

## Winchester City Council Affordable Housing on Exception Sites explained

### Rural exception sites

(See <http://www.harrah.org.uk/faqs/affordablehousing/affordable-housing/> for further information)

Rural exception sites are housing sites on which building houses would not normally be allowed. However, development may be permitted if it will provide affordable housing for local people in rural areas, who would otherwise not be able to afford to live in their settlement. This would be an exception to general planning policies for housing, hence the title of rural exception sites. This exception has its own planning policy in Winchester City Council; CP4. Importantly, any development granted planning permission under this policy does not set a precedent for any future development (see <http://www.harrah.org.uk/faqs/homes-land/will-development-lead-housing-being-built-village/> for further information, or link below for CP4 in full).

The housing is safeguarded for local people through a legal agreement (s106 agreement) as part of the planning permission. The S106 Agreement sets out the local connection criteria which applicants must meet to be offered a home. This includes a minimum length of time living in the settlement, previous residence and with close family still living there and/or working there.

### Winchester City Council Core Policy 4 (CP4) explained: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites to Meet Local Needs

(See <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-march-2013-local-plan-review-2006/local-plan-part-1-joint-core-strategy-adopted-2013> for full policy)

Winchester City Council is committed to meeting the local need for affordable housing and policy CP4 enables this to happen in areas where new housing would not normally be allowed, but makes it possible for an affordable housing scheme.

An affordable housing scheme should meet certain criteria under this policy:

- It should be meeting a need that cannot be met within the existing settlement
- The number of homes and the tenure (rent/ shared ownership etc.) should reflect the identified need
- The design of the scheme should 'fit in' with the surrounding area
- The scheme should avoid harm to the character of the area and to other planning objectives whilst fulfilling the policy objective to maximise affordable housing provision
- The homes should, as far as legally possible, remain affordable housing for future generations

The identified affordable housing need of the local community should dictate the tenure of the affordable homes. Winchester City Council's priority is to provide homes for rent, but other tenures are acceptable if they enable an affordable housing scheme to progress. A minimum of 70% of the proposed homes should meet priority local affordable housing needs (usually homes for rent). If alternative tenures are required for a scheme to happen (for example it makes the scheme affordable to build), then it must be shown that the proposal:

- Needs these homes for financial viability of the scheme
- Has community support

In these circumstances, only the minimum number of non-priority homes needed to make the scheme financially viable should be allowed.

### Additional information

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy, states in Chapter 7: Core Policies – Active Communities, that information about local affordable housing needs can be gathered from the council's housing register, which is the Hampshire Home Choice register (for rented accommodation).

Information on shared ownership accommodation can be obtained from the Help to Buy South register. Further information could be obtained from local surveys.

Evidence of community involvement and support may be required and can include Parish Council involvement/ support and other evidence of community involvement in the process (see policy CP4 text for further information).

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