

Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 12th December 2022

Local Lettings Policy – New Build

Report of Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement for Housing

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement, 01246 242231 victoria.dawson@bolsover.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement, 01246 242231 victoria.dawson@bolsover.gov.uk

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To consider and provide comment on the draft Local Lettings Policy for new build properties across the District.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Bolsover District Council has set an ambition to deliver 150 new homes by March 2024. Sites have been developed in key locations, with a mixture of property type to reflect the housing need in that specific location.
- 1.2 Allocations to new developments require a mix of tenants to create sustainable communities and to give priority to local people.
- 1.3 The Council's Allocations Policy provides the overall framework for lettings of council properties. Local lettings policies allow the Council to respond to local needs and have a localised approach to the management of specific property types. Local lettings policies may give preference for offers of accommodation to defined groups of customers, for example, on the basis of their age, employment status or local connection to an area.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The Council's Allocations Policy ensures that people in most need are placed in the reasonable preference categories and are able to access council accommodation, therefore this Local Lettings Policy will be used in conjunction with the Council's Allocations Policy.

- 2.2 The Local Lettings Policy – New Build Properties (Appendix 1) details the method of allocating the new build properties, to those who live in or have a strong connection to the ward where the new properties are located, in the first instance.
- 2.3 The strong local connection criteria will include;
- Living within the ward where the new build homes are located (for the past 3 years)
 - In paid work in the ward – (for the past 3 years)
 - Has a close family member (parents, grandparents or children) living in the ward – (for the past 3 years)
 - Can demonstrate a strong local connection having lived in the area for five years e.g. lived in the area as a child and then moved away
- 2.4 If there are no applicants in the categories above, the properties will be allocated in accordance with the Council Allocations Policy, in order of priority banding and waiting time.
- 2.5 Applicants will bid for properties, via the Choice Based Lettings system. They will undergo a first stage assessment based on the Council’s usual Allocations Policy. Successful shortlisted applicants will then be required to undergo a second stage selection process based on the criteria set out in this Local Lettings Policy before any offer of accommodation is made. This will require the applicant to attend an interview with the Housing Needs Assistants and Housing Tenancy Assistant for the area.
- 2.6 It is intended that the Local Lettings Policy will apply to any new build property built or acquired by the Council and any other new build schemes in the District owned/managed by the Council. However where there is a property with adaptations, this will be excluded and allocations will be through the Housing Allocation and Review Panel (HARP) as set out in the Allocation Policy.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The new properties have been built to reflect the housing need in specific locations, and it is considered necessary to have a Local Lettings Policy to manage the allocation of these. This ensures that priority is given to those with a local connection to the area in the first instance to meet the housing need and demand, with an option for allocations to then take place in accordance with the Allocations Policy.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The alternative option is to let new build properties without a Local Lettings Policy which would not achieve the desired outcomes in terms of letting properties to local communities, where there is an identified need.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee review and provide comments on the draft Local Lettings Policy prior to Executive approval and formal adoption.

Approved by Cllr Sandra Peake – Portfolio Holder for Housing

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

The Council must abide by the Housing Act 1996, as amended, in developing its allocations scheme, including local lettings policies. Local lettings policies may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives. However, the Council must have regard to its duties under equalities legislation, as well as the requirement to give overall priority for allocations of social housing to people in the reasonable preference (housing need) categories, including homelessness, medical need or overcrowding. This is achieved through the Council's approach to lettings across the wider District area.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details: N/A

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

There are no staffing implications arising from the report or Policy.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	Yes

<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	<p>(please state which wards or state All if all wards are affected)</p>
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Details: Customer Services Scrutiny</p>

<p>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.</p>
<p>Customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing customer satisfaction with our services • Providing good quality council housing where people choose to live <p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling Housing Growth: increasing the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population and support economic growth • Making the best use of our assets

<p>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</p>	
<p>Appendix No</p>	<p>Title</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Local Lettings Policy</p>

<p>Background Papers</p>
<p><i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i></p>
<p>None</p>