

COUNCIL MEETING – 25TH JUNE 2015

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

RUSHMOOR GOOD HOMES CHARTER

A Report from a meeting of the Cabinet.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report seeks Council's approval of the Rushmoor Good Homes Charter.

2 Background

2.1 The concept of the Rushmoor Good Homes Charter was developed by Councillors Lyon and Clifford, following their experiences as ward councillors of the Concept House development at the Clockhouse in Farnborough.

2.2 This site, comprising a mixture of social and private housing, had experienced many issues around common parts, parking, provision of services etc following its development by Fairview Homes. The ward councillors inevitably became involved in the resolution of these matters and learnt first-hand of some of the difficulties residents encountered.

2.3 As a result, they, together with a local resident residing in Concept House, developed the Rushmoor Good Homes Charter for mixed tenure dwellings.

3 The Rushmoor Good Homes Charter

3.1 The Charter (attached at Appendix 1) sets out what the Council would expect from developers of mixed tenure homes, by way of good practice and our planning requirements. It endeavours to ensure that residents purchasing in such developments are fully aware of the arrangements surrounding the management of the collective property, and have a say in the future management arrangements.

3.2 The Charter has been subject of consideration by Cabinet who approved an earlier draft for consultation with the local development industry. Following consultation, the Charter has been amended and signed off by the Environment Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the Leader.

3.3 In accordance with the Council's constitution, it now requires approval by the full Council.

- 3.4 It is anticipated that once agreed, the Charter will set standards for mixed tenure dwelling both in this Borough and potentially more widely. It will be published on the Council's website and drawn to developers' attention through the planning process.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Council is recommended to approve the Rushmoor Good Homes Charter for mixed tenure dwellings as set out in the Appendix to this report.

R.L.G. DIBBS
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
AND SERVICE DELIVERY

RUSHMOOR GOOD HOMES CHARTER FOR MIXED TENURE DWELLINGS

In Rushmoor, we believe homebuilders should aspire to provide good quality homes to our residents. As such, the Council has the following expectations of good practice and requirements for new developments.

Good practice we expect in this Borough

1. Residents buying properties need impartial advice, to ensure they are not mis-sold. As such, developers should make clear that residents have free selection of conveyancing solicitors and make them aware of independent local solicitors
2. All residents should be provided with a free copy of the Lease, services charges and details of the Resident Management Company (RMC). Leases should make specific mention of the RMC and formally acknowledge their role in supporting residents. The RMC should be a Party to the Lease, ie Three Party Leases should be used.
3. Large developments (over 100 dwellings) should include a bespoke RMC strategy that includes protocols for working with all stakeholders, including housing associations.
4. To help familiarise residents, the developers should provide clear information on the bodies, obligations and practicalities of living in a mixed tenure dwelling. This would include local contact details of independent sources of advice, including contact details for local RMCs.
5. RMC Articles must require that an Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held annually, with clear and encouraged opportunities for residents to participate as soon as is possible.
6. All dwelling owners should be entitled to be members of the RMC on completion of purchase. This will be a condition of sale and stated in the bespoke RMC strategy or the RMC Articles of Association.
7. Residents should be represented on the RMC from the outset or at the least not later than the first AGM and a clear plan should be included for transition to full resident control.
8. Managing agents will be selected competitively and local managing agents will be given a fair opportunity to tender. All managing agents will be members of ARMA or RICS and the ARMA Management Agency Agreement will be used. Within 2 years of first occupancy, the managing agent arrangements should be reviewed by residents.
9. At project handover, the RMC will be formally issued with operational and maintenance / as built documentation in both electronic and paper format.

Requirements which will be reflected in our planning rules

10. Clear parking policy on unallocated spaces, including disabled and visitor parking. Shared disabled / visitor car park spaces will be discouraged.
11. Travel plans must be reviewed 2 years after first occupancy, in consultation with residents. Timescales for completion of such plans should take into account occupation levels and not terminate until 2 years after full occupancy.
12. Waste management will be clearly addressed and described in the final planning submission, including allocation of bin storage. This equally applies to cycle storage / mobility scooter housing and provision for electric car charging points.