

NOTICE OF DELEGATION OF DECISION TO CABINET MEMBER BY STRONG LEADER

Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

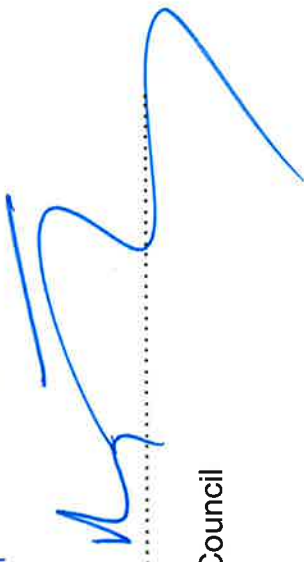
I, Marcus Hart, as Strong Leader, delegate the decision to agree the Local Letting Plan for new affordable housing at Berrington Court, Silverwoods, Kidderminster and the Local Letting Plan for hard to let properties the Cabinet Member detailed below:

Cabinet Member- Councillor Sally Chambers

Dated:

10.03.16

Signed:



Leader of the Council

NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Berrington Court Local Letting Plan (LLP)	To agree the LLP for Berrington Court with Community Housing Group	This decision allows the Registered Provider (RP) to let the new dwellings in line with the LLP rather than the allocations policy and will allow for the creation of a balanced, sustainable community.	11/03/16
Hard to let Local Letting Plan (LLP)	To agree the LLP for hard to let Community Housing Group properties	This decision allows the Registered Provider (RP) to let the new dwellings in line with the LLP rather than the allocations policy and will allow for the creation of a balanced, sustainable community.	11/03/16

I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.

Dated: 11/03/16
 Signed: 
 Councillor: Sally Chambers
 Cabinet Member

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Strong Leader Report

Local Letting Plans; Berrington Court and Hard To Let properties

OPEN	
DIRECTOR:	Mike Parker
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey
APPENDICES:	1. Hard to let Local Letting Plan 2. Berrington Court Local Letting Plan

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree proposed Local Letting Plans for hard to let properties owned by Community Housing Group and at Berrington Court Extra Care scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Housing is asked to decide that:

The Hard to Let Local Letting Plan and the Berrington Court Local Letting Plan be adopted by the Council.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 All nominations and allocations to properties owned by Registered Providers in Wyre Forest must be let in accordance with the Allocations Policy unless a Local Lettings Plan (LLP) is in place. The LLP will outline alternative criteria for letting properties.
- 3.2 Hard to Let Properties: Community Housing Group (CHG) has a number of properties which have become hard to let. These properties have been advertised on Home Choice Plus at least twice and no suitable tenant has been identified. These schemes mainly consist of two bedroom flats in high rise blocks and large family houses that have become difficult to let due to the underoccupation subsidy that affects people on housing benefit – households traditionally found on the Council's housing register can no longer afford these units. There will also be some sheltered flats in less popular areas / schemes and so far these have accounted for about 50% of hard to lets.
- 3.3 Berrington Court: Community Housing Group have developed an Extra Care housing facility that will open in October 2016. WFDC has provided a small capital contribution of £22,000 towards the new build costs and these are subject to a separate grant agreement. WFDC also supported the scheme for the purpose of gaining Homes and Communities Grant in 2014/15.
- 3.4 The Council has an Extra Care Strategy based on housing accommodation and support needs and therefore delivery of schemes such as Berrington Court help to meet the council's overall strategic housing aims and required numbers.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Berrington Court: Residents residing in the facility will have access to care and support above the provision found in sheltered housing and should enable people to remain living independently but in a safe environment. These types of schemes are typically let by way of an allocations panel made up of the District Council, landlord and Adult Social Care (County Council) and it is proposed, in the LLP, to let this stock in the same way.
- 4.2 Berrington Court will still be allocated to people in housing need and who have a connection to the district. However they may have capital above the usual threshold allowed on Home Choice Plus.
- 4.3 Hard to Let properties: There are a number of reasons for properties to become hard to let for example due to location, the size of units and/or high service rate charges which bring the rental charges of such properties into the same price bracket as a property within the Private Rented Sector.
- 4.4 CHG is now looking to advertise this relatively small number of properties via Phipps and Pritchard letting agents. They will display flyers in their office window and set up adverts on their web site and Rightmove. It has been agreed that CHG will inform WFDC when any properties are advertised. They will attempt to let the property twice through Home Choice Plus before moving on to advertising the property via the estate agents and where possible, they will still consider local connection and housing need in letting the property. In total CHG anticipates about 15 – 20 properties per annum let through this route.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The development of Local Lettings Plans is permissible within the overall Allocations Policy and the policy will be made publically available through the Home Choice Plus website.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 CHG are not restricted, through any agreement (except the transfer agreement) in the letting of properties. Although most stock is let through the Council's allocations policy CHG could choose to reduce the use of this. The agreement to have Local Letting Plans therefore enables the Council to still have some influence on how new and existing stock, outside the transfer agreement, gets let and enables us to meet our objectives of letting to local people in housing need where possible.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The use of a Local Lettings Plan for Berrington Court will enable the council to ensure accommodation goes to those with a local connection and housing need as well as those with higher level care and support needs which require this type of accommodation. A Local Lettings Plan for Hard to let properties will ensure CHG are not unable to let stock and carry high void costs but opening properties up to a wider housing market.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 None.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

Local Lettings Plan

Scheme Name:	Berrington Court, Felix Baxter Drive, Kidderminster
Landlord:	The Community Housing Group
Does a S.106 agreement apply to this scheme?	Yes Details – Scheme is 100% affordable rent.
Full Address (as advertised)	100 units of Extra Care on Silverwoods (numbers / street names not yet known). Berrington Court, Felix Baxter Drive, Kidderminster DY11 7FH
Number, Size, Type and Tenure of units	100 one and two bedroom apartments for affordable rent. (35 @ 1 bedroomed apartments; 65 @ 2 bedroomed apartments)
Reasons for developing a LLP (including evidence where relevant)	The scheme has been developed in conjunction with the County Council and District Council and will require a Letting Plan that imposes a slight variation to the Allocations Policy to be able to meet and address funding partner's requirements.
Aims and Objectives of LLP	To ensure the correct mix of residents within the scheme including self funders and those with low, medium and high care needs. It is important to ensure the correct balance so the scheme isn't inundated with high need cases where adequate care cannot be provided within the resources.
Are any allocation restrictions proposed in terms of Home Choice Plus bandings?	No Details
Are any allocation restrictions proposed in terms of numbers of household members to be allocated to family sized properties	No
Are any allocation restrictions proposed in terms of ages of	N/A

children?	
Is it proposed to advertise any properties for priority to Transfer applicants?	No but there will be a mix of both transferring tenants and applicants. Details
Are any other restrictions outside of the Home Choice Plus allocations policy proposed?	Yes Details Applicants must be 55 years old and above although there will be an exceptional circumstances waiver. Applicants to the scheme will be assessed on the basis of need and eligibility for the scheme outside of the usual HC+ criteria. However 60% of all lettings will go to people registered on HC+ and 40% of lettings to applicants suggested by Adult Social Care. The maximum capital threshold will also be waived where it is not possible for the applicant to meet their housing needs through the housing market. An allocations panel will be established to meet and agree lettings. The panel will be comprised on representatives from WFDC, WCC and TCHG.
Date of LLP	29 February 2016
Date of review against objectives	February 2019

Local Lettings Plan Template

Scheme Name:	Hard to Let Properties
Landlord:	Community Housing Group
Does a S.106 agreement apply to this scheme?	No
Full Address (as advertised) Please include all property numbers	<p>No specific address, however general areas include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-storey flats in the Horsefair • 2 Bedroom general needs flats on the Walshes estate • Houses in Foley Park (Jubilee Drive, Victoria Place etc.) • OAP first floor flats in low demand areas – e.g. 2 bedroom first floor flats on the Walshes estate
Number, Size, Type and Tenure of units	<p>Various.</p> <p>Social or affordable rent.</p>
Reasons for developing a LLP (including evidence where relevant)	<p>To ensure that vacant properties are tenanted as soon as possible and not left empty.</p> <p>To widen the audience for prospective suitable tenants. It must be evidenced by the company (CHG) that the property has been offered to at least two Nominees who are registered on Home Choice Plus or if no suitable Nominee have been identified.</p> <p>The properties will be advertised twice through Home Choice Plus before advertising with an estate agent.</p>
Aims and Objectives of LLP	<p>To let less popular units of housing.</p> <p>To provide the opportunity for social housing for those in housing need.</p> <p>To help ensure the appropriate mix of tenants.</p>
Are any allocation restrictions proposed in terms of Home Choice Plus bandings?	No

<p>Are any allocation restrictions proposed in terms of numbers of household members to be allocated to family sized properties?</p> <p>(i.e. different to Home Choice Plus bedroom standard)</p>	No
<p>Are any allocation restrictions proposed in terms of ages of children?</p>	Yes for the OAP first floor flats in low demand areas
<p>Is it proposed to advertise any properties for priority to Transfer applicants?</p>	Yes
<p>Are any other restrictions outside of the Home Choice Plus allocations policy proposed?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details: the company would apply their usual pre-tenancy checks before any property was offered via this route.</p>
<p>Date of LLP</p>	29 February 2016
<p>Date of review against objectives</p>	29 February 2017