

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

Veteran Scheme - Jupiter House, Swindon Road (Incorporating 6 and 8 Brunswick Street)

1. Summary

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

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.

2. The Scheme

This development consists of 10 CBC affordable homes. These homes are 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 are 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

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.
- 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.
- Under-occupation of the properties will be considered for veterans only in the event that the properties are not allocated in the above order of priority. Preference will be given to existing CBH tenants and then all other applicants in order of housing need: emergency, then gold, then silver, then bronze band. Where there is more than one applicant in the same housing need banding, priority will be given to the applicant whose application includes the strongest case for an additional bedroom. Any allocation will be subject to an affordability assessment.

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 detailed in this Local Lettings Plan are listed in the Cobseo (The Confederation of Service Charities) Housing Directory. This organisation represents the whole serving and veteran community and its members include SSAFA, RBL, RAF, RNA, Help For Heroes, Hire A Hero and Walking With The Wounded.

Prior to advertising on Homeseekerplus the schedule for advertising the vacancy on the Cobseo Veterans Gateway “Find a Home” service will be established and the application to advertise the property on that platform submitted. The Homeseekerplus advert closing date should allow for the Cobseo Veterans Gateway advert to run for at least 1 full week prior to closure.

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

To co-ordinate with the advert going live the following additional step will be taken:-

- All veterans on the housing list who could be considered for the property will be identified . They will then be contacted directly about the vacancy to advise them of the bidding opportunity.

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 Homeseekerplus system according to housing need.

In the event that no veterans have bid for the property or the property is not accepted by the veterans who have applied, then the following additional steps will be taken:

- Social media and public awareness raising of the vacancy.
- All local and county Services organisations will be contacted to advise of the vacancy and to encourage anyone interested to contact.
- The property will be re-advertised, advising that a 1 bedroom need would be acceptable in the event of a 2 bedroom vacancy not being matched to a 2 bedroom need.

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

An interview 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 an interview will be carried out.

The reason for the interview 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 for a period of 12 months.

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.