

Local Lettings Plan for Flat 1-43, Miller Place Milsom Street, Cheltenham, GL50 4JF

Name & Address of scheme

Flat 1 – 43 Miller Place, Milsom Street, Cheltenham, GL50 4JF

The Agreement is between Cheltenham Borough Council and Bromford.

Overview of development

The High Street site consists of 43 Affordable Homes. Site owned by Powell & Casey Ltd.

Unit	Type	Total
1 bed Flat	1b2p flat	27
2 bed Flat	2b4p flat	16
Total		43

The properties to be built on this development will support customers living in Bromford's Regency stock in Cheltenham to move.

The properties being acquired are flats situated on the ground, first and second floors, with a communal entrance hallway. The flats are of a good size and are therefore suitable for single persons and for couples or small families. They are located in Cheltenham town centre and are therefore close to all amenities. There is no outside space with any of the flats and there are limited parking facilities, however local transport services such as bus and train are very close by.

What is the Demand for this scheme?

Bromford currently owns 6 Regency schemes in Cheltenham. It has been agreed that due to ongoing costs associated with these properties, they are no longer cost effective to run, or efficient for customers to live in. Bromford will not continue to invest in Regency properties and is needing to find new homes for the 61 customers living in them. Once our Regency properties are empty of rented customers, Bromford will sell the buildings.

Most of Bromford's Regency stock are 1 and 2 bedroom units located centrally in Cheltenham. The High Street site is also located centrally and will contain 1 and 2 bedroom units. It will therefore appeal to a number of Regency customers.

Cheltenham itself is very close to the M5 and M50 motorways. Also to the A38 and other major road networks. It is extremely convenient for customers working in nearby Tewkesbury, Worcester and Gloucester. Birmingham and Bristol can also be accessed within an hour by car or via train. Cheltenham Spa train station is approximately 20 minute walk from the High Street site.

Bromford owns c 900 homes in Cheltenham. Demand for social housing stock is high, particularly for 1 and 2 bedroom homes which Cheltenham Borough Council has confirmed. There is a lack of affordable homes centrally located in Cheltenham.

Why do we want a Lettings Plan?

The purpose of the plan is to support Bromford customers in Regency stock to move to new homes and create a balanced and sustainable 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. Measures have been considered to maintain low levels of anti-social behaviour and crime, and to support a more sustainable and cohesive community.

To summarise, our objectives are to:

- Provide homes for Bromford customers in regency stock needing to move
- Support mobility for existing Bromford customers needing to move which will support the emptying of regency schemes (chain lettings)
- Create a thriving and supportive community that customers would recommend
- Create a balanced and sustainable scheme

Bromford will use this Local Lettings Plan to cover both initial and future lettings of the properties to help maintain a balanced and sustainable community.

Summary

Of the 43 homes being built on this scheme, at first letting two will be offered to the local authority for nomination and will be allocated via Gloucestershire Homeseeker Plus. Cheltenham BC will have 100% nomination rights over these 2 units for initial lets, and 75% for subsequent lets.

The remaining 41 units will be used by Bromford to allocate homes to customers living in Regency stock in Cheltenham. Customers moving from Regency stock to the new scheme will have their

existing rent regime honoured and will be allowed to under-occupy if affordability and sustainability can be demonstrated.

If any of the 41 units are not able to be let to Regency customers, Bromford will allocate to any other Bromford customers whose vacated dwelling would be suitable for rehousing a Regency customer (chain lettings). These customers will also be allowed to under-occupy if affordability and sustainability can be demonstrated.

If any units remain unlet by Bromford customers as stated above, homes will be advertised via Gloucestershire Homeseeker Plus and Cheltenham BC will have 100% nomination rights for initial lets and 75% for subsequent lets. Details of this are set out in sections 1 and 2 below.

All prospective customers will be processed through Bromford's Lettings Policy and Process and will also undergo an affordability assessment, including those nominated by Cheltenham BC.

1. Initial Lets

- a. 41 units will be set aside for existing Bromford customers living in Regency Stock in Cheltenham, or other customers in Cheltenham whose move to one of these homes will facilitate the subsequent move of a Regency customer.
- b. Bromford will be responsible for prioritising and determining the eligibility of Bromford customers for these 41 homes at first letting, including any decision to allow under-occupation.
- c. If Bromford has insufficient demand from Regency customers, or from customers whose move would facilitate a Regency customer's rehousing, Bromford will offer the remaining first lets of this scheme to Cheltenham BC for nomination via the Glos Homeseeker Plus Scheme. In order to create a balanced and sustainable new community at first letting Cheltenham BC agree to advertise the first lets of these homes with the following restrictions:
 - 50% of vacancies will be advertised with preference to those who are economically active – working 16 hours or more PW, self-employed, in work with a permanent or long-term contract. **
 - 25% of vacancies will be advertised with preference to applicants over the age of 25
 - 25% will be let without any preference criteria applied
 - 2 bedroom flats, above ground floor level, will be advertised for those with one child over the age of seven or all adult households

*** Households that are unable to be economically active through reasons such as being full time carers, not being of working age or having a disability which prevents them from working will be treated as though they are economically active.*

- d. 2 units (1 x2 bed and 1 x 1 bed) will be offered for nomination at first letting without regard to Bromford's Regency customers.
- e. These properties will be advertised using Gloucestershire Homeseeker Plus, and will be let in accordance with the Glos Homeseeker allocation scheme.

2. Subsequent Lets (Relets)

- a. Should any of the homes become vacant for re-letting whilst Bromford have an ongoing need to rehouse customers from Regency properties then any relets will, in the first instance, be offered to existing Bromford customers either living in a Regency home or to another Bromford customer whose home could then be used to rehouse a Regency customer (chain letting).
- b. If there are no Bromford customers that meet the criteria above then 75% of relets will be offered to Cheltenham BC for nomination via the Glos Homeseeker Plus CBL scheme.
- c. Bromford will have the option to allocate 25% of relets outside of Homeseeker Plus in accordance with the Bromford Lettings Policy

3. Local Connection

- Local connection requirements will be applied in line with the criteria set out in the S106 Agreement and in compliance with the Gloucestershire Homeseeker Plus allocation scheme. The definition of local connection is set out in the scheme and is part of the application assessment and prioritisation on Glos Homeseeker Plus.
- Priority in the first instance will be given to applicants with a verified local connection to the Cheltenham District
- If there are insufficient eligible applicants on the Gloucestershire Homeseeker Plus allocation scheme who have bid on a home to achieve a successful letting and Cheltenham BC are unable to make a further nomination then Bromford will let the home in line with its Lettings Policy and outside of the nomination arrangements.

4. Affordability:

All prospective customers will be subject to Bromford's Lettings Policy and process, including an affordability assessment. Bromford will meet applicants to discuss affordability. Bromford will not knowingly allocate a property to any household or person who will not be able to afford to live in that property using Bromford's published affordability criteria.

Bromford and Cheltenham Borough Council will work together to provide advice to applicants about Welfare Reform and the benefits of being in paid employment.

Assessment of Suitability to be a Tenant

Bromford will assess each nomination or application on its own merits and reserves the right not to offer tenancies to

- Persons for whom a Possession Order had been obtained relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), or who had previously been evicted for ASB or who had been the subject of an injunction for ASB within the last 5 years.
- Households where the tenants or members of their family are persons with a history of ASB at current or previous tenancies within the last 3 years.
 - Each applicant will be considered on a case by case basis and will include the applicant's 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 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.
- Persons who have arrears, former tenant arrears, court costs or rechargeable repairs on their current rent account but have failed to maintain an appropriate payment plan for a consistent period of time.
 - Exceptions would be considered if the arrears accrued were deemed not to be the responsibility of the applicant such as affordability issues due to welfare reform or domestic abuse issues. In these circumstances each case would be assessed on an individual basis.

These are not blanket exclusions but are used as indicators of risk of an applicant's ability to sustain a tenancy and be part of a cohesive and vibrant community. Bromford's aim is to enable people to be the best they can be and there is an expectation that customers engage well with Bromford colleagues and with their neighbours. Decisions will be evidence based and will be non discriminatory. Bromford will always take into account the past and present circumstances of an applicant when reaching a decision on offering a home and where an offer is not made will offer advice on what steps need to be taken by the individual to secure a home with Bromford in the future.

Review of the Plan

This plan will be reviewed every 12 months or as required by either party (Cheltenham Borough Council and Bromford).

Monitoring

Bromford commits to monitoring of the lettings process as set out above, and reporting on the following:

- (i) The total number of offers made on the 2 properties.
- (ii) The total number of offers refused or withdrawn unrelated to the Lettings Plan.
- (iii) The total number of bypasses which occurred over the 2 lettings due to applicants failing to meet the Letting Plan criteria.
- (iv) A breakdown of any bypasses made due to the applicant not meeting any of the specific exclusion criteria detailed above.

Formal agreement of the Local Lettings Plan

Bromford Signatory

Signature



Print Full Name: CHARLIE JACKSON

Date: 19/11/2020

Cheltenham Borough Council Signatory

Signature



Print Full Name: TIM ATKINS

Date: 30/11/2020