

Local Letting Plan for Cranbrook

This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) is an over arching document for the affordable housing (not 'affordable by design') for all phases of development at Cranbrook. All Registered Social Landlords (RSL) or companies managing new affordable housing in this area will be expected to use this as a template. The LLP is agreed between East Devon District Council and Exeter City Council. The Registered Providers who will own and manage the affordable housing at Cranbrook will let the properties in accordance with this LLP.

Aim of this Letting Plan

To help create a unique, vibrant self sustaining community; a place of real quality, variety and interest, that residents are proud of and is attractive to visitors and a model of 21st century living working and playing.

Purpose of the Local Lettings Plan

To guide and support initial and future lettings to newly developed properties in Cranbrook.

1. To support the work within Cranbrook to achieve a balanced community. This can contribute to meeting the housing needs of the whole community in the longer term.
2. To establish sustainable communities in all of our new developments by creating communities that include a broad cross section of residents from a variety of social and economic backgrounds.
3. To be used as a guide for nomination requests, transfers and any future lettings at Cranbrook. The plan will apply to the allocation of the rented homes. All shared ownership units will be marketed through the existing Homebuy Agency.
4. To achieve a fair balance between the needs of the existing community and the housing needs of the wider communities of East Devon and Exeter.

Housing Schemes

5. The LLP relates to Phase 1 housing development at Cranbrook.

Letting of Properties

6. The LLP has been developed having regard to the Housing Management Charter and the S106 agreement for the housing development at Cranbrook.

7. The letting of the affordable housing, excluding the 'affordable by design' properties will be as follows:
- a. An early publicity campaign through Devon Home Choice will alert housing applicants to the housing opportunities at Cranbrook.
 - b. The East Devon District Council; Exeter City Council; Tor Homes and Sovereign Housing Association will publicise housing opportunities at Cranbrook locally and to existing tenants.
 - c. All applicants must be registered with Devon Home Choice and must have a local connection to either Exeter or East Devon.
 - d. The allocation of the housing will be split 35% for Exeter and 65% for East Devon.
 - e. We will allocate 20% of the affordable housing to applicants with less bedroom need than the property provides to ensure a level of underoccupation so that the community can 'grow'.
 - f. We will encourage existing tenants to 'transfer' to new affordable home at Cranbrook and in the case of the first phase of affordable housing we will allocate 30% for transfer to existing Exeter or East Devon tenants to move to a 'larger' or 'smaller' property. These should not be used for underoccupation.
 - g. We should designate 20% for homeless households. These are households who have been accepted as statutory homeless through no fault of their own e.g. not evicted from previous home for rent arrears or anti social behaviour.
 - h. We will designate 10% of the affordable housing for households moving on from 'supported' accommodation. These will be direct lets and be approved by a 'move on' panel set up by Exeter City Council and East Devon District Council specifically for this purpose.
 - i. East Devon District Council and Exeter City Council will provide 100% nominations for the first lettings, through Devon Home Choice unless otherwise specified in the LLP. Lettings will be restricted to those with a local connection to East Devon and Exeter; however, if it is not possible to find a suitable applicant then the opportunity will be widened to all applicants in Devon through Devon Home Choice.
 - j. Subsequent lettings will be in accordance with the Housing Charter and S106 Agreement and will usually be allocated on the basis of housing need and local connection.

Allocation Principles

8. Rented Properties

Rented properties will be allocated through the Devon Home Choice scheme unless otherwise stated in the LLP.

9. Shared Ownership

Priority will be given to applicants registered with the local Homebuy agency.

Local Connection

10. Applicants must show a clear a local connection to East Devon and Exeter area in accordance with the Devon Home Choice scheme criteria.

Underoccupation

11. Child density is widely agreed to be a key factor in the sustainability of any community, particularly on housing estates. Every effort will be made to comply with the criteria set out in the Housing Management Charter. A balance of age ranges amongst children is an important refinement to density limits, in order to avoid pressures caused by large groups of children of the same age living in one area.
12. We aim to achieve a reasonable balance of child density that will allow for some natural growth of the families housed. This will be achieved by offering larger vacant homes to individuals or families than their normal requirement in order to create more sustainable communities. In determining what a "reasonable balance" might be on a scheme by scheme basis, consideration will be given to other aspects of the local infrastructure such as schools and child facilities generally.
13. The general aspiration is to allocate on the principles set out in the Devon Home Choice scheme and the Cranbrook Housing Management Charter.

Verification of all applicants

14. The Registered Providers reserve the right to refuse an application where it does not adhere to the principles of the LLP or contravenes the principles of each organisation. Such refusals should however be consistent with Devon Home Choice and other overarching policies and agreements that may exist.

Home Visits

15. These may be completed by the Registered Provier to **all nominees**, to confirm their housing need, circumstances and ensure that their application conforms to the LLP

Eligibility

16. Registered Providers that operate under charitable rules, will not generally offer a tenancy to any individual or family that has the means, whether by income, savings or other assets (or a combination of these), to provide a suitable home for themselves. This may be by renting on the private market, or by purchase on the open market. This principle applies to all lettings, from whatever source, including transfers. To support this principle, we have provided a framework to determine whether applicants are eligible for our rented properties, based on a variety of factors which will include:

- Income;
- Savings;
- Other assets;
- Size and composition of the family;
- The state of the local housing market; and
- The prevailing interest rates.

17. Applicants' financial circumstances will be verified to provide evidence that we are only providing homes to those who are unable to afford to provide them by their own means.

18. Any resident who is found to have given false information, which led to them being provided housing by the Association, may face court action for eviction.

References

19. These may be sought from existing or previous landlords to establish the conduct of current and former tenancies.

Anti-Social Behaviour

20. Only Devon Home Choice applicants will be considered for the rented homes at Cranbrook and must meet the eligibility criteria to register for housing. The applicant or a member of their household may not be eligible unless:

- a. the incidence of ASB occurred two or more years ago, and there has been no further incident ; or
- b. there is substantive evidence that they are not likely to cause such problems again.

Rent Arrears

21. Only Devon Home Choice applicants will be considered for the rented homes at Cranbrook and must meet the eligibility criteria to register for housing.

If an applicant has rent arrears an allocation will not normally be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where there are outstanding rent arrears, for a nomination to be successful it will need to meet the criteria set out in the Devon Home Choice scheme policy.

Pets

22. Applicants who have a pet/s who are offered a flat can apply to keep the pet direct to the Registered Provider. However, permission may only be granted in special circumstances and in line with the Registered Providers pet policy. This decision is at the discretion of the Registered Provider.

Equalities statement

23. All partners are committed to equality of opportunity for all in the services provided. We aim to ensure that all applicants receive equal and fair treatment, free from direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds, including: disability, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, marital status and sexual orientation.
24. The partners recognise that Equalities are very much part of the 'day job' and is not merely another initiative or 'add-on'. Equalities issues are seen as fundamental to good management, with equalities monitoring being part of general service monitoring.

Tenancy Types

25. All new applicants and transfers from a different landlord will be probationary tenancies. There is no legal definition of a 'probationary (starter) tenancy', however we use the term to describe a tenancy that starts as an 'Assured Shorthold' tenancy (one with less security of tenure, and generally used by private sector landlords) which automatically converts to an 'assured' tenancy (one which enjoys a considerable degree of security of tenure) on the first anniversary of the start of the tenancy.

Disputes

26. Any applicant dissatisfied with a decision made regarding the allocation of social rented properties may request a review by following the published complaints procedures of the relevant landlord.

Monitoring and Review

27. Careful monitoring of the allocations process and how the community is forming must take place to identify areas that may need to be reviewed regarding future allocations.

The following information should be collected and carefully monitored.

- Number of refusals of offers and reasons;
- Number of transfers;
- Number of exchanges;
- Number and type of complaints;
- Number of children housed;
- Number and ethnicity of those housed;
- Origin of application;
- Number of re-lets;
- Reasons (if possible) for tenants leaving the properties

All partners must agree and sign this document before it can be implemented:

East Devon District Council

Signature.....
Print Name
Job Title.....
Date.....

Exeter City Council

Signature.....
Print Name
Job Title.....
Date.....

Devon and Cornwall Housing Association

Signature.....
Print Name
Job Title.....
Date.....

Sovereign Housing Association

Signature.....
Print Name
Job Title.....
Date.....