

Local Agreement for Wiltshire - Progress by Ambition: June 2009

Improving affordable housing

- **Build a significant and lasting increase in the number of affordable homes.**

The completions achieved to the end of the second quarter (288) have ensured we are currently on target to achieve 554 completions by the end of the year. Although developers have stalled on progressing large developments through which we can achieve affordable housing via s.106 agreements, the new housing team has supported bids to the HCA by RSLs to take up opportunities to convert market sale housing to affordable housing in order to boost affordable housing numbers.

In addition, Wiltshire Council has been successful in securing £3.2m of grant funding from the HCA to deliver 47 new affordable Council homes in Wiltshire on Council-owned land, all to be completed by the end of March 2011.

The housing market continues to be fairly static although there are early signs that developers are beginning to invest in infrastructure for larger developments where values have held up reasonably well and the sites are less risky to develop. However, there is a lull in development activity currently which will affect the delivery of affordable housing through planning gain through 2010/11. Alternative means of securing opportunities for new affordable housing will continue to be sought through supporting RSL bids for HCA funding and considering bidding as a Council to develop affordable housing on Council owned sites.

Actions taken include;

Holding the first housing market partnership meeting involving housing, spatial planning, the HCA, GOSW, local developers, RSLs and landowners to identify barriers to delivering new housing, both market and affordable, and to tackle those barriers.

Organising a meeting of the RSL preferred development partnership to explore the issues currently being faced by our RSL partners in order to try to address those issues to promote affordable housing delivery.

Continuing to work to deliver a new core strategy for South Wiltshire and a wider core strategy document for Wiltshire including robust policies for the delivery of new affordable housing through the planning system without recourse to public funding.

Meeting with the MOD to advance discussions around the delivery of new affordable housing on MOD owned land planned for release to the market.

- **Increase access to suitable accommodation for all vulnerable people and reduce the number of people facing homelessness**

Four Homelessness Forums have been set up across Wiltshire Council to identify gaps in service provision for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Information gathered is provided to the Homelessness Strategy Group to assist in the creation of the Homelessness Strategy. Proactive partnership working with key agencies and organisations to enable people to remain in their home or find alternative accommodation. With extra government funding we have been able to expand our Court Desk and Money Advice Service, and recruitment of 2 x fixed term private sector support workers.

- **Make homes in Wiltshire more environmentally friendly**

All new affordable homes across Wiltshire are built to code for sustainable homes level 3 which ensures a high level of energy efficiency. The bid the Council submitted to the HCA for funding is for homes to meet code level 4. These properties will raise the standard for affordable housing in the area and will provide a template for delivering high quality, environmentally friendly homes.

Existing homes: (Private Sector Housing report)

1. Work completed through Warm Front scheme to improve energy efficiency in homes of vulnerable people on benefits (only July-Aug figures currently available):

Central heating installation/boiler replacements: 105 homes

Cavity wall insulation installed: 33

Loft insulation installed/topped up: 56

2. Wiltshire Council Action for Wiltshire (A4W) project: proposal made by Private Sector Housing to fund cavity wall insulation for homes of people directly affected by the credit crunch (redundancy/lower paid job/loss of overtime), and the 'nearly poor', neither of whom would normally be entitled to a full grant. Awaiting decision on availability of funding through A4W project.

3. Wiltshire Warm and Well scheme 2009/10. Discussions in progress with South West Energy Agency (SWEA) and Gloucestershire LAs to join in their Warm and Well scheme for free loft and cavity wall insulation for the 'nearly poor'.

4. Low carbon retrofit homes project: A successful SW Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) bid has been made, in partnership with the Gloucester LAs and SWEA for the development of 30 exemplar low carbon retrofit homes. 5 of these will be in Wiltshire.

5. Wiltshire Warm and Well scheme: GOSW bid 2010/11. A bid has been submitted for a four part project:

- Free loft and cavity wall insulation to
 - o Households affected by the credit crunch
 - o 'Nearly poor' with income under £16,000
 - o Households with young children, and income under £20,000
 - o Aged 60-70. None of these would normally get a full grant
- Grants for insulated cladding for mobile homes
- Grants for cavity wall insulation for flats
- Grants for energy efficiency improvements to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

NI	NI Name	2007/08 Full Year	2008/09 Full Year	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Q2	On Target	2010/11 Target	Comment (if 'on target' is N) (Note: trend is 3 year unless only 1 year's previous data available)
NI 141	Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living.	66%	77.60%	68%	80.46%	Y	70%	This PROVISIONAL result is above target. Data is collected via an Excel workbook designed by CLG. It is CLG who decree when these workbooks (one per Supporting People scheme) are submitted. The current timetable means that full, confirmed results are not available when required by CLT and will only be available 6 weeks after the end of the quarter.
NI 154	Net additional homes provided.	2670	1867	2517	-	-	2565	This data is collected annually The target for this indicator was set by the local authorities in agreement with GOSW. However, the target was set during the housing boom and so does not reflect recent economic circumstances. There is the opportunity to revise these targets, but following advice from GOSW, Wiltshire Council did not pursue this as insufficient data on the housing downturn was available. As a result the target is still very ambitious.
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross).	636	583	554	288	Y	590	We are currently on target to achieve our LAW target of 554, as at Qtr 2 we have delivered a total of 288. We are also pulling together all the required information and evidence on how the recent economic downturn has impacted on this target. A strategic housing / planning partnership board has been set up that includes key partners to discuss the way forward on the delivery of NI 155 and NI 154, evidence gathering is currently taking place.

Other LAW indicators

ESDHOU 1	97% of all social housing achieves decent homes standard by 2010	-	94%	96%	97%	Y		We have already met our 09/10 target but will continue to try and improve further properties within our stock to ensure they meet the decent homes standard.
ESDHOU 2	Bed and Breakfast: end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for all homeless households by 2011, all except emergency use.	45	2	0	0	Y		In Qtr 2, as in Qtr 1 we recorded 0 (zero) this is a fantastic achievement and has been due to the increase in the amount of homeless prevention work that has been carried out by the team as well as due to the introduction of the new choice based lettings system Homes4Wiltshire.
ESDHOU 3	Temporary accommodation: halve the use of Homeless temporary accommodation between 2008 and 2010	-	179	242	158	Y		We are very pleased to confirm that the figure in Qtr 2 is 158 which shows a continued decline in the amount of clients who are being placed in temporary accommodation. Again this is due to the increase in prevention work and introduction of Homes4Wiltshire.
ESDHOU 4	Reduce the number of people facing homelessness by offering genuine alternative housing and support options.	-	997		4.6	-		In Qtr 2 we recorded a total of 451 preventions (882 cumulative figure for year). This is on target for our target in 9/10 and reflects the total amount of potential homeless cases that have been resolved via action from the Housing Options team.
ESDHOU 6	Carry out energy improvements to private homes				-	-		The new Private Sector Housing Renewal Interim Strategy and Policy has yet to be approved by the new Council.

Affordable Housing
Other LAW Indicators.