

SELECTIVE LETTINGS PLAN

MALMESBURY GARDENS SWINDON

Malmesbury Gardens is a new development of 13 properties built to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. In accordance with a Cabinet Member Decision Note issued on 6 September 2010, "Selective Lettings Policy for Council New Build Schemes" must be available for this scheme.

Aims and objectives

- To produce a balanced, long lasting, stable community with households who will care and look after their properties and their neighbourhood.
- These properties are built to a high environmental standard with features that are designed to minimise energy use and provide micro-energy generation. In order for prospective tenants to obtain maximum benefit from these features, they will need additional training and support.
- Malmesbury Gardens is subject to additional tenancy clauses to address the restrictions that the "special features" create with this type of construction. The restrictions are described more fully in the frequently asked question sheet .

The existence of this selective lettings policy may mean that vacancies will not always be allocated to the applicant who are top of the choice based lettings shortlist therefore those with a lower priority may be considered for an allocation if their housing may help to maintain a stable community and meet the environmental objectives of the scheme.

Description of Malmesbury Gardens

Malmesbury Gardens is a small development of 13 properties comprising of 2, 3 and 5 bedroom houses. Each property has special features that are described more fully in the Question and Answer sheet.

Lettings

The vacancies will be advertised through Swindon Borough Councils Choice Based Lettings Scheme entitled 'Swindon Home Bid'. The property advertisement will be advertised in order to draw attention to the Selective Lettings Policy and the frequently asked questions.

In an effort to achieve and maintain community stability allocations will be made in respect of applicants in order to try and maintain the following allocation targets;

Households from Band A	10%
Households from Band B	90%

The allocations will be a mix of transfer applicants, accepted as homeless applicants by Swindon Borough Council and Housing Wait applicants. This will mean that you would not necessarily be shortlisted if you were top of the list for the property advertised to ensure this mix.

Exclusions

Applicants with a known history of convictions for criminal or anti-social behaviour, drug abuse or drug dealing will not be considered for accommodation within the scheme.

Where any of the above issues are identified the council will check with other partner agencies, such as the Police, Probation Service, Primary Care Trust, Drug and Alcohol Action team, etc on the suitability of the applicant.

Should an applicants bid be refused they will be advised in writing and will have the opportunity to appeal in accordance with the Allocations policy. Appeals should be made in writing to the Housing Needs Manager.

Bernie Brannan
Director Of Housing. Leisure, Libraries and Culture
December 2010

Malmesbury Gardens QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

How will these houses differ to other existing Council houses?

- These houses have been designed to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes with the main focus being on fuel poverty i.e. reducing the running costs and lowering the amount of money tenants will need to spend on fuel bills.
- These houses will not have a gas supply fitted as all systems will be electrically powered i.e. cookers will need to be electric

How much will it cost to run the house?

- Unfortunately it is simply not possible to say at this stage what these homes will cost to run as they will be the first we have built to Code 5, and much will depend upon the lifestyle and choices of the tenants. However, the intention is that they should be much cheaper to run than any homes of the equivalent size elsewhere in Swindon.
- We will be collecting energy use and cost information from your meter to better answer this question in future and also help us plan new homes in the future. We also aim to provide tenants with support and feedback to help them learn how best to reduce their energy bills.

What new technology will the houses have?

- Each house will have solar panels for hot water and photovoltaic panels to generate electricity. The tenant will benefit from free electricity when it is generated in daylight hours, however any surplus electricity generated will be sold back to the grid and the money will be credited to Swindon Borough Council (SBC).
- The homes will be highly insulated and it is essential that no holes are drilled through the external walls of the house for cabling, tumble dryer vents or similar to ensure that the houses stay energy efficient.

How will I know how to use the new technology within the house?

- The heating, hot water and ventilation system controls will be simple to operate; the tenant will be able to set temperature requirements for each room via a room thermostat.
- Prior to receiving keys and during the tenancy, tenants will be supported with training to help them learn how to use the house efficiently and reduce the running costs. Engaging with this training will be a condition of granting the tenancy.
- An easy to follow information manual on how to use the house will be provided to tenants at the start of the tenancy.
- Ongoing support will also be available.

Will cooking facilities be gas or electric?

- Cookers (provided by tenant) will have to be electric as there will be no gas in the house at all.

Will the houses be on key meters?

- No. –You will have to make appropriate arrangements to pay your bills.
- Smart meters will be installed allowing the tenant to monitor their energy use effectively.

What sort of heating and ventilation system will the houses have?

- All rooms within each house will have underfloor heating.
- Stale air will be extracted from the bathroom, shower/wc and the kitchen.
- A recycling cooker hood will be provided above each cooker position.
- Heat will be taken from the outgoing, extracted air and recycled into the heating system.
- Fresh, warmed air will be supplied to the living rooms and bedrooms.
- Periodically, the filter in the ventilation system will need to be changed; a simple part of SBC's maintenance process.
- Periodically the ventilation grilles will need to be cleaned by the tenant.
- In the heating season unnecessary opening of windows will result in higher energy bills.
- Windows will be openable to allow the whole house to be naturally ventilated.
- Bathrooms will have openable windows, although the heating and ventilation systems should minimise the need to open these windows in the heating season.
- The windows are designed to allow efficient air circulation without needing to have them wide open; however, it will be possible to open them wide to allow the house to 'free vent'.

What sort of floor finishes can be laid over underfloor heating?

- Hard sheet flooring, some laminated (suited to underfloor heating) or carpets, but carpets/underlay will need to have limited insulation value if the underfloor heating is to operate efficiently; this TOG value should not exceed 2.0 (carpet suppliers will be able to tell you the TOG value of their products).

Will there be parking?

- The 2-bed and 3-bed houses will each have 2 allocated parking spaces.
- The 5-bed house will have 3 allocated parking spaces.
There will be three unallocated visitors' parking bays, one of which will be to disabled standards.

What sort of decoration can be applied to the internal walls?

- It is important that only vapour permeable paint finishes are used on the internal walls; suggested manufacturers are as follows (but others are available):
 - Keim Mineral Paint
 - Farrow & Ball
 - Ecos Organic Paint
 - Nutshell Natural Paints
- Wallpaper will only be permitted on some of the walls (to be advised).

Will the houses have a TV aerial?

- Each house will be connected to a satellite TV signal allowing the occupant to view free to air channels via a Freesat receiver (provided by the tenant).
- Cable ducting will be provided in each property to enable straightforward connection to other services such as cable television. These things will be done to make sure that no holes are drilled through walls for reasons set out above.

Will the houses be wheelchair accessible?

- All houses will be wheelchair accessible and have level access front and rear doors.
- All houses will be built to Lifetime Homes Standards and have space for a through floor lift to be installed in the future should the need arise. This will be subject to funds being available.

What about home security?

- The whole development has been designed to meet the certification requirements for 'Secured By Design', a programme run nationally by the Police.
- The security standards of all elements of the houses, including windows and doors meet these same standards.

Will the house be wi-fi enabled?

- The house will have a BT connection. It will be up to the tenant to make arrangements for a Broadband service and wireless distribution of any network.

What access will be required to the houses?

- The houses will be monitored for energy usage/cost and so tenants will be required to sign additional tenancy conditions allowing Swindon Borough Council (SBC) access.

Tenants will NOT be permitted to do the following:

- Under no circumstances will tenants be allowed to drill through the external walls of the houses as this would seriously compromise the thermal envelope of the houses and significantly reduce their efficiency.
- No fixings will be allowed to the outside walls i.e. no hanging baskets
- No fixings will be allowed in the floors in order not to puncture the underfloor heating.
- Items will be allowed to be fixed, fitted or hung on internal walls, subject to meeting certain technical criteria
 - Light items that can be hung using plasterboard anchors will be permitted e.g. small clocks, small mirrors, small pictures
 - Flat screen televisions will only be able to be hung on identified walls in the lounges and master bedrooms where provision will have been made for this.
- Vents for tumble dryer will not be permitted to be drilled through the external walls; if a tumble dryer is desired it will have to be of a non-vented type i.e. condenser tumble dryer.

Will pets be allowed?

- Yes, however cat-flaps will not be permitted as this would seriously compromise the thermal envelope of the houses.