

Affordable Housing in Priory, Wellington

Three schemes for affordable housing in the Priory, Wellington area have been progressing and planning applications were submitted for each some months ago. These schemes, to which Raglan Housing Association and the Housing Corporation have committed £2.2 million, have been going through the full democratic process to obtain planning permission. This money could be lost if there are further delays or the schemes do not go ahead.

There is a desperate need for affordable housing in Taunton Deane with just under 3,000 families on the waiting list. 602 of these are in Wellington and, in recognition of this, Taunton Deane has committed to Wellington £345,000 and the land towards the cost of the schemes.

Prevarication on these schemes in Wellington not only puts the direct funding for Wellington of £2.2 million at severe risk. It also calls into question the Council's commitment to the Corporate Priority of providing affordable housing throughout Taunton Deane and risks destroying the credibility of the Council. It may also jeopardise future funding from the Housing Corporation, of which £15 million is expected this year, and create uncertainty amongst Registered Social Landlords for other schemes in Taunton Deane.

The search for extra sites in Wellington is to be applauded. However, the aim of this initiative should be to increase the housing numbers and not to replace a site that was intended to go through the full democratic planning process. Any new sites found would need to be subject to the full, protracted consultation and planning process so it is unlikely they could be delivered as part of the present agreed package.

In order to allow works to start and provide desperately needed affordable housing for the people of Wellington, the Council RESOLVES that:-

- (1) the delay in implementing approved schemes for 23 units of affordable housing in Priory, Wellington be deplored;**
- (2) the necessary legal agreements with the housing provider, Raglan Housing Association, be finalized immediately for the two sites with planning consent (at Baker Lane/Priory and at Gay Close) and**
- (3) Raglan be requested to reinstate the planning application for the third site (at Humphries Road) to allow full and proper consideration through the democratic planning process.**
- (4) A report be submitted to the Executive as to the progress made in implementing these resolutions**