

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Bearscroft Farm Local Lettings Plan

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny – Performance & Customers –
1 February 2017
Cabinet – 9 February 2017

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Housing and Regulatory Services:
Cllr R Fuller

Report by: Head of Customer Services

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Council's Lettings Policy provides the legal framework as to who may be accepted onto the Council's housing register and how those households are prioritised for the available socially rented housing within the district. Local lettings plans may be adopted as an appendix to the Lettings Policy as a means of varying the lettings scheme to create more mixed communities by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment. They are often used on the initial lettings on new build estates.

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This proposed local lettings policy follows good practice guidelines aiming to create a balanced and mixed community within the socially rented new build properties on the Bearscroft Farm development site. There are 51 affordable rented properties being delivered on the site by Cross Keys Homes. It is proposed that the initial lettings of these properties be apportioned equally between households in the various priority bands on the housing register with the shortlisting for properties also ensuring that properties are apportioned between households both in and out of employment.

Any subsequent letting of these properties would then be in line with the Lettings Policy at that time.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the Local Lettings Plan for the rented properties being built by Cross Keys Homes at the Bearscroft Farm development.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To adopt a local lettings plan for the initial letting of the 51 affordable rented properties on the Bearscroft Farm development site.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY

- 2.1 The Council's Lettings Policy forms the allocation scheme - a legal framework that defines how properties are allocated. A local lettings plan must be adopted to allow a small number of defined properties to be allocated in a different way to the legal framework.
- 2.2 The Council and Cross Keys Homes, the housing association developing the affordable rented properties on this site, are keen to create a mixed and balanced community on this new housing estate. To this aim it is proposed the initial 51 lettings will be made as follows:

Band A - 17 Applicants of which 8 to be allocated to applicants where one tenant is working. No more than 8 households moving from homelessness temporary accommodation.

Band B - 17 Applicants of which 8 to be allocated to applicants where one tenant is working

Band C - 17 Applicants of which 8 to be allocated to applicants where one tenant is working

3. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 3.1 Where a number of new build properties are delivered in quick succession in one location there is a risk through the normal lettings process that there may be a concentration of households with similar issues. This may include things such as a higher proportion of households not in employment, and this local lettings plan aims to minimise these risks thereby delivering a more balanced and mixed community.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL COMMENTS

- 4.1 The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers) meeting of 1 February 2017 will be circulated to the Cabinet subsequent to the meeting.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVE

- 5.1 The delivery of affordable housing on this site contributes to the Council's strategic priorities by enabling sustainable growth and delivering new and appropriate housing. The delivery of new and affordable housing to meet future needs is a key objective of the Council.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Section 166A(6)(b) of the 1996 Housing Act enables local authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of s. 166A(3). This is the statutory basis that allows local authorities to adopt local lettings policies for certain parts of the social rented stock within their area. The

proposed local lettings plan is compliant with the legislation and statutory guidance in this area.

7. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the local lettings plan be adopted to assist with the creation of a new balanced and mixed community on this development site.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Local Lettings Plan – Bearscroft Farm, Godmanchester.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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