

**Report of: Housing Business Manager**

**To: Executive Board**

**Date: 19th June 2006**

**Item No:**

**Title of Report : Local Lettings Plan for Eagle Wharf Development**



### **Summary and Recommendations**



**Purpose of report:** To seek the Board's endorsement of a lettings plan designed at creating a sustainable community on the Eagle Wharf site.



**Key decision:** No

**Portfolio Holder:** Housing

**Scrutiny Responsibility:** Housing

**Ward(s) affected:** Jericho & Osney Ward

#### **Report Approved by:**

Legal Services – Jeremy King

Finance – Mike Baish

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Murray

#### **Policy Framework:**

Creating sustainable communities.

Partnership working with RSLs.

Supports the Homeless strategy.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

1. That the Board should recommend adoption of the lettings plan to the next meeting of full Council, noting that it was designed to achieve a balanced and sustainable community on the site.



## Why is this plan needed ?

1. This plan is designed to assist Oxford City Council Allocations Team to provide nominations that will result in achieving a balanced and sustainable community in the former Eagle Works Site.

## Focus of the Plan.

2. It is recognised that for Oxford City Council to meet Housing Need in its area, it is necessary to select nominations from the Housing Register for households that maximise the full occupancy restrictions of each property, to which nomination rights exist.
3. However, on large social housing estates it has been noted that if communities are to be balanced and sustainable, child density is a crucial factor in maintaining an estate. In comparison with national figures, child density averages at 21% across the U.K. for all sectors, where as in the social rented sector, this is 67% (*Page Report*). This indicates that in order to sustain the new community at Walton Well Road, the focus of this plan is to consider child density as a major factor in making the estate 'work' in the long term.
4. The site is also geographically restricted in size (leading to higher density building) & part of the site (The Island Site) is bordered by The Canal & Castle Mill Stream. This is also a driver to restrict the child densities on the site.

## The Site Itself – Full Occupancy

5. The Eagle Works Site comprises of 99 units of accommodation, including 38 shared-ownership units, managed by Catalyst Communities Housing Association.
6. The site has 2 phases: the Island site & the Main site. The 61 units of rented accommodation are split as follows:

No of Units	Type of Unit	Total Population by Unit Type
25	1B 2P (Flat)	50
22	2B 3P (Flat)	66
10	3B 5P (House)	50
4	4B 6P (House)	24

7. This provides for an estate of 61 units, with a total population of 190, of which there would be 68 children, assuming that there are two adults in

each household and the maximum number of children per property are allocated.

### Local Lettings – Proposals

8. Using child density as the driver in terms of allocations, it is proposed that the following criteria are used to allocate families to the estate:

a) One Bed Units

It is proposed that all units are allocated to maximum numbers, with nominations being for suitable persons – i.e. persons without a history of problems/ anti social behaviour caused through high density living; or persons allocated who do not have appropriate support packages in place from the outset in order to maintain their tenancies (N.B. – Tenancy Support will not be provided by Catalyst Communities, other than normal Housing Management).

b) Two Bed Units

These units will not be under-occupied and nominations will be allocated in accordance with Oxford City Council's re-housing policy.

c) Three & Four Bed Units

These units will be subject to reductions in child density. As a broad rule, 25% of properties will be allocated to full capacity, with the remaining 75% under-occupied by one bed space.

9. The Principles behind this are:

This will allow for families to increase in size within their existing homes, resulting in requests for transfers reduced due to overcrowding reasons, and thus reductions in applications to Oxford City Council for re-housing. The community should be more stable, with far less turnover.

The overall effect on child density will be a reduction in the total number of children on the estate from 68 to 58 – this is shown below in the proposed matrix of allocations.

*Allocation Matrix – Three/Four/Five Bed Units*

Type of Unit	25% units full occupancy	75% units at full occupancy, minus one bed space
2B 3P (3 units in total)	N/A	N/A
3B 5P (10 units in total)	3 units – 9 children	7 units – 14 children
4B 7P (4 units in total)	1 unit – 4 children	3 units – 9 children
<b>Total Nos of Children</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>

This gives 36 children, plus 22 for the 2B 3P units, allowing a total of 58 children, in total, in the social-rented properties on the estate.

### **Differences from Standard Allocation at Full Capacity**

10. In relation to allocating the estate to full capacity, the differences are as follows:

In total, 58 children out of a possible 68 children will be the maximum number on the estate.

This represents a reduction to 85% from 100% of maximum occupation in relation to child density.

This represents a reduction to 94% from 100% of *total occupancy* (180 persons out of a possible 190) for the estate as a whole.

### **Flexibility in Meeting Housing Need**

11. Built into this proposal is a proviso that Oxford City Council will be able to vary the allocation percentage for any particular group where it is necessary to increase the 25% allocation at full capacity. For example, should Housing Need at the time result in more 4 bed units needing to be let at full capacity than 25% (as above), then overall numbers of children will remain constant at 58, or below, with reductions in other unit types to balance this need taking place.

### **Nomination Procedure**

12. The nomination procedure will take place as set out in the Nomination Agreement between Oxford City Council and Catalyst Communities Housing Association.

### **Review**

13. The Local Lettings Plan will be reviewed jointly by Oxford City Council and Catalyst Housing Association after one year, to determine the effectiveness of the Plan in creating and maintaining a balanced and sustained community. Factors will include: No.s of tenants requesting transfers and the reasons for this; No.s of voids and turnover of tenants; No.s of nuisance complaints and reasons for this; A review of household size one year on; any other factors that may be appropriate after the scheme has been in operation for a year.

### **Extension of the Lettings Plan to Future Lets**

14. If the Plan, after the annual review shows that the Lettings strategy for this estate has been a success, then consideration will be given to extending the plan for all future lets on the estate.

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There are no background papers.