

Questions and Answers



Dermot Gardens / Ballyhenry Lane, Comber

The information below is provided in response to questions raised by local residents about the development of new homes at Dermot Gardens / Ballyhenry Lane, Comber.

Q: Concerns regarding existing private neighbouring properties losing their value, because social properties are being built beside them

A: This issue is often raised in areas where new social housing is proposed, however there is no evidence that there is any impact on house prices, and we have consulted with a chartered valuer who has confirmed this.

Radius is currently constructing affordable homes for sale at one of our developments in Belfast. These properties are pepper potted across the development. The demand to purchase one of these homes on the open market has been significant, demonstrating that private homes next to social homes does not discourage buyers. All of the properties in phase 1 have been sold, and there is an extensive waiting list for those wishing to purchase a home in this location as soon as the next phase is released.

Radius has also built several mixed tenure schemes and we have evidence to confirm that private homes adjacent to social homes does not impact on the saleability of privately owned homes. One of the new homes in our development in Bangor was listed for sale 2 years after it was first purchased, at 25% more than the original purchase price. The property achieved a further 6% more than its asking price. The Agent dealing with this property was able to confirm that there was a high level of demand for the property, and after only 3 hours of viewings, the property was sale agreed within a week of being listed.

Q: Properties won't be given to people from Comber

A: Allocations will be made to the highest pointed applicant as per the rules of the Common Selection Scheme, which is managed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Q: Who will homes be allocated to?

A: Allocations will be made to families who have selected this scheme as their area of choice and have been assessed as being in the most housing need.

Q: Concerns that Social Housing will bring trouble and anti-social behaviour to the area, as was the case for another social housing scheme which completed recently in Comber

A: All Radius tenants sign a Tenancy Agreement and are expected to adhere to the tenancy conditions. Additionally, all tenants will sign a Good Neighbour Agreement and are informed of the consequences of breaching this agreement. At Radius we take our responsibility as a landlord seriously, and we manage more than 13,000 homes across Northern Ireland.

Q: Concerns that Social Housing tenants don't look after their properties or gardens

A: As per the tenancy conditions Radius tenants are responsible for keeping individual gardens, pathways, yards, and other areas of hard standing in a clean and tidy condition and must cut the grass and trim the hedges.

Q: Does Radius have a policy on Flags?

A: Although Radius does not have a policy of flags, tenants are asked to be respectful of neighbours in their local community.

Q: Traffic will increase in the area, both during construction and once the properties have been built.

A: The developer has planning permission to construct 6 properties on this site, and the capacity of the local road infrastructure was considered as part of the planning process and approved by DfI Roads Service.

This is a small scheme of 6 family homes; therefore, the overall impact on traffic will not be significant. As with any new developments there will be some construction traffic but the developer will ensure that any disturbance is kept to a minimum.

Q: Residents don't want social housing in their area

A: The NI Housing Executive have identified there are over 3,000 applicants on the waiting list in the Ards and North Down Council area with over 800 of these applicants being families. The NIHE has therefore supported this development to provide homes for 6 families on the waiting list. We hope the presentation on our website provides further comfort that Radius is a responsible landlord with robust procedures to manage our tenancy agreements.

Q: Why did Radius not interact with the Residents at the site meeting last Friday 12th November 2021.

A: The meeting on Friday was not a meeting organised by Radius. Radius was invited to attend and we were advised that this was a meeting with some of the political representatives, not a public meeting. As with any new development Radius hold consultation events which are intended to enable us to engage with residents, provide information and listen to any comments or concerns. Due to current Covid 19 guidelines Radius are holding all our consultations meetings via zoom.

Q: The planning permission is for private housing not social housing.

A: There is planning permission for 6 residential homes on this site. The planning is not specific to tenure so there is no requirement to obtain additional or specific planning approval for social housing.

Q: Concerns regarding how the new properties will connect into to the existing sewage infrastructure

A: The drainage in Dermott Gardens is adopted and therefore the responsibility of NI Water. NI Water were consulted during planning process and are aware of the new development, the Developer will arrange for the new drainage to feed into the existing drainage, this is something that NI Water have agreed to following capacity checks of the infrastructure.