

Housing Services Local Letting Plan

Beecham Place, Midsomer Norton

A local letting plan is an agreement between Housing Services and a housing provider. It decides how properties will be allocated in certain defined geographical areas. Local lettings plans will only be used in exceptional circumstances, to meet specific local issues within an area.

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A S T E R
G R O U P

This document can be made available in a range of languages, large print and Braille.

Neighbourhood profile, supporting information and views of the local community

Beecham Place at Midsomer Norton is a development of homes built on brownfield land. This development is situated in Midsomer Norton, mid-way between Radstock and Stratton on the Fosse. .???? are the builder and the main social housing provider is Aster Housing Association who have purchased 57 of the homes under the S106 Agreement. 43 social rent units and 14 Shared Ownership.

The development is a brown field site and is close to an existing housing development and within walking distance of both a primary and secondary school.

Unit Type	Tenure	Size	Permitted persons	Rent (inc. Service charge)
House x 15	Social	2 Bed	4	52 weeks (To be confirmed)
House x 12	Social	3 Bed	5	52 weeks (To be confirmed)
House x 4	Social	4 Bed	6	52 weeks (To be confirmed)
Flat x 6	Social	1 Bed	2	52 weeks (To be confirmed)
Adapted House x 4	Social	3 Bed		52 weeks (To be confirmed)
Adapted House x 2	Social	2 Bed		52 weeks (To be confirmed)

Section 106 – not applicable

Purpose of the plan

The aim of this local lettings plan is to achieve:

To work with Bath and North East Somerset Council Homeseach Team to achieve a sustainable and balanced community and to create a safe and secure environment in which tenants can live peacefully and harmoniously. At the same time we will contribute to meeting the varying housing needs of applicants who are included on the Council's Common Housing Register.

Whilst the lettings plan is designed to afford the best possible chance of creating and maintaining a stable and safe community Aster remains committed to assisting the Council to meet housing need in the area. However, the existence of the lettings plan may mean that vacancies will not always be allocated to the applicant who can demonstrate the greatest housing need to ensure the allocations give the best chance of creating and maintaining a stable and balanced community.

Objectives

The plans letting criteria will give reasonable preference to those in priority need and be flexible and non-discriminatory. Aster aims to accommodate the needs of a diverse range of applicants. In doing so it also has a duty of care to all its residents and staff. This means that it must be aware of the previous history and specific needs to potential tenants.

All applicants will be required to answer specific questions relating to their past conduct and that of members of their household. We will require the applicants consent to contact previous landlords or other agencies for confirmation.

Criminal records will be checked for all new applicants.

The local lettings plan is designed to create the best possible chance of maintaining a stable and secure community. The existence of a local lettings plan may mean that vacancies will not always be allocated to applicants with greatest need. Applicants with a lower priority may be considered if their housing may help to maintain a stable community. Aster will make the final decision with regards to the allocation of the properties let under this plan.

Advertising & Letting Criteria

The following criteria are aspirational and subject to annual review:

Applicants housing needs will be assessed in accordance with the Homesearch, the regional choice based lettings scheme. We aim a minimum of 25% of residents will be in employment.

1 5 x 2 Bedroom Houses Priority to be given to households with a 2 bedroom housing need and two dependent children.

1 2 x 3 Bedroom Houses Priority to be given to households with a 3 bedroom housing need and 2 to 3 dependent children.

4x4 Bedroom Houses Priority to be given to households with a 4 bedroom housing need and 4 to 5 dependent children.

6x1 Bedroom Flats Priority to be given to households with a 1 bedroom housing need.

4x3 Bedroom Adapted Houses Priority to be given to households with a 3 bedroom housing need who require adapted housing, as confirmed by an Occupational Therapists report

2x2 Bedroom Adapted Houses Priority to be given to households with a 2 bedroom housing need who require adapted housing, as confirmed by an Occupational Therapists report.

The properties will be advertised on Homesearch in the first instance:

Households from A Band 30%

Households from B Band 50%

Households from C Band 20%

Preference will be given to applicants in line with the Homesearch policy.

Applicants with a support need must have a detailed support plan in place before we will consider them.

Tenancy Type

There are a variety of Tenancies that can be awarded. These include the following;

- A 2 or 5 Year Fixed Term Assured Shorthold Tenancy. The majority of customers will be awarded this type of Agreement.
- A Starter Tenancy which may be converted into a Fixed Term 2 or 5 year Assured Shorthold Tenancy after 12 months. This decision will be made at a 12 month review meeting and will be subject to the conduct of the tenancy throughout this period.
- A 12 weeks Licence which may be rolled over to a Starter tenancy, subject to conduct. If a decision is taken to end the tenancy, the tenant has the right of appeal.

Exclusions & grounds for rejection

All nominations will be verified in accordance with Aster policies and any rejections made in accordance with the identified grounds for refusal accompanying that policy.

Where there is a history of anti-social behaviour, which has led to legal action within the last two years, the applicant's nomination **MAY** be refused. Legal action could include:

- Injunction
- Anti-Social Behaviour Contract (ABC)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)
- Suspended Possession Order (SPO)
- Possession Order (PO)
- Notice of Seeking a Demotion of Tenancy (NSD)
- Criminal anti-social behaviour order
- Criminal convictions relating to conduct or action, which may impact upon the conduct of the tenancy

A landlord reference will be required.

For existing Local Authority or Housing Association tenants, their present accommodation must also be in good decorative order, and there are no Rent Arrears or Breaches of Tenancy conditions.

After shortlisting an applicant, they will be interviewed by relevant Aster staff. All applicants will be required to answer specific questions relating to their past conduct and that of household members. A financial assessment will also be carried out to ensure the property is affordable. Aster may require the applicants consent to contact being made with previous landlords, or other agencies for confirmation.

Timescale

The plan will commence in October 2016 and will be operational initially for 12 months.

Review date

The Lettings Plan will be reviewed after 12 months.

Equalities

This lettings plan is intended to work alongside the Equality policies of both Bath and North East Somerset Council and Aster. This ensures that the assessment and nomination process does not discriminate against households and enables applicants with diverse needs to access accommodation on this scheme. The overall aim is to ensure that the community at the

development reflects the diversity of the community within the Somerset region.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the allocations process and the management of the development will routinely take place and at as a minimum at every turnover of tenancy in order to identify at the earliest possible time areas that might need to be reconsidered in respect of future allocations within the scheme.

The purpose of the annual review will be to:

- Identify any trends/common complaints;
- To consider targets not met or exceeded;
- To consider the overall success of the lettings plan;
- To review and, where considered necessary, set new targets

The following will be monitored and reviewed annually by both Bath and North East Somerset Council_and Aster:

- Number of refusals of offers and reasons;
- Number of transfers out of the block being requested and the reasons for this;
- Number of mutual exchanges out of the block being requested and the reasons for this;
- Number and type of Complaints;
- Number of children housed by age groups;
- Ethnicity of those housed;
- Origin of Application;
- Number of relets,
- Reasons why tenants have chosen to leave the block.

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- To consider targets not met or exceeded;
- To consider the overall success of the lettings plan;
- To review and, where considered necessary, set new targets

Important information

With the exception of the requirements of this Local Letting Plan, Housing Services and Aster will comply with the Homeseach Allocation Scheme and Nomination Agreement.

Housing Services must ensure that this scheme does not dominate the Homeseach Allocation scheme and that overall, the scheme gives reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories.