

LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL DAVID MURRAY JOHN TOWER

Aims and objectives

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

To create a safe and secure environment in which tenants can live peacefully and harmoniously and where a commitment in helping 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, Swindon Borough Council has 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 an allocation if their housing may help to maintain a stable community.

The Area – Town Centre

The David Murray John Tower is situated in the town centre of Swindon, with this giving it excellent transport links, the main shopping area and the basis of many of Swindon's businesses.

In view of the density of accommodation in a tower block and this area, sensitive allocations are required to ensure any issues of anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance are kept to a minimum. Consideration will also need to be given to the limited parking accompanying the rented flats.

The Accommodation

The David Murray John Tower residential accommodation comprises 72 flats, spread over 9 floors. 64 one bed flats spread over 8 floors, and 8 two bed flats on the top floor.

The rent charge for a one bed flat for the 2014/15 financial year is £100.49 per week. The heating charge is £11.17 per week, and the service charge is £26.13 per week. The rent charge for a two bed flat for the 2014/15 financial year is £125.60 per week. The heating charge is £13.14 per week, and the service charge is £30.74 per week. The flats are accessed via communal entrances and communal lifts. No pets are allowed in the building apart from small caged birds.

The properties are heated by communal radiators.

Tenancy Type

All **new** applicants accepted in the David Murray John Tower are given an Introductory Tenancy. The conduct of the tenancy will be reviewed during the initial 12 month period and if no breaches of tenancy identified, then it will automatically be converted to a Secure Tenancy on its first anniversary.

If a decision is taken to end the tenancy, the tenant has the right of appeal.

Lettings

The vacancies will be advertised through Swindon Borough Councils Choice Based Lettings Scheme entitled 'Swindon Home Bid'. The property advertisement will be worded in order to ensure a Local Lettings Plan is in place. A copy of the Local Lettings Plan will also be available on the Swindon homebid website.

Exclusions

Due to the cost of living in the David Murray John Tower applicants will need to be 25 years old or older, earn in excess of £13,000 per year, or be in receipt of an additional benefit such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), or receive Tax Credits.

Applicants with a known history of criminal or anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years will not be considered for accommodation within the scheme. After this time the prospective tenant must be able to clearly demonstrate to our satisfaction that they have had a proven record of no anti-social behaviour or criminal behaviour.

Applicants with a known history/convictions of/for drug abuse or drug dealing in the last 3 years will not be considered for accommodation within the David Murray John Tower.

Applicants with a known history/convictions of/for prostitution or 'pimping' in the last 3 years will not be considered for accommodation.

Bids will not normally be considered from those who have a debt outstanding to Swindon Borough Council or another landlord. This includes present rent, former arrears or recharges. However, consideration may be given to those who have adhered to a regular repayment plan for a consecutive 13 weeks. A landlords reference will be required.

Successful applicants shortlisted will receive either a home visit or office interview. All applicants will be required to answer specific questions relating to their past conduct and that of household members. Swindon Borough Council will require

applicants consent to contact previous landlords or other agencies for confirmation required.

Ethnicity

This lettings plan is intended to work alongside the equal opportunities policies of Swindon Borough Council. It should ensure that the assessment and allocation process does not discriminate against households and enables applicants with diverse needs to access accommodation. The overall aim is to ensure that the community in the David Murray John Tower reflects the diversity of the community within the Swindon Area.

Monitoring and Review

Careful monitoring of the allocation process and the management of the scheme will routinely take place. At every turnover of tenancy identify at the earliest possible time anything that might need to be reconsidered in respect of future allocations within the David Murray John Tower.

The following should be carefully monitored by Swindon Borough Council, Tenancy Services and the Housing needs Section.

- Number of refusals of offers and reasons
- Number and nature of any complaints by residents and third parties
- Ethnicity of those housed
- Origin of application
- Number of re-lets

Monitoring of the lettings plan should formally be undertaken by 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 consider overall success of the lettings plan
- To review and, where considered necessary, set new targets