

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Review of Bearscroft Farm Local Lettings Plan
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Cabinet – 22nd November 2018
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Cllr R Fuller, Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development
<b>Report by:</b>	Housing Needs and Resources Manager
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All

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**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, for example 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.

The Council adopted a local letting plan with Cross Keys Homes in February 2017, for the initial 51 affordable rented homes being developed at Bearscroft Farm site. The intended aim of plan was twofold:

- To apportion the allocation of properties equally between households in the various priority bands on the housing register; and
- To ensure that properties are apportioned between households both in and out of employment.

Cabinet requested a review of this local lettings plan after its implementation and this report gives feedback on these initial lettings. Although it will take several years to determine whether the initial lettings on a new build development site fully achieve their aims of creating a more mixed and balanced community this report provides analysis of the two main aims of the plan as applied to the initial lets that have now been completed.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet are invited to note and comment on the review of the initial lettings on the Bearscroft Farm development site.

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To review the initial letting of the 51 affordable rented properties on the Bearscroft Farm development site.

## 2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY

- 2.1 The Panel requested a twelve month review of the local lettings plan. Delays in the completion of the phases that contained these properties meant that this review was not possible until the initial lettings were complete, hence this report being delayed until now.
- 2.2 The local lettings plan set the following targets as to how the initial lettings should be apportioned:

**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

- 2.3 The initial lettings were apportioned as follows:

Band	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Total	Number in work
<b>A</b>					
Phase 1	3	8	4	15	5
Phase 2	1	1		2	2
8 of the households from band A moved from temporary accommodation					
<b>B</b>					
Phase 1	1	7	3	11	6
Phase 2	1	3	2	6	5
<b>C</b>					
Phase 1	6	4	1	11	5
Phase 2	4	2		6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>27</b>

- 2.4 Although 7 households from band A were in work at the point of allocation compared to a minimum target number of 8, this was agreed with Cross Keys Homes given that a higher proportion of households were in employment overall compared to the plan's original aims.

## 3. KEY IMPACTS

- 3.1 Although it is too early to determine the success of this lettings plan Cross Keys Homes have provided positive anecdotal feedback on the first months of the new tenancies - *'From a CKH perspective the local lettings plan has worked well and we have had a negligible rate of incidents in the area of ASB, rent arrears, requirement for a Neighbourhood Manager to visit the site'*. As housing associations often encounter issues with a proportion of tenancies on new

developments the early signs are that the Bearscroft development has made a positive start to delivering a mixed and balanced community.

#### **4. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

4.1 *The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) will be added to the report after their meeting on 8th November.*

#### **5. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISION**

5.1 Cabinet are invited to note and comment on the review of the initial lettings on the Bearscroft Farm development site.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Lettings Plan – Bearscroft Farm, Godmanchester

#### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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