

INTRODUCTION

Significant tranches of development are currently starting across Bristol in response to the known housing needs. The terms under which these are being approved and developed will ensure the provision of more affordable housing in the city.

In 2021 / 2022, in conjunction with a large swathe of development starting in Lockleaze, we developed a Local Lettings Policy intended to ensure that the opportunity provided by the new developments is used to address several local issues identified by the residents of the area.

The Policy was developed in conjunction with the local community through extensive engagement with the main local community organisation (Lockleaze Neighborhood Trust), the Ward Councillors, and in consultation with other involved / affected parties such as BCC Housing Delivery, Community Lead Housing organisations and the Registered Providers operating in the area.

The Council actively supported the local community organisation in engaging widely with residents, for example by means of a survey and multiple community forum meetings. Housing Options leadership ensured that either they themselves or suitable designated representatives attended these forums and engagement opportunities when the Local lettings Policy was included on the agenda.

All negotiation was conducted in a very transparent and mutually respectful manner. Decisions were informed by extensive factual data and analysis, as well as by community input. All proposals put forward by the community were given full consideration internally and response was provided in detail, including explanations as to why specific requests might not be feasible, and where possible, how they might be adapted to be feasible.

The resulting proposal was provided to Partner Registered Providers through the WoE Housing Partnership for review by all interested parties. An in-depth EQIA was produced (Mandatory), and where necessary the feedback resulted in amendments that were then played back to the community.

It is our belief that this process has built trust and good relationships and resulted in a LLP that will deliver meaningful value for the local community without being unduly onerous for prospective landlords to apply.

The document that follows is a template that has been derived from the Lockleaze LLP which can be used for the development of such policies in other areas of the city going forward. Development of LLP is a co-design process performed in collaboration with Community Groups/ representatives who engage with the local community

Local Lettings Policy for **LOCATION** Affordable Housing Developments

Context

The policy below has been developed with the following principles in mind:

- 1) **Administrative simplicity** – to minimise the need to update and change the policy for every new development in LOCATION, the wording has been kept generic with no direct reference to any specific development. Site-specific commentary about the intentions underpinning each separate development should be publicised on that specific development’s website and could potentially be included in some form when the associated units are made available to the public.
- 2) The **definition of the boundaries** of ‘LOCATION’ are agreed as the [Ward boundary](#) as commonly accepted for Voting purposes.

If the data supporting the development of the proposal was sourced using different criteria explain that here.

- 3) The **process to secure approval to implement** this policy requires that
 - a. an Equality Impact Assessment be performed to evaluate the potential impact of our internal and external policies, procedures, activities and decisions on equality communities and make sure we meet our legal duties as defined by the Public Sector Equality Duty.
 - b. It be circulated for comment by interested Registered Providers via the WoE Housing Partnership.
 - c. It be presented to and approved by the applicable forum as dictated by BCC decision pathways.
 - d. Any or all of the above may result in a possible rejection of the policy or the need for further amendments in order to secure approval.

This 3rd point pertains to the approval of the Policy only and should be removed / adapted before publication

Local Lettings Policy for **LOCATION** Social and Affordable Housing Developments

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Bristol City Council (BCC) is committed to the creation of a mixed and balanced community within **LOCATION** through new build affordable homes.
- 1.2. *(General undertaking)* Brief explanation why the Local Letting Policy is being introduced e.g. a swathe of new development about to commence
- 1.3. *(Specific undertaking)* In line with BCC strategy this policy is intended to further support Community Led Housing initiatives which we believe are vital to meeting the needs of the city. These particularly intend to deliver true benefit for the local community, a specific group of people (an intentional community), or both.
- 1.4. *(Definition of **LOCATION**)* The boundary for this policy is the same as **LOCATION** ward boundary.
- 1.5. *(Development approach)* This policy has been developed through a process of consultation and community engagement undertaken in conjunction with **(Name the community groups / organisations involved in arriving at the policy)**.
- 1.6. *(Contextual overview)* Whilst BCC recognises the needs, priorities and ambitions of the **LOCATION** community, it also recognises the pressures and demands on social and affordable housing throughout the city. This Policy will supplement the existing Bristol Housing Allocations Policy to ensure homes are allocated in a fair and transparent manner.

Only applicants who are already on the Housing Register and deemed to be in Housing Need **AND** who meet the required eligibility criteria in this Policy will be considered under the Local Lettings Policy.
- 1.7. *(Application boundary)* The Local Lettings Policy may only be applied where the properties concerned are to be let by means of the Lettings System in use by the Bristol City Council (Currently Home Choice Bristol) i.e. social housing.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. **[50%]** of new social and affordable rented properties within each of the developments being undertaken within **LOCATION** will be allocated to applicants that meet the criteria set out in this document. *The standard expectation is 50% provision for the LLP, however, adjustment could be negotiated based on local circumstances and compelling supporting data.*

- 2.2. In the case of Community led Housing developments 100% of the new social and affordable units will be allocated in line with the Local Lettings Policy where this is possible, and in line with the relevant development's Lettings Plan where this exists.
- 2.3. This policy shall be applied for first let of all new build social and affordable housing and, in cases of turnover of tenancy, for an initial duration of 12 months from the date of first allocation using the policy. Subsequent extension of the LLP shall be contingent on the findings of the Annual Review.
- 2.4. In the case of CLH developments the Local Letting Policy will apply in perpetuity or until such time as it is renegotiated, as the protection of the benefits of CLH in perpetuity is one of the principle tenets of such developments.

2.5. If any OTHER category of housing is to be included explain the rationale and data behind the decision to include such housing.

NOTE: Any such additional provisions may be removed after the annual review should it be demonstrated by BCC data that the instigating data disparity no longer exists.

- 2.6. Should this process fail to select a suitable candidate, the property will be allocated according to the current Bristol Housing Allocations Policy.
- 2.7. This policy will be enacted once the first new build property or site is built ready for allocation and occupancy and will be applied per development. The process of application, shortlisting and allocation in line with the Policy may commence up to 16 weeks (4 months) prior to occupancy in order to enable a degree of consultation with prospective occupants. Individual timeline to be agreed per development up to the limit stated. Should there be a significant delay in the subsequent delivery of a development (more than 2 months), then we may consider withdrawing bids without any negative impact on their housing application.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the policy is to:

- 3.1. Provide clear guidance to Bristol City Council, housing provider partners, existing **LOCATION** residents and citizens of Bristol how the new homes built within **LOCATION** will be allocated and monitored.
- 3.2. Ensure that value created by the development is retained within the neighbourhood by prioritising local residents in housing need, and people with a strong connections to **LOCATION**.
- 3.3. To address current challenges in the provision of homes for both growing families and those who are downsizing to enable movement within the area as residents' needs change over time.

4. Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1. Applicants must be on the Bristol Housing Register and any offers made to applicants meeting the criteria below will be given to the applicants in the highest housing need. The normal Bristol Housing Allocation policy criteria regarding the number of reasonable offers rejected will apply.
- 4.2. Priority will be given to residents who meet at least one of the following criteria to successfully demonstrate a need or connection to live within **LOCATION**. *(Adapt the criteria that follow in line with the criteria agreed with the participating community organisations / groups)*
 - 4.2..1. Applicants who are currently living within **LOCATION** and have 2 years of more continuous residency with no breaks in their tenancy or residency and/or:
 - 4.2..2. Applicants who can demonstrate that they had 2 years or more of continuous residency with no breaks in their tenancy or residency in **LOCATION** no more than 2 years prior to their application, and/or
 - 4.2..3. Applicants employed within **LOCATION** for at least 2 years. (Min 16hpw)
 - 4.2..4. Applicants of no fixed abode, or living in Temporary or Supported Housing, whose previous address was in **LOCATION** and who can demonstrate 2 years' continuous residency in **LOCATION**.
- 4.3. Should an applicant not be found who matches the above criteria, the allocation of the property will revert back to the Bristol Housing Allocation Policy.
- 4.4. There will be flexibility in the allocation of properties to allow Landlords to make best use of stock and so direct away from this policy in cases of strategic interest where direct offers may be used as per LAT and Direct offer policies. (Examples of such cases include major repairs/ adaptations/ special-guardianship needs that would logically take priority over less urgent requirements.)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Landlords of the respective developments will be responsible for the allocation of properties.
- 5.2. BCC Housing Options will be responsible for assessing rehousing applications and agreeing the banding of an applicant.
- 5.3. BCC Housing Options will carry out allocations audits after each scheme / development has been successfully allocated. Outcomes and anonymised data regarding the successful applicants will be shared with the **LOCATION**

Neighborhood Trust (LNT) in accordance with [The Data Protection Act 1998](#) and BCC's own data protection protocols.

6. Policy Review

- 6.1. This Policy will be reviewed every twelve months following the first allocation using this policy.
- 6.2. Landlords may also monitor the effects of the policy separately to ensure that it is fair and that the criteria are still appropriate and fit for purpose. Any such concerns to be raised during the annual review.
- 6.3. The Annual Review will base decision-making on fact-based evidence as much as possible and is detailed in APPENDIX A
- 6.4. In the event that the 2021/2022 review of the current Bristol Housing Allocations Policy determines a more comprehensive approach to Local Lettings Policies, the implications of such changes on this particular policy will be discussed and integrated as part of the first Annual Review.

APPENDIX A: ANNUAL REVIEW

The Purpose

Objectives of the Annual Review of the Local Lettings Policy are:

- to assess the extent to which its objectives are being fulfilled,
- to address any issues that may have emerged during the previous 12 months,
- to assess whether there are grounds on which the continued application of the policy on developments where the first let has been completed may be warranted,
- similarly, to assess whether the continued application of the policy on *[specific additional categories of housing as per 2.5]* may be justified
- to decide whether the continued application of the policy for current and future planned new build developments is justified
- to propose amendments that may be required to address any of the above.

The Forum

The Forum for the Annual Review shall comprise:

- The Manager of the Department responsible for the Bristol Housing Allocations Policy (Currently Andrew Corp)
- The Bristol City Council Lettings Manager (Currently Joanne Marchant)
- Up to four representatives from the **LOCATION** **[Named Community organisations]**
- Representatives of the Providers responsible for applying the Local Lettings Policy in **LOCATION**. (For example, the Lettings Managers of these organisations)
- Representatives of Community Led Housing Developments responsible for applying the Local Lettings Policy in **LOCATION** **(For example, XYZ)**
- The person/s responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the Local Lettings Policy
- BCC Minute Taker

The Input

Inputs to the Annual Review will include at least the following with additional input being supplied where this is deemed to be relevant to the attainment of objectives or to issues being raised:

- Reporting of allocations made using the policy since inception / since the last review
- Reporting of any issues identified in applying the policy or as a result of applying the policy (e.g. complaints)
- The most recent housing register statistics available against the **LOCATION** (as sourced by postal code/s or any other way of determining data specific to the **LOCATION** should this become available in the interim)
- Information regarding any changes made or proposed to the over-arching Bristol Housing Allocation Policy that might affect or impact on the Local Lettings Policy

The Process

Timing: Annually from date of first let using this policy

Venue: TBA : Currently online

Agenda:

Report back on Lettings in line with the policy

Issues Raised

As per inputs above

Chair: Housing Supply Manager

Decision-making: Dependent on the issues / proposals raised. Proposed amendments may require EQIA / HSLT or other involvement.

BCC will raise awareness internally ahead of the review:

- HSLT - with a view to expediting any decisioning process that may be required.
- Other to be agreed at the time (e.g. Specialist Advisors – with a view to drafting proposed amendments)

Similarly, the Community and Community Lead Housing organisations may need to prepare for any community consultation that may be required as a result of the Review.

As with the development of the original policy the intent is that issues be resolved in a collaborative and mutually respectful manner.