

Appendix A

Eligibility criteria for new affordable housing development providers in Sevenoaks District

Sevenoaks District Council welcomes the opportunity to work with affordable housing development providers who are committed to delivering new affordable housing in the Sevenoaks District. Any provider is expected to meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be a body registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Registered Provider of Social Housing, pursuant to the provisions of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, unless otherwise agreed by the District Council.
- 2) Assist the District Council in meeting its statutory housing functions by embracing the terms of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022 - 2027 (and any successor document). Primarily, with regards to social housing (homes provided as Affordable Rented and Social Rented tenures), to enter into a nominations agreement with the District Council (template provided on the District Council's website) to provide 100% first lettings and 75% of all re-lets, in favour of the District Council, during any 12 month period.
- 3) Be (or become) a member of Kent Homechoice - the partnership body of all Local Authorities in Kent and private Registered Providers, providing a single application point to local housing registers for those in housing need and a means of allocating social housing vacancies via choice-based lettings. To agree all social housing lettings provided in favour of the District Council (see No. 2 above) will be progressed via Kent Homechoice.
- 4) Provide all Affordable Rented homes at a rent including service charges that does not exceed the Local Housing Allowance level applying, or at a lower rent, to ensure all affordable housing is genuinely "affordable" to those reliant on welfare benefits and in comparison to the local resident-based median income.
- 5) Have an office base within one hour's travel of the District Council's Argyle Road offices, or be able to demonstrate that adequate management arrangements are in place for the management of stock in the District.
- 6) Be willing to actively engage as a key stakeholder in the development of policies and strategies developed by the District Council.
- 7) Where the provider is in control of the development process, to:
 - deliver affordable housing that meets the minimum sizes described in the Nationally Described Space Standards (March 2015), or any successor document;

- comply with the following, unless otherwise agreed by the District Council:
 - (a) all national design and construction standards published by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities applying at the time of permission;
 - (b) Part 2 of Secured by Design standards published by Police Crime Prevention Initiatives Limited;
 - (c) Optional requirement M4(2) of Building Regulations 2010 (Part M) (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings); and
 - (d) Local development standards as set out in adopted Core Strategy (2011) and any successor document.
 - deliver a range of unit types, tenures and sizes as identified by the most up to date evidence on local need and suitable to the location;
 - deliver wheelchair-user housing to meet M4(3) (b) of Building Regulations 2010 (Part M) (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings), as identified by the most up to date evidence on local need and suitable to the location;
 - assist the District Council in its ambition to reduce carbon emissions across the District as part of the Net Zero 2030 commitment by promoting energy efficiency, sustainable travel and sustainable building practices;
 - demonstrate that they have adopted a formal approach to environmental management for their operations ideally by applying a recognised Standard such as ISO14001, the Kent STEM Scheme, or EMAS;
 - use Modern Methods of Construction, where appropriate, subject to planning.
- 8) On request, to enter into a local lettings plan to ensure a sustainable and balanced community is created and to assist the District Council in meeting wider housing strategy objectives. This may arise on developments with a significant number of social housing units, or locations requiring sensitive lettings, or where the District Council wishes to target certain client groups, e.g. to facilitate existing social housing tenants to downsize or to assist Local Essential Workers.
 - 9) Respond in a timely manner to requests by the District Council for qualitative and quantitative information - including quarterly lettings returns (as per template nominations agreement), decent homes standard compliance and rent levels.
 - 10) Be willing to meet with officers from the District Council's Housing Team, on request, to discuss the organisation's development programme and opportunities for partnership working.
 - 11) Where appropriate, to take part in, or provide training, which is of clear benefit to the enabling function of the District Council and its affordable housing provider partners, e.g. showcasing new delivery models.

- 12) Can demonstrate the organisation's services are fully accessible and offered equally, regardless of race, gender, disability, age, sexuality, religion or belief.
- 13) For Shared Ownership and Intermediate Affordable Rented homes, to embrace the terms of the [Sevenoaks District Intermediate Housing Protocol](#) in order to deliver housing opportunities for local people, and to advertise all vacancies through the local Help to Buy agent.
- 14) For First Homes, to deliver these in accordance with the [Sevenoaks District Local First Homes policy](#) (agreed by Cabinet, December 2021).
- 15) For Discounted Market for Sale Housing, to discuss and agree with the Housing Strategy Manager how homes will be marketed and local connection provisions applied.

If you wish to discuss any of the above, please email housing.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call 01732 227000 and ask for Housing Policy.