

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning		
DECISION DATE:	On or after 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	2295
TITLE:	Local Lettings Plan - Bath Western Riverside		
WARD:	All.		
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>			
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Local lettings plan – Bath Western Riverside.			

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The first phase of new social and low-cost housing at Bath Western Riverside is nearing completion and will need to be allocated. To ensure that this large scale allocation is made in a sustainable and balanced manner the housing provider; Somer Community Housing Trust have requested the adoption of a Local Lettings Plan. The 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:

- 2.1 The attached local lettings plan

### **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.

### **4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

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

### **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The first phase of the Bath Western Riverside development will provide one hundred and twenty one new units of social and low cost homeownership housing managed by Somer Community Housing Trust. The social housing within these developments will shortly be allocated by Housing Services.
- 5.2 The new social housing within the development 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.
- 5.3 In particular there are a considerable number of smaller family units within the development and hence there is potential for high child density. The LLP allows for some flexibility in addressing this issue by seeking to allocate to households with a range of child ages and allowing for some under-occupation of accommodation. The LLP also provides some flexibility to prevent an excessive concentration of residents who whilst able to work are not in employment.
- 5.4 It is important to remember that the LLP will only be evoked should the Homesearch scheme fail to provide a balanced community. In this case the Registered Provider will be able to overlook applicants, in agreement with Housing Services, to meet the requirements of the LLP.

### **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 report author and Cabinet member have had due regard to the Equality Duty. The LLP has a limited positive affect on the advancement of equality of opportunity for some protected characteristics. However, balanced to this is the

fact that the employment criteria could potentially negatively affect some already socio-economically disadvantaged people. This is considered reasonable in light of the overarching aims of the LLP. In addition if any applicants are overlooked on the grounds of employment, then the Registered Housing provider must advise the local authority so that we are able to ensure that the decisions has been applied fairly and equitably. The policy is effective for one year after which it will be fully reviewed, including any equalities implications.

## 8 RATIONALE

8.1 Creating sustainable communities in this area 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. However, the potential risks of inappropriate allocation, and the associated negative impacts on the scheme and locality, are such that it was considered proper to mitigate against such risks.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 *Cabinet member; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer;; Monitoring Officer*

## 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>		