Havebury Housing Partnership

Allocations & Lettings Policy

Policy HS 035

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Relevant corresponding Policy *(procedures only)*			
Approved by (inc date)	Resident Experience Committee		
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Author *(Document Owner)*	Allocations and Voids Manager		
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Legal Advice (inc date)	N/A		

1. Policy statement

1.1 We aim to provide affordable, well managed rented accommodation to those in housing need within our operating areas.

1.2 We will:

- Let our homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way.
- Consider the housing needs and aspirations of our residents and potential residents.

We will also demonstrate how:

- We make the best use of available housing
- Ensure lettings are compatible with the requirements of any plans or section 106 agreement.
- Contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities
- Implement a clear application, decision making and appeals processes when outside of the choice-based lettings scheme.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy sets out how we will allocate and let our properties.

2.2 We will strive to ensure equal, fair and open access to housing for all eligible applicants or residents in need of housing, within our operating areas.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all our rented homes available for letting, including general needs (Affordable Rent and Social Rent), independent living accommodation (sheltered or over 55 years), supported and intermediate rent. It does not apply to housing for sale, shared ownership or Lucy Adams House

3.2 This policy does not apply to mutual exchanges, which are covered in the Tenancy policy (HS 055)

3.3 This policy also covers how we will rent our garages in a separate section (7).

3.4 Where applicable and in line with our domestic abuse housing alliance accreditation, exceptions will be made to the standard allocations process to support a survivor moving into one of our homes, particularly around local connection.

4. Definitions:

4.1 **CBL** – choice-based lettings (scheme)

4.2 **Home-Link, Gateway to Homechoice, Breckland Key Select, Broadland & South Norfolk Home Options** – the CBL partnership scheme's that covers our operating area.

4.3 **Local connection** – a connection to an area is typically formed by the residents current home address, place of work or through their parent/s or adult sibling connection to an area. These are set out within individual planning agreements or

local lettings policy.

4.4 **Affordable Rent** – a type of affordable housing. It is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). Rent increases are regulated by the social housing regulator but rent can be rebased and reassessed on new lettings.

4.5 **Social Rent** – another type of affordable housing - rent is calculated using a set formula that takes into account the value of the property, the average earnings in the area and the number of bedrooms. Social rented homes are typically around 60% of an open market rent. Rent increases are regulated by the social housing regulator.

4.6 **Intermediate Rent** – aimed at people who have difficulty affording market rents on the open market and for those who lack a mortgage deposit and therefore cannot buy a home just yet. Intermediate Rents are generally set around 80% of the market rate, including service charges and are normally offered on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy with an initial commitment of six months. The target group for Intermediate Rents is different from those looking for Social/Affordable Rented housing. Generally these are targeted at working households, such as those identified as 'keyworkers', such as nurses, teachers, etc.

4.7 **Allocation** – the term used when a property is offered to a prospective tenant shortlisted from the CBL scheme.

4.8 **Letting** – a property is accepted by the resident, and they sign a tenancy agreement to move into the property.

4.9 **Independent living** – a name given to our over 55 customers, formerly known as sheltered accommodation, with no additional support provided.

4.10 **Hard to let properties** – a property which has not been accepted by any applicant for at least three concurrent cycles on the appropriate CBL scheme.

4.11 **Sensitive let** – a request for additional screening of any applicant to ensure they have not caused previous tenancy related issues and/or we are aware of current neighbourhood issues where it is likely that the previous resident caused distress/nuisance to the wider residents.

5. Aims and Outcomes

5.1 We want to ensure that our residents and applicants can access suitable housing based on need and availability in a fair, accessible and transparent way.

5.2 We will advertise and allocate all of our properties via the relevant local authority choice based letting scheme, where appropriate, subject to paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 below. Where there is a need for a local lettings plan, or sensitive let, we may let homes outside of the local authority's policy. Due to our operating area it might

not be possible to meet all the requirements of the individual local authority.

5.3 Housing need is assessed by the sub regional common allocations policy, for each CBL scheme. This comprises of a banding system that considers housing need and length of time the applicant has been waiting for a property.

5.4 We will advertise our new build properties within the relevant CBL scheme and in accordance with any relevant section 106 agreement. We normally also do this for the majority of our relets of existing stock, but we can and will, retain 25% of our properties to offer to our own residents by way of management moves and direct lets should we need to do so

5.5 To make the best use of our properties and in exceptional cases, we may choose not to advertise a property through the CBL scheme, and a direct let may be made – for example:

- If a property is needed urgently to deal with an emergency e.g. fire or flood
- To enable a management move
- To facilitate a move while a property is being repaired
- When a resident's existing property needs to be demolished
- To meet the requirements of those with specific housing needs
- If it is specifically adapted and meets a particular need of an applicant
- If it is needed to provide temporary accommodation or to fulfil a statutory duty for a succession case

In these cases, we will notify the relevant CBL scheme and local authority. Direct lets and the determination of urgency will be considered on a case by case basis. This list is not exhaustive.

5.6 Our lettings procedures contain full details on how we allocate our properties and the possible reasons we may refuse an applicant.

5.7 Homes particularly designed for, or accessible to, people with disabilities will be advertised as such, to help applicants with those needs to identify them. An applicant who is eligible for an adapted property may bid on properties without adaptations in line with the normal bidding procedure. Any aid or adaptation request will be completed in line with our aids and adaptations policy.

5.8 We will work with partners, the local authority and agencies to promote strong and sustainable communities and may decide to let our properties via a local lettings plan. This may be to tackle anti-social behaviour or to improve areas that are difficult to let.

5.9 Each week, we will advertise any vacant properties via the relevant CBL route (including to those on assisted bidding schemes), subject to paragraphs 4.4-4.8 above. To ensure the best use of properties, we may arrange multiple viewings with applicants where the CBL scheme supports this option. Viewings may be done in person or virtually. Each advert will contain details of the specific property.

5.10 We reserve the right to withdraw an offer to an applicant if there are grounds to do so, and if we consider that the allocation would be detrimental to the local community, in line with our allocations and tenancy management procedures.

5.11 We will issue any tenancy in line with our Tenancy policy.

5.12 Where a disability is disclosed during the shortlisting or allocations process, which may have an impact on evacuation and health and safety, we will complete a person-centred risk assessment to advise of the suitability of the property. Where appropriate we may implement a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP).

6. Eligibility

6.1 Applicants are entitled to bid for properties we advertise, and we will offer accommodation in accordance with the allocation process of the particular CBL, the applicant's eligibility for the specific property and in line with our procedures.

6.2 The same eligibility rules for all applicants apply, including an assessment around verification, and any help or support required to maximise income. This is to ensure that the offer of accommodation is right first time, and that the applicant will be able to sustain their tenancy. Where there is debt or former tenant arrears, or other tenancy breaches in a previous or current tenancy, we may refuse to accept the bid or work with the applicant to resolve the issue.

6.3 We will only refuse bids in exceptional circumstances. A refusal can be appealed to the voids and allocations manager with the reasons why. Any appeal will be considered on a case by case basis and used in conjunction with our Allocation process.

6.4 We reserve the right to let to applicants who ordinarily would not be eligible for social housing but who fulfil the aims of our charitable status. This could be in the following circumstances, and this list is not exhaustive:

- Where we have hard to let properties and are unable to let via the local authorities CBL system.
- This is a requirement of the S106 or local lettings plan.
- A varied tenure mix is required to create a balanced or sustainable community.

'Hard to let' properties will be let on this basis and advertised via our website, the local press or property websites such as Rightmove. Our usual pre tenancy checks and our Tenancy policy will apply.

6.5 Intermediate rent properties will be offered in accordance with the requirements of the scheme, eligibility conditions and in line with our tenancy policy and our allocations procedure.

6.6 We will conduct right to rent checks for all new applicants where the allocation does not originate from a local authority.

6.7 We will manage any suspected cases of fraud or deception in line with our Tenancy policy and procedures.

7. Garages

7.1 Garage allocations and lettings sit outside of our dwellings (rented homes) policy.

7.2 Each garage will be allocated for rent on a licence. There could be exceptions when garages remain empty. Those which remain empty may be due to refurbishment, development requirements or because they are beyond

economic repair. All applications for a garage will be completed online via our portal.

7.3 We will not allocate a garage to tenants or former tenants who are in arrears unless there are exceptional circumstances. This decision will be reviewed by the Allocations Manager.

7.4 All of the terms and conditions relevant to the garage tenancy are within the garage licence agreement. Each garage tenant should be aware of their responsibilities and adhere to this agreement. Should a tenant breach any condition(s) Havebury reserves the right to repossess the garage without a Court Order.

7.5 We will not issue joint tenancies to a garage agreement.

7.6 Each garage is let under the most recent terms and conditions. Each tenant is responsible for the insurance of any vehicle or other items stored within a garage

7.7 VAT will be charged to all non-Havebury residential tenants. VAT will not be charged to Havebury tenants who rent up to two garages. However, VAT will be applied to any subsequent garage rentals above the two-garage threshold.

7.8 The type of agreement along with the allocation of garages will be set out within the garage allocation procedure.

7.9 The management, terms of the rental agreement and termination of an agreement are within the licence agreement for each garage.

7.10 There is no right of appeal or to contest decisions made in the allocation of garages.

7.11 There is no automatic right to succeed or mutually exchange a garage. This will be discussed on an individual basis in line with other policies.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Resident Experience Committee is responsible for approval and oversight of this policy.

8.2 The voids and allocations manager and delegated staff are responsible for delivery.

9. References

Related External Documents	
Reference	**Link to reference**
9.1 The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013	Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013
9.2 The Housing Act 1985 (as amended) and any associated Regulations	Housing Act 1985
9.3 The Housing Act 1988 (as amended) and any associated Regulations	Housing Act 1988
9.4 The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and any associated Regulations	Housing Act 1996

9.5	The Homelessness Act 2002 and any associated Regulations	Homelessness Act 2002
9.6	The Data Protection Act 2018 and any associated Regulations	Data Protection Act 2018
9.7	The UK General Data Protection Regulation and any associated Regulations (UK GDPR)	UK General Data Protection Regulation
9.8	Tenancy Standard, Regulator of Social Housing	Consumer standards Code of Practice - GOV.UK
9.9	Rent Standard and Policy Statement, Regulator of Social Housing	Rent Standard and Guidance - GOV.UK

Related Internal Documents	
9.10	*Tenancy Policy and procedure*
9.11	*Allocations and Lettings Procedure - P003*
9.12	*Garage Allocations and Lettings Procedure – P005*
9.13	*Abandonment Procedure*
9.14	*Succession Procedure*
9.15	*Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure*
9.16	*Income Management Policy and Procedure*
9.17	*Recharges and Sundry Debts Procedure*
9.18	*Data Protection Policy and Procedure*
9.19	*Management Move / Direct Let Procedure*
9.20	*Anti-Social Behaviour Policy*
9.21	*Aids and adaptations policy and procedures*

10. Document control

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