

Local Lettings Plan - Windsor House

MAP of the site



Context

The Housing Act 1996 allows housing authorities to allocate accommodation to people of a particular description to properties by means of a Local Lettings Plan/Policy.

They are usually set up in response to particular local circumstances. They will include a clear commitment to equality of opportunity, the provision of clear and accurate information to applicants and an appeals mechanism.

Canterbury City Council's Allocations Policy (2015) S1 Page 6, sets out provision for applying a local lettings policy/plan to a property or group of properties for initial lettings, with the aims to widen choice for local people, create a better living environment for local residents, and to ensure that good housing contributes to regeneration and renewal.

It is essential to ensure that addressing an issue in one area does not create an imbalance in another, there is also a need to take into account community safety issues, and how the area or estate will be managed.

Having a local lettings policy/plan may mean that applicants in the highest band may not be considered first, and preference may be given to applicants with a lower housing need and / or effective date.

<p>Description of the site and services</p>	<p>Windsor House is a sheltered housing scheme situated on Belmont Road, Whitstable, CT5 1QN.</p> <p>The scheme provides 69 units of accommodation and is made up of a mixture of 11 studio, 34 x 1 bedroom and 24 x 2 bedroom flats. It is managed by the council's Independent Living team following the transfer back to the council on 1 October 2020.</p> <p>The flats are intended specifically for people aged over 60 years.</p> <p>There is a Lifeline alarm system in place, which provides a response 24/7, 365 days each year. The Lifeline is linked to the fire detection system at the scheme, helping people to stay safe and independent in their own home.</p> <p>The scheme is managed by an Independent Living Manager (ILM). The ILM delivers the landlord function, oversees the day-to-day running of the scheme, helps out in emergencies, checks the Health & Safety of the site, identifies repairs that are needed and arranges for them to be rectified, completes a tenant sustainment plan for each resident, and gives residents information on availability and access to services.</p> <p>The ILM is not there to carry out personal services such as shopping, cooking, cleaning and nursing but they may be able to help arrange for additional services to be provided, for example by signposting tenants to social services.</p> <p>There are communal facilities including a shared lounge, laundry, scooter shed and garden area. There is also a room provided for other service provision such as chiropody and hairdressing.</p>
<p>Community infrastructure and local facilities</p>	<p>Offsite, there is access to a wide range of facilities and services within a 5 minute walk including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wide range of supermarkets and shops ● Library ● Seafront ● Places of worship
<p>Start date of the Local Lettings Plan and length of time that it is applicable for.</p>	<p>The Local Lettings Plan (LLP) will be used for the letting of properties at the scheme from when LLP agreed.</p> <p>It will be in place for one year, and then future application will depend upon the first year review findings (this could be extended potentially after 1 year as we don't know what turnover will be)</p>
<p>Rent levels and tenancies</p>	<p>Properties will be re-let at rent levels as per the council's rent setting policy. There is an element of building related services charges that are also applicable for the tenant to pay. Tenant's are also responsible for paying for consumption of electricity and</p>

	<p>supply of Lifeline.</p> <p>The types of tenancies offered will reflect the council's current Tenancy Policy.</p>
<p>Allocation and lettings - generic approach</p>	<p>The properties will be advertised through Kent HomeChoice scheme and a link to the LLP will be included in the advert.</p> <p>Interested applicants will need to be registered and accepted on to the Housing Needs Register for the Canterbury district.</p> <p>Applicants need to show that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a housing need because of the physical condition of the present home; or • there is a medical or social reasons for wanting to move, such as poor health, disability, isolation from friends and family <p>To be accepted for any of the sheltered or sheltered plus housing schemes in the district, an ILM assessment will be carried out to ensure eligibility.</p> <p>Note - S193 offers (homelessness offers) will be looked at on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>Justification for Local Lettings Plan</p>	<p>In accordance with Canterbury City Council's Allocations Policy, this Local Lettings Plan is for the letting of homes for the Windsor House sheltered housing scheme in Whitstable.</p> <p>There are a number of reasons as to why this Local Lettings Plan is needed, namely to address the following:</p> <p>Increased vulnerability of residents in the scheme</p> <p>The council has confirmed that there is currently a concentration of tenants with high, complex needs and lifestyle vulnerabilities living within the scheme. This has been exacerbated by new tenants to the scheme who have similar or who have higher level support needs than the scheme can offer.</p> <p>At the time of writing this plan, 38% of tenants have significant complex needs this includes mental health, drug and alcohol dependencies, learning disabilities, dementia and cognitive impairment. Of this figure 19% have a dual diagnosis.</p> <p>In order to improve community life for all residents we need to strike a balance between those with high needs and those with low/no needs living at Windsor House</p>

	<p>Vacancies in the scheme</p> <p>There is a difficulty letting some vacancies in this scheme, mainly the two bedroomed properties. The council is under pressure to fill voids as when left empty this means a loss of rental income. The other issue is that we are seeing reducing numbers on the HNR who need sheltered housing, and who have been assessed as needing two bedrooms.</p> <p>Many tenants who need to move would prefer to stay in the scheme that they currently live in, with their friends, Independent Living Manager, support network, GP and in an area with which they are familiar.</p> <p>Anti Social behaviour</p> <p>Sheltered housing schemes aim to provide sociable, safe and supportive environments.</p> <p>There have been a significant number of issues within the scheme relating to anti social behaviour.</p> <p>The residents' general sense of safety and security has been completely undermined by the anti-social behaviour of some residents in the scheme.</p> <p>Community cohesion</p> <p>Historically, there were a number of active residents who coordinated social activities for those living at the scheme. These have gradually ceased over recent years.</p> <p>The impact of the anti-social behaviour at the scheme has had a detrimental effect on the scheme's sense of whole community.</p>
<p>Aims of the Local Lettings Plan</p>	<p>In light of the above challenges and justification, a Local Lettings Plan is needed for Windsor House, and it will be used to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help achieve a balanced community - including achieving a balance between residents with no/low needs and those with higher/more complex needs 2. Make effective use of vacancies within the scheme 3. Proactively manage, and where possible prevent antisocial behaviour, nuisance and crime

	<p style="text-align: center;">4. Encourage greater community cohesion and sustainability</p>
<p>Actions planned to meet the aims of the Local Lettings Plan</p>	<p>1. To help achieve a balanced community (<i>including achieving a balance between residents with no/low needs and those with higher/more complex needs</i>) we will:</p> <p>Develop a new process of assessment for the scheme to better ensure that risk is appropriately managed, that the support needs of new residents can be met fully, and to promote greater balance of support needs within the scheme.</p> <p>The ILM will also seek to obtain, wherever possible, landlord or other references to ensure that there is no history of prospective tenants causing anti-social behaviour or nuisance.</p> <p>People whose behaviour is thought likely to pose a risk to the health, safety and welfare of other residents, or who have support needs that cannot be met, will not be allocated sheltered housing within this scheme.</p> <p>To ensure sustainability and management of the scheme, the aim will be to achieve a ratio split of 20/80 of tenants with complex vs low/no needs (19 residents with high needs/ 50 with low or no needs).</p> <p>The new assessment process will also help build a sustainable, more balanced community in the scheme by avoiding an increased concentration of people with high support needs and conflicting lifestyles.</p> <p>2. To make effective use of vacancies within the scheme we will:</p> <p>When allocating vacant sheltered housing units in the scheme, priority will firstly be given to sheltered housing tenants who need to move within the same scheme and secondly to existing sheltered housing tenants who need to move from another scheme.</p> <p>Where a flat has significant disabled adaptations, the incoming tenant must be in need of these.</p> <p>Where there are no bids for two bedroom sheltered housing from eligible households assessed as needing two bedrooms, then the unit can be offered to qualifying two person households with an assessed need for one bedroom.</p> <p>Where no such households bid, then the unit may be offered to a</p>

	<p>single person eligible for sheltered housing.</p> <p>Any moves of existing tenants either within the scheme or from another scheme, will be subject to a new ILM assessment and also a risk assessment.</p> <p>3. Proactively manage, and where possible prevent antisocial behaviour, nuisance and crime:</p> <p>Striking a balance between residents who have high/complex needs and those with low/no needs, and risk assessment measures will contribute significantly towards prevention of anti-social behaviour occurring in the first instance.</p> <p>Applicants (and members of their household) will not have been perpetrators of serious and/or ongoing nuisance or anti social behaviour at their current home, or in the local community, or had any legal action as a result of nuisance, evicted for nuisance or anti social behaviour from any previous addresses. Discretion may be exercised if the applicant can show that they have over a period of not less than 2 years rectified their behaviour.</p> <p>Applicants will not have any outstanding or current Tenancy Notice for any breaches of tenancy where the grounds for the Notice have not been addressed. This also includes rent arrears and court costs.</p> <p>The council will facilitate the inception of a multi agency working group to look at complex or high risk issues occurring at the scheme. The working group will explore how various agencies, services and charities can support proactive management of these issues to improve the quality of life of those living at the scheme. Frequency of meetings in the first 12 month period is to be determined.</p> <p>4. Encourage greater community cohesion and sustainability:</p> <p>Ensuring that there is not a significant concentration of tenants in the scheme with high/complex needs, assessing the needs of prospective tenants to ensure that they can successfully manage a tenancy, and enabling moves within the scheme will all support improved community cohesion and sustainability.</p> <p>In addition, through the multi agency working group, the council will encourage partners to support the community cohesion agenda.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>The principles within this LLP will be discussed in detail with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ward Councillors ● Tenants <p>Feedback from these may be used to inform the final version.</p>

	Once the final LLP has been produced, then a link to this will be included on any property adverts for the scheme placed on Kent HomeChoice website
Impact assessment	EIA to be completed
Monitoring of the Lettings Plan	The council will monitor the impact of this Local Lettings Plan to assess effectiveness and to ensure it does not discriminate directly or indirectly on any equality grounds. Initially 3, 6 and 12 month reviews on progress.
Role of BSU HNR (Business Support Unit Housing Needs Register) Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allocate properties in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy, and the Local Lettings Plan ● Monitor the impact of the Local Lettings Plan
Role of Housing Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advertise properties via Kent Homechoice ● Sign up tenants ● Rent account management ● Scheme and tenancy management ● Management of ASB cases ● Monitor the impact of the Local Lettings Plan with BSU HNR team ● Applicant assessments ● References from previous landlord where possible. <p>Note - the Asset team is responsible for day to day repairs, planned maintenance, void works and safety aspects.</p> <p>Note - the council's Lifeline Team is responsible for provision of this service at this scheme.</p>
Complaints process	<p>If any applicant that is eligible to be rehoused under the Local Lettings Plan is unhappy with the process, then complaints should be made in the first instance to housingadvice@canterbury.gov.uk - the full Canterbury policy and process can be viewed via this link https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/info/20074/about_the_council/152/make_a_complaint/2</p>