



Cambridge City Council Local Lettings Plan

Location covered by plan: Ventress Close

Landlord

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

Total number of properties covered by this plan

12 homes (expected to be ready for letting January 2021)

Affected property types and sizes

7x 1 bedroom flats, comprising of
5 x Ground floor (all wheelchair accessible)
2x First floor

5 x 2 bedroom flats, comprising of
3x first floor;
2 x second floor;

Reasons for introducing the Local Lettings Plan

1. Background

This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) applies to all first-time Cambridge City Council lettings on the new development off Ventress Close, Cambridge known as Ventress Close.

The Council has worked in partnership with the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) to build a new housing development in the Queen Edith's ward of Cambridge City.

The location of the development allows travel by foot, public transport, and through cycling

The site is near bus routes and close to local primary and secondary school -

2. Building a mixed community

The reason for this LLP is to support Queen Edith's to grow as an integrated and balanced community, and to support the local economy through giving priority to

people who work locally within the Queen Edith's ward. It also aims to minimise the impact on the environment by limiting the need for people to travel long distances to work. Building a diverse community may help to strengthen what already exists in the Queen Edith's area.

3. Additional information

Council tenants are allowed pets under their tenancy agreement; however, it is requested that tenants in flats have a maximum of one (1) dog due to space constraints. 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.

Parking

Adverts will detail whether a home is allocated with a car parking space at an additional charge. Parking charges will in most cases not be eligible to be paid for by Housing Benefit/Universal Credit and may exceed LHA levels.

Applicants should be aware that a charging scheme for car parking will be introduced at this site in 2021 and there is only one car parking space per property.

1. Completion dates

The letting of the affordable homes at Ventress Close will be in January 2021.

2. Affordability and rent levels

Rent levels for affordable homes will be let at Ventress Close below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels for the City, found here <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-housingallowance> however charges may exceed this level (such as parking).

This is higher than social rent levels, but significantly less than market rent. Applicants will be asked to complete an affordability assessment prior to offer to try and prevent financial hardship where there is a risk that an applicant may not be able to afford the level of rent being charged, in line with our Anti-Poverty Strategy.

3. Allocating homes

The Council's Lettings Policy applies to all lettings at Ventress Court. In addition to letting within the Councils allocation policy the following will apply.

a) Approximately a third of homes will be allocated to people who are currently working either full time or part time within the City of Cambridge some of whom may be in lower 'bands' under the Council's Letting Policy but struggle to access housing that is affordable.

Some priority may be given to those working within the Queen Ediths Ward (which includes the Addenbrookes Hospital, research sites and other places of employment), but currently living outside of that ward, to promote community integration, whilst reducing the need to drive to work.

The mix of 1 bedroom and 2-bedroom homes reflects the current need on the Housing Needs Register of 57 % requiring 1 bedroom properties and 25% requiring 2 bedroom properties.

The Queen Ediths Community Forum residents survey 2020

<https://queen-ediths.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Survey-results.pdf>

Showed that the 'Wulfstan' area of Queen Edith's where the Ventress Close development is situated, scored lower on the 'do the homes in my area support the needs of the community' question than other areas of Queen Ediths. There is also a younger demographic in this area.

b) Each size of home will be allocated to a mix of household types and sizes. e.g. 1-bedroom homes will be allocated to both single people and couples, whilst 2-bedroom homes will be allocated to those with both school aged children as well as resident adult children. This will help in getting a good mix of different types of household across the development.

Some priority may be given to under-represented groups (based on Census data) in relation to the percentage of those groups on the Council's housing register to promote diverse and cohesive communities.

The Council will also 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.

(There may be overlaps between the above groups. For example, someone allocated a home could be both working locally, and moving from a Council or Housing Association home).

Wheelchair accessible homes

All homes are 'accessible and adaptable' homes (homes for life) and with the **ground floor** properties first priority will be given to applicants on the City Council's housing register requiring this type of housing. This may involve assessment from an Occupational Therapist to ensure people's needs are met.

Housing First

Rough sleeping is a major issue in Cambridge. Between April 2019 and March 2020, 169 separate individuals were assessed as sleeping rough during that period.

To help address this, as part of wider plans across other development sites, three (3) homes at Ventress Close will be let under the Housing First England initiative (<https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/>) This is a project already active across the City that offers accommodation for single homeless people requiring a new start. These homes will not be advertised and will be let directly to eligible applicants.

Unacceptable behaviour

When shortlisting applicants, the Council will consider any recent history (within the last 3 years) of unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to; domestic abuse, harassment, hate crime, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing or other criminal activity, failing to maintain or repair their home or associated garden/communal area, noise nuisance, and/or housing related debt.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed?

Yes

How we propose to let the homes covered by the plan

1. Completion dates

The letting of the affordable homes at Ventress Close will be in January 2021.
January 2021– 12 units*

**all dates subject to change.*

2. Affordability and rent levels

Rent levels for affordable homes will be let at Ventress Close below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels for the City, found here <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-housingallowance> however charges may exceed this level (such as parking).

This is higher than social rent levels, but significantly less than market rent. Applicants will be asked to complete an affordability assessment prior to offer to try and prevent financial hardship where there is a risk that an applicant may not be able to afford the level of rent being charged, in line with our Anti-Poverty Strategy.

3. Allocating homes

The Council's Lettings Policy applies to all lettings at Ventress Court. In addition to letting within the Council's allocation policy the following will apply:

a) Approximately a third of homes will be allocated to people who are currently working either full time or part time within the City of Cambridge some of whom may be in lower 'bands' under the Council's Letting Policy but struggle to access housing that is affordable.

Some priority may be given to those working within the Queen Ediths Ward (which includes the Addenbrookes Hospital, research sites and other places of employment), but currently living outside of that ward, to promote community integration, whilst reducing the need to drive to work.

The mix of 1 bedroom and 2-bedroom homes reflects the current need on the Housing Needs Register of 57 % requiring 1-bedroom properties and 25% requiring 2-bedroom properties.

The Queen Ediths Community Forum residents survey 2020

<https://queen-ediths.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Survey-results.pdf>

Showed that the 'Wulfstan' area of Queen Edith's where the Ventress Close development is situated, scored lower on the 'do the homes in my area support the needs of the community' question than other areas of Queen Ediths. There is also a younger demographic in this area.

b) Each size of home will be allocated to a mix of household types and sizes. e.g. 1-bedroom homes will be allocated to both single people and couples, whilst 2-bedroom homes will be allocated to those with both school aged children as well as resident adult children. This will help in getting a good mix of different types of household across the development.

Some priority may be given to under-represented groups (based on Census data) in relation to the percentage of those groups on the Council's housing register to promote diverse and cohesive communities.

The Council will also 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.

Wheelchair accessible homes

All homes are accessible and adaptable' (homes for life) and with the **ground floor** properties first priority will be given to applicants on the Council's housing register requiring this type of housing. This may involve assessment from an Occupational Therapist to ensure people's needs are met.

(There may be overlaps between the above groups. For example, someone allocated a home could be both working locally, and have an urgent need for housing)

Housing First

Rough sleeping is a major issue in Cambridge. Between April 2019 and March 2020, 169 separate individuals were assessed as sleeping rough during that period.

To help address this, as part of wider plans across other development sites, three (3) homes at Ventress Close will be let under the Housing First England initiative (<https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/>) This is a project already active across the City that offers accommodation for single homeless people requiring a new start. These homes will not be advertised and will be let directly to eligible applicants.

Unacceptable behaviour

When shortlisting applicants, the Council will consider any recent history (within the last 3 years) of unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to; domestic abuse, harassment, hate crime, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing or other criminal activity, failing to maintain or repair their home or associated garden/communal area, noise nuisance, and/or housing related debt.

The period that the plan covers

Until the first lettings are completed. The policy will be reviewed at this time and may be extended if there are future allocations of properties at this scheme

This plan is approved by:

Role

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

Housing Services Manager, Housing Advice (on behalf of Housing Advice Service)

Housing Strategy Manager

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

Date of plan

26112020

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