



Cambridge City Council Local Lettings Plan

Location covered by plan: Dykes Bower Court -The Meadows development (Phase 1), off St Catharine's Road and Arbury Road

Landlord

The landlord of the properties covered by this plan is: Cambridge City Council

Total number of properties covered by this plan

22 homes (expected to be ready for letting starting from end of January 2023*)

*all dates subject to change

Affected property types and sizes

12 x 1-bedroom flats, comprising of

- 2 x ground floor;
- 2 x first floor;
- 2 x second floor;
- 2 x third floor;
- 2 x fourth floor;
- 2 x fifth floor

10 x 2-bedroom flats, comprising of

- 2 x first floor;
- 2 x second floor;
- 2 x third floor;
- 2 x fourth floor;
- 2 x fifth floor

Reasons for introducing the Local Lettings Plan

1. Background

This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) applies to all first-time lettings of Cambridge City Council homes on the new development off St Catherine's Road and Arbury Road known as Dykes Bower Court, The Meadows (Phase 1).

The Council has worked in partnership with housing developer, Hill, through the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) to build a new housing development in the north side of Cambridge City, perfectly situated for access to the city centre.

The properties have been designed and developed to be highly energy efficient and to reduce carbon emissions.

The development is ideally located with regards to local schools and colleges and provides easy access to Central Cambridge, the nearby A14 and Cambridge North Station. The location of the development allows travel by foot, public transport, and through cycling - including the new Histon Road Cycle trail.

2. Building a mixed community

The reason for this LLP is to support a mixed and balanced community, to support the local economy, and to give priority to people who live and work locally, potentially minimising the impact on the environment by limiting the need for people to travel long distances. It is hoped this will build and strengthen the diverse community that exists in North Cambridge area.

It also aims to free up existing council and housing association homes for others on the register through priority given to people looking to downsize.

The Council recognises that Cambridge has a thriving economy and a growing population that needs housing, and some of whom may be unable to buy or rent homes due to expensive owner-occupying and Private Rented Sector (PRS) in the City.

3. Additional information

Council tenants are allowed pets under their tenancy agreement; however, tenants in flats are asked to consider that there are space constraints which may not be suitable for owning more than 1 dog. It is important to ensure that the development and its residents are protected from potentially negative impacts, such as noise and the possible impact of dog fouling in open spaces.

This aims to protect the development and its residents from potentially negative impacts, taking into consideration advice from Environmental Health and the Dog Warden in relation to noise, Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) already in force across the City, and the possible impact of dog fouling in open spaces. For more information about PSPOs and exclusion areas visit <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/dog-control>

Given the type of properties tenants who wish to have cats in the flats would be advised to have house cats. Because of fire safety concerns no permission will be granted to tenants to install cat flaps either on their front doors in the flats or any communal entrance door.

Applicants should be aware that there is no car parking on site.

Disruption will be kept to a minimum constructing the site, however new tenants should be aware of possible inconvenience, and we ask them to co-operate with the builders where required.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed?

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on 6th January 2023.

How we propose to let the properties covered by the plan

1. Completion dates

The letting of the 22 affordable homes will be staggered January 2023 as flats are constructed*

**all dates subject to change.*

2. Affordability and rent levels

Rent levels for homes, including most service charges, will be set in line with our [Affordable Rents Policy](#) (Up to 60% of gross median market rent for that size of property, location and service provision, or the current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, whichever is lower).

For more information on LHA levels in Cambridge City, please visit

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-housing-allowance>

In line with Cambridge City Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, applicants will be asked to complete an affordability assessment before any offers are finalised to try and prevent financial hardship. The council reserves the right not to make an offer where there is a risk that an applicant may not be able to afford the level of rent and any service charges being charged.

3. Allocating homes

The Council's Lettings Policy applies to all first lettings of affordable homes at The Meadows, Dykes Bower Court. The properties are built in a way that would allow/accommodate future adaptations when required.

The Lettings Policy document is available via

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/8662/lettings-policy.pdf>

In addition to this, subject to demand:

- a) Approximately a third of homes will be allocated to applicants who are currently working either full time or part time within Cambridge City, some of whom may be in lower 'bands' under the Council's Letting Policy but struggle to access housing that is affordable.
- b) Approximately one third of 1-bedroom flats will be allocated to HomeLink transfer applicants whose homes are no longer suitable for them.
- c) Approximately two third of 2-bedroom flats will be allocated to HomeLink transfer applicants whose homes are no longer suitable for them.

This could be because their family have moved out and they wish to move to a smaller home or to another area; they are fleeing domestic abuse; or their current home is no longer suitable for other reasons such as requiring a wheelchair accessible home. As

mentioned above, all properties are built in a way that would allow/accommodate future adaptations when required.

As well as helping to support a mixed community, this will help to free up existing homes for applicants on the Council's housing register.

- d) Regarding the two (2) ground floor 1-bedroom flats; subject to demand these will be allocated to those needing ground floor accommodation according to recommendations provided by an Occupational Therapist.

Priority will be given to those tenants downsizing from three- or four-bedrooms council or housing association properties to 2-bedroom properties.

- e) Approximately a third of homes will be allocated to others on the Council's housing register. This will be a mixture of people who are already council or housing association tenants or tenants of private landlords, whereas for others it may be their first home.

(Please note: There may be overlaps between the above groups. For example, someone allocated a home could be working within Cambridge City and be a transfer applicant.)

The Council will continue to give appropriate priority to those who are homeless and those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds and may have an urgent need for housing, as well as those given an emergency status for rehousing following other regeneration and decanting projects.

To ensure the fair representation of people with protected characteristics, allocations will be made with regard to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

Unacceptable behaviour

This Local Letting Plan aims to support the objectives of the Lettings Policy as follows and when shortlisting the following will be considered:

The council's housing service, City Homes, will reserve the right to carry out background checks for applicants nominated to these properties.

When shortlisting applicants, the Council will consider whether an applicant or a member of their household has a history of behaviour which in the opinion of Cambridge City Council is unacceptable. Unacceptable behaviour can include being a perpetrator of (but is not limited to) domestic or other abuse, harassment, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing or other criminal activity, failing to maintain or repair their home or associated garden or garage, noise nuisance or tenancy related debt. Details regarding the Housing Related debt policy can be found on <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/5404/housing-related-debt-policy.pdf>

City Homes reserves the right to refuse any applicant with an unspent criminal history.

Applicants (including household members) with an evidenced history within the past 3-years including drug and/or alcohol abuse and involvement in perpetrating any anti-social behaviour (which can include, but is not limited to domestic or other abuse, harassment, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing or other criminal activity, failing to maintain or repair their home or associated garden or garage, noise nuisance or tenancy related debt) or with any vulnerability which may have an adverse effect on the community or the applicant themselves, may be excluded from being allocated accommodation.

When considering whether or not to exclude an applicant from the shortlist the Council will take into account whether an applicant is effectively engaging with a recognised programme of support and rehabilitation.

The period that the plan covers:

Until first lettings are completed

This plan is approved by:

Role

Anna Hill - Housing Services Manager, City Homes (on behalf of landlord)

James McWilliams - Housing Services Manager, Housing Advice (on behalf of Housing Advice Service)

Helen Reed - Housing Strategy Manager

If there are any enquiries about the criteria contained within this document please email HousingOfficer@cambridge.gov.uk

Date of plan

06/01/2023

Staff Guidance – Examples of reasons for introducing the LLP

Please note the examples below are to be used by staff as a guide to identifying LLP objectives. It should not be considered a definitive list.

For re-lets in a specific area using current social housing stock

- Help meet particular unmet needs within an area
- Help regenerate areas
- Help to ensure that affordability of homes is taken into account when they are let
- Help promote homes in areas which tend to attract fewer bids through Home-link
- Encourage greater community cohesion and sustainability
- Respond to particular housing management issues where problems of anti-social behaviour, nuisance or crime occur (including environmental crime such as fly tipping and dog fouling)
- Address an imbalance of residents from different age groups or family type within existing developments
- Giving those in acute need the opportunity to bid for homes in the context of the Council's Housing First programme
- Take into account any restrictive covenants associated with the land

For first-time housing lets on a new development

- Create a balance between those in and out of work to support the local economy
- Give priority to people working within an agreed geographical radius of the development; although ensuring that priority is available to employees of a range of employers and employment types
- Create a mix of household types and children's ages
- Give priority to households whose children currently attend schools in the catchment area
- Ensure specialist housing, for example disability adapted homes may be reserved for households who require them
- Provide a balance between households that will need additional support and those that will not
- Allow for under-occupation of some homes
- Identify the balance to be struck between existing social tenants and home-seekers
- Ensure some homes are available for let nearer to completion, where homes have been advertised through Home-Link well in advance of them being available to let
- Enable households whose needs have more recently been assessed to bid
- Give those in acute need the opportunity to bid for homes in accordance with the Council's Housing First programme