

LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AND CHELTENHAM BOROUGH HOMES

The Swindon Road New-build Scheme

1. Summary

The aim of this local Lettings Plan is to support the delivery of new affordable homes on the Swindon Road new build development for veterans of the Armed Forces.

For the purposes of this Plan a veteran is defined as anyone who has served at least a day in the HM Armed Forces, whether as a Regular or as a Reservist. This definition is in line with the definition given to veterans within the Armed Forces Covenant, to which Cheltenham Borough Council signed up on 27th February 2012 and the aim of which is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Gloucestershire and to bring about better integration of veterans into civilian life.

The purpose of any local Lettings Plan on new developments is to ensure that new communities start well and that they are given every opportunity to become cohesive and sustainable within the wider community. This Lettings Plan will therefore also take account of these wider aims.

2. The Swindon Road Scheme

The Swindon Road new build development will see the delivery of 10 new CBC affordable homes. These homes will be made up of 5 x 1 bedroom flats, 3 x 2 bedroom flats and 2 x 2 bedroom houses.

All properties are designed to achieve the Lifetime Homes Standard, with the ground floor accommodation to the flats providing wet rooms to facilitate ease of access for veterans with disabilities.

These homes will be let at an Affordable Rent (i.e. 80% of market rents).

3. The Local Lettings Plan

CBH will use this local Lettings Plan to cover both initial and future lettings of homes on the Swindon Road development. The allocation and exclusion criteria to be applied for the letting of these homes will be as follows:

3.1 Allocation

Will applicants need a Cheltenham local connection?

Allocation of each unit of accommodation will be in the following order of priority:

- Disabled veterans who are in need of level access accommodation will be given preference for the ground floor accommodation in order of their housing need, i.e. emergency, then gold, then silver, then bronze. (consistent with next bullet point)
- All other veterans of the Armed Forces, including their bereaved spouse or civil partner, will be given preference in order of their housing need: emergency, then gold, then silver, then bronze band. (In the event that not all homes on this development are filled by veterans, the remaining homes will be allocated in the following order of preference:
 - Existing CBH tenants in housing need in the following order: emergency, then gold then silver band.
 - Tenants of other Registered Providers in housing need who are residing in Cheltenham in order of banding need as detailed above;
 - Then other applicants in housing need in order of banding need as detailed above.

This approach will not only release other social housing accommodation across the borough, thereby supporting housing need, it will also ensure that any tenants who are accommodated on this new development have a history of sustaining their social housing tenancies successfully.

3.2 Exclusion

CBH will not offer tenancies to households where the applicants or members of their household are:

- Persons with a history of ASB at current or previous tenancies within the last 5 years. This includes those subject to informal interventions such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.
- Persons for whom a Possession Order had been obtained, or who had previously been evicted for ASB or who have been the subject of an injunction for ASB within the last 5 years.
- Persons with support needs who have failed to accept support or do not have adequate support in place and whose need is likely to have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties, and/or their ability to sustain their tenancy.
- Persons owing any monies such as former tenant arrears (i.e. 8 weeks or more) including any other housing debt such that the Registered Provider would be able to apply for a Possession Order, or significant (i.e. >£500), rechargeable repairs invoices to CBH or another Registered Provider, **AND** who have not kept to an agreed repayment plan having missed a minimum of 3 consecutive repayments.

4. Process

The properties will be advertised using Gloucestershire Homeseeker, and will include details of the local lettings criteria.

When the bidding cycle has ended a list will be produced of all applicants who have bid on the property. These applicants will be ranked by the Homeseeker system according to housing need.

Applicants will be assessed in order of preference as detailed within this local Lettings Plan.

A visit will not be arranged if CBH already has evidence that the applicant does not meet the Lettings Plan criteria, and instead CBH will then move to the next ranking applicant.

If the applicant meets the criteria a visit will be made.

The reason for the visit will be threefold:

- to conduct an affordability assessment;

- to identify any existing housing management issues which will not have been flagged through the Homeseeker bidding process; and
- To provide the applicant with details about the development.

A record of all evidence collected, known, given or received will be kept for the Lettings Plan.

5. Review

This local lettings plan will be subject to an annual review to ensure it continues to fulfil the needs and criteria as initially intended.

6. Date of Local Lettings Plan

This plan, whilst agreed between CBC and CBH on xx of April 2016, will be dated immediately prior to the letting of the first homes on this development.

Parties to the Agreement:

Martin Stacy – Lead Commissioner Housing Services

Cheltenham Borough Council

Signed

And

Caroline Walker, Community Services Manager

Cheltenham Borough Homes –