



# South Wiltshire Core Strategy

Topic Paper 16 Addendum 2:

*Inclusive Design*

July 2009

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

**TOPIC PAPER 16 ADDENDUM 2**

**INCLUSIVE DESIGN**

**JULY 2009**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2007 Salisbury District Council published Local Development Framework Topic Paper 16 'Inclusive Design' ("The Topic Paper"). In February 2008, following consultation on options put forward within The Topic Paper, the Council published an Addendum to Topic Paper 14 on Design ("The Addendum"). Issues relating to Inclusive Design were examined within The Addendum, rather than in a separate addendum to The Topic Paper itself, as it was considered that any resultant policy should be applied to all new development.
- 1.2 This second addendum should be read in conjunction with both The Topic Paper and The Addendum and it is not therefore considered necessary to repeat background information, national and regional policy, examples of best practice and community aspirations contained therein in detail.
- 1.3 The Council's desired outcome for this topic is to develop an inclusive design strategy, including specific development control policies, in order to promote, create and facilitate a physically and socially inclusive society in which the needs of everyone are met.
- 1.4 The Topic Paper noted that difficulties faced when accessing facilities and services often relate not to an individual's ability, but rather to a lack of thought and awareness when designing the built environment. Inclusive design should aim to remove barriers that create undue effort and separation or special treatment.
- 1.5 Examples of how development proposals might address inclusive design issues were explored and as a result The Topic Paper recommended that the Council adopt a Core Strategy policy requiring that:
  - Buildings and other developments, by virtue of their location and physical features, meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion so that all potential users, regardless of mental or physical disability, age or gender can use them safely and easily.
  - Designers should go beyond the minimum requirements contained in Part M of the Building Regulations and, unless agreed otherwise, adopt the recommendations contained in British Standard BS8300.

## **2 ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The issue of Inclusive Design was included within the Council's 'Our Place In The Future' Issues and Options consultation carried out in the summer of 2007.
- 2.2 The Addendum reviewed The Topic Paper, analysed the results of the public consultation on the options and examined relevant individual comments to ascertain if there were any additional areas that required investigation prior to preparation of Preferred Options for this topic.
- 2.3 A large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'new development should address the needs of all, particularly the elderly and disabled'. It was therefore proposed to put forward a Preferred Option that when permitting new development of all types, the design of new buildings should address the needs of the district's unique population profile, especially the elderly and disabled.

### **3 PREFERRED OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The proposals arising from the Issues and Options stage were subjected to a number of tests including sustainability appraisal, deliverability and conformity with national and regional policy. As a result The Addendum identified the following, inter alia, as an option that should be considered further:
- A district-wide Preferred Option of policies which ensure that the design of new buildings addresses the needs of the district's unique profile; and ensure homes are designed which are safe and adaptable, for example, by following Lifetime Homes Standards, Secured by Design principles and including live/workspace.
- 3.2 The Council carried out consultation on a wide range of Core Strategy Preferred Options in the spring of 2008, of which those referred to below were of relevance to this topic.
- 3.3 The Golden Threads listed under Preferred Option PO1 included 'planning for an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to meet their aspirations and realise their potential'.
- 3.4 Preferred Option PO 11 proposed (a) a policy to ensure that the development of welfare facilities and residential accommodation for the elderly, mobility impaired and those with other disabilities will be encouraged provided this is in scale with the settlement, and (b) planning for all new residential development to accord with Lifetime Homes Standards and contain a percentage of Wheelchair Housing.
- 3.5 Part M of the Building Regulations already requires appropriate levels of accessibility to non-residential buildings and it was not therefore considered necessary to address access to such buildings within this Preferred Option.
- 3.6 43% of respondents supported the list of Golden Threads identified under PO1. A further 33% neither supported nor objected to the list, but rather made comment on its content. It should also be noted that planning for an inclusive society formed part of a list and none of the 24% of respondents who objected to this Preferred Option were against this individual element in principle. Analysis of comments made by objectors indicates that they were mostly concerned with suggestions as to additional Golden Threads and how other Preferred Options would impact on those already identified.
- 3.7 Comments made by respondents included the following:
- Affordability of any option must be a key core value or Golden Thread.
  - Affordable housing also needs to be desirable housing with allowances for privacy and space.
  - The [Parish] Council agrees that your policy work should be underpinned by the Golden Threads as listed.

- Need to assert the value of existing communities and provide protection and sustainability and assistance they require.
- The Golden Threads are all common sense objectives.

3.8 76% of respondents supported the proposals suggested under PO11. A further 11% neither supported nor objected to the list, but rather made comment on its content. Analysis of comments made by the 13% of respondents objecting to this Preferred Option indicated that they were principally concerned with the precise wording of subsequent policies.

3.9 Comments made by respondents included the following:

- I support this option because it will bring much needed support to our aging local population.
- Older people generally prefer to stay in the community where they have lived for some years and facilities linked to health and welfare need to keep pace with required service levels.
- This admirable option is open to expansive interpretation leading to South Wiltshire becoming a specialist geriatric centre.
- The elderly also require recreation spaces.
- The aim of PO11 is laudable, however it fails the 'sustainability' test unless all residential and welfare developments are constrained to the primary urban centres, where medical, care, shopping and transport are readily available.
- The elderly as well as the young should be integrated within a community.

3.10 The council undertook a second stage of Preferred Options consultation in the autumn of 2008. Although a specific question regarding this topic was not asked at this second stage of consultation, there was an opportunity for respondents to make additional comments, including on previous Preferred Options. These responses have been examined and it is considered that no new issues requiring further investigation have been raised in respect of this topic.

## **APPENDIX ONE: SUGGESTED POLICIES**

Taking into account the rigorous processes, consultation and analysis undertaken by the Council and outlined above, it was considered appropriate to include the following policies within the Core Strategy.

The draft policies do not include references to general design criteria such as impact on visual amenities, biodiversity, water resources, access and traffic generation as these should flow from the Design Topic Paper. It might however be considered appropriate to reiterate such criteria in the Core Strategy policies regarding this topic.

### **Policy A: Lifetime Homes Standards**

All new residential development will accord with Lifetime Homes Standards.

#### **TARGETS**

100% of residential development delivered through the Core Strategy to accord with Lifetime Homes Standards.

#### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Annual Monitoring Report; Percentage of completed dwellings delivered through the Core Strategy that meet Lifetime Homes Standards.

#### **DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY**

Wiltshire Council; Developers; Strategic Partnerships.

### **Policy B: Specialised Health and Welfare Facilities and Residential Accommodation**

Except in Smaller Settlements and the Countryside, proposals for health and welfare facilities and/or residential accommodation specifically for the elderly, mobility impaired and those with other disabilities will normally be supported.

In Smaller Settlements and The Countryside, permission may exceptionally be granted for proposals for small-scale health and welfare facilities and/or residential accommodation specifically for the elderly, mobility impaired and those with other disabilities, where these proposals involve the conversion of buildings that for contextual, architectural, or historic reasons should be retained and would otherwise not be.

#### **TARGETS**

A net increase in specialised health and welfare facilities and residential accommodation in each Community Area (a figure cannot be set as actual levels of accommodation delivered will be dependent on ongoing demand and availability of sites in each area).

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Annual Monitoring Report; Number of new specialised spaces delivered.

## DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

Wiltshire Council; Developers; Strategic Partnerships.

## APPENDIX TWO

### CHANGES AS A RESULT OF SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL, HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT AND EDITING REFINEMENT

This initial policy text was then subjected to Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment as well as editing refinement and advice from parties such as GOSW. As a result of this the following amendments were made to the text to ensure conformity with both European Directives as well as ensuing central and regional policy are not repeated and future editing ensured.

The issue of Lifetimes Homes Standards was addressed in Core Policy 4 of Draft 3 of the Submission Document. Due to various iterations, Draft 13 of the Submission Document resulted in the policy being redrafted as Core Policy 18 below:

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| <b>Lifetime Homes Standards</b>  |
| All new residential development will accord with Lifetime Homes Standards.   |
| <b>Targets:</b> 100% of residential development delivered through the Core Strategy to accord with Lifetime Homes Standards                              |
| <b>Monitoring and Review:</b> AMR & housing trajectory, % of completed dwellings delivered through the Core Strategy that meet Lifetime Homes Standards. |
| <b>Delivery Responsibility:</b> Wiltshire Council, Development Industry, Strategic Partnerships  |
| <b>Policies replaced:</b> H24  |

The SA noted that this policy would have a neutral effect on most objectives. A positive effect was identified for the objectives relating to social inclusion, housing provision and quality of development. The policy would enable people to stay in their own communities and adapt their existing homes with minimal expense compared to adapting a home that does not already incorporate the design features for easy adaptation.

Wheelchair access to all homes and disabled parking standards would facilitate accessing a wider range of facilities. Minor issues were identified which include people staying in larger homes than they might otherwise occupy, leading to energy demand to heat and light “dead” space, elderly residents becoming isolated in villages with infrequent public transport services and a lack of flow onto the market of family sized homes.

However, it was considered that the benefits of the policy outweighed these issues and no mitigation or enhancement recommendations were made.

No requirement was identified for examination of this policy at the appropriate assessment stage of the HRA.

Although it will be applied as a development management policy, there is no current Local Plan policy requiring Lifetime Homes Standards, and the proposed policy will

aid delivery of aims of the Local Development Framework. The Policy as drafted above should therefore be included within the Core Strategy.

The topic of Specialised Health and Welfare Facilities and Residential Accommodation was addressed in Core Policy 5 of Draft 3 of the Submission Document.

The SA noted that, although the policy had no identified significant adverse effects, it lacked clarity, which might have an effect on the benefits that should arise from a policy of this type, designed to ensure that specific community needs are met.

The policy sought to facilitate the provision of residential care and “specialised health and welfare facilities” but no explanation of this latter term was given, making it hard to gauge the effect of the policy. Specialised facilities could imply that people would travel to take advantage of them, and therefore they should be based in locations with good public transport links, and not in small settlements or the open countryside.

Provision of residential and nursing homes will be essential to meet the needs of an aging population but the policy says proposals will normally be supported. However, it is generally understood that proposals for development to meet identified needs will be supported provided that they comply with other plan policy.

It is important for people to stay in their own communities as long as possible and the requirement that small scale residential homes will only be allowed in buildings of architectural/historic merit, which might otherwise be demolished, was considered very restrictive. Use of such buildings is covered by other planning policies and might be inappropriate for the uses identified here due to the internal alterations that are often needed to facilitate the use.

The following mitigation enhancement recommendations were made:

- Removal of the word “normally” from the first sentence.
- Either explanation of the phrase “specialised health and welfare facilities” in the supporting text, or its removal from the policy.
- The use of historic buildings is covered by other plan policies and national legislation. Buildings of no historic interest might be suitable for residential accommodation for the elderly of an appropriate scale for smaller settlements. Such provision may save travel distances for visiting to the larger centres and maintain people in their own communities. New build may also provide better accommodation designed for its purpose.
- Ideally, a reconsideration of the whole policy and clarification of its intent and purpose.

No requirement was identified for examination of this policy at the appropriate assessment stage of the HRA.

Following iteration, the policy was deleted from Draft 7 as it represented a development management policy, which will be delivered through a Wiltshire-wide DPD.