

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Tim Ball, Executive Member for Homes & Planning		
DECISION DATE:	On or after 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	2273
TITLE:	Local Lettings Plan		
WARD:	All.		
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>			
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Local lettings plan - Pennyquick View, Twerton &amp; Southlands, Weston, Bath.</li><li>2. Local lettings plan - Marjorie Whimster House site, High Street Twerton.</li></ol>			

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Three new social housing developments are reaching completion and the housing on these schemes will need to be allocated. To ensure that these large scale allocations are made in a sustainable and balanced manner the housing providers; Somer Community Housing Trust & Flourish Homes have requested the adoption of a Local Lettings Plan. This plan allows for the Council to deviate from the existing Homeseach Policy should this policy not produce a sustainable and balanced allocation.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet member is asked to agree that:

- 2.1 To approve the local lettings plan for these Social Housing Schemes. (See Attachments –) Local Lettings Plans – 1. Pennyquick View, Twerton & Southlands, Weston Bath. 2. Local Lettings Plan - Marjorie Whimster House, High Street Twerton).
- 2.2 The local lettings plans will be effective for one year, after which they will be reviewed.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from this report.
- 3.2 Creating a sustainable community will reduce the demand for other public services and the resources of our partners, Somer Community Housing Trust and Flourish Homes.

### **4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- *Building communities where people feel safe and secure*
- *Improving the availability of Affordable Housing*

### **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 Pennyquick View in Twerton and Southlands in Weston are two new-build multi-tenure housing schemes in Bath. The developments are Somer Community Housing Trust regeneration projects. The schemes are being built on sites of former PRC (pre cast reinforced concrete) properties that have been demolished. The two new schemes provide one hundred and thirty new units. The social housing within these developments will shortly be allocated by Housing Services.
- 5.2 Marjorie Whimster House development is a multi-tenure scheme located off the High Street in Twerton. The scheme is a redevelopment of a former care home, comprising of a mix of flats and houses. The new development is a mixture of general needs housing and specific supported housing units for people with learning disabilities. In total the scheme provides twenty-nine new units of accommodation.
- 5.3 The new social housing within the developments will be allocated through the council's Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, known as Homesearch. However, the providers have requested the adoption of a Local Lettings Plan (LLP). This plan allows for the Council to deviate from the existing Homesearch Policy should the Homesearch Policy not produce a sustainable and balanced allocation as defined within the LLP. This is important given that allocating large numbers of properties in one location in a short period creates particular risks, particularly around the potential to create an unbalanced community.
- 5.4 The locations of the new housing developments are within existing communities, and incorporate some mixed tenures. There are a high number of family units within the developments, and there is therefore potential for high child density. It is essential that the accommodation is allocated so that tenancies are sustained to ensure the long term success of the schemes. The local lettings plans will help to create sustainable communities by allocating accommodation to people who choose to live in an area and who want to be part of a successful balanced community.
- 5.5 The aim of both local lettings plans is to ensure that a range of housing need is met by ensuring that homes are let to applicants with different types of need and priority. It is also intended to allow for some under-occupation of accommodation and to allocate property to families with a range of ages of children. This should reduce management problems including anti social behaviour. The plans will help

reduce turnover and build sustainable and desirable communities which enhance the neighbourhoods.

- 5.6 It is proposed that the rented social housing in these developments are advertised and allocated in line with the Homeseach Lettings Policy and the Registered Provider's allocations policies. Where the Homeseach CBL scheme fails to provide a balanced community, the Registered Provider will be able to overlook applicants, but only with the agreement of Housing Services.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The report author and Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

- 7.1 The local lettings plans seek to achieve 50% employment amongst new residents for the first year. The employment target may negatively affect some socio-economically disadvantaged people. This possible negative effect should be considered in relation to the positive effects of creating sustainable communities. The plans seek to prevent concentrations of unemployment and deprivation within the specific new developments, and create communities where people want to live, are balanced and successful. The plans will only be effective for one year, if any applicants are overlooked on the grounds of employment, then the Registered Housing provider must advise the local authority. After one year the plan will be fully reviewed, including any equalities implications.

## **8 RATIONALE**

- 8.1 Creating sustainable communities in these areas of Bath and North East Somerset will have positive benefits to residents and visitors to the area. Moreover it will contribute to the socio-economic future and stability of the area.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 To allocate the properties strictly through the Choice Based Letting system without local lettings plans was also considered. Without local lettings plans, the new communities may lack social and economic diversity in these areas of Bath and North East Somerset, and may therefore have a negative impact on existing neighbouring communities and services.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 *Cabinet member; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

- 10.2 The consultation was by E-mail and meeting

## **11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION**

- 11.1 *Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Property; Young People; Human Rights; Other Legal Considerations*

**12 ADVICE SOUGHT**

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Homeseach Policy	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>		