- You may wish to consider how the policy will be delivered or communicated.*

The Review will currently be published in English, but we recognise that it will need to be accessible in various formats, including;

- Translations
- Easy Read
- Audio

We also aim to ensure staff familiarity with the results of the Review process, such that staff are able to understand, adopt and use the principles of the H4W Policy.

The Review aims to identify gaps and to improve the Homes4Wiltshire Policy, that is, to identify housing need and respond to it in a fair and balanced manner. For example, the protection of rural communities through the prioritisation of 'local connection' in the allocation of housing need may adversely impact urban communities; but the Review will aim to balance these needs, and will actively work towards improving housing for all groups.

### **4.2. What measures does, or could, the strategy / policy / procedure / practice include to help promote equality of opportunity?**

*For example, positive measures designed to address disadvantage and reach different communities or groups?*



The H4W service aims to deliver quality services without prejudice or discrimination to meet the needs of all the community; in consultation with interest groups the Review will identify specific measures to help promote equality of opportunity; and this will be monitored in an ongoing and continual manner by the H4W Partnership Group.

**4.3. What measures does, or could, the strategy / policy / procedure / practice include to address existing patterns of discrimination, harassment or disproportionality?**

As the Review process is taken forward, the consultation is intended to identify any issues of discrimination, harassment or dis-proportionality. In this manner, we can address any such issues from a position of knowledge. Where necessary, advice will be sought both from the corporate Equality and Diversity team and the Housing E&D officer (appointment forthcoming). The H4W Partnership will have responsibility for monitoring.

**4.4. What impact will the strategy / policy / procedure / practice have on promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?**

Community participation through consultation and engagement.

**4.5. If the strategy / policy / procedure / practice is likely to have a negative effect ('adverse impact'), what are the reasons for this?**

*Consider and include comments on direct or indirect discrimination.*

The implementation of the findings of this Review process will NOT have any direct adverse impact.

Any indirect discrimination in the implementation of the strategy statement will be monitored through;

- Quantitative data analysis
- Qualitative data analysis
- Assessment of outcomes under relevant performance measures, NIs and comparative data

See also 4.7 below.

**4.6. What practical changes will help reduce any adverse impact on particular groups?**

*For example:*

- *Changes in communication methods, providing language support, collecting data, revising programmes or involvement activities.*
- *Have you considered our legal responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, including treating disabled people more favourably where necessary?*

Providing accessible communications in accordance with DDA.  
This Review acknowledges and upholds the social model of disability provided by the DDA.

**4.7. What evidence is there that actions to address any negative effects on one area of equality may affect other areas of equality or human rights?**

As described above, the issue of local connection vs. housing need is known to involve balancing. That is, the protection and sustainment of rural communities involves the prioritisation of a local connection in the allocation of rural properties, through rural exception sites, the provisions for local connection in the H4W service, and also through the section 106 agreements. This action to protect rural communities involves an indirect discrimination against people living in towns, who are proportionally less likely to obtain housing within these rural communities.

**4.8. What will be done to improve access to, and take-up of, services or understanding of the policy / strategy / function or procedure?**

*Some things to consider:*

- *Increasing awareness of the policy among staff.*
- *Reviewing your staffing profile to make sure you reach all parts of local communities.*
- *Encouraging wider public involvement in our work or communications activities.*
- *Encourage different groups, including disabled people, to get involved in what we do.*

- Communicating the strategy statement to various interest groups / external partners
- Capacity building across staff
- Raising staff awareness

Please note that you may need to revisit this section once you have completed the policy development process.

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**Step 5 – Procurement and Commissioning**

**5.1. Consideration of external contractor obligations and partnership working**

*Is the implementation of this strategy / policy / procedure / practice due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors / commissioning? If yes, have you done any work to include equality and human rights considerations into the contract / service level agreements already?*

*If you have, please set out what steps you will take to build into all stages of the procurement / commissioning process the requirement to consider the general equality duties and equality more broadly.*

*Specifically you should set out how you will make sure that any partner you work with complies with equality and human rights legislation. You will need to think about:*

- *Tendering and Specifications*
- *Processes for awarding contracts*
- *Contract / SLA clauses*
- *Performance measures and monitoring*

The Review process will have partnership involvement. If within the partnership arena, considerations are made to procure contracted services, this will be subject to our equalities and procurement guidelines and relevant strategy

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**Step 6 – making a decision**

**6.1. Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the strategy / policy / procedure / practice will meet the Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and human rights**

The Review process will further strengthen our commitment to helping those in housing need and to ensure the well being of communities. It will;

- Identify gaps in provision and seek improvement

- Strengthen our response, with our partners, in providing suitable and affordable accommodation to all those in housing need
- Develop citizen-focussed services which involve and reflect the needs of applicants.
- Equip staff to contribute toward the aims of the Review.

We believe that the Review meets the council's responsibility in relation to equality and human rights.

## 6.2. What practical actions do you recommend to reduce, justify or remove any adverse / negative impact?

*Please note that these should be reflected in the action plan (see Step 8).*

### This assessment endorses the post-consultation recommendations of the Review that:

1. Mystery shopping be carried out in order to ensure that all staff are treating our customers equitably.
2. That a rolling programme of staff training be instituted in order to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and good practice guidance.
3. That 'local connection' should NOT be further prioritised in the banding system, as rural communities already possess high levels of protection and increasing this further would result in indefensible discrimination against urban communities.
4. That the H4W application form be reviewed and possibly changed in order to ensure compliance with the latest EHRC guidance on the monitoring of equalities.
5. That the H4W application form be reviewed and possibly changed in order to ask applicants how they would like to access the service, in order to increase our knowledge of accessibility.
6. That a Marketing Working Group be instituted to examine the logistics and costs of increasing access to the H4W service, for example through newspaper advertising.
7. That research be carried out into the restrictions on banding involved in the 'mixed communities' guidance to ensure that we are not inappropriately categorising people by reference to their band. It is recommended that this research be carried out in conjunction with research into the new 'Fair and Flexible' guidance on banding, which emphasises employment as a criterion of demarcation.
8. That property adverts carry access information, in line with DRC guidance.

### The EIA further recommends that:

9. In line with CLG good practice guidance, that monitoring take place of the H4W register in order to assess whether specific needs groups are being fairly catered for. Ideally, we should know the type of properties bid for, and allocated to, in terms of specific demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, faith, disability) and monitor bidding and allocations in order to ensure that local trends are equitable.
10. That currently there are no written provisions to allow extra time for disabled applicants (for example to make a decision or view a property) in the H4W Policy, which contravenes the DRC guidance. We note that property turnaround times and associated lost rental income is a key landlord performance indicator, thus putting pressure on the landlord to ensure that this time span is kept to a minimum. It is however recommended that the following text is inserted into the H4W Policy to address this matter and comply with DRC guidance: ***'Consideration will be given to extend both the notice period given to accept or reject an offer of accommodation and/or the tenancy commencement date in circumstances where a disabled person(s) requires such additional time on account of their personal circumstances.'***
11. One of the key objectives of CBL is that it will contribute to community sustainability. Two of the key indicators around community cohesion involve measuring firstly tenancy sustainability and secondly the location of tenancies by socio-economic status (i.e. to ascertain for example if CBL is creating 'clusters' of households that were economically inactive or from the same ethnic background). We recommend that monitoring of this data take place.


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## Step 7 – monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

### 7.1. How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?

*This may include policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.*

The implementation of any recommendations as result of this Review process will be monitored by the H4W Partnership Group. This will include recommendations for undertaking further reviews and amendments as monitoring information is assessed. This will be a continual process.

### 7.2. How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the strategy / policy / procedure / practice?

*This could include adaptations or extensions to current monitoring systems, relevant timeframes and a commitment to carry out an EIA review once the policy has been in place for one year.*

Any direct / indirect impact resulting from the implementation of the Review will be assessed through;

- Quantitative data analysis
- Qualitative data analysis
- Assessment of outcomes under relevant performance measures, NIs and comparative data

The implementation of the findings of this Review will be the responsibility of the Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership. This is a multi agency group that will meet bi-monthly for the next 12 months in order to ensure delivery of the findings of the Review.

### 7.3. Give details of how the results of the impact assessment will be published

*There is legal requirement to publish assessments. Completed assessments should be first be quality assured and then, once signed off, be published on the Council website, via the Web Team.*

- Impact assessment will be published, once signed-off and approved, on our website and made available to the public via freedom of information
- Outcomes of this impact assessment, and any future subsequent assessments will be made available in to the public

## Step 8 – action plan

Taking into consideration the responses outlined in Steps 1-7, complete the action plan below (if appropriate).				
	Actions	Target date	Responsible post holder and Directorate	Monitoring post holder and Directorate
Involvement, Consultation and Partnerships	To continue the H4W Partnership meetings for the next 12 months in order to ensure successful delivery of the findings of the Review	March 2011		
Data collection and evidence	The Review recommends data collection and evidencing through the Marketing Working Group and the changing of the H4W application form to monitor equalities and accessibility.			
Assessment and analysis	The Review is ongoing at this stage and will be assessed bi-monthly	Ongoing		
Procurement and Commissioning	n/a at this stage			
Monitoring, evaluating and		Ongoing		

reviewing	The H4W Partnership meetings will monitor and evaluate, and make provision for any further reviews.			
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## Sign-off

**The final stage of the EIA is to formally sign off the document as being a complete, rigorous and robust assessment**

The strategy / policy / procedure / practice has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.

### Author of strategy / policy / procedure / practice and EIA

Name:	Job title and directorate:	Date:	Signature:
Graham Hogg	Service Director – Housing		

### Quality check: screening document has been checked by:

Name:	Date:	Signature:
Sarah Hartley		

### Director level (sign-off)

Name:	Job title and directorate:	Date:	Signature:
Graham Hogg	Service Director – Housing		

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**Appendix 4 – Outcome of proposals considered as part of the Homes 4 Wiltshire Review:**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Partnership Recommendation</b>
<b>Question 1 – Access and Publicity</b>		
Undertake a piece of work to follow up with applicants who have not re-applied for housing	Yes – 2 No – 6	Disagree with recommendation – instead concentrate on improved marketing of Homes 4 Wiltshire
Re-consider newspaper advertising, providing details to the landlords of costs and looking at how we can accommodate those raising concerns about the newspapers by direct mail out	Yes – 9 No – 4	Agreed to establish a Marketing Working Group to consider general marketing issues and resource implications
<b>Question 2 – Refusals</b>		
Introduce a limited number of bids available each week	Yes – 11 No – 10	No change recommended as goes against the principles of choice
Introduce a limited number of refusals allowed	Yes – 16 No – 2	Agreed that if an applicant unreasonable refuses 3 offers on properties for which they have bid, they will be “demoted” to the Bronze band for a period of 6 months
Enable applicants to select their first, second and third choices when bidding	Yes – 9 No – 3	Postpone decision until outcome of further discussions on Question 3 is known
Make photographs compulsory with any advert	Yes – 18 No – 1	Agreed, but giving landlords a period of 6 months to build up a portfolio and not in exceptional circumstances
<b>Question 3 – Reducing process time</b>		
To roll out the pilot to the remaining landlords on a permanent basis allowing shortlisting to be undertaken by the landlords with two sub-proposals, either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords shortlisting and sending matches for approval from Homes 4 Wiltshire. Homes 4 Wiltshire will ensure that landlords are applying their policies</li> </ul>	Yes – 21 No – 5	Agreed to defer this decision until after the next Partnership meeting, at which feedback from a full evaluation of the pilot be presented to the Partners.

<p>consistently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords shortlisting without input from Homes 4 Wiltshire with a spot check on 10% of all lets</li> </ul>		
<b>Question 4 – Local connection in villages</b>		
<p>To continue advertising rural properties openly for all applicants to bid for, or To restrict a certain percentage of properties for applicants with a local connection only</p>	<p>Openly – 12 Restricted – 7</p>	<p>Agreed to refer this matter to Wiltshire Housing Partnership, as it impacts on Planning as well as allocations, and is primarily a political not an operational decision.</p>
<b>Question 5 – Status of private sector tenants</b>		
<p>Consider introducing a new Private Rented category in the silver band for applicants living in private rented accommodation (regardless of whether or not it is suitable)</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No – 18</p>	<p>That the issue is not private / social status but housing need. No recommendations for change.</p>
<p>If it is agreed that a new category is introduced, should Private Rented count towards multiple needs</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	
<b>Question 6 – Waiting Time</b>		
<p>Consider if application date should override housing need</p>	<p>Yes – 4 No – 13 Application date needs to be factored in – 13</p>	<p>The principle of choice-based lettings is as a register of housing need; and application date is already factored in as a decision element within the bands. No recommendations for change.</p>
<b>Question 7 – Information on winning bids</b>		
<p>Change the recent lets data to display information based on the applicants who was actually successful</p>	<p>Yes – 21 No – 7</p>	<p>That the recent lets data be changed to provide information on the successful applicant.</p>
<b>Question 8 – Marketing Information</b>		
<p>Improve the amount of marketing information available and its distribution</p>	<p>Yes – 7 No – 4</p>	<p>Passed to the Marketing Working Group for consideration</p>
<b>Question 9 – Customer Services</b>		
<p>Develop the knowledge of the service with Customer</p>	<p>Yes – 8</p>	<p>Agreed a rolling programme of training for</p>

Services	No – 0	Wiltshire Council, partner RSL and stakeholder staff
<b>Question 10 – Eligibility for property type</b>		
Either amend the system to enable customers to be given set property eligibility, therefore knowing what they are eligible to bid for; or Leave the system as it is, enabling customers to be given minimum and maximum bedroom eligibility but leaving the property type open to the landlord	Change – 9 Leave as is – 10	Agreed to leave the system as it is, in order to accommodate the different policies of partners regarding occupancy levels.
<b>Question 11 – The role of the landlords</b>		
Landlords to conduct pre-void inspections to enable an indication of when the property will be available to be advertised with the property details	Yes – 20 No – 4	Agreed that landlords will conduct pre-void inspections wherever possible. This will not lead to the provision of a projected “available for letting date”, as the properties are advertised before an inspection can be carried out.
Could adverts contain a projected “available for letting” date to guide bidders?		
<b>Question 12 – Improved search facility</b>		
Liaise with Abritas to ascertain if the search options can be amended and if so at what cost	Yes – 10 No – 7	Agreed
<b>Question 13 – Knowledge base for front line staff</b>		
Ensure all staff are adequately trained and able to deal with a wide range of customer queries	Yes – 9 No – 0	Agreed to identify any areas of concern and provide targeted training
<b>Question 14 – Allocation of Council Housing</b>		
Amend the Homes 4 Wiltshire policy to accommodate flexibility for Wiltshire Council’s Housing Management and internal transfer arrangements	Yes – 4 No – 8	Agreed policy amendment to clarify that all landlords can label some properties for transfer applicants only – no need to make specific provision for Wiltshire Council Housing Management

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## Appendix 5 – Homes 4 Wiltshire Service Review consultation

Consultation took place with:

Age Concern  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
Community 4  
Alabere  
Action for Blind  
Splitz  
WASS4YP (Wiltshire Accommodation Support Scheme for Young People)  
Wiltshire Racial Equality Council  
Support Providers

Wiltshire Council departments:

Homes 4 Wiltshire  
Housing Options  
Adult Care  
Customer Services  
Libraries

Customers (4 meetings were held – one in each district – for existing applicants on Homes 4 Wiltshire register and applicants who had recently been housed through Homes 4 Wiltshire)

Public consultation was via the internet, libraries and hub offices.

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**Environment Select Committee**  
**Rolling Work Plan from May 2010**

<b>SUBJECTS</b>	<b>COMMITTEE/ TASK GROUP</b>	<b>PROJECT START DATE</b>	<b>NEXT DATE TO O &amp; S COMMITTEE</b>	<b>SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION</b>	<b>WHO REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO</b>	<b>SUBMISSION DATE</b>
Major Contracts (Standing)	Task Group		Ongoing	To provide an update where one is available.		
Empty Private Sector Homes update	Committee		May 2010	To receive an update following issues raised in March 2010.		
Housing – PFI Update	Committee		May 2010			
Waste Disposal (MBT/North Wiltshire)	Committee		May 2010			
Corporate Plan	Committee		May 2010	Future scrutiny of business and departmental delivery plan.		
Homes4Wiltshire Service Review	Committee		May 2010			

SUBJECTS	COMMITTEE/ TASK GROUP	PROJECT START DATE	NEXT DATE TO O & S COMMITTEE	SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	WHO REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO	SUBMISSION DATE
Road Safety	Committee		July 2010	To receive an update on road safety as raised through the CAA.		
Housing Landlord Services	Committee		July 2010			
Climate Change	Committee		July 2010	To receive an update on climate change objectives, the proposed work programme and resources available to deliver the objectives.		
Review of Wiltshire Local Transport – Parking Plan	Committee		July 2010			
Flood risk Management	Committee		December 2010	To receive an update on progress following the amalgamation of TEL and EDPH.		



**Draft Cabinet Forward Work Plan**  
**May 2010 – August 2010**

**Items that may be of interest to the**  
**Environment Select Committee**

<b>SUBJECTS</b>	<b>DATE TO CABINET</b>	<b>SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>OFFICER CONTACT</b>
Gypsies and Travellers	24 May 2010	To create a strategy and process to support Gypsies and Travellers from 1 April 2010.	Cllr Toby Sturgis	Graham Hogg
Contaminated Land Strategy for Wiltshire County Council	24 May 2010	To seek the adoption of a single contaminated land strategy for Wiltshire Council. The document is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 1995 and details how the council will administer it's powers and duties under the Act.	Cllr Keith Humphries	Gary Tomsett
Delegation of Services to Town & Parish Councils	24 May 2010	To update Cabinet on progress made with regard to the Delegation of Services to Towns and Parishes.	Cllr Dick Tonge	Mark Smith

SUBJECTS	DATE TO CABINET	SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER	OFFICER CONTACT
Private Sector Housing Renewal Insulation Scheme	24 May 2010	To obtain authorisation to use monies already bid for from Government Office of the South West, from the Regional Housing Pot Grant for Private Sector Renewal 2010/11.	Cllr Toby Sturgis	Graham Hogg
Review of Development Control Service	22 June 2010	To seek member agreement to changes to the manner in which Wiltshire Council's Development Service operates following a review of the service.	Cllr John Brady	Brad Fleet
Housing PFI Agreement to Enter into Contract	22 June 2010	To seek Cabinet's agreement to enter into the housing PFI contract with Silbury Housing Ltd.	Cllr John Brady	Laura Young
Climate Change	22 June 2010	To set out the Council's responsibilities regarding climate change and carbon reduction and agree a five year carbon reduction plan.	Cllr Toby Sturgis	Alistair Cunningham

SUBJECTS	DATE TO CABINET	SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER	OFFICER CONTACT
Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document	27 July 2010	To seek approval to consult on the formal Regulation 27 Waste Site Allocations Document.	Cllr John Brady	Geoff Winslow
Salisbury Conservation Area	27 July 2010	To seek Cabinet's approval for the de-designation of the Salisbury Conservation Area and its re-designation as four separate conservation areas, including some changes to the boundaries.	Cllr John Brady	Ms Elaine Milton
Wiltshire Air Quality Strategy	14 September 2010	To seek adoption of the Wiltshire Air Quality Strategy	Cllr Keith Humphries	John Carter

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