

Lettings Plan – Fenn Road, Tankersley, S75 3DE

Background

- 1.1 The purpose for developing a sensitive lettings plan for the new affordable housing for rent on Fenn Road, Tankersley is to try to establish balanced and sustainable communities that are integrated successfully with intermediate and market housing. This sensitive lettings plan will only cover the allocation of the 'Social rented' housing and not the Shared Ownership housing managed by Equity, this will be subject to Equity Housing Group policies and procedures relating to Shared Ownership housing.
- 1.2 A choice based lettings system based on five priority bands currently operates in Barnsley. This means that households in the greatest housing need are most likely to be successful in securing affordable housing for rent when it becomes available. In a new development such as Grosvenor Gardens the sensitive lettings plan enables the allocation of some of the properties to households in less overall housing need, thus helping to create more balanced communities.
- 1.3 The authority to develop sensitive (or local) lettings is set out in S167 (2e) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, which allows local authorities to establish local lettings policies to enable them 'to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description', in order to achieve a housing policy objective. The ability to develop local lettings plans was reinforced in the governments 'Fair and Flexible- Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England' published in December 2009
- 1.4 Barnsley councils existing lettings policy does allow for the development of sensitive lettings plans where these are deemed necessary. (Section 9c BMBC Lettings policy dated January 2011)

2.1 Lettings Plan for Grosvenor Gardens, Barnsley, S70 6JH

Purpose of the Sensitive Lettings Plan:

This sensitive lettings plan has been prepared to assist in the letting of 13 properties for affordable rent on Fenn Road. The properties are owned and managed by Equity Housing Group. The aim is to contribute to establishing a balanced and sustainable community, which integrates successfully with the market housing in what has been an area of housing market failure and deprivation.

Divergence from Barnsley Councils standard lettings policy

The lettings plan for Fenn Road, Tankersley differs from Barnsley Councils Homeseeker scheme in the following ways:

- Tenants will have an Assured-Shorthold Tenancy with Equity Housing Group for the first 12 months of the tenancy, this will be converted to an assured tenancy at the 1st anniversary subject to satisfactory tenancy conduct.
- In order to promote sustainability within the neighbourhood:
- 50% of all allocations will be made to applicants currently in employment (full or part time), full time education or training providing their assured housing need meets that of the property
- In the remaining 50% priority will be given to applicants who currently reside in or can evidence close family connection to (parent / child) the Penistone East or Rockingham electoral wards providing their assured housing need meets that of the property.
- Offers will be subject to satisfactory pre-tenancy and affordability checks, where necessary further supporting information may be sought from other agencies such as Police and Probation
- Allocations will not be made to any household where the applicant or other household member has:
 - Rent arrears with their current landlord and have not made and maintained an arrangement to clear the rent arrears for a period of not less than 6 months prior to the allocation.
 - Former tenant rent arrears and have not made and maintained an arrangement to clear those arrears over a period of not less than six months prior to the allocation
 - A criminal conviction, police caution, ASBO or injunction for violence and / or anti-social behaviour within the last 5 years.
 - A criminal conviction or police caution for theft and/or burglary within the last 5 years
 - A criminal conviction or police caution for drug dealing within the last 5 years
 - A conviction or police caution for domestic violence within the last five years

However, we will look at all the cases individually and where there are extenuating circumstances which would lead to unfairness or inequality the criteria may be relaxed.

Appeals procedure

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Berneslai Homes and Equity Housing Group aim to operate this policy in a fair and equitable manner.

The appeals process covers the 'decision making' aspect of this lettings plan. This includes the exclusion, suspension and offer making process of this plan. It does not apply to the sensitive lettings plan itself. Complaints about such issues will be dealt with in line with the Equity Housing Group complaints procedure.

The Appeals process is detailed in the Equity Housing Group allocation policy copies of which can be obtained from:

Online

- www.equityhousing.co.uk

Telephone

- 0800 733233

In Writing

- Allocations Team Leader
Equity Housing Group
Armitt House
Monmouth Road
Cheadle Hulme
SK8 7EF

Review of the Sensitive Lettings plan

This Sensitive Lettings Plan for Grosvenor Gardens, Barnsley will be reviewed initially within 6 months of the first lettings on this estate and thereafter every 2 years.