

**Rushmoor Borough Council
Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing**

**Local Letting Plan for the new development at 42-46 Birchett Road, Aldershot
Postal address: 42-46 Birchett Road, Blue View and Archers House, Aldershot**

Introduction

The new development at 42-46 Birchett Road will provide 58 new affordable homes for a mix of rent and shared ownership. The development will be delivered by Funding Affordable Homes (FAH) and managed by Plexus Housing Association.

This lettings plan has been prepared to assist in letting these homes and to give the development the best start by creating a balanced and sustainable community. Subsequent lettings will also take into account the aims of the lettings plan as set out below.

Affordable Housing Dwelling Mix

Housing Type	Rented	Shared Ownership
	(44 Affordable and 6 Social rented)	
One Bed Flat	19	
Two Bed Flat (3 & 4 persons)	22	8
Three Bed Flats (4 & 6 person)	6	
Three Bed Maisonettes (4 person)	2	
Four Bed maisonette (5 person)	1	
TOTAL	50	8

In order to comply with this letting plan, applicants will be prioritised in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocation Policy and the principles of this Local Letting Plan.

Applicants may not be prioritised by band order, and properties will not necessarily be let at maximum child density.

Initially properties will be let on a Starter Tenancy for the first 12 months of their occupation. Providing there are no issues or significant breaches of the tenancy the tenancy agreement will be promoted to an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST).

**Authority to develop a lettings plan
(Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996)**

The Council has the power under 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.

Nomination rights

The Council has nomination rights to 100% of the affordable housing on first let, and 75% nominations on subsequent lets.

The lettings plan will apply to all lettings to which the Council's nominations apply.

The aims of the lettings plan are:

To make best use of our social housing stock whilst meeting the housing needs of the borough

- Ensure a balanced new community, by including a mix of applicant types and household sizes
- Achieve a mix of child density and occupancy levels that will encourage stability
- Create movement in our existing housing stock

Considering Tenancy History

The lettings plan will aim to ensure that up to 40% of tenants on first let are housing association tenants with a good tenancy history and 40% to be allocated to residents with a good tenancy history and privately renting, the remaining 20% to be allocated to first time tenants e.g. living with family or friends.

In order to assess a nominee's ability to sustain a tenancy, Plexus Housing Association will look at the last settled accommodation, previous rent arrears and any history of antisocial behaviour within the last 5 years.

All new lettings will be subject to a financial assessment and benefit entitlement check, carried out by Plexus Housing Association to ensure that the offer of accommodation is affordable.

Households where any member is currently engaged in anti-social behaviour, or criminal activity, or who have been engaged in unacceptable behaviour in the past five years as defined in Rushmoor Borough Council's Housing Allocation Policy, may not be considered.

Employment

Households where the applicant or their partner is in employment

The lettings plan will aim to achieve that 50% of tenants on first let are in employment.

Employment includes the following:

- A permanent employment contract (contracted to be at least 16 hours per week)
- A long term temporary contract (more than 12 months)
- Self employed
- Actively looking for work, to be supported by evidence of receiving JSA
- Approved job related training
- Past working history will be considered if the applicant has recently become unemployed
- Those households where at least one member of the household volunteer for a non-profit organisation or registered with the charity commission. Volunteers must have been volunteering for a continuous period of at least six months for minimum of ten hours per month

Medical and Welfare Needs

In the affordable rented properties, no more than 20% of households will have medical/welfare needs as categorised by the definition below:

- 10% - High medical and welfare needs (Care programme and tenancy support services in place)
- 20% - Medium medical and welfare needs (support from statutory and voluntary agencies, tenancy support in place, but no formal programme)

- 70% - Low medical and welfare needs but able to live independently or with some support i.e. tenancy support

Where applicants have a support need a support package must be in place

Definition of Child density

The child density is the number of children under 18 years, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the affordable rented units of the scheme. In calculating child density, single parents should be considered as a couple.

Consideration should be given to the number of children to adults in an individual family, as well as to the range of ages to make sure that as far as possible that the concentration of high child density and concentration of children of similar ages are avoided.

The lettings plan will aim to ensure that a maximum child density of **33%** is applied based on the size of the scheme and recommended child density levels.

Women who are more than 28 weeks pregnant will be considered on the basis that they already have a child, and their bedroom requirements will be assessed accordingly (proof of pregnancy of at least 28 weeks will need to be provided).

In order to create a stable community the lettings plan is intended to have at least a five-year term. This will be achieved by not allocating all units to the maximum number of occupants or by ensuring that those with children who are currently expected to share a bedroom are at appropriate ages to allow the family to remain in their property for at least 5 years.

Under Occupation

We aim to assist under occupiers finding it difficult to maintain a property where it is too large for their needs or they are experiencing financial hardship whilst making available much need family homes in the borough.

In order to free up a larger housing association property, as well as meeting the objective of Rushmoor's under occupation scheme. Rushmoor BC wish to reserve 20% of the flats (to include the six social rent flats i.e. three 1-bedroom and three 2-bedroom), for an existing housing association tenant to move to a smaller property. The flats set at social rent can be allocated to a household who are under occupying and in employment.

Where an applicant chooses to down size the vacancy created may be used to achieve a chain let.

Overcrowding

To make best use and enable movement in our existing stock preference may be given to existing housing association tenants who have been assessed by Rushmoor BC as lacking a bedroom

Where there is an opportunity, three and four bedroom properties may be used to house transfer tenants to achieve a chain let.

Chain Letting

Chain letting is an important approach in managing and securing the best use of existing housing within the social rented housing. It ensures that as many tenants as possible are housed in accommodation that is suitable for their needs and encourages mobility of tenants

(a) 1st phase

A housing association tenant under-occupier moves into a new build property releasing a larger property (2 bedroom plus)

(b) 2nd phase

- The property released by the under-occupier will be used to house overcrowded households. Preference is given to existing housing association tenants.

(c) 3rd phase

The property released by the overcrowded householder may revert to the first phase to be used to house an additional under-occupier OR be used to house an applicant in the Housing Allocation Pool. Preference is given to existing housing association tenants.

Accommodation specific criteria

Three-bedroom maisonettes x 2 (4 person)

The 3-bedroom maisonettes are to be allocated to families with two children or with one child and expecting a child.

Four-Bedroom Maisonette (5 person)

The 4-bedroom maisonette is to be allocated to a family with three children or with two children and expecting a child.

One bedroom flats x 19

We aim to achieve 70% (13 flats) occupation by single people and 30% (6 flats) by couples

Two-bedroom flats x 22 (5x4 person and 17x3 person)

The 2-bedroom (3-person) flats can be allocated to a family with one child or expecting a child

Three of the 2-bedroom (4-person flats), flats can be allocated to a family with one child or expecting a child (proof of pregnancy is of at least 28 weeks). A maximum of three persons

The remaining two, 2-bedroom, four person flats, can be allocated to a family with two children or with one child and expecting a child.

Three-bedroom flats x 6 (5x4 person and 1x6 person)

The five 3-bedroom (4-person) flats to be allocated to a family with two children or with one child and expecting a child.

The remaining 3-bedroom (6-person) flat, to be allocated to a family with three children, or with two children and expecting a child.

Priority/Ground floor flats; applicants who have a specific health need for ground floor accommodation on their housing allocation application, will be given priority above applicants without this need.

No pets are permitted in the flats or maisonettes

Allocations procedure

- Plexus Housing Association will advise Rushmoor's senior housing officer of the properties for letting, at least 5 weeks prior to handover

- Rushmoor BC will advertise the properties on Rushmoor Home finder in accordance with the lettings plan
- Once bidding has closed, Rushmoor BC will pass on a list of prioritised applicants.
- Plexus Housing Association will advise Rushmoor BC when tenancies have been accepted and will show how the lettings comply with the lettings plan.
- In order to comply with this lettings plan applicants may not be considered from the housing allocation pool in band order and properties may not be let at maximum child density.
- The council will send the top three applicants for each property for consideration by Plexus Housing Association. The top applicant will be invited to view the property

Monitoring

Careful monitoring of the allocations process and management of the scheme will be undertaken by Rushmoor BC as set out in clause of the Rental Nomination Agreement to consider the overall success of the lettings plan and identify any trends /common complaints.

On Initial Lets, Plexus Housing Association will inform Rushmoor BC of any refusals of offers and the reason.

A scheme profile will be compiled annually by Plexus Housing Association, including the following:

- Analysis of CORE lettings returns on each new letting (including information on letting to people needing adaptations)
- Analysis of transfer requests to include;
 - Reasons why tenants have chosen to terminate the tenancy
 - Number of mutual exchanges being requested and the reason for this
- Level of voids during the year and number of letting to nominees from Rushmoor's Housing Allocations Pool
- Analysis of housing management activity on the site (to include antisocial behaviour work and Notice of Suspended Possession (NOSPS) served for breach of tenancy).
- Rent arrears

Rushmoor Borough Council will assess the outcome of the lettings and will monitor under occupation and chain lets that are achieved. Based on the monitoring outcomes variations in the lettings plan may be considered.

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