



9th May 2017

Joan McAlpine MSP
Unit 7
Loreburn Centre
High Street
Dumfries
DG1 2BD

Dear Ms McAlpine,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 April 2017. You may be aware that we have met with local stakeholders, including Councillor Denis Male, to discuss this matter and I am happy to provide clarity on this issue to you.

As you will know, the estate owns a variety of property around Eskdale and Liddesdale in addition to its landholdings. This is mostly made up of residential and agricultural properties, and we are a significant provider of rented accommodation in the area.

As part of good estate management, the estate continuously appraises its property. This will include reinvestment, refurbishments, changes of use and sale. Sale of a residential property may be for a range of reasons but the estate will always consider the desire of incumbent tenants to purchase a property of paramount importance.

Some properties are currently being considered for sale and the tenants have or will be approached and offered first-refusal on purchasing their property directly from the estate. We believe this provides an opportunity for tenants to become owner-occupiers where they wish to do so and we will provide assistance or advice where we can.

The estate has different types of agreements in place across its properties, including occupiers on secure residential tenancies. Many such tenants have expressed an interest in purchasing their properties but where a tenant does not wish to do so, they will, of course remain, in their tenancies.

We are fully aware that there may be some properties where a tenant on a short-term, non-secured lease does not wish to purchase the property, and we are aware of the uncertainty this may create. In such cases, if a tenant confirms that he or she does not wish to purchase

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the property, the estate has committed to taking this information into account as part of its continuing deliberations. If the estate confirms at a later time it does wish to sell the property, we have made clear that we would visit the tenant once again to discuss the various options. This would include giving the tenant another opportunity to purchase the property prior to it being advertised more widely.

I can confirm that the information set out in your letter regarding Notices to Quit is incorrect. Two tenancies have been terminated, with the estate itself finding alternative accommodation for the tenant in one instance and the tenant is happy with the outcome. In the second instance, a three-month notice period was given by the estate to the tenant – a notice period which was not used in full because the tenant had already purchased a property elsewhere. At the current time, we have not served notice on any other residential properties and we remain in discussions with tenants. In three cases, the property is either under offer or an agreement has been reached in principle.

The estate has also reviewed a number of vacant properties. We believe it is important that these are brought back into use, especially where the estate is no longer in a position to continue its stewardship of these properties, and it is our initial intention that these will also be made available for purchase, allowing them to be brought back into use for local housing as soon as possible.

We are aware that estate business can often prompt local discussion and conjecture but I am sure that you will be supportive of the estate, and Buccleuch more generally, reducing the amount of property it owns. As mentioned above, whilst we are aware that discussions with existing tenants may create uncertainty in some circumstances, we believe it is positive that an opportunity is created for tenants to purchase a property where they choose to do so. It would be helpful if you could ask the tenants who have approached you to contact us directly so that we can discuss the matter and hopefully offer reassurance. Also, if you felt it useful you could contact me directly and discuss these cases.

I hope this helps to clarify matters.

Yours sincerely



John Glen
Chief Executive