

LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN FOR CHELTENHAM BOROUGH HOMES

PROPERTY ACQUISITION INITIATIVE.

Summary

The purpose of the plan is to support Cheltenham Borough Council's investment in new properties by considering measures to maintain low levels of anti-social behaviour and crime, and to support more sustainable and cohesive community.

This plan details the suggested lettings strategy to mitigate potential issues with the introduction of a new group of residents into an existing community or into an area in which CBH has not traditionally managed council property.

The new properties will be made available to let at an 'affordable rent' level and a tenant affordability assessment has been added into the lettings process.

The local lettings plan

The reasons for this Local Lettings Plan are to assist CBH in managing the risk and to help ensure the sustainability of a tenancy in an area where there is little or no social housing.

CBH will use this Local Lettings Plan to cover both initial and future lettings of newly acquired properties through the property acquisition programme.

Therefore, the Local Lettings Plan is proposed to include allocation and exclusion criteria as follows:

Allocation

- Preference for the properties will be given to existing CBH tenants in housing need in the following order: emergency, then gold then silver band.

Followed by:

- Tenants of other RSL's 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 will release other social housing accommodation across the borough, and most importantly, this will also give CBH a core of tenants who have historically sustained their tenancies successfully.

Exclusion

- CBH will not offer tenancies to households where the tenants or members of their family are/is: 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 had been the subject of an injunction for ASB within the last 5 years.
- persons with high support needs who have failed to accept support or do not have adequate support in place and who may impact on neighbouring properties
- persons owing any monies such as former tenant arrears or significant (i.e. >£500) rechargeable repairs invoices to CBH or another RSL, **AND** who have not kept to an agreed repayment plan having missed a minimum of 3 consecutive repayments.

Process

The properties will be advertised using Gloucestershire Homeseeker, and including 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.

The highest place CBH tenant in housing need will be contacted and their application assessed in line with this LLP.

A visit will not be arranged if CBH already has evidence that the applicant does not meet the Lettings Plan criteria, and process 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 property acquisition.

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

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.