

Local Lettings Plan - Margaret Court

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>Margaret Court is a designated elderly housing site situated on Kings Road, Herne Bay, CT6 5XA.</p> <p>The scheme provides 36 units of accommodation and is made up of a mixture of 18 x 1 bedroom and 18 x 2 bedroom flats. It is managed by the council's Neighbourhood Management Team following the transfer of housing services from East Kent Housing (EKH) back to the council on 1 October 2020.</p> <p>The flats are intended specifically for people aged over 55 years.</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.</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,

	<p>such as poor health, disability, isolation from friends and family; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are downsizing from a larger, general needs property <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 Margaret Court designated elderly site in Herne Bay.</p> <p>The rationale for a Local Lettings Plan is to address the issue of hard-to-let 2 bedroomed properties at this site.</p> <p>Vacancies at the site</p> <p>There is a difficulty letting vacant two bedroomed properties. The housing register has been exhausted, leaving properties vacant for long periods. The council has a responsibility to manage the void process as effectively as possible, to minimise rent loss and let properties as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Aims of the Local Lettings Plan</p>	<p>In light of the above challenges a Local Lettings Plan is essential for Margaret Court, and it will be used to:</p> <p>1. Make effective use of vacancies within the site</p>
<p>Actions planned to meet the aims of the Local Lettings Plan</p>	<p>1.To make effective use of vacancies within the site we will:</p> <p>Where there are no eligible bids in relation to the Housing and Allocations Policy for two bedroom designated elderly housing from 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 single person eligible for designated elderly housing.</p> <p>Priority will be given to current tenants of Margaret Court who want to move within the block.</p> <p>The age eligibility criteria will continue to apply for applicants and any non-dependents on their application.</p>

	<p>NB: Tenants need to be aware that they will be responsible for the full rent liability and may be affected by the under occupancy charge (more commonly known as the bedroom tax), whereby their housing benefit payment will not cover the full rent charge. Those tenants who are in receipt of their state pension are exempt from this charge.</p>
Consultation	<p>The principles within this Local Lettings Plan will be discussed with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ward Councillors ● Tenants <p>Feedback from these may be used to inform the final version.</p> <p>Once the final Local Lettings Plan has been produced, then a link to this will be included on any property adverts for the scheme placed on Kent HomeChoice website</p>
Impact assessment	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment to be completed</p>
Monitoring of the Lettings Plan	<p>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.</p> <p>Initially 3, 6 and 12 month reviews on progress. We propose these dates to be August and November 2022 and June 2023.</p>
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 Business Support Unit (BSU) and Housing Needs Register (HNR) teams ● 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>
Complaints process	<p>If any applicant that is eligible to be rehoused under the Local Lettings Plan is unhappy with the process, complaints can be</p>

	<p>made in the first instance to housingadvice@canterbury.gov.uk - the council's full complaints 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>
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