

 <b>Executive – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>  <b>13</b>
<b>Title</b>	Rural Local Lettings Policy	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	<p>Satnam Kaur, Interim Housing Strategy Manager  <a href="mailto:satnam.kaur@warwickdc.gov.uk">satnam.kaur@warwickdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Lydia Wailoo, Development Officer  <a href="mailto:lydia.wailoo@warwickdc.gov.uk">lydia.wailoo@warwickdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Tel : 01926 456 422/335</p>	
<b>Service Area</b>	Housing and Property Services (Housing Strategy)	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	All Rural Settlements	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	N/A	
<b>Background Papers</b>		

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	Yes

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Relevant Director	17.01.11	Bill Hunt
Chief Executive	17.01.11	Chris Elliott
CMT	17.01.11	Andy Jones
Section 151 Officer	17.01.11	Mike Snow
Legal	11.11.10	Max Howarth
Finance	17.01.11	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	11.11.10	Cllr Grainger
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>		

- Councillors Moira Ann-Grainger and Alan Rhead
- Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council
- Registered Providers (formerly Registered Social Landlords)
- Housing & Property Services – Housing Services Team
- Legal Services
- Planning (Policy)
- Rural Parishes

<b>Final Decision?</b>	Yes/ <del>No</del>
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>	

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals regarding the letting of rural affordable housing both within existing stock and new rural affordable housing developments.
- 1.2 The aim of the proposals are to assist with achieving sustainability in rural communities and support people with a local connection to retain links with their communities.
- 1.3 They also aim to increase the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas.
- 1.4 The rural settlements covered by this report are listed in Appendix 1 at point 3.2

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To approve the following proposals for the letting of new and existing rural affordable housing:
  - 2.1.2 The introduction of a Rural Local Lettings Policy (RLLP) as set out in Appendix 1. The primary focus of the RLLP is that it has regard to an applicant's connection with the surrounding area for which the housing has been developed. The Rural Local Lettings Policy will apply to new rural affordable housing developments including those which will not be subject to a S106 agreement. These are all settlements where evidence from Housing Needs Surveys demonstrate that the small number of lets usually available annually are insufficient to meet existing housing need in the parishes concerned. Not all rural developments are subject to Local Plan Policy RAP 4 (Rural Exception Policy) however, the provisions of the RLLP will apply for allocation purposes.
  - 2.1.3 That a report is taken to the Planning Committee notifying members of the new policy and seeking permission to vary the existing s106 agreements so that the local connection cascades mirror those contained within the RLLP.
  - 2.1.4 Relets of existing rural affordable housing not subject to any S106 provisions will be subject to the provisions set out in paragraph 5.1 and 5.3 of the RLLP where a housing need has been identified through a current housing needs survey.
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Housing and Property Services in consultation with the Housing and Property Services Portfolio Holder to make minor amendments to the policy.

## **3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The aim of the RLLP is to enable people to remain or return to a Parish with which they have an association relating to current or past residence;

family connection; or employment, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable communities in rural areas.

- 3.2 To help rural communities retain households who due to high property prices are often priced out of the local housing market and unable to afford to live locally.
- 3.4 To promote and increase the development of Rural Affordable Housing across the district and allay fears of Parish Councils and local communities that developments will not be for local people.
- 3.5 There are 5 existing s106's agreements which need varying, they are for existing rural exception schemes that already have local connection cascades attached to them. However they all differ slightly and also differ from the cascades proposed in the RLLP. Varying the existing S106 agreements will give clarity and consistency in the lettings of rural affordable housing both new and existing. Legal Services have confirmed this course of action is possible.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 To maintain the current inconsistency in lettings of rural affordable housing.
- 4.2 This is not considered a favourable alternative as it will impact on the District Council's strategic aim of creating sustainable rural communities.
- 4.3 Previous experience has shown Parish Council's may become disillusioned if local people are not given priority and may be unwilling to engage in the process of developing rural affordable housing.

#### **5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There will be legal costs associated with varying the existing S106 agreements. These will be covered within the existing budget provision.

#### **6. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) requires local authorities to have a written policy that determines the priorities and the procedures to be followed in letting housing.
- 6.2 All available Council owned and RSL owned properties are allocated in line with the District Council's HomeChoice Allocation Scheme 2008.
- 6.3 Section 17 of the HomeChoice policy makes provision for the use of Local Lettings Policies in order to make best use of new and existing stock and to create sustainable communities. The RLLP will sit beneath the overarching HomeChoice policy.
- 6.4 The proposed RLLP aligns with the aims and objectives of Fit for Future.

## 6.5 The Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026

- Everyone's housing needs are met
- Reduce and prevent homelessness
- Make homes sustainable
- Support independent living
- Citizens are actively engaged in decision making and participate fully in community life

6.6 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 Housing sets out the Government's national policies including provisions Local Authorities should make for affordable housing. An overall target should be set for the provision of affordable housing and in relation to rural affordable housing allows for the use of Rural Exception Site Policy to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have family or employment connections.

6.7 Local Plan Policy SC 11 (Affordable Housing) provides for negotiation for affordable housing on private development sites of 3 or more dwellings in rural areas.

6.8 Local Plan Policy RAP4 allows "the development of affordable housing in the rural area to meet the locals needs of a village or parish in exceptional circumstances". One exceptional circumstance is the evidence of need by way of an up to date housing needs survey.

## 7. **BACKGROUND**

7.1 The last rural development completed in the District was the Barford Burrows Scheme at Barford in 2008.

7.2 At the time of allocating the properties there was a lot of confusion about how allocations were made and the provisions contained within the S106 agreement.

7.3 The District Council gave a commitment to learn from this and introduce a system that was clear from the outset so Parish Council's are fully aware of how properties on new build schemes will be allocated even before any planning application is submitted.

7.4 New rural affordable housing, brought forward through Rural Exception site will only be granted planning permission if the development will meet identified needs. In order to meet this planning requirement it is necessary to restrict allocations to those households in housing need with a local connection the parish.

7.5 A Section 106 agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act will usually set out the obligations in relation to the allocation of the affordable housing. The provisions of all new Section 106 agreements for Rural Affordable Housing on exception sites will bind the owner to allocate the properties in such a way as to reflect the Rural Local Lettings Policy.

- 7.6 Rural developments that do not fall within the rural exception definitions will also be subject to the RLLP.
- 7.7 The RLLP will deviate from the HomeChoice Policy in 3 ways:
- a) Priority consideration will be given to those with the greatest housing need and a local connection to the relevant Parish.
  - b) Rural properties will not be included within the Band quotas for HomeChoice to ensure all applicants with a local connection are considered.
  - c) In the first allocation of affordable housing schemes where the Housing Needs Survey for the Parish has identified a need for singles/couples without children but no 1 bedroom houses, or 1 or 2 bedroom flats/maisonettes are constructed on the site. Only in these circumstances will single/couple households without children be permitted to bid for a two bedroom house. This will be in addition to the standard property types they are eligible to bid for. This exception is in order to ensure their housing needs can be met. In these instances only, the properties will be allocated by Band then local connection then date of homechoice application (allocation will be made to the applicant that has the longest waiting time).
- It is very unlikely that situation c) should arise as the Council would expect any new development to reflect the need identified in the Housing Needs Survey, which would include the construction of 1 bedroom houses or 1 or 2 bedroom flats/maisonettes.
- 7.8 If there are no suitable applicants who fulfil any of the stipulated local connection criteria for the stated parish or the adjoining parish/es the property will be further advertised on HomeChoice without the need for applicants to demonstrate any of the above criteria. At this point the property will be included within the Band quotas
- 7.8 Housing Strategy has been working in partnership with Warwickshire Rural Community Council and Parish Councils to undertake updated housing needs surveys. The progress to date can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 7.9 Currently District Council owned rural affordable housing is not subject to any local connection criteria. All existing RSL owned rural affordable housing is subject to additional local connection criteria by way of a legally binding Section 106 agreement. In order to bring about consistency we are seeking to vary the s106's for 5 existing rural exception schemes to reflect the local connection cascade provisions proposed in the RLLP. The s106's currently contain cascade provisions but they all vary slightly and differ from those contained within the RLLP.
- 7.10 Appendix 3 contains the Equality Impact Assessment for this policy.

## 8.0 **Reviewing the Policy**

- 8.1 The policy will be subject to continuous monitoring and an annual review will be carried out in order to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate.

# **Rural Local Lettings Policy**

## **February 2011**



Contents	Page No
1.0 Aims and Objectives	2
2.0 Planning Policy	2
3.0 Areas Covered by the Policy	2
4.0 Allocations	3
5.0 Defining the Local Connection Hierarchy	4
6.0 How to apply for Housing	4
7.0 Advertising and Re-letting	5
8.0 Re-Sale of Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing	5
9.0 Existing Council Owned Affordable Housing	6
10.0 Applying this Policy	6
11.0 Glossary	7

This policy covers all new rural affordable housing development schemes granted planning permission after February 2011.

## **1.0 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1 The aim of the Local Lettings Policy is to enable people to remain or return to a locality to which they have a connection, and to develop sustainable communities within rural areas. The local connection will relate to current or past residence, family associations or employment in the relevant Parish.

## **2.0 Planning Policy**

- 2.1 Local Plan Policy SC 11 (Affordable Housing) provides for negotiation for affordable housing on private development sites of 3 or more dwellings in rural areas.
- 2.2 Local Plan Policy RAP4 allows "the development of affordable housing in the rural areas to meet the local needs of a village or parish in exceptional circumstances". These exceptional circumstances relate to:
- the evidence of need
  - the scale and location of the development, and
  - the ability of the homes to meet the particular need in perpetuity

## **3.0 Areas covered by the Policy**

- 3.1 The Local Lettings Policy will apply to the allocation of affordable housing in Parishes where a need has been identified by way of a current housing needs survey. At February 2011 the Local Lettings Policy applies to the following Parishes:

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Date of Housing Needs Survey</b>
Baginton	February 2008
Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton	January 2009
Ashow and Stoneleigh	July 2009
Bishops Tachbrook	August 2009
Cubbington	November 2009
Budbrooke	January 2010
Lapworth	February 2010
Bubbenhall	May 2010

- 3.2 The Policy will be reviewed on a six monthly basis to take account of new surveys being undertaken and new developments being completed. The Parishes that the Policy may be applied in are:

Ashow	Baddesley Clinton	Baginton	Barford
Beausale, Haseley, Honiley and Wroxall	Bishops Tachbrook	Blackdown	Bubbenhall
Budbrooke	Cubbington	Eathorpe	Hatton
Hunningham	Lapworth	Leek Wootton	Norton Lindsey
Offchurch	Old Milverton	Radford Semele	Rowington
Sherbourne	Shrewley	Stoneleigh	Wappenbury
Wasperton	Weston under Wetherley		

#### **4.0 Allocations**

- 4.1 All allocations will be made in accordance with the HomeChoice Allocation Policy which is in operation at the time of allocation. Where the HomeChoice Allocation policy has been superseded all allocations will be made in accordance with the Council's Allocation Policy which is in operation at the time of allocation.

- 4.2 The only exceptions to this will be:

1. The properties will not be included within the Band quotas for HomeChoice to ensure all applicants with a local connection are considered.
2. In the first allocation of affordable housing schemes where the Housing Needs Survey for the Parish has identified a need for singles/couples without children but no 1 bedroom houses, or 1 or 2 bedroom flats/maisonettes are constructed on the site. Only in these circumstances will single/couple households without children be permitted to bid for a two bedroom house. This will be in addition to the standard property types they are eligible to bid for.

In these instances the properties will be allocated by band, then local connection. In circumstances when two or more households have the same band and local connection the allocation will be made to the household who has waited the longest date on Homechoice.

This exception is in order to ensure their housing needs, as identified by the Housing Needs Survey used to support the new development, can be met.

## **5.0 Defining the Local Connection Hierarchy**

- 5.1 In addition to the HomeChoice Allocation Scheme eligibility criteria, applicants will also need to demonstrate their need to be housed in the locality, this will be by fulfilling at least one of the following criteria (listed in priority order):
- 5.1.1 people who currently live in the parish and have done so continuously for at least the last 2 years and are seeking more suitable accommodation;
  - 5.1.2 people who have lived in the parish for at least 2 years out of the last 10 years;
  - 5.1.3 people who used to live in the parish and who have immediate family (restricted to mother, father, son, daughter, brother or sister) living in the parish
  - 5.1.4 people who have relatives living in the parish to whom it is essential to live near for support e.g. elderly relatives, young families; and
  - 5.1.5 people who are employed in parish in permanent paid work, other than that of a casual nature and have been for at least 12 months
- 5.2 In the event there are no suitable applicants who fulfil any of the above criteria, the properties will be allocated to applicants who can demonstrate any one of the above criteria (in priority order) in relation to the adjoining parish/es specified in the appropriate schedule of the S106 agreement.
- 5.3 If there are no suitable applicants who fulfil any of the above criteria for the stated parish or the adjoining parish/es specified in the relevant schedule of the S106 agreement the property will be further advertised on HomeChoice without the need for applicants to demonstrate any of the above criteria. At this point the property will be included within the Band quotas.
- 5.4 All applicants would need to be registered on the Council's Housing Register and be in housing need according to the HomeChoice Policy that is in operation at the time.

## **6.0 How to apply for housing**

- 6.1 Any person wishing to be considered for a property in the Parish must apply for housing in the normal manner. The standard housing application form will need to be completed in full and be accompanied by the relevant supporting evidence.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of the application it will be registered and assessed in accordance with the HomeChoice Allocations Policy in operation at the time. Applicants will be informed in writing of their priority by confirming

which Band they have been placed in and the number of bedrooms they require. The accompanying booklet will provide further details on the HomeChoice Allocations policy and will also detail the type of property they are eligible to bid for.

## **7.0 Advertising and Re-letting**

- 7.1 Properties will be advertised via the Council's Home Choice Scheme as detailed in the HomeChoice Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 If there are no bids from applicants in the preferred Band, the property will be offered to the highest placed applicant in the next Band who has the highest local connection to the parish.
- 7.3 If upon advertisement it has not been possible to rent the properties to a applicant fulfilling the criteria set out above the properties shall be offered to applicants who demonstrate any of the criteria as set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) but in relation to neighbouring Parishes who will be named in priority order in any S106 Agreement.
- 7.4 In the case of re-lets of two bedroom houses for rent only, if upon advertisement it has not been possible to rent the properties to an applicant eligible for this type of property and who fulfils any of the criteria as set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 in relation to the specified Parishes, the properties shall be offered to single and couple applicants with no children who fulfil any of the criteria set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) in relation to the Parish or neighbouring Parish/es (in priority order).
- 7.5 If upon advertisement it has not been possible to rent the properties to an applicant fulfilling the criteria set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) in relation to neighbouring Parishes the properties shall be offered to applicants registered on the HomeChoice Allocation Scheme who do not have a local connection to the Parish or neighbouring Parishes. In the case of two bedroom houses for rent these will only be available to households who are eligible to bid for this size property.

## **8.0 Re-Sale of Shared Ownership or Low Cost Affordable Housing**

- 8.1 Properties will be advertised via the Council's HomeChoice Scheme for applicants who demonstrate their need to be housed within the locality by fulfilling any one of the criteria as set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) in relation to the specified Parish/es.
- 8.2 If after two successive advertisements no suitable applicants with a local connection have applied for the properties, they will be advertised via the Council's HomeChoice scheme for all eligible applicants to apply.
- 8.3 If after a further period of advertisement no suitable applicants apply for the properties then the owner shall have the right to advertise the properties generally.

## **9.0 Existing Council owned Affordable Housing**

- 9.1 The provisions set out in 5.1 – 5.3 will be applied to re-lets of existing Council owned affordable housing within a Parish where a housing need has been identified by way of a current housing needs survey.
- 9.2 Adjoining parishes will be those physically adjoining the main Parish in question and will only include Parishes within Warwick District.

## **10.0 Applying this policy**

- 10.1 There will be no individual agreements for particular schemes, unless there is a specific need for a Local Lettings Policy; the above policy will apply to all and should be read in conjunction with the HomeChoice Allocations Policy.

## 11.0 Glossary

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	Housing to be provided to those persons identified by the District Council as being in need of affordable housing as defined in the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 and that will be available to persons who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally on the open market within Warwick District. It will comprise housing for rent, shared ownership, low cost or on an intermediate tenure and at all times be allocated to applicants registered on HomeChoice Allocation Scheme.
Relatives living in the parish to whom it is essential to live near for support (5.1.4)	<p>Will be assessed on a case by case basis, however in most cases the person who requires the support will already be resident in the parish, the relative who needs to provide support will be the one seeking to move to the parish.</p> <p>Support will be assessed on a case by case basis but an example would be to provide substantial care (for example assistance with dressing, washing and preparation of food) for an elderly parent who would otherwise be unable to carry these tasks out themselves.</p>
Current Housing Needs Survey	Comprehensive assessment of the housing needs of the parish recorded in a document specifying the types, sizes and tenures of affordable housing required. A housing needs survey is valid for a period of 5 years.

## Appendix 2 – Progress of Parish Councils

Parish	Date of Housing Needs Survey	Affordable Housing Need Identified	Current Position
Baginton	February 2008	12 x rented, 5 x shared ownership	Two sites have been identified, discussions are taking place with the land owners regarding potential disposal.
Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton	January 2009	10 x rented, 1 x shared ownership	Available land has been identified, preferred site has been selected by the Parish. Architect has been instructed to prepare draft layout.
Ashow and Stoneleigh	July 2009	No need identified	Recommend to undertake further survey in five years time.
Bishops Tachbrook	August 2009	9 x rented, 1 x shared ownership	Parish Council are actively identifying potential sites.
Cubbington	November 2009	5 x rented, 1 x shared ownership	Preferred site identified, land owner has confirmed availability of the site, Architect has been instructed to prepare a draft layout.
Budbrooke	January 2010	3 x rented, 1 x shared ownership	Parish Council are actively identifying potential sites.
Lapworth	February 2010	4 x rented, 1 x shared ownership	Meeting to take place on 11 <sup>th</sup> October to discuss the findings of the report and two potential sites.
Bubbenhall	May 2010	5 x rented, 1 x shared ownership	Parish Council are actively identifying potential sites.
Hatton			Affordable Housing will be included within the Parish Plan questionnaire that will be distributed during Summer 2010. A Housing Needs Survey may be undertaken following this.





# Equality Impact Assessment Introduction and Forms

Toolkit for conducting EIAs – part 1



# Contents

## 1. Introduction

<b>What is an Equality Impact Assessment?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Why undertake Equality Impact Assessments?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Who is responsible for Equality Impact Assessments?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Who are the target equality groups?</b>	<b>7</b>

## 2. Equality Impact Assessment Forms 7

<b>Initial Screening Form - A1</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Form - A2</b>	<b>9</b>

**Guidance notes are available as a separate document**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of the council's strategies, policies, services and functions on its customers and staff.

Equality Impact Assessments can anticipate the equality consequences of particular policy/service initiatives and ensure that as far as possible, any negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community are eliminated, minimised or counterbalanced by other measures.

Equality Impact Assessments are therefore essentially about service improvements and can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to customers by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

This toolkit has been produced to help managers undertake comprehensive and robust Equality Impact Assessments of all their core services or functions, strategies, policies, procedures and practices.

Please note that throughout this document the term 'policy/service' will be used to abbreviate for 'functions, strategies, policies, procedures and practices'.

The Equality Impact Assessments forms which includes an Initial Screening - Form A1 and an EIA Report and Action Plan - Form A2 can be found on pages 8-14. The forms are followed by a step-by-step guidance on 'Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment' on pages 15-21.

You can use the toolkit to assess whether the policies that guide your work, the procedures you operate and the day-to-day working practices you have developed are likely to have a positive or negative impact on different groups within our diverse community. Having made this assessment you can take action to **prevent** direct and indirect discrimination and **promote** positive and harmonious community relations.

The following definitions might help:

**Strategy:** a plan outlining what we wish to achieve and broadly how we plan to do this

**Function:** these are broad areas of activity, duties and powers, usually defined by national legislation (statutory) but also by local choice (non-statutory)

**Policy:** formal, publicly recorded decisions of the Authority, detailing the way in which functions will be carried out.

**Procedure:** The activity at the core of employment practice or service delivery, i.e. the way in which a function is actually carried out, the impact of professional decisions, or custom and practice.

### 1.2 Why undertake Equality Impact Assessments?

***It is good practice and necessary if we are to deliver our own ambitious equalities agenda for the Council***

Equality Impact Assessments will help us drive forward the equalities agenda locally and with our partners. The benefits of impact assessments include:

- Helping to identify whether we are excluding certain groups from our policies/ services; helping to identify any unmet need
- Helping to identify direct or indirect discrimination
- Assisting us in considering alternative policies or measures or other ways of providing a service that might address any adverse impact
- Helping to mainstream equality into our policies and practices
- Helping us to target resources more effectively

***Although Equality Impact Assessments are not a statutory requirement, they are still a relevant tool to evaluating the service you deliver meets your customer' need***

The new Equality Bill, April 2009 brings together the three existing equality duties on race, disability and gender into new single Equality Duty. The new single Equality Duty will cover:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion/Belief
- Pregnancy and maternity explicitly
- Gender re-assignment
- Socio - economic

The new Equality Duty will require all public authorities to have “due regard” to:

- The need to eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The council must assess which of its policies and services are relevant to the various equality strands, and set out how they will:

- Monitor policies/services for any adverse impact on equality
- Assess and consult on the likely impact on proposed policies/services
- Make sure the public have access to information and services
- Train their staff in relation to the various duties

We want to ensure that our policies and practices do not discriminate against any group within our community and that we use every opportunity to promote equality of opportunity

and good community relations. Our EIAs will also help and support us in the delivery of our work towards achieving an excellent status within the new Equality Framework for Local Government and delivering on our Single Equality Scheme.

### ***Equality Impact Assessments will help us deliver other priorities***

The work we do on EIAs will feed into and enhance a wide range of other priorities including:

- Service and business planning – actions identified within EIAs will feed into a range of Council plans at all levels including service/business plans, directorate service strategies, the Corporate Performance Plan and our various statutory plans.
- LAA partnership working - the outcomes of EIAs will support our work on narrowing the gap and feed into the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the LAA, local Community Plans and our work with key partners on the Warwickshire Public Service Board.

### **1.3 Who is responsible for Equality Impact Assessments?**

Equality Impact Assessments should be an integral part of policy development and in line with the statutory requirement, the Council must conduct EIAs as soon as a relevant new policy, function or service is considered. The ownership and responsibility for an EIA lies at Head of Service level. Service Managers and frontline staff are important in the assessment process as they will not only be involved in implementing the necessary actions identified following an assessment but also helping to integrate and mainstream equalities into service planning.

For some assessments, particularly smaller ones, it may be more appropriate to have a 'virtual team' with one or two people taking responsibility for it, but drawing on the knowledge and expertise of others as and when necessary. To avoid duplication try and undertake an EIA as part of a review; for example, if you are reviewing your service plan, an EIA could be undertaken at the same time.

### **1.4 Who are the target equality groups?**

There are a range of different equalities groups and you may want to consider the impact of the policy on the following:

- Different ethnic groups including white minorities
- Faith groups and faith issues
- Different sexes, including transgender
- Disabled and non-disabled people
- Gay men, lesbians and straight people
- Different age groups, for example older and younger people

Equality Impact Assessments can be used to focus on specific equality strands to help promote equality of opportunity for a particular group. For instance, certain sections of the community may be known to experience more disadvantage than others. They may be adversely affected by a policy or service or omitted from the benefits of the policy or service. This list is not meant to be exhaustive; your experience in a particular area of work might mean that you additionally look at other diversity issues.

**Equality Impact Assessment**

<b>Service Area</b>	Housing & Property Services – Housing Strategy
<b>Policy/Service being assessed</b>	Rural Local Lettings Policy
<b>Is this is a new or existing policy/service?</b> <b>If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment</b>	New
<b>EIA Review team – List of members</b>	Satnam Kaur – Interim Housing Strategy Manager  Lydia Wailoo – Development Officer
<b>Date of this assessment</b>	January 2011
<b>Signature of completing officer (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)</b>	
<b>Name and signature of Head of Service (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)</b>	

**A copy of this Equality Impact Assessment Report including relevant data and information should be saved in the Equality and Diversity Folder on the shared drive.**

## Form A1

### INITIAL SCREENING FOR STRATEGIES/POLICIES/FUNCTIONS FOR EQUALITIES RELEVANCE TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTE EQUALITY



High relevance/priority



Medium relevance/priority



Low or no relevance/priority

**Note:**

1. Tick coloured boxes appropriately, and depending on degree of relevance to each of the equality strands
2. Summaries of the legislation/guidance should be used to assist this screening process

DEPARTMENT:	Relevance/Risk to Equalities																							
State the Function/Policy /Service/Strategy being assessed:	Gender			Race			Disability			Sexual Orientation			Religion/Belief			Age			Socio-economic			Priority status For EIA		
Rural Local Lettings Policy			√			√			√			√			√			√			√			



## **Form A2**

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

#### **Please Explain**

#### **Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining**

(1) What are the aims and objectives of policy/service?

When allocating rural affordable housing priority will be given to households in need that have a local connection to the relevant Parish. This will enable people to remain or return to a locality to which they have a connection with and develop sustainable communities within rural areas.

To help rural communities retain households who due to high property prices are often priced out of the local housing market and unable to afford to live locally.

The requirements of the Rural Local Lettings Policy are in relation to rural affordable housing where a housing need has been identified by way of housing needs survey and are in addition to the Homechoice Allocation Scheme 2008.

(2) How does the policy/service fit with the council's wider objectives?

The Corporate Strategy 2008 -11:

- To use current stock as effectively as possible
- To maximise affordable housing provision
- To promote multi agency working for the benefit of our customers.

The Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026

- Everyone's housing needs are met
- Reduce and prevent homelessness
- Make homes sustainable
- Support independent living
- Citizens are actively engaged in decision making and participate fully in community life

Warwickshire Local Investment Plan

Warwick District Local Plan – RAP4

<p>(3) What are the expected outcomes of the policy/service?</p> <p>Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To give clarity and consistency to letting of rural affordable housing</li> <li>• Promote and increase the development of new rural affordable housing</li> <li>• To promote and increase the development of Rural Affordable Housing across the district and allay fears of Parish Councils and local communities that rural developments will not be for local people.</li> <li>• To ensure compliance with Planning Policy RAP 4</li> <li>• To align with the emerging themes of the Localism Bill and in particular to 'empower communities to do things their way'.</li> <li>• Beneficiaries will be Rural Communities and Parish Councils by ensuring rural affordable housing is allocated consistently across the District and to promote sustainable communities</li> </ul>		
<p>(4) Does this policy/service have the potential to directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group?</p> <p>Please identify all groups that are affected and briefly explain why</p>	<p>RACE- NO</p> <p>Applicants can for housing on Warwick District Homechoice providing they are eligible under s166 (3) of the Housing Act 1996. Some people are not eligible to apply due to their immigration status.</p>	<p>AGE –NO</p> <p>Properties are allocated based on a households housing need via Warwick District Homechoice, however some properties are age designated – for example some bungalows are for those aged 60 years and over. Applicants who do not meet this age requirements are unable to bid for these properties.</p>	<p>GENDER – NO</p> <p>Allocations are made based on level of housing need via Warwick District Homechoie, the gender of the household is not a factor in determining this.</p>

	<p><b>RELIGION/BELIEF - NO</b></p> <p>Allocations are made based on level of housing need via Warwick District Homechoice, a household's religion or belief is not a factor in determining this.</p>	<p><b>DISABILITY – NO</b></p> <p>Some properties have adaptations, in the first instance consideration is given to households that require the adaptations. This is to meet housing need and also to make best use of existing stock.</p>	<p><b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION –NO</b></p> <p>Allocations are made based on the level of housing need via Warwick District Homechoice, a household's sexual orientation is not a factor in determining this.</p>
	<p><b>OTHER – Applicants with no local connection to the Parishes.</b> The purpose of the local lettings policy is to give preference to applicants with a local connection to a parish when allocating new affordable housing. In the first instance, those without a local connection will not be considered. However, the cascade mechanism allows applicants with no local connection to the parish/es to be considered in the event there are no suitable applicants with a local connection.</p>		
(5) Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service?	<p>There may be potential barriers if households are not aware of how to access the adverts that detail available properties. However, previous rural lettings have proved that this has not been an issue. In order to ensure advert is accessible it is displayed on Parish noticeboards, in the Observer newspaper and is also available on the website. Information regarding the development and how to access the adverts is also contained within Parish newsletters.</p>		
(6) How does the policy/service contribute to promotion of equality?	<p>The rural local lettings policy seeks to develop and maintain sustainable rural communities by giving preference in allocations to those persons with a local connection. This is a requirement of the planning process set out in PPS 3 and the Local Plan. Without this requirement people may find themselves excluded from certain areas due to the lack of and price of housing.</p>		
(7) Does the policy/service have the potential to promote good relations between groups?	<p>Yes in particular between the District Council, Parish Councils and the rural communities.</p>		
<b><u>Stage 2 - Information Gathering</u></b>			

<p>(1) What type and range of evidence or information have you used to help you make a judgement about the policy or service?</p>	<p>Previous experience of allocating properties within a rural settlement. Previous provisions were not clear or sufficient to ensure those applicants with a local connection to the relevant parish and adjoining parishes were given priority over those applicants that did not have a local connection.</p> <p>Government Guidance as set out in PPS3 and specifically the definition of rural exception sites: "Rural exception sites should only be used for affordable housing in perpetuity. A rural exception site policy should seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection, whilst also ensuring that rural areas continue to develop as sustainable, mixed, inclusive community".</p> <p>Planning consent is only granted for rural affordable housing on exception sites where a need has been identified for the locality by way of a housing needs survey.</p> <p>A Local Lettings Policy is required in order to ensure those with a connection to the locality are given priority for consideration for properties.</p>
<p>(2) What consultation/ information has been used? What new consultation, if any, do you need to undertake?</p>	<p>The policy was developed with colleagues from planning and legal services as well as representatives from Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council and Warwickshire Rural Community Council.</p> <p>Consultation has been carried out with Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, our other partner Registered Providers and the Parish Councils.</p>
<p><b><u>Stage 3 – Making a Judgement</u></b></p>	

<p>(1) From your data and consultations is there any adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group?</p> <p>Is there any evidence of needs not being met? e.g. language or physical access barriers; lack of appropriate resources or facilities</p>	<p>The policy will be used to ensure people who have a connection with a parish are given priority for consideration for accommodation in order to remain in or return to the locality. This policy is in addition to the Homechoice Allocation Policy 2008, all properties are allocated based on housing need.</p> <p>There may be an adverse impact for applicants that have no local connection to the Parish as they will not be considered for the properties in the first instance. However, they are not excluded from the process as a whole, they will be considered for the properties if there are no suitable applicants with a local connection to the relevant Parish/es.</p>
<p>(2) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?</p>	<p>Those without a local connection are not excluded from being considered, they will however, only be considered if there are no suitable applicants with a local connection. This policy relates to rural affordable housing only and only in parishes where housing need has been identified. Currently 8% of the total affordable housing stock within the district is classed as rural. Affordable housing is otherwise allocated without these requirements. Between 2008 and 2010 there have been a total of 7 re-lets in the rural parishes requiring applicants to have a local connection.</p>

(3) What actions are going to be taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact?	The cascade provisions within the policy allow households without a local connection to be considered if there are no suitable applicants with a local connection. The policy will be reviewed on a six monthly basis and will be applied/removed on a parish by parish basis depending on level of housing need and development. In addition we will be monitoring the number of applicants that express an interest in a rural property but are unable to bid as they do not have a local connection.														
(4) Is there any positive impact? Does it promote equality of opportunity between different groups and actively address discrimination?	Yes, applicants with a local connection to a parish will be given priority for consideration within that locality. This will promote sustainable communities within rural areas.														
<b><u>Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review &amp; Monitoring</u></b>															
If No Further Action is required then go to – Review & Monitoring  (1)Action Planning – Specify any changes or improvements which can be made to the service or policy to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.	<div>EIA Action Plan</div> <table><tr><th>Action</th><th>Lead Officer</th><th>Date for completion</th><th>Resource requirements</th><th>Comments</th></tr><tr><td>Monitoring of expressions of interest from applicants with no local connection</td><td>Lydia Wailoo</td><td>On going – will occur whenever a property subject to the provisions of the Rural Local Lettings Policy is available</td><td>Initial IT programming.  Officer Time</td><td></td></tr></table>					Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments	Monitoring of expressions of interest from applicants with no local connection	Lydia Wailoo	On going – will occur whenever a property subject to the provisions of the Rural Local Lettings Policy is available	Initial IT programming.  Officer Time	
Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments											
Monitoring of expressions of interest from applicants with no local connection	Lydia Wailoo	On going – will occur whenever a property subject to the provisions of the Rural Local Lettings Policy is available	Initial IT programming.  Officer Time												
(2) Review and Monitoring State how and when you will monitor policy and EIA Action Plan	The policy will be reviewed on a six monthly basis and will be applied/removed on a parish by parish basis depending on level of housing need and development.  Monitoring of interest from applicants with no local connection will also be carried out to ensure that any adverse impact is minimal otherwise the policy will be reviewed.  The EIA will be reviewed in three years or sooner if a fundamental change is made to the policy.														

Once complete please save a copy of this EIA into the central drive **L:/Equalities & Diversity/EIA/2010/relevant service area**

Please annotate your policy with the following statement:

'An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on (date of assessment) and will be reviewed on (date three years from the date it was assessed'.