

Local Lettings Plan

Howse Gardens, The Triangle, Swindon

Swindon Borough Council and Westlea Housing Association working in partnership

The Triangle is a mixed tenure development which includes 21 homes for affordable rent.

Aims and Objectives

To work with Swindon Borough Council to achieve a sustainable and balanced community that contributes to meeting the varying housing needs of applicants on Swindon Borough Councils housing needs register whilst fulfilling the aspirations of the design of the estate.

These aspirations are to allow people to live more environmentally-friendly and fulfilling lives: to walk or cycle rather than drive, to share lifts or join a car club; to grow their own food and to coexist happily with natural habitats, wildlife and above all, with their neighbours and community as a whole, building and maintaining a vibrant community.

The lettings plan is designed to afford the best possible chance of creating and maintaining a stable and safe community. Westlea Housing remains committed to assisting Swindon Borough Council to meet housing need in the area. However, the existence of a lettings plan may mean that vacancies will not always go to the applicant who can demonstrate the greatest housing need. Applicants with a lower priority may be considered for an allocation if their housing may help to maintain a stable community.

The Area – The Triangle Swindon

The Triangle is situated just off the Northern Road, behind an estate of owner occupied, 1930's homes.

Northern Road is situated off Ferndale Road and is about a 15 minute walk into Swindon Town Centre. There is a good bus route, a couple of newsagents, a hairdressers, garage and schools all within 1 mile of the site.

On three of the boundaries there are existing residential properties, the fourth boundary backs onto a small access way which provides vehicular access to the rear of the houses on Ferndale Road

The environment is very pleasant and there is little noise in the way of traffic or industry. The proposed scheme backs onto existing gardens, providing a lovely environment for people to live in.

There is a frequent bus service which runs along Northern Road. The bus stop is located just outside the entrance to the development.

There are a range of health services within a mile of the site including Hawthorn Medical Centre and Dental Practices. Cheney Manor has a post office and a local newsagent, there are other shops along Ferndale Road including a hairdressers and fish and chip shop.

The Oasis Leisure Centre is located under half a mile from the site. This provides a range of leisure facilities including a lagoon swimming pool.

The Scheme

The Triangle is mixed development of 42 homes. Of these, 21 homes are for affordable rent with the remainder being let as intermediate rent and rent to homebuy.

The scheme has been designed using sustainable materials to meet code 4 and has a number of innovative technological aspects to it. It has been designed for residents to live as sustainably as possible with communal kitchen gardens and car sharing particular features. Much thought has gone into the ethos of scheme and all residents will be encouraged to make the scheme as sustainable as possible and use the outside space. In order to achieve this, we will be using a questionnaire for applicants to complete regarding their interest in green issues and communal activities. This will form part of the lettings process and a copy of the questionnaire is attached to this lettings plan.

The affordable rented homes are made up of the following:

- 4 x 1 bed flats
- 2x 2 bed flats
- 8 x 2 bed houses
- 4 x 3 bed houses
- 3 x 4 bed houses

Pets will be allowed in the houses but not the flats

The homes are designed and constructed to be energy efficient and have numerous technological features to assist with this.

The scheme is designed to have a community feel and there are communal kitchen gardens and a car share on site to help reduce car usage.

Tenancy Type

New tenants from Swindon housing register will be given starter tenancies. The conduct of the tenancy will be reviewed during the initial 12 month period

Tenants transferring from Swindon Council homes will be given an Assured Tenancy.

Lettings

Westlea supports Swindon Borough Councils Common Housing Register and the Council will normally be asked to provide nominations for all the vacancies that arise.

Westlea Housing reserves the right, in appropriate cases, to consider its own residents for a transfer to the development. Such cases will be discussed in advance with allocations staff from Swindon Borough Council. Westlea also reserves the right to make the final decision on allocating tenancies.

The vacancies will be advertised through Swindon Home Bid. The advert will be worded to explain that this lettings plan is in place.

Lettings Criteria

Applicants must have had a connection with Swindon for at least 3 years.

No more than one car per household

Mix of transfer, waiting list and homeless applicants.

Properties to be offered as follows :

1 bed flats –	singles or couples depending on size of accommodation
2 bed houses -	families with 1 child
3 bed houses-	families with no more than 2 dependent children
4 bed houses	will be let as 3 bed houses but to families with a minimum of 3 children to make use of all bedrooms.

We will try to achieve a suitable child supervision ratio across the family housing.

We will also try to achieve a mix of 1/3 waiting list, 1/3 transferring tenants and 1/3 homeless applicants and this will be reviewed at subsequent lettings.

Because of special nature of the scheme it is important that the lettings plan reflects the ethos of it and that customers are chosen for their ability to fit with this as well as their housing need.

The questionnaire has been designed for customers to complete at point of bidding on Swindon Home Bid

Exclusion.

Applicants with a known history of convictions for criminal or anti-social behaviour will not be considered for accommodation within this scheme unless they can demonstrate that they have changed their behaviour and have successfully held a tenancy for at least a year without incidents.

Police checks will be carried out where applicants have a history/convictions of/for substance misuse and substance dealing or prostitution and Westlea reserve the right to refuse nominations on police advice.

Nominations will not normally be considered from those who have a housing related debt outstanding to Westlea or another landlord. These include present rent and former rent arrears or recharges. However, where applicants have an overriding need and have been keeping to a repayment plan for a minimum of 12 weeks an exception may be made. Each case will be considered on its merits by Westlea's Home Mover Services and Customer Accounts Managers.

For existing RSL or Council tenants, their present accommodation must be in good decorative order.

On receipt of a nomination, home visits will be carried out by Westlea staff. These interviews will include more detailed questions concerning customers interest in green issues if appropriate. We will also ask specific questions relating to customers past contact and that of their family. We will also ask for permission to contact previous landlords and any agencies providing support.

Refusing offers

Should Westlea refuse a nomination, the case will be discussed with the Lettings Manager at Swindon Borough Council. Any appeals will be accordance to Westlea or Swindon Borough Council's allocations policy.

Under occupation

In order to maintain a sustainable mix on this estate, homes will be let in accordance with the numbers set out above in Lettings Criteria and monitored to ensure that child density levels do not exceed manageable levels.

Ethnicity and Diversity

This lettings plan is intended to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of both Swindon Borough Council and Westlea Housing. The overall aim is to ensure that the Community at the Triangle reflects the diversity of the community within the Swindon area.

Monitoring and Review

The lettings process will be reviewed 6 months after the first lets. Any subsequent lettings during the first 6 months of this plan will be made in accordance with it. Any lettings after the 6 month review will use either the existing plan or the reviewed version. After this the plan will be checked each time a vacancy arises to ensure it is still appropriate. The review will be carried out by Westlea in consultation with the Lettings Manager at Swindon Borough Council.

Signed on behalf of Westlea Housing	Signed on behalf of Swindon Borough Council
Name:	Name:
Position:	Position:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date: