



Oswestry Rural Parish Council

Shropshire Council's

'Build Your Own Affordable Home' Scheme

CONFIRMING LOCAL CONNECTION POLICY

Introduction

Shropshire Council's 'Build Your Own Affordable Home' Scheme is explained in its Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document. 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 – namely 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 reproduced below:

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 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.

The Parish Council has been advised by Shropshire Council of the following:

Local Area: Local Area is defined as being the 'Parish' area, i.e. geographic boundary of Oswestry Rural.

Community Involvement: There is not a prescriptive list identifying what is deemed to a community activity, however, 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 these criteria.

To consider whether applicants have a 'Local Connection' under the scheme, Oswestry Rural 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, for example a Parish Councillor). 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 Procedures adopted on 25 August 2015.

Policy adopted 25 August 2015

Reviewed and adopted 26 September 2017

Next review date September 2020