

Local Lettings Policy We Can Make Knowle West

1. Aims and Objectives

For We Can Make Knowle West Community Interest Company (WCM) to work with Bristol City Council (BCC) and their members and the residents of Knowle West to deliver a sustainable and balanced community. Together we can contribute to meeting housing needs of the local community and meet the needs and aspirations of future residents. The local lettings plan will apply to all homes that are developed on micro-sites where the land and home is owned and managed by WCM.

The aim of this Local Lettings Policy is to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To create a sustainable, safe and secure community which residents aspire to live in;
- b) To create a mixed, cohesive and diverse community;
- c) To ensure that the properties are affordable for residents;
- d) To meet the aspirations of the We Can Make Knowle West CLT Membership;
- e) To make a positive impact on the local Knowle West community by creating “good homes” that make a positive contribution to:
 - (i) “good for me” (individual well-being);
 - (ii) “good dwelling” (performance and design of the homes);
 - (iii) “good for the neighbourhood” (contribution to neighbourhood regeneration and resilience);
 - (iv) “good for the planet” (contribution to addressing climate and ecologic emergency; and
 - (v) “good construction” (localised production and jobs through innovative Modern Methods of Construction)

We Can Make Knowle West is committed to creating and maintaining a stable and safe community. We understand our obligations to assist Bristol City Council meet the housing need in Knowle West and the wider Bristol area.

2. The Micro-sites

WCM develops micro-sites for community-led homes that are affordable in perpetuity. The micro-sites are distributed in large back gardens, in between buildings and on small under-used pieces of land.

Micro-sites are identified through:

- 1) Community engagement undertaken by WCM. This community engagement is focused on engaging families in housing need, who have sufficient space

available, and for whom the type and tenure of homes that can be provided through We Can Make would improve their housing situation. All participating families receive independent legal and financial advice before any development takes place.

- 2) Identifying micro-plot opportunities in void properties where there is no existing household. Future tenants of the host garden will be aware of the intention to develop a WCM home and supported through the development and lettings process.

WCM is focused on developing one and two bedroom homes, as this reflects the type of housing need in the area and are most suitable for being able to be accommodated on micro-sites. All homes developed on micro-sites meet Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

WCM is focused on developing community-led homes for affordable rent. The micro-sites and the homes developed on them will be owned by WCM to ensure community benefit and affordability in perpetuity.

Rents aim to be genuinely affordable, defined as no more than 35% of average net household income for the local area (as defined by the ward the micro-site is situated), and capped at Local Housing Allowance levels.

3. Register of Interested Tenants

WCM will hold a list of BCC tenants who are interested in exploring relinquishing part of their garden as a micro-plot to develop a home for someone who meets both the eligibility criteria for a WCM tenancy and the eligibility criteria to register on HomeChoice.

For the avoidance of doubt, this is not a register of applicants for a WCM home.

4. Eligibility Criteria for a WCM home

All potential WCM tenants will:

- Be Registered and have a live application on HomeChoice Bristol.
- Be able to demonstrate the following:
 - (a) Meet one of the recognised priority housing needs in the area:
 - (i) **Down Shifters:** individuals or couples whose house is now too big for them and are looking for a smaller home but want to remain in their community close to care and social networks. Often this is because children have grown up and flown the nest.
 - (ii) **New Shoots:** families where there is an urgent need for more space,

because children are growing up and seeking independence or are having offspring of their own, or caring responsibilities are expanding to include additional elderly or disabled family members

(iii) Better Fits: families where one member or more is experiencing changing needs and the family home needs to be adapted (including, for example, where the garden is too much to look after).

(b) At least one of the following:

- (i) Living or have lived in Knowle West for a period of 2 years within the last 5 years or 6 months within the last 9 months;
- (ii) Has a local connection to Knowle West (for example to give or receive support/provide care to a family member/relative);
- (iii) Working with local area (working defined as employed, self-employed, volunteering, and training).

We Can Make could allocate micro-site homes up to 12 months prior to the development being completed. In order to ensure that the allocations are open and transparent BCC will have access to the proposed allocations prior to the allocations being confirmed.

All applicants will be required to join WCM and membership will cost £1.00.

The applicant will be required to provide current evidence to satisfy the above criteria. Plus We Can Make we will require evidence of income (including wages slips and/or latest Benefit entitlement) to carry out an affordability assessment. To accompany this, we will request a credit check (this will notify us of any debts the applicant has and prevent the tenancy from being obtained on fraudulent grounds). This process is essential in determining support requirements/need or debt advice for the applicant to ensure they are able to sustain their tenancy rather than a reason for refusal.

The successful applicants are required to become a member of the We Can Make Community Land Trust.

Applicants may also be asked to undertake training to understand how to maintain their home and garden and develop and maintain neighbourly relations.

We may require a minimum of 1 weeks rent in advance up to a maximum of 1 month's rent in accordance with the WCM Affordable Rent Policy. The rent in advance is to be paid when the tenancy agreement is signed by the applicant.

5. First Lets Allocations to Applicants nominated by the Enabler

Nomination rights for the first let of the We Can Make home are granted to the family/tenant of the home who has enabled the creation of the micro-site by opting into the We Can Make process and agreeing to the transfer of the micro-site to WCM (known as the Enabler). This right is granted providing the Applicant meets the eligibility criteria in section 4 of this agreement.

The Applicant will be directly matched to the new WCM home in accordance with the BCC HomeChoice allocations scheme. These properties will not be advertised for wider HomeChoice applicants to bid on.

We Can Make could allocate micro-site homes up to 12 months prior to the development being completed (or longer by agreement with Bristol City Council).

When the Enabler does not wish to exercise their nomination right, WCM will use the Re-let and Void Allocation policy (see below).

6. Re-let and void micro-site home allocations

The selection of applicants for all other lets will be based on:

- (a) Housing need of the applicant (as outlined in the eligibility criteria)
- (b) Fit with the type of micro home available
WCM will take into consideration the applicant's needs and the fit with the particular design and facilities of the specific micro-site home available. This assessment will be done through an interview by WCM with prospective candidates.
- (c) Fit with the occupants and lifestyle of the adjacent household (the occupiers of the home from which the micro-site was originally acquired).

An assessment will be done through an interview by WCM with prospective candidates and facilitated meetings with the prospective tenant and the members of the adjacent household. WCM will endeavour to ensure a compatible match. WCM will make the final decision on allocation after taking into account the above considerations.

Available homes will be advertised on Bristol City Council's HomeChoice system. On every advertisement for a We Can Make home on HomeChoice, there will be clear information about the requirements of the Local Lettings Policy, how it will be applied, and how applicants bid for homes using Home Choice. The final decision of allocating a tenancy for a home under this LLP will be made by WCM.

WCM may opt to move tenants from one WCM home into a re-let to best manage their existing tenants' needs and housing stock. The resulting re-let will be allocated in accordance with this LLP.

If WCM are not able to identify a tenant within the primary eligibility criteria in section 4, they will select a tenant from the Council's list of nominees, in priority housing order, that best suits the needs of the applicant and the adjacent occupiers. BCC will support WCM in this decision making as required.

7. Tenure

The tenancies will be a starter (12 Month assured short hold) tenancy with an option to renew on a longer term.

If any breaches are identified at any point during the first 12 months of the probationary/starter tenancy, WCM will decide whether to extend the starter period for a further 6 months or to bring the tenancy to an end.

The decision to extend the Fixed Term Tenancy will be made a year before it is due to expire and will be subject to the conduct of the tenancy throughout this period. WCM will decide to offer another Fixed Term, offer a Lifelong Assured Tenancy, or bring the tenancy to an end. If the tenancy is terminated by WCM, we will advise and give support to the resident to move to more suitable accommodation, including the option of transferring to more suitable accommodation within the stock held and managed by We Can Make.

8. Equalities and diversity

This Lettings Plan is intended to work alongside the equalities and diversity policies of WCM and Bristol City Council. The local letting plan should ensure that the assessment and allocation process does not discriminate against households and enables applicants with diverse needs to access good quality accommodation. All host tenants and applicants will be made aware of WCM's Equality and Diversity policy and the importance of ensuring that direct or indirect discrimination against people with protected characteristics is not taking place.

9. Review – All properties

This Local Letting Plan will be reviewed with BCC 6 months after the beginning of the first tenancy, and then reviewed every 12 months to ensure it meets the aims and objectives. This review will be done jointly with Bristol City Council.

10. Complaints

WCM has a procedure for dealing with complaints raised by the Tenant on any matter arising from their Tenancy. WCM shall provide details of the scheme at the beginning of the Tenancy and inform the Tenant of any changes. If still dissatisfied after the complaint's procedure has been exhausted, the Tenant has the right to refer the matter to the Independent Housing Ombudsman.

11. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In the event of any complaint or dispute arising between the parties to this Agreement in relation to this Agreement the matter should first be referred for resolution to the

Council's Head of Housing Options or any other individual nominated by the Council from time to time.

Should the complaint or dispute remain unresolved within 14 days of the matter first being referred to the Head of Housing Options or other nominated individual, as the case may be, either party may refer the matter to the Council's Director of Housing and the Director of We Can Make with an instruction to attempt to resolve the dispute by agreement within 28 days, or such other period as may be mutually agreed by the Council and WCM.

In the absence of agreement under Clause 27.2, the parties may seek to resolve the matter through mediation under the CEDR Model Mediation Procedure (or such other appropriate dispute resolution model as is agreed by both parties). Unless otherwise agreed, the parties shall bear the costs and expenses of the mediation equally.

In the event of a dispute arising through the annual review of this LLP, it is agreed that this approved LLP will remain in place until the dispute is resolved and a revised LLP approved by both parties.

12. Agreement

Signed on Behalf of We Can Make Knowle West Community Interest Company

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Signed on Behalf of Bristol City Council

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date: