

Local Lettings Plan – Bath Western Riverside, Bath Phase 1

Bath Western Riverside is a new Somer Community Housing Trust (Somer) development built on former industrial land in central Bath. The first phase of the development is due to be allocated in late August 2011. A minimum of seventy five percent of the social housing will be allocated in line with the existing Homesearch allocation scheme. Due to the size and specific details of the scheme Somer Community Housing Trust have requested the use of a local Lettings Plan.

1. Bath Western Riverside -Neighbourhood Profile & the Scheme

- 1.1 This is a new build multi tenure scheme located in the central bath area. The development provides the regeneration of the current brown field Bath Western Riverside site (BWR). In the first phase of BWR Somer will own and manage the following homes:-

General Needs Rented Homes		
1 bed flat	39%	47
2 bed flat	26%	32
2 bed house	3%	4
3 bed house	2%	2
GN Total		85
Intermediate Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)		
1 bed flat	16%	19
2 bed flat	14%	17
IRH Total	100%	36
Total		121

The houses have private gardens. Some houses and flats will have access to parking but not all. In Phase 1 there will be no communal play facilities except a communal courtyard garden shared and accessible to one multi-tenure block. A public park does form part of the regeneration scheme in a later phase. The scheme has a high density of flats in large blocks. There are many local facilities close by due to the proximity of the town centre.

2 Purpose of Local Lettings Plan

2.1 The aim of this local lettings plan is to achieve:

- a range of housing need being met, by ensuring that homes are let to applicants with different types of need, and priority given to a range of households in different personal circumstances.
- a sustainable community which enhances the neighbourhood, where people choose to live;
- sustainable individual tenancies
- a range of family sizes with a range of ages amongst children living in the homes

3. The Plan - Rented Social Housing.

3.1 The general needs rented homes are advertised and allocated in line with the Homesearch Lettings Policy and Somer Community Housing Trusts allocations policy and procedures. Where Homesearch CBL fails to provide a balanced community, Somer will be able to overlook applicants in consultation with Housing Services.

To achieve these objectives, it is agreed that:

- Allocations will be made to families with a range of ages and numbers of children, mixing families with children in different age ranges. This will also include adult only households requiring two bedrooms.
- Aim to have 50% of residents in employment ¹.
- Limit applicants with support needs relevant to management issues, in consultation with B&NES Housing services
- Priority to households who are downsizing from house which have 3 or more bedrooms

It is acknowledged that some households may meet more than one of the above criteria.

¹ this does not apply to people over the state retirement age, people unable to work due to disability or single parents who are pregnant or with children under school age.

4. Low Cost Home Ownership

These will be allocated as per this agreement with B&NES and Somer's Allocations, Nominations and Affordability Policies and Procedures.

Initially all of the homes will be marketed for sale on a HomeBuy Shared Ownership basis.

Depending on the level of demand for the HomeBuy Shared Ownership properties and external factors (mortgage lending requirements for example if higher LTV are requested.) it may be necessary to offer the homes on one or both of the following tenures:

- Rent to Buy (RtB)
- Intermediate rent (IMR)

Properties will only be considered for either IMR or RtB tenure, once it is demonstrated that it is not possible to sell all of the properties on a HomeBuy Shared Ownership basis, this will be demonstrated by:

Marketing the properties on a HomeBuy Shared Ownership basis for a minimum of 3 months, which may be before practical completion of the homes, as a minimum the marketing will consist of:

- Marketing the homes on South West Homes (HomeBuy Agents Website)
- Sending mail shots to those registered with South West Homes
- Marketing through www.somerhomes.co.uk

In addition to the above, the following marketing methods may be used, providing they can be considered to offer value for the money:

- Distributing leaflets on the properties to households living and or working in Bath and or
- Marketing the properties through one of the national website such as www.rightmove.co.uk or www.smartnewhomes.co.uk or www.primlocation.com
- Local estate agents
- Local newspapers (The Chronicle)

All households will be required to be registered with South West Homes and Bath and North East Somerset District Council on their Housing Waiting List.

Previous experience of marketing flats for HomeBuy Shared Ownership is that the majority of the households that will want to apply will be single and

or dual adult households with no children, there is likely to be a very low level of demand from single households with children and or multi households with children.

In line with guidance households will be able to apply for a property that has one more bedroom than is required which will mean that all single and dual households will be able to apply for either the one or two bedroom apartments that are available.

In the event that households with children do apply they will be given a priority for a 2 bed house over a single or dual household.

Households with children and mobility issues will have a priority for ground and first floor properties.

Local Connection

- HomeBuy Shared Ownership - For the first 3 months of marketing all households will be required to have a local connection to Bath and North East Somerset (either currently residing or working in Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority Area). After 3 months of marketing households without a local connection will be considered.
- IMR and RtB – for the first month of marketing the homes of these tenures households will be required to have a local connection to Bath and North East Somerset, after the first month households without a local connection will be considered

Preferred Income Ranges. For the first 3 months of marketing households that are within the preferred income ranges that are agreed with Bath and North East Somerset Council will be prioritised (to be agreed with BANES) after 3 months households outside of the preferred income range will be considered, providing it can be demonstrated that those households outside the income ranges have a need for the affordable housing.

Households in receipt of housing benefit can be considered for HomeBuy Shared Ownership providing they are able to fund the purchase of the share being marketed. However if offered on an IMR or RtB basis then applicants on Housing Benefit will not be considered.

5. Timescale and Review

- 5.1 The Local Lettings plan will be effective for one year. At the end of this period a full review will be carried out jointly by Somer and Bath and North East Somerset Housing Services. Based on the review a new lettings plan will be developed if appropriate.

6. Approval

Somer Community Housing Trust Board

Date:

B&NES

Date: