

ADDLESTONE ONE (PHASE 1) LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

June 2017

Between Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) and Thames Valley Charitable Housing Association (TVHA)

1.0 Purpose of the Local Lettings Plan

- 1.1 This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) has been prepared to assist in the letting of the 18 units of affordable housing being developed by TVHA within Phase 1 of the Addlestone One development in Addlestone, Surrey.
- 1.2 This LLP should be considered alongside the RBC Housing Allocations Scheme (currently Version 1.1 - February 2017).
- 1.3 It is intended that the LLP will be used only for the initial lets, for which RBC has 100% nomination rights. Future lets will be subject to the RBC Housing Allocations Scheme & Tenancy Policy of TVHA in use at the time, which will have due regard to the RBC's Tenancy Strategy in use at the time, as well as the terms of the Nominations Agreement which specifies that RBC will nominate to 75% to future vacancies.
- 1.4 The Housing Allocations Scheme gives particular emphasis on RBC working in partnership with housing associations to achieve best use of limited social housing stock in the local area, and in providing balanced, sustainable communities for housing associations to manage. This is set out in the current Tenancy Strategy for Runnymede.
- 1.5 An LLP involving 50 units or fewer can be agreed between RBC and TVHA without the need for approval from Housing Committee, as set out in RBC's Housing Allocations Scheme.
- 1.6 This LLP has been created in partnership and consultation with both RBC and TVHA.
- 1.7 In formulating this LLP, regards has been had to local housing need. This has been based on the number of applicants registered for social housing, and their priority on the register. It has also been based on learning experiences from previous new build developments in the borough.

2.0 Objectives of the LLP

- 2.1 The objectives of this LLP are:

- a. To create a community that is balanced and sustainable, within the constraints of current legislation and regulations.
- b. To ensure that the new community blends in smoothly with the existing community.
- c. To ensure that the needs of the local and wider community, as well as the business needs of both Runnymede Borough Council and Thames Valley Charitable Housing Association, are reflected within the new development.
- d. To promote community contribution via paid employment, whilst being mindful of RBC's Public Sector Equality Duty.
- e. To make the best use of the existing social housing stock in the Borough.
- f. To work alongside the RBC Housing Allocations Scheme in use at the time.
- g. To reduce and prevent the problems of anti-social behaviour (ASB) related to the Housing Association properties by implementing Thames Valley Housing Associations policy which includes a record of anti-social behaviour and drug related crimes.
- h. To achieve the objectives set out in RBC's current Tenancy Strategy.

3.0 **Property details**

3.1 The eighteen units in Phase 1 are spread across four five floors, with lifted access to all flats:

Ground floor	1 x 2 bed 3 person flat
First floor	3 x 1 bed 2 person flats 2 x 2 bed 3 person flats
Second floor	3 x 1 bed 2 person flats 2 x 2 bed 3 person flats
Third floor	3 x 1 bed 2 person flats 2 x 2 bed 3 person flats
Fourth floor	1 x 2 bed 3 person flat 1 x 3 bed 5 person flat

Parking

3.2 There are nine parking spaces available for the eighteen units in Phase 1. These spaces will be allocated by TVHA.

Tenure type

3.3 All successful applicants will be offered Assured tenancies, however all applicants who are not currently a Secure or Assured tenant will initially be offered a Starter Tenancy for one year.

Rent levels

3.4 Rent levels will be Affordable Rent which can be up to 80% of market rents, and are set two months in advance of completion.

4.0 **Applicant groups to be offered priority within this LLP**

4.1 In order to create a balanced, sustainable community, as well as meet the other objectives of this LLP, priority of allocation will be given to the following applicant groups:

Under occupiers

- 4.2 Tackling under occupation within the social sector is a key objective for RBC, contained in the Homelessness Strategy, the Tenancy Strategy and the Housing Strategy.
- 4.3 Current social tenants in Runnymede who are under-occupying accommodation will be offered priority. This can include under occupiers with RBC as well as other Registered Providers (RP), providing that RBC is offered the nomination rights to any subsequent void. We will aim for **three** of the units available to be offered to under occupiers. We will aim for at least **one** of these downsizers to be in employment.

Homeless households currently in RBC Temporary Accommodation (TA)

- 4.4 It is vital for RBC to provide settled accommodation for applicants who are owed the full statutory duty to be re-housed, whilst also keeping the costs of emergency and temporary accommodation to a minimum for the Council. It is vital that RBC maintains a steady rehousing level from emergency accommodation, which otherwise incurs high costs for Bed & Breakfast placements.
- 4.5 To assist with this important objective, applicants who are in emergency or temporary accommodation provided by RBC are not able to bid for properties. These applicants fall under RBC's Assisted Choice Scheme, whereby applicants are directly offered a property. Applicants are re-housed in order of entry to TA.
- 4.6 The highest bedroom need amongst this applicant group is two bedrooms. Therefore, **six** of the two bedroom units will be reserved for direct nomination from this applicant group. We will aim for at least **4** out of these eight households to be in employment.

Couples (applicable to one bedroom properties only)

- 4.7 Households which comprise of a single person tend to have higher support needs when compared with households comprised of a couple. Due to 50% of the properties in this development being one bedroom, and in order to minimise the concentration of tenants with high support needs within the development, **four** of the nine flats will be prioritised for couples, with the remainder being available for open bidding. We will aim for **two** of the four couples to be in employment.

5.0 **General Allocation Criteria**

Previous / current tenancy conduct

- 5.1 Save for a small number of exceptions, the Housing Allocations Scheme does not allow for tenants with outstanding housing related debt of over £100, nor tenants who have breached the terms of a tenancy within the past five years, to be allowed onto the Housing Register. Because of this, it is not anticipated that Runnymede will nominate any applicant where such

breaches have been declared or discovered through verification checks.

Homeless Households

- 5.2 TVHA accepts that applicants who are owed a statutory rehousing duty by RBC may have been exempted from the restrictions described in 5.1 above. Where such applicants are identified, RBC agree that:
- a. Where housing related debts are identified, suitable repayment plans will have been put in place and started prior to nomination to TVHA.
 - b. Where a history of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity is identified, these applicants will be subject to a police check.
- 5.3 Where issues are identified which may prevent a nomination from being successful, TVHA will discuss each case with RBC on its own merits.

Applicants with support needs

- 5.4 Applicants who are being considered for nomination to TVHA may have support needs. In considering the need for a balanced and sustainable community, RBC will work with TVHA to ensure that applicants, who have known support needs, including drug and / or alcohol recovery, are not over-represented within the development. In view of this, RBC will aim to restrict nomination of applicants with support needs to four (22%).
- 5.5 Where necessary, TVHA will refer the prospective new tenant for Tenancy Support to promote tenancy success.
- 5.6 TVHA reserve the right to reject any nominee where there is insufficient evidence that the nominee is engaging in ongoing treatment or support for any drug or alcohol addiction, but it is required that TVHA will liaise with RBC prior to making any such rejection.
- 5.7 TVHA also reserve the right to carry out police checks on applicants to confirm that the applicant is not engaging in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Economic activity

- 5.8 This LLP will promote sustainable communities and recognise households who make a community contribution by way of employment.
- 5.9 As such, RBC will aim to achieve at least a 55/45 split between working and non-working households that are nominated, spread across the applicant group in Section 4 above.
- 5.10 For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of employment will be where at least one permanent adult member of the household who is in current employment for at least 16 hours per week. Applicants will need to provide evidence of employment upon verification.

Affordability checks

- 5.11 TVHA will carry out affordability checks on all nominees to Addlestone One, regardless of whether they are in work, claiming state benefits, or a mixture of the two. The aim of these checks is to promote sustainable tenancies which do not place an unnecessary burden on a tenant's finances. The agreed principles of the affordability checks are to confirm that:

- a. When taking into account all possible household income, the prospective tenant is able to demonstrate that they can meet their primary liabilities:
 - Rent and service charges
 - Council Tax
 - a reasonable amount to cover energy costs
 - TV licence
- b. This income may also include Housing Benefit or Housing Costs Element of Universal Credit which has been capped. A nominee whose benefits have been capped would not normally be refused solely because of the cap. Where the income and expenditure shows that there is sufficient income to cover primary liabilities as above, the aim should be to accept the nomination. RBC does not consider credit debts / non-priority debts as a reason to not meet primary liabilities, and expects nominees to seek appropriate debt advice immediately. Priority referrals can be offered by RBC if required and requested.

5.12 Where an applicant is rejected on the basis of affordability, then they may wish to request a review of the decision under section 14 of the TVHA Lettings Policy.

Pets

5.13 None of the properties have direct access to private gardens. They are all therefore subject to a strict “no pets policy”, subject to one exception below.

5.14 TVHA will consider giving permission for a resident who requires an assistance dog to keep one at the property, but it is the responsibility of the resident to request permission for this from TVHA.

5.15 Where a dog is not an official, registered assistance dog, it will need to be re-homed prior to the commencement of tenancy. This will also apply to all cats.

5.16 Other pets may be allowed within the properties, although permission must be obtained from TVHA in writing before any pet is kept at the property.

Decision making under this LLP

5.17 The final decision as to whether a tenancy is offered is down to TVHA. However, TVHA are expected to communicate any concerns about nominees early on in the process so that all options of resolving barriers can be explored fully prior to any final decision to reject a nominee.

5.18 Where an applicant is rejected by TVHA, the applicant is able to request a review of that decision under section 14 of the TVHA Lettings Policy.

6.0 Equality

6.1 RBC has carried out an Equalities Screening of this LLP to ensure that it complies with all equalities legislation and regulations, and that ethnic minority groups, as well as disabled and vulnerable applicants, are not disadvantaged. That Equalities Screening shows that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required. A copy of this screening is attached to this

LLP.

7.0 **Monitoring**

7.1 In order to ensure that the LLP is successful, there will be a monitoring process in place to monitor both the sustainability and balance of the community that is produced.

7.2 Within six months of the first letting, TVH will provide a development profile to include:

- a. The level of void properties
- b. Analysis of the frequency of any ASB issues (whether significant or minor in nature)
- c. Analysis of housing management activity on the development. This would include Notices of Seeking Possession served for breaches of tenancy.
- d. Analysis of level of rent arrears amongst the tenants of the development, with any specific trends identified.

7.3 This monitoring will be used to inform the LLP for Phase Two of the development.

Signed as Approved Date.....

Name Position

Runnymede Borough Council

Signed as Approved Date.....

Name Position

Thames Valley Charitable Housing Association