

Local Lettings Plan

Heyford Park

June 2015 (reviewed March 2017)

1. Background to this Lettings Plan
- 1.1 This revised Lettings Plan amends the previous plan dated June 2015. The revision follows on from a decision to change the specification of the existing estate refurbishment at former RAF Upper Heyford. In the short to medium term the existing estate will no longer be refurbished in phases as per the original refurbishment schedule and instead internal refurbishments will take place as residents naturally vacate properties. Therefore residents no longer need to move according to the date their property was to be renovated Registered applicants in groups A will be prioritised by Cherwell District Council in order of their assessed need (housing band) and their effective date on the register. As affordable housing becomes available suitable properties will be allocated in priority of this shortlist
- 1.2 Applicants in group B will be limited to those who moved onto Heyford Park before June 2017. All other residents will be put into group C
- 1.3 This Lettings Plan should be read in conjunction with the Nominations Agreement for the affordable housing which will be delivered on Heyford Park.
- 1.4 This lettings plan follows the approval at Cherwell District Council Executive Meeting on the 6th August 2007 to develop a lettings plan that would give priority in the allocation of any new affordable housing developed as part of the planning approval associated with application reference 10/01642/OUT to those residents who reside on Heyford Park.
- 1.3 In 2012 following the approval of the outline planning permission for the site, a survey was commissioned by the Council and carried out by DWA to gather information on all of the tenants on Heyford Park in order to gather together a picture of the household circumstances that existed on the site. This information has been used to inform the type of affordable housing secured on the site, for example the house types and tenure of the housing. Ultimately the aim of the survey being carried out and this local lettings plan is to ensure that those households which have resided on Heyford Park and the community that has been built up over that time, has the opportunity to remain on the site through the allocation of a housing option.

1.4 As such the timeframe of the survey and those resident on the site at the time of the survey completion 31st March 2012 was used in the S106 in order to grant priority status for those residents.

2. Priority Groups

Due to the length of time that has elapsed and also the projected length of time that it will take for the site to be fully developed it has been determined that there should be four groupings to determine the priority order in which residents will be considered for the allocation of the new affordable housing at Heyford Park. These groupings will be used to prioritise the rented properties. The groupings will include reference to local connection criteria and give priority to residents of Heyford Park both prior and post the Survey carried out in 2012.

As with any allocations there will be exceptional cases which arise and may need to be dealt with on a case by case basis. These could include those with a severe housing need on the site as determined by the Council.

Group A -residents who meet the criteria as 'Eligible Occupiers' as identified in the S106 Agreement who were residing on Heyford Park prior to 31st March 2012, responded to the Survey, remain resident on Heyford Park at the time new affordable housing becomes available to be allocated and who have an active housing registration with Cherwell District Council.

Will be:

- Awarded first priority status for allocation of the new affordable housing built on Heyford Park.
- Will be directly matched to a suitable property by the Council using the Choice Based Lettings system.
- All group A residents will be prioritised through the Cherwell Housing Register according to their assessed housing need on the register and then by their effective date. As properties become available, The managing Registered Provider (Heyford Regeneration) will contact applicants who qualify for the property using Cherwell's priority list until the property is accepted. If a household feels they have a particularly high housing need they can contact the Council for an assessment which may or may not affect their priority on the housing list.
- The size of property they qualify for is detailed in section 4.4. of this document, and is applicable to Group A residents only.
- To achieve this offer they will need to be registered on the current Cherwell Housing Register. For Group A residents the £60,000 assets or earning's restriction will NOT apply.

- This prioritisation will not translate to other affordable housing allocations in the rest of Cherwell District. Residents seeking affordable housing elsewhere will be considered with others on the general register in line with their housing needs assessment and banding.
- Group A residents will receive up to 3 offers of suitable housing on Heyford Park. If they refuse all 3 offers, they will lose their priority as Group A, and will be considered for homes alongside Group B residents.

All affordable properties not taken up by Group A residents will be advertised through the Council's Choice Based Lettings System and subject to the Council's Allocation Scheme rules. Applicants for these properties will be given priority as defined below.

Group B – All current tenants whose tenancy began 1st April 2012 – 1st June 2017 or those Group A residents who chose not to accept their direct match offers of accommodation on the site.

Will be:

- Awarded second priority for allocation of the new affordable housing built on Heyford Park.
- Will be required to apply and be eligible to join the Council's Housing Register, or may have already been registered, in line with its current Allocations Scheme. In accordance with the Council's Allocation Scheme those having assets or earning over £60,000 will NOT be eligible to join the Housing Register. The full Allocations Scheme can be viewed at www.cherwell.gov.uk
- The size of property they qualify for will be defined by the **Allocation Scheme** rules.
- Will be contacted if there are no applicants in group A who have accepted the offer of a property in order of their position on Cherwell's Housing Register to alert them to the opportunity
- Will receive up to **three** offers of suitable affordable housing on Heyford Park. The consequences of refusing all three offers of accommodation for those applications on the Housing Register are detailed within the Council's Allocation Scheme and can be viewed at www.cherwell.gov.uk
- This Local Lettings Plan only affords Group B residents prioritisation for new affordable homes at Heyford Park. This prioritisation will not translate to other affordable housing allocations in the rest of Cherwell District. Residents seeking affordable housing elsewhere will be considered with others on the general register in line with their housing needs assessment and banding.

Group **C** – This group includes residents who move onto Heyford Park after the 1st June 2017 or who have a local connection with Heyford Park as specified below.

They will be;

- Awarded third priority following Group A and B
- Will be required to apply and be eligible to join the Council Housing Register, or may have already been registered, in line with its current Allocations Scheme
- Group C will cover residents with a local connection to;

Upper Heyford (including the Upper Heyford Airbase), Lower Heyford, Ardley, Fritwell, Somerton, North Aston, Steeple Aston, Middle Aston, and Middleton Stoney, Duns Tew and Kirtlington

- Qualifying village or parish connections are that the applicant or joint applicant must:
 - Have lived in the village for the last 5 years
 - Be employed in the village for a minimum of fifteen hours per week and the employment is not of a short-term nature
 - Have 10 years previous residence in the village if not currently residing there
 - Be over 55 or with a disability requiring support on health grounds from close relatives currently living in the village
 - Have close relatives living in the village for a period of at least the last five years.
 - (Close relatives are defined as parents, children, siblings, grandparents or grandchildren including step relatives, where there is evidence of frequent contact, commitment or dependency).
 - Where applicants have a strong connection with a particular village, we will ask them to detail this on their application. This will enable them to be actively considered for any housing development, which takes place in areas where they hold such a connection. If an applicant is successful, they will have to provide proof of their connection before they can be approved for the nomination.
 - We check village connections as specified in the section 106 agreement determined when planning permission is granted for a rural exception development to take place prior to making nominations to our partner Registered Providers.
 - Priority within this group will be determined by **housing need**, according to the Councils Allocation Scheme. If a household feels as though they have a particularly high housing need due to a specific family circumstance, they can contact the Council directly for an

assessment which may or may not affect their priority on the housing list depending upon the Council's judgement.

Group D – This group refers to any applicants on the housing register who qualify for affordable housing in Cherwell District subject to the Council's Allocations Scheme and shall be considered for allocation of affordable housing after Groups A-C.

3. Shared Ownership

3.1 Properties will be advertised by Heyford Regeneration who will also be required to advertise through the Help to Buy Agent. Priority for these properties will follow the above criterion, however will not be nominated by the Council and will instead be assessed by the Heyford Regeneration who will liaise with the Council. If residents are interested in Shared Ownership properties they will need to apply and be registered with the Help to Buy Agent which, for Cherwell, is Help to Buy South www.helptobuysouth.org.uk

4. Housing Offer

4.1 Housing options interviews will be offered to all residents on Heyford Park in order to ensure that each household is aware of their housing priority in line with this Local Lettings Plan, and the housing options available to them on Heyford Park. These interviews will be carried out by Heyford Regeneration. These options are described in Appendix 2 of this Lettings Plan. Affordability checks to ensure nominated applicants can afford to move into the affordable properties at Heyford Park will be carried out by Heyford Regeneration.

4.2 If required residents will also be offered a housing options interview with housing officers at Cherwell District Council to consider wider options that may be available across the Cherwell District.

4.3 The housing options interviews will also cover other issues, such as ensuring information is gathered on households medical needs which impact on their housing situation or any other special needs that a household may have which would be important when considering the housing offer made to them or the housing options open to them.

4.4 Applicants eligible for properties for Affordable Rent will be able to access the size of property they are entitled to under Cherwell District Council's Allocation Scheme except Group A which are entitled to the following property size's:

Household Size	Number of bedrooms
Single Person	Studio or 1 bedroom/2 bedroom (subject to affordability checks)
Couple	1 bedroom/2 bedroom (subject to affordability checks)

2 applicants not a couple	2 bedroom/3 bedroom (subject to affordability checks)
Household with 1 child	2 bedroom/3 bedroom (subject to affordability checks)
Household with 2 children	2 or 3 bedroom (subject to affordability checks)
Household with 3 children	3 or 4 bedroom (subject to affordability checks)
Household with 4 or more children	4 bedroom

4.5 All applicants will be put through affordability checks by Heyford Regeneration at the time of allocation of an affordable property to ensure that those applicants looking to move into the property can afford the rent either via private means or through securing housing or other benefits. Group A applicants will be given the opportunity to under-occupy a property by 1 bedroom should they wish, but it will depend on affordability.

4.6 While statutory overcrowding will not be allowed, applicants may apply for properties smaller than their needs to try and improve their housing circumstances and affordability.

4.7 Those applicants seeking shared ownership properties can purchase a property of any size as long as they are assessed as being able to afford this .

5. Allocation of Affordable Properties

5.1 Once there are appropriate new affordable properties available those residents in Group A detailed above will be prioritised for the housing and notified of a direct match to a suitable affordable home, having gone through all the necessary housing options advice. That Group A resident will receive **three** reasonable offers of a rented property. Should they wish to refuse these offers of suitable affordable accommodation via a direct match they then may be considered in Group B and bid accordingly on an advertised property through Choice Based Lettings

5.2 Properties identified for Group A residents will be advertised through Choice Based Lettings, but will be listed as having been direct matched to an applicant to ensure transparency of allocations. The property will have been direct matched to eligible residents on Heyford Park in Group A as they become available.

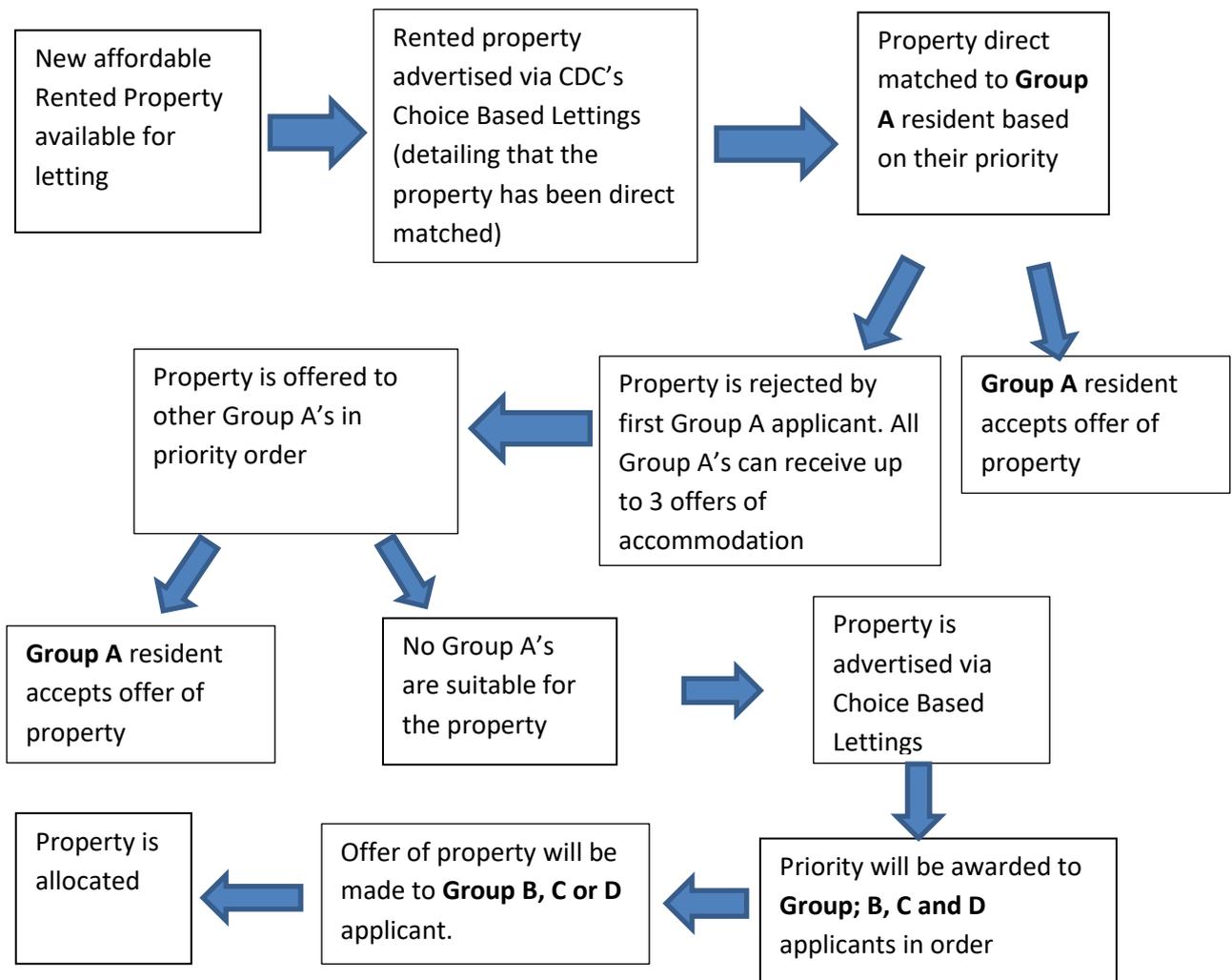
5.3 When properties are not taken up by Group A residents then those properties will be advertised through the Council's Choice Based Lettings system and the Allocation Scheme rules and bid on by those accepted onto the Housing Register. Priority for these properties will be awarded firstly to those residents in Group B, then C, then D.

5.4 This Local Lettings Plan will be in effect from the point that the first affordable home is available for letting or sale on Heyford Park, and will cease to be in effect once all of the affordable rented properties have been first let and the last shared ownership property has progressed to a 'reserved' status. Subsequent lettings and sales will take place outside this local lettings plan and will be subject to the nominations agreement and the normal processes according to the Council's Allocations Scheme.

5.5 There will be an annual review period on the anniversary date for this agreement or a time agreed by all parties to ensure that it remains relevant, fit for purpose and achieving necessary objectives.

Appendix 1

Affordable Rented allocation flow chart



Example:

A 3bed 5 person house becomes available for rent. A direct offer is made by the Council to a suitable, eligible Group A applicant who is highest priority for the particular property. That Group A resident either accepts or rejects that offer of accommodation. If they reject it, they will receive 2 further offers when appropriate properties become available. The first property is then offered to other suitable, eligible Group A residents in order of their

If there are no suitable, eligible Group A applicants for the 3 bed house then the property will be advertised on Choice Based Lettings where applicants can bid on the property but those in Group B, then C, then D will be prioritised for the offer, should they be suitable and eligible.

***Exceptional cases outside this process will be considered on their own merits and within the parameters of the Council’s Allocations Scheme.**

Council’s home choice website - www.cherwell-homechoice.org.uk

Appendix 2

Details of Housing Options for Heyford Park Residents

It is important that residents are fully aware of their housing options under the lettings plan and what these might mean for their future housing which are as follows:

Housing Option	Pluses	Minuses
Move to a new affordable home on Heyford Park	Affordable rent and subject to affordable rent rules to keep the housing affordable Greater security of tenure allowing certainty about future housing Residents in groups A and B get priority above all other applicants on the waiting list	Home may be smaller than current accommodation
Move to another affordable home in the area	Affordable rent and subject to affordable rent rules to keep the housing affordable Greater security of tenure allowing certainty about future housing	No priority above other applicants on the register so may be harder to secure for residents in groups A and B
Stay put in existing privately rented un renovated home (some external renovations may be undertaken)	May be larger and benefit from additional facilities such as gardens. Lower rent than general private sector rents	No security of tenure – notice may be given in accordance with the tenancy May not be an option to move to new affordable housing on site at a later date if all suitable properties are taken.

Move to another privately rented renovated property on site when these become available	Upgraded accommodation of a type that may suit needs	Will be more expensive than affordable properties and the current un-renovated properties Will not have same degree of security of tenure as affordable housing
Move into other privately rented accommodation away from Heyford Park	Allows freedom of choice and ability to move to a different area	Properties in private rented market are generally more expensive than the current homes at Heyford Park