

Whixall Parish Council

Confirming Local Connection Policy

in association with Shropshire Council's "Build Your Own Affordable Home Scheme"

This policy was adopted by the council at the meeting held on Wednesday 8th January 2014.

Whixall Parish Council has adopted the following policy in order to ensure that there is a standard procedure for considering and commenting on all requests for confirming local connection (in the context of Build your own affordable home scheme) that are presented to them by Shropshire Council.

Introduction

Shropshire Council's 'Build Your Own Affordable Home' Scheme is explained in a supplementary planning document entitled 'Type and Affordability of Housing' and can be found at www.shropshire.gov.uk > environment and planning>planning policy>supplementary planning documents.

Homes built under this Scheme are "exception sites" in locations that would not normally obtain planning permission for new housing development. The exception is made because it is development of affordable housing for local people.

Under the scheme applicants must demonstrate they qualify by meeting four tests of eligibility:

- Housing Need
- Local Connection
- Affordability/Availability and Site
- Suitability to the satisfaction of Shropshire Council's Housing Enabling Officer

For the Local Connection test, Shropshire Council requires applicants to seek written confirmation from the relevant Town / Parish Council (for the area where the development is to take place) as to the validity of their claim to have a 'Local Connection' with that specific area.

Determining a Local Connection

The determination of local connection is a matter of fact - applicants either meet the required 'Build Your Own Affordable Home' Scheme policy criteria or they do not.

The criteria is outlined in Shropshire Council's 'Type and Affordability of Housing' Supplementary Planning Document and is as follows.

At least two of the following criteria for at least one of the members of the household must be met:

- Their parents were permanently resident in the local area at the time of the applicant's birth

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- They were in permanent residence in the local area for any period of five years as a child attending a local school (or who, for special reasons attended a school outside the local area but would have been expected to attend a local school but for those special reasons)
- They are currently lawfully resident in the local area and have lived there for at least the previous 5 years
- They don't currently live in the local area but have previously lived there for 15 continuous years as an adult
- They are currently employed or routinely carry out self-employed work within either the local area or 5km of the site
- They have a confirmed written offer of permanent work within either the local area or 5km of the site
- They can demonstrate active community involvement in the local area sustained for at least the previous 2 years; or are determined by the Parish Council as having some other form of strong connection with the local community and/or its hinterland
- Their parents currently live in the local area, or another close family member who provides or requires a substantial degree of support currently lives in the local area
- If over 55, they have a close family member currently living in the local area.

To consider whether applicants have a 'Local Connection' under the scheme, Whixall Parish Council requires a letter, signed by the applicants, explaining how they meet the criteria. The letter should be supported by independent evidence (for example – Birth Certificate, School Records, Rental Agreements, Work Contracts, License Agreements, Utility Bills, Oral Evidence, Supporting statements from known members of the community).

Shropshire Council requires the Parish Council to confirm satisfaction of 2 elements of the criteria. However, it would assist the Parish Council in its assessment if the applicants covered as many of the criteria as possible.

The Parish Council will then consider the request at the next available meeting. The Parish Council reserves the right to ask for:

- further clarification and/or
- further supporting evidence and/or
- an interview with at least 2 members of the Council.

It should be noted that confirmation of the applicants Local Connection by the Parish Council does not in itself constitute support for the proposed development. Any planning application submitted to Shropshire Council under the 'Build Your Own Affordable Home' Scheme will be considered with reference to the Parish Council's Planning Application Policy and Procedures adopted on **Wednesday 8th January 2014**.