

Round Meadow, Soulton Road, Wem Community-Led Housing

Roles and Responsibilities of Sevenside Housing, Wem Rural Parish Council and Shropshire Council.

Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to agree the roles and responsibilities of key partners of the Community-Led Housing Development at Round Meadow, Soulton Road, Wem once allocation of the properties commences.

It is envisaged that once the properties have been completed, the Steering Group will be disbanded having completed its objective of:

To deliver, with the assistance of partners, a Community-Led Housing Development of Affordable Homes primarily for local residents of Wem Rural Parish with housing needs.

The areas covered by this document are:

- Future ownership of properties
- On-going management of Round Meadow
- Round Meadow Residents Group
- Allocation of properties

This document will be reviewed and revised where necessary should material changes take place eg installation of play equipment or the allocation process.

Background

In August 2012 Sevenside Housing approached Wem Rural Parish Council to partner it under Shropshire Council's Community-Led Housing Scheme. A Steering Group was established and its initial brief was to investigate the concerns and objections to the project.

The Steering Group's work was suspended during the planning application process but was re-convened once planning permission was granted. During the build process, the Steering Group has monitored progress, considered neighbouring residents concerns and approved the section in this document relating to the allocation of properties.

It should be noted that Shropshire Council's Community-Led Housing Scheme is not to be confused with any national scheme.

1. Future ownership of properties

1.1 The freehold ownership of the properties will remain with Sevenside Housing.

2. On-going management of Round Meadow

2.1 As the freeholders of the site and the landlord named in tenancy agreements, Sevenside Housing are responsible for the on-going management of the site.

For the whole site this includes:

- The design, implementation and maintenance of the drainage system until adoption is confirmed by Severn Trent Water,

- Repair and maintenance of the play area excluding any play equipment.
- The maintenance of the roads until adoption is confirmed by Shropshire Highways.

For the affordable rented properties this includes:

- Repairs to the structure of the properties,
- Decoration to the outside of the properties,
- Certain repairs to the inside of the properties as identified in the tenancy agreement.

- 2.2 For clarity, Shropshire Council and Wem Rural Parish Council have no responsibility for the on-going site management of Round Meadow.

3. Round Meadow Residents Group

- 3.1 Wem Rural Parish Council and Severnside Housing will establish a residents group which will have its own Terms of Reference.
- 3.2 One of the first tasks of the Group is to put in place a Neighbourhood Standards Agreement (NiSA). This NiSA will encourage residents to take more interest within the community, and will inspire people to take part in the decision making process on their estate. The NiSA will outline the importance of residents and partnering agencies working together to improve and maintain standards and make it clear who is responsible for what. Partners in this agreement, in addition to new residents, may include;
- Wem Rural Parish Council
 - Severnside Housing
 - A local Shropshire Councillor
 - West Mercia Police
 - Shropshire Fire & Rescue
 - Existing local residents (for example, from Ash Grove or Church Lane)

4. Allocation of properties

- 4.1 As soon as Severnside Housing becomes aware a property is to become vacant it will notify Wem Rural Parish Council to ensure local awareness of a potential re-let is maximised.
- 4.2 All properties will be advertised and allocated through the Shropshire Choice Based Lettings scheme, Homepoint, and will stipulate that a 'local connection' is a requirement as detailed in 4.5.
- 4.3 Severnside Housing will ensure that when submitting houses to be advertised on Homepoint the widest range of criteria is set so to maximise the number of applicants.
- 4.4 Severnside Housing will allocate properties in accordance with the following hierarchy:
- Firstly: Satisfaction of local connection criteria (see 4.5 below)
- Secondly: Housing Priority Band
- Thirdly: Date of Homepoint application
- 4.5 Local connection is defined as:
- 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;
- 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 last 3 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 years of age, they have a close family member currently living in the local area.

4.6 Local area means the administrative area of the Parish of Wem Rural, or widened further through operation of the cascade criteria (see 4.8 below).

4.7 Active community involvement is clarified as follows:
There is no prescriptive list identifying what is deemed to a community activity. It is largely activities that socially enhance the life of a community. Any activities which are personal recreational activities and not necessarily for wider community benefit are not considered under this criteria.

4.8 If Severnside Housing is unable to successfully allocate a property to an eligible person who satisfies the local connection criteria within 10 weeks, the geographical definition of the local area shall be progressively widened over time and applied by Severnside Housing as follows:

- 1 After a period of 10 weeks the definition of local area may be extended to also include the administrative area of Wem Urban Parish being the Parish forming part of the settlement where the site lies.
- 2 After a further period of 10 weeks the definition of local area may be extended to include a 10 kilometre radius of the site (excluding from that radius any settlements exceeding 3,000 persons), and if the settlement is part of a 'community cluster', all parishes included within that cluster.
- 3 After the previous periods of 10 weeks have expired, the definition of local area may be extended further to include anywhere within the Shropshire Council administrative areas including all settlements exceeding 3,000 persons.

4.9 Severnside Housing will arrange for applicants to complete an agreed local connection form which will be forwarded to Wem Rural Parish Council. Wem Rural Parish Council will confirm whether the declared local connections meet the set criteria.

- 4.10 Once confirmation has been received, Severnside Housing will issue, where approved, an offer conditional to local connection being proved.
- 4.11 To consider whether applicants have a local connection Wem Rural Parish Council will require 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).
- 4.12 On receipt of the documented evidence, Severnside Housing will forward copies to Wem Rural Parish Council.
- 4.13 Wem Rural Parish Council will consider the documented evidence and confirm whether the local connection has been proved.
- 4.14 Where local connection is not met Severnside Housing shall be advised of the reasons for forwarding onto the applicant. Although appeals will be considered, the decision of Wem Rural Parish Council will be final.
- 4.15 Officers and members of Wem Rural Parish Council who are involved with the local connection decision making process will sign a confidentiality agreement with regard to the personal information being considered.
- 4.16 Severnside Housing, Wem Rural Parish Council and Shropshire Council will not disclose to third parties (corporate or individual) other when required to do so by law or to a Government Body any details relating to local connection approvals.

Formal agreement of this document

Severnside Housing

Wem Rural Parish Council

Shropshire Council

Signature

Signature

Signature

Name and position

Name and position

Name and position

Date

Date

Date