

Report No. 12

Report to Planning and Environment Committee, 21st March 2017

Wiltshire Council's Affordable Housing Allocation Policy Consultation re Family Connection

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider whether and how to respond to Wiltshire Council's current consultation on its Affordable Housing Allocation Policy regarding family connection.

2. Background

- 2.1 In January 2015, Wiltshire Council announced an affordable housing policy headlined as "local homes for local people." The policy included the criteria that a family connection to either Wiltshire, or a parish / town in Wiltshire, would make a household eligible to be placed on the Housing Register for affordable housing in Wiltshire or that parish / town.
- 2.2 The family connection criteria were "close family (grand-parents, parents, legal guardian, adult children or brothers and sisters) who have continuously lived in the Council [or parish / town] area for 5 years or longer." (There are also a number of other eligibility criteria including where an applicant resides or is employed.)
- 2.3 Wiltshire Council is currently conducting a consultation (which closes on 30th April) on changes to the Affordable Housing Allocation Policy, which includes the proposal to remove the family connection criteria because of the "huge administrative burden for ... staff and applicants to confirm the [family] connection criteria."
- 2.4 Individuals and organisations such as councils can respond to the consultation. The consultation materials are here:
http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/housing/housing_allocations_consultation_2017?tab=files
- (i) The proposals are contained in the New Allocation Policy document linked in the box on the page, which helpfully has its proposed changes highlighted. The proposed changes covering the family connection criteria are paragraphs 4.13.2 and 9.1.1.
- (ii) A link to the online survey is in the text above the box on the page and its standalone link is <https://surveys.wiltshire.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=148482912352> .
- 2.5 The survey asks two specific questions on family connection:
- Question 2: "Do you agree that the connection criteria requiring the applicants themselves to have lived in the Wiltshire Council area for 2 years should remain as it is unless amended by the government?"
- Question 3: "Do you agree that we should remove the following connection criteria – applicants who have close family (grand-parents, parents, legal guardian, adult children or brothers and sisters) who have continuously lived in the Council's area for 5 years or longer? NB Please note that this does not affect those who need to move to or within Wiltshire Council's area to give or receive support which cannot be provided by other means."

4. Proposal

- 4.1 Committee is invited to consider whether to respond to the current consultation on Wiltshire Council's Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and if so, with what response.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 None.