

LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN
Abbey Farms, Blunsdon, Swindon
Working in Partnership with
Swindon Borough Council
& Aster Group

The Aims and Objectives

To work with Swindon Borough Council to achieve sustainable and balanced community which can contribute to meeting varying housing needs of applicants who are included on the Swindon Homebid common housing register.

To create a safe and secure environment in which tenants can live peacefully and harmoniously and with a commitment in helping to create and maintain a vibrant community.

Whilst the lettings plan is designed to afford the best possible chance of creating and maintaining a stable and safe community, Aster Group is committed to assisting Swindon Borough 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. Applicants with a lower priority may be considered for any allocation if their housing may help to maintain a stable community.

The Area – Abbey Farm, Blunsdon, Swindon

The Abbey Farm development is situated in the Blunsdon area of Swindon. There are a number of Primary Schools and Secondary Schools in the area. The Swindon retail and shopping park is closeby along with a variety of leisure facilities. There are also good transport links to the town centre.

In view of the density of accommodation, sensitive allocations are required to ensure any anti-social behaviour (ASB) and noise nuisance are kept to a minimum.

The Scheme

The scheme comprises of 122 Properties in total; 16 for Shared Ownership and 37 Affordable Homes for rent (9 x 1 bed Flats, 4 x 1 bed Maisonettes; 11 x 2 bed Houses, 10 x 3Bed Houses and 3 x 4 Bed House)

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.

Lettings

As Aster Group does not maintain its own waiting lists and supports Swindon Borough Council (otherwise known as the Council) common housing register, the Council has 100% nominations for initial vacancies that arise (as per deed of nomination rights). This may include advertisements that are specifically aimed at existing Aster tenants.

The vacancies will be advertised through Swindon Borough Councils Choice Based Lettings system entitled Swindon Homebid. The property advertisement will be worded in order to ensure a Local Lettings plan is in place.

In order to achieve and maintain a community stability, nominations will be sought in respect of applicants in order to try and maintain a good mix for the community taking into account economic status, scheme layout and household size, age and make-up. Agreement will be reached prior to advertisement between Aster Group and Swindon Borough Council about households that should receive priority when bidding for this new stock.

These homes will be let as Affordable Rents.

Exclusions

Any refusals will be made in accordance with Aster rejection guidelines (Appendix 1)

For existing Registered Provider or Council Tenants, their present accommodation must be in good decorative order and maintain a clear account.

On receipt of a nomination an assessment will be carried out by an Aster colleague. All applicants will be required to answer specific questions relating to their past conduct and that of household members. Aster will require applicants consent to contact previous landlords or other agencies in relation to their application.

1. Any internal transfers applying through the CBL system, must have a clear rent account and no current breaches of their tenancy.
2. In order to seek to attain and maintain the base targets contained within the local lettings plan, under-occupation by no more than one bedroom will be permitted to ensure that child density levels do not exceed manageable levels. Consideration will be given to Welfare Reform and families advised of the reduction in Housing Benefit for under-occupied property.

Ethnicity

The lettings plan is intended to work alongside the equal opportunities policies of both Aster Group and Swindon Borough Council. It should ensure that the assessment and nomination process does not discriminate against households and enables applicants with diverse needs to access accommodation on this scheme. The aim is to ensure that the community at Abbey Farm reflects the diversity of the community within the Blunsdon area.

Monitoring and review

Careful monitoring of the allocations process and the management of the scheme will routinely take place as an on-going process and as a minimum at every turnover of the tenancy in order to identify at the earliest possible time the area might need to be reconsidered in respect of future allocations within the scheme.

The following should be carefully monitored by Swindon Borough Council and Aster Group;

- Number of refusals of offers and reasons
- Number of transfers out of the area being requested and the reason for this
- Number of Mutual Exchanges out of the area being requested and the reasons for this
- Number and type of complaints
- Number of children housed by age group
- Ethnicity of those housed
- Origin of applicants
- Number of re-lets
- Reasons why tenants have chosen to leave the area

Monitoring of the lettings plans should formally be undertaken by Aster Group and Swindon Borough Council on an annual basis. The purpose of the annual review will be to;

- Identify trends and common complaints
- To consider targets not met or exceeded
- To review as allocations progress and, where considered necessary, set new targets
- To consider overall success of the lettings plan at a review in six months

Name Lyn Dowsett
Position Lettings Manager
Signature.....Lyn Dowsett.....
Date.....5.1.17.....

On behalf of Aster Group

Name
Position
Signature.....
Date.....

On behalf of **Swindon Borough Council**