

# LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN FOR CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PROPERTIES AT HILLFORT CLOSE, CHELTENHAM, GL53 0JS (EFFECTIVE FROM OCTOBER 2023).

## **Executive Summary:**

The purpose of the plan is to support Cheltenham Borough Council's investment in five new build affordable homes at Hillfort Close, Cheltenham, GL53 0JS, by considering appropriate measures to support the establishment of a sustainable and cohesive new community at the location.

There are five affordable properties at Hillfort Close, of which four will be available to let at Affordable Rent with a mix of two 2-bedroom and two 3-bedroom houses. This development also includes one 2-bedroom house available for Shared Ownership.

This Local Lettings Plan will cover the following Affordable Rented units:

- 8 Hillfort Close, Cheltenham, GL53 0JS
- 9 Hillfort Close, Cheltenham, GL53 0JS
- 10 Hillfort Close, Cheltenham, GL53 0JS
- 11 Hillfort Close, Cheltenham, GL53 0JS

## **The Local Lettings Plan:**

Cheltenham Borough Homes will use this Local Lettings Plan to cover all first lettings and subsequent lettings of numbers 8-11 Hillfort Close, GL53 0JS, within the first fifteen months following the handover date for these properties (16<sup>th</sup> October 2023), until 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025, with the aims of creating and sustaining a cohesive

community at this location, and successfully integrating new residents into the wider community. Subsequent lettings will comply with Homeseeker Plus policy. Cheltenham Borough Homes can apply to extend the local lettings plan, if evidence supports the need to do so.

### **Exclusion Criteria:**

Cheltenham Borough Homes reserves the right not to offer a tenancy at Hillfort Close to a household where the applicant(s) and/ or members of their family are:

- Persons for whom a Possession Order has been obtained relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or who has previously been evicted for ASB or who has been the subject of an injunction for ASB within the last 3 years.
- Persons with a history of ASB at a current or previous tenancy within the last 3 years. Each applicant will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will include the applicants' response to informal actions such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and the length of time since the last report of ASB.
- 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 current tenant arrears or former tenant arrears of 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., £750 or more) rechargeable repairs invoices to Cheltenham Borough Homes or another Registered Provider, AND who have not kept to an agreed repayment plan having missed a minimum of 3 consecutive repayments.
- Persons who have caused a deterioration of the condition of their current property, its garden or its fixtures and fittings due to ill-treatment, waste, neglect, or default. This will include any unauthorised alterations.

When applying the above exclusion criteria, Cheltenham Borough Homes will consider the individual circumstances of each applicant, for example where domestic abuse may have contributed to reports of anti-social behaviour or a deterioration of the condition of their current property.

### **The Lettings Process:**

The properties will be advertised using Homeseeker Plus, and the advert 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 properties. These applicants will be ranked by the Homeseeker Plus system according to housing need.

The highest placed applicant in housing need will be contacted and their application assessed in line with the criteria outlined in this Local Lettings Plan.

If there is evidence that an applicant does not meet the Local Lettings Plan criteria the process will then move to the next ranking applicant. At the same time we will inform the applicant of the reason they have not been successful and Cheltenham Borough Homes commits to working with unsuccessful applicants to ensure that they are tenancy ready so that they can be considered for future lettings.

If the criteria is met, an interview will be arranged with the applicant at their current accommodation. The purpose of the interview will be: -

- To identify any housing management issues which will not have been flagged through the Homeseeker Plus bidding process; and
- To provide the applicant with further details about the property.
- To check that the applicant(s) have not caused a deterioration of the condition of their current property as stated above, taking into account individual circumstances.

Providing all is acceptable then a viewing of the property will be arranged with the Lettings Officer.

## **Monitoring:**

Cheltenham Borough Homes commits to providing the following monitoring data at the point that all initial lettings are complete, and again in October 2024 as part of the review process outlined below:

- The total number of offers made on all 4 properties.
- The total number of offers refused or withdrawn unrelated to the Lettings Plan.
- The total number of bypasses that occurred relating to the 4 lettings due to applicants failing to meet the Lettings Plan criteria.
- A breakdown of any bypasses made due to the applicant not meeting any of the 5 specific exclusion criteria detailed above.

## **Local Lettings Plan Review Mechanism:**

Cheltenham Borough Homes commits to a review of this lettings plan in October 2024, in conjunction with key officers from Cheltenham Borough Council. As part of the review the above monitoring data will be reviewed alongside tenancy sustainability data, and data relating to anti-social behaviour, tenancy management and rent arrears cases.

At the point of review, Cheltenham Borough Homes can apply to extend the local lettings plan if evidence supports the need to do so. This Local Lettings Plan will automatically expire on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 if Cheltenham Borough Homes do not apply to review this Local Lettings Plan in October 2024.

If, for any reason, this Local Lettings Plan is not functioning as originally intended, Cheltenham Borough Council will have the ability to undertake a review of the Local Lettings Plan at any point prior to 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 in consultation with key officers from Cheltenham Borough Homes.

**Authorisation:**

**Cheltenham Borough Council**

Signed: 

Date: 25/09/2023

**Cheltenham Borough Homes**

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 29/09/2023