

HEATH TOWN LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

Introduction

The Allocations Policy satisfies the requirement on the Council by Part VI Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for determining priorities, and the procedure to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation both to first time applicants and transferring tenants.

The aim of the Allocations Policy, whilst meeting legislative requirements, is to make best use of the limited supply of social and affordable housing becoming vacant each year by providing a simple, transparent priority system based on clear criteria which determines an applicant's place within the allocations scheme.

The policy recognises that from time-to-time certain housing stock would benefit from a local lettings plan where the needs are not met by way of the main Allocations Policy.

Location

This plan relates to 40 properties developed at Heath Town estate, Heath Town, Wolverhampton. These properties are part of a wider development and make up the first phase to be completed. These properties owned by the Council will be managed by Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of the Council.

Property Type	No. Bedrooms	No. Units
House	4 Bedroom	16
House	2 Bedroom	24

Whilst four bed houses, Bungalows and Ground floor flats are generally excluded from a Local Lettings Plan due to the limited stock available in the City; in this instance due to the number of properties being developed and to help maintain stability within the existing community, a local connection will be applied to a proportion of these properties and made available to transferring social housing tenants in the highest priority bands from Emergency plus Band to Band 1.

Scope

This plan relates to the first let of properties only. Relets will be let in full accordance with the Council's main Allocations Policy.

Objectives

A plan for the letting of new build council housing has been agreed to:

- ensure the stability and sustainability of new communities created through large scale new build and regeneration by giving some priority to transferring tenants who have demonstrated they are able to sustain a tenancy;
- ensure existing communities remain balanced and sustainable and are not destabilised by the letting of concentrations of new build within an area, by giving some priority to those with a local connection to the area;
- maximise the number of new lettings by giving some priority to transferring tenants, which will help to alleviate a greater quantum of housing need through chain lettings;
- make best use of stock by only letting new build to those in housing need;
- ensure there is opportunity for those households on the housing register who are in greatest housing need to access new build homes.;
- ensure those groups protected by an equality characteristic are not disadvantaged by this plan.

1. Letting Plan Criteria

Applicants must be eligible for the specific property type to be considered for it.

Eligibility criteria and household categories are set out in the Council's Allocation Policy.

2. Eligible Properties

All housing types are eligible for letting under this plan including those properties that are normally excluded from Local Lettings Plans; for the purpose of this plan, this applies to four bedroom plus properties though the priority for these property types will be exclusive to applicants from Emergency Plus Band to Band 1. This is due to these property types being in short supply and so any allocations should be to those households with the greatest housing need.

In the event that the shortlist of existing social housing tenants is exhausted, properties will be let in full accordance with the Allocations Policy.

3. Local Connection Criteria

In order to establish local connection, the applicant must be able to demonstrate at least one of the following criteria in addition to any housing need criteria:

1. Giving or receiving essential support which is evidenced by professional support e.g. hospital, social services etc. Can also be confirmed by the Council's medical advisor.
2. Long term residency - 5 years out of the previous 10.

3. Children in school in the area.

4. Phase 1 – 40 dwellings

Unit type	Criteria
16 x 4 Bedroom Houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 properties to those in the greatest housing need in full accordance with the allocations policy. • 13 properties to transferring social housing tenants (Emergency Band + to Band 1), up to 7 applicants with an agreed local connection to Heath Town will be given additional preference.
24 x 2 Bedroom Houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 properties to those in the greatest housing need in full accordance with the allocations policy. • 20 properties to transferring social housing tenants (Emergency Band + to Band 3), up to 10 applicants with an agreed local connection to Heath Town will be given additional preference.

Failure to let

In the unlikely event of new build properties not being let after the initial round of bidding, all remaining properties will be allocated in full accordance with the Allocations policy.

How the Local Letting Plan will be applied

The allocation of properties through this local lettings plan will be done in close accordance with the Council's Allocation's Policy:

- Applicants will need to have a live housing application on Homes in the City;
- Properties being let under this local lettings plan will be advertised on Homes in the City. Adverts will be clearly marked as giving priority as set out in the lettings plan criteria.
- Eligible applicants will need to bid on properties within the advertised bidding period.
- When the bidding period comes to an end, contact will be made with the applicant who:
 - i. Is in the highest priority band
 - ii. Has the greatest number of housing needs that placed them in that band
 - iii. Has had that level of housing need the longest
 - iv. and is eligible for that property.

- The applicant will be contacted to request that they supply evidence of their housing circumstances, their identity and the identity of those moving with them. If the applicant fails to provide this evidence within a reasonable amount of time the applicant will be by passed and contact will be made with the next applicant on the shortlist.
- Finally, if a successful applicant still cannot be found the home will be let in accordance with the Allocations Policy, removing the local lettings plan priority.

Ending the Local Lettings Plan

Following the first let of new build properties the local lettings plan will no longer be applicable to all future reletting of these properties, which will be undertaken in full accordance with the Council's Allocation Policy.

Equalities Analysis

An equalities analysis has been undertaken as part of the development of the plan and has found:

Any impact of restricting these lets to transferring tenants will be mitigated by the resulting void properties being open to those on the housing register, being allocated via the usual housing allocations process.

Monitoring of the Local Lettings Plan

Once all new build properties on a development have been let the Council will complete an evaluation exercise to review how all properties were let, assessing factors of housing need, household composition, equalities and if the original objectives of the local lettings plan have been achieved.