

Lettings Plan for Dilly Lane, Hartley Wintney

Purpose of the Lettings Plan:

This local lettings policy has been prepared to assist in the initial letting of 40 properties for affordable rent at Dilly Lane, Hartley Wintney by Sentinel Association, to contribute to establishing a balanced and sustainable community, which integrates successfully with the market housing.

Property type	No of properties	Tenure
1bed 2person maisonette	20	12 rent, 8 s/o
2bed 4person house	34	19 rent, 15 s/o
3bed 5person house	14	9 rent, 5 s/o
Total	68	

The development at Dilly Lane provides a total of 68 affordable homes for a mix of rent and shared ownership, to be delivered in phases.

Purpose of the Lettings Plan:

This Lettings Plan has been prepared to assist with the initial letting of 40 affordable rented properties for Dilly Lane. The principles are:

- To establish a balanced community, by including a mix of applicant types and household sizes
- To achieve a mix of child density and occupancy levels that will encourage sustainability

In order to comply with this Lettings Plan, applicants may not be considered in accordance with the relevant lettings scheme in operation at the time and will not necessarily be let at maximum child density.

Authority to develop local lettings policies:

The Council has the power under s167 (2e) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories or not. However, in operating local lettings policies, housing authorities will need to ensure that, overall, reasonable preference for allocations is given to applicants in the reasonable preference categories; and that their local lettings policies do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on racial or other equality grounds, as set out in Paragraph 5.26 of the Allocations Code of Guidance issued in November 2002.

Nomination rights:

The Council has nomination rights to 100% of the affordable housing on first lets and a minimum of 75% nominations on subsequent lets, in line with the existing Nomination Agreement.

Employment:

The lettings plan will aim to ensure that at least 40% of tenants on the first let are currently in employment including:

- A permanent employment contract
- A long-term contract – more than 1 year

- Self-employed
- Tenants who are working more than 16 hours per week
- Substantial training for employment

Child density:

- Child density is defined as the number of children under 18, expressed as a percentage of the total population. Single parents are considered as a couple when calculating child density. Priority will be given to establishing a balance between older and younger children by seeking a range of children's ages in each phase.
- A child density of 40% applies to the 2 bed affordable rented houses across the development.

Use of starter tenancies:

All successful applicants who are not moving directly from a housing association property will be issued with starter tenancies for the first 12 months of their occupation. Tenants transferring from other housing association homes will be issued with a similar tenancy, depending on their current tenure.

Rewarding good tenants:

The lettings plan will aim to ensure that all lettings are made to tenants, who have a good tenancy record in accordance with Sentinel's policy. (See Appendix xx).

- No breaches of their tenancy agreement, for example, for anti-social behaviour
- A clear rent account for at least 30 of the past 36 months (in the current climate, there may be tenants who have paid their rent regularly and on time, but have had a period when, for circumstances beyond their control, there has been a delay in rent payments, eg awaiting a claim for Housing Benefit)
- Not owe any housing-related debts to their landlord or the Council

Prior to applicants being invited to view, an assessment of 'good' tenant status will be confirmed and references will be sought from private landlords.

Accommodation specific criteria:

Ground floor maisonettes:

Applicants assessed as having a requirement for level access accommodation will be prioritised for ground floor maisonettes

Impaired Mobility Units

Two units are designed to accommodate people assessed as having impaired mobility. These include wet rooms, power sockets at a higher level and lower window sills. Applicants with a requirement for these features will be prioritised for these units.

Allocation process:

- Sentinel Housing Association will advise the Council of the properties to be advertised for letting, at least 4 weeks prior to handover.
- The units will be either advertised on Hart Homes or through choice-based letting schemes in neighbouring authorities as part of cross-boundary nomination arrangements.
- The Council will send the top applicant for each property to Sentinel Housing Association.
- The top applicant will be invited to view the property.
- Phased handover will enable the review of lets to take place throughout the allocation process

Monitoring

An estate profile will be compiled annually by Sentinel, including the following:

- Summary of CORE lettings returns
- No of voids during the year
- Analysis of housing management activity, including anti-social behaviour work

Hart District Council will assess the outcome of the initial lettings at Dilly Lane when all the properties are let.

Appendix I:

Extract from Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings (Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities) August 2008

Local lettings policies and advertising criteria, labelling

- 4.68 Section 167(2E) of the 1996 Act enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories. This is the statutory basis for so-called “local lettings policies”. Local lettings policies may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives. So for example, local lettings policies may be used to reduce the proportion of older children/young adults on an estate to reduce the incidences of anti-social behaviour; or to deal with concentrations of deprivation by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment.
- 4.69 Local lettings policies may be operated in conjunction with a choice based lettings scheme. However, authorities need to bear in mind that any local lettings policy will restrict the choice available to some applicants, and may lead to choice based lettings schemes which are more complex and less transparent.
- 4.70 Where operating local lettings policies, housing authorities will need to ensure that, overall, reasonable preference for allocations is given to applicants in the reasonable preference categories; and that their local lettings policies do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on racial or other equality grounds.¹ Consequently, it will not usually be appropriate to apply local lettings schemes to more than a limited part of a local authority’s stock (or stock to which the authority has nomination rights). Local lettings policies should be monitored as to their effectiveness and reviewed regularly so that they can be revoked where they are no longer appropriate or necessary.
- 4.71 Where authorities intend to operate local lettings policies, this should be made clear on the face of the allocation scheme. However, since local lettings policies will often be time limited, it may not be practicable for the detailed policies to be included in the allocation scheme. One way to get around this would be for the allocation scheme to include a general statement about the intention to implement local lettings policies and to set out the detail of any local lettings policy in a separate document or documents which could be revoked or revised as appropriate. Where this approach is adopted, local lettings policies should be published and should include an explanation of the policy which should be evidence based wherever possible.

¹ Paragraph 5.26 of the Allocations Code of Guidance issued in November 2002.

Advertising criteria – “restrictive labelling”

4.72 Where accommodation is allocated by means of a choice based lettings scheme, housing authorities may wish to attach criteria (known as “advertising criteria” or “restrictive labelling”) to particular accommodation which is advertised specifying, for example, that:

- only people of a particular description may apply for that particular accommodation or
- people of a particular description will be given preference for that particular accommodation

4.73 Restrictive labelling may be used, for example, to give effect to a local lettings policy (see paragraphs 4.67 to 4.71) or to a target-based system (see paragraph 4.38 to 4.43), or to match people with access needs to accessible accommodation. It is important that the practical application of such labelling should be operated in accordance with criteria or policies which are set out clearly in the authority’s allocation scheme, and that the effect should not be directly or indirectly discriminatory. Where an authority uses restrictive labelling, it should monitor the impact to ensure that it continues to comply with its duty to give reasonable preference to applicants in the reasonable preference categories.

Appendix 2: Affordable Housing Units and Expected Handover

Phase	Expected handover date	Tenure	Mix	Plot	Total no. Of units
1	8 th March 2011	GNR	5 x 2B, 4P houses	1,2,3,4,6	5
1	8 th March 2011	GNR	2 x 3B, 5P houses	5,7	2
1	1 st March 2011	S/O	2 x 1b, 2P maisonettes	27,28	2
1	1 st March 2011	S/O	5 x 2B, 4P houses	29, 30,31,32	4
1	1 st March 2011	S/O	2 x 1B, 2P maisonettes	33 and 34	2
2	Mid-April 2011	S/O	2 x 1B, 2P maisonettes	8 and 9	2

2	Mid-April 2011	S/O	4 x 2B, 4P houses	10,11,12,13	4
2	Mid-April 2011	S/O	2 x 1B x 2P maisonettes	14 and 15	2
2	Mid-April 2011	GNR	2 x 3B, 5P houses	25 and 26	2
3	Mid-May 2011	GNR	2 x 1B, 2P maisonettes	16 and 17	2
3	Mid-May 2011	GNR	2 x 3B, 5P houses	18 and 19	2
3	Mid-May 2011	GNR	4 x 2B, 4P houses	20,21,22 and 23	4
3	Mid-May 2011	GNR	1x 3B, 4P houses	24	1
TOTAL					34