

Members' Room



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Insert PC clerk details (Rural only)

*Bodicote House
Bodicote • Banbury
Oxfordshire • OX15 4AA
Telephone 01295 252535
Textphone 01295 221572
DX 24224 (Banbury)
<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk>*

Please ask for **Catherine Phythian** Our ref Your ref
Direct Dial **01295 221583** Fax **01295 270028** Email **Catherine.phythian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk**

17 December 2008

Dear

Cherwell District Council scrutiny review into Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites.

As Chairman of the Cherwell District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee I am writing to inform you that we will be conducting a scrutiny review into the Council's approach to rural affordable housing and exception sites. This is in response to the comments made at the recent Parish Liaison meeting and Councillor Wood's commitment to look into the matter.

Scrutiny is a councillor lead process intended to challenge and improve council services. As part of this review we will be considering case studies of previous schemes and interviewing the officers involved in the process. We will also be looking for examples of good practice from other local authorities and of course we need to gather evidence from those communities which have had direct experience of the process. So we would like to hear from your Parish Council and these are some of the questions we want to answer:

- Are you aware of the Council's Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites policy/process?
- Do you understand the policy/process?
- Are there any aspects of the policy/process that need further explanation?
- Do you have affordable housing in your parish?
- Have you tried to get affordable housing in your parish?
- Do you anticipate a future need for affordable housing in your parish?
- What has been your experience of the policy/process?
- What do you think contributed to a satisfactory outcome?



- What do you think were the main problems that you encountered?
- What aspects of the policy/process could be improved? And how?
- What do you think the Council and its partners could do differently?
- What do you think that Parish Councils could do differently?

You can submit your views and comments in writing to me or to the Scrutiny Officer, Catherine Phythian at the above address or by email to overviewandscrutiny@cherwell-dc.gov.uk. Alternatively you may pass your written comments to your local district councillor. It would help us if you could forward your response by 6 February 2009.

We are planning to consider this topic at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 March 2009 which will be open to the public. We intend to invite representatives from some of the parish councils to attend that meeting to discuss their experiences of the affordable housing and rural exception sites process. We will also be talking to Cherwell planning and housing officers, as well as representatives from our partner organisations at that meeting. If your parish council would like to participate in the discussion please indicate this when you submit your written comments. I expect the review to run for about 4 months from January to April/May 2009. We intend to present our conclusions to the next parish liaison meeting.

Finally I must point out that the date of the next Cherwell Parish Liaison meeting is **Wednesday 17 June 2009** and not Friday 12 June as stated in Chris Rothwell's letter of 1 December 2008.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

John Donaldson
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Copies to: Cllr Wood
Cllr Gibbard
Overview & Scrutiny Committee members
Strategic Director/Officers