

LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

For Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council (BCP)

Between

Sage Homes and

BCP Council Housing Options & Partnerships

For units 7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18 and 23

Poitiers Drive, Bournemouth, BH11 9GG

1. Background

Section 167 (2E) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) enables Housing Authorities to adopt Local Lettings Policies and Plans. The Code of Guidance states, that these lettings plans could enable a Housing Authority to allocate to specific groups of people, whether or not they fall into the reasonable preference categories. However, it does also state that reasonable preference categories must be taken into account overall and that local lettings plans (LLPs) should not discriminate either directly or indirectly on any equality grounds.

Once agreed these schemes will have their own allocations criteria. LLPs may be applied in addition to any local planning restrictions (contained in agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) which may be in place but will not override them.

LLPs can be put in place for a specific area or estate and will be 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.

LLPs will be used to ensure, where possible, that there is a mixed and balanced community, working towards outcomes that reflect the wider community and address issues such as child density and the proportion of households in employment in any one area or estate. The precise approach to be adopted will reflect the problems/issues of an area or estate.

This LLP shall apply to the initial allocations of 13 new-build properties known as Poitiers Drive, Bournemouth. The LLP will begin at the point that the first properties are handed over, approximately September 2023 and continue until such time as all 13 properties have been allocated. The LLP can be extended by mutual agreement.

13 properties (2 x three-bedroom houses, 1 x four bedroom House, 6 x 1 Bedroom Maisonettes, 4 x 2 Bedroom Houses) are to be let as affordable rent homes, with the BCP Council having 100% allocation rights on all lettings. All tenancies will be offered on a One year Starter Tenancy followed by a five year fixed term tenancy subject to no tenancy breaches.

The Development consists of:

- 6 x 1 Bedroom Maisonettes (max 2 persons) general needs
(plots 10, 11, 13, 14, 17 & 18)
- 4 x 2 Bedroom Houses (max 4 persons) general needs
(plots 12, 15, 16 & 23)
- 2 x 3 Bedroom Houses (max 4 persons) general needs
(plots 8 & 9)
- 1 x 4 Bedroom House (max 6 persons) general needs
(plot 7)

2. Purpose of Local Lettings Plan

This Local Lettings Plan has been prepared to assist in the initial letting of properties at Poitiers Drive, Bournemouth by BCP Council.

The contents of this document will be used to prepare the advert for promoting the development under the BCP HomeChoice Lettings Scheme and will assist with the final selection of successful applicants.

3. Objectives of the Local Lettings Plan

- i. To create a community that is sustainable.
- ii. To ensure the new community blends smoothly with the existing community.
- iii. To ensure that the housing needs of the local and wider community are reflected within the new development.
- iv. To attain a mixture of child density and occupancy levels to encourage sustainability.
- v. To make the best use of the housing stock (primarily through the BCP Council's under occupation scheme).
- vi. To meet the requirements of the BCP HomeChoice Allocations Policy to ensure allocation is made to suitable applicants.
- vii. To ensure that residents feel safe and content in their homes and have the same opportunities as any other resident.
- viii. To protect the public and residents from nuisance/anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- ix. To reduce turnover and potential refusals of properties.
- x. to minimise any possible stigmatisation of residents living in these properties

The existence of the letting plan will mean that vacancies will not always be allocated to the applicant who can demonstrate the greatest housing need.

Applicants who do not meet this criterion or with a lower priority need may be considered for an allocation if their being housed would help maintain a stable community.

This LLP does not:

Provide for subsequent allocations of these properties, which will be let in accordance with BCP Council's current Allocation Policy.

4. Key Elements

Applicants will be considered for allocation who are eligible and assessed in accordance with BCP Council's Housing Allocations Policy bedroom size criteria. Under occupation will not be considered for these properties, as per the policy.

For the initial vacancies the following will be considered by BCP Council prior to nominating applicants from the Housing Register:

- I. The 13 properties will be occupied by a mix of housing need applicants from Gold and Emergency Housing Bands. In the event there are no suitable applicants from the Emergency and Gold bands, applicants from other bands will be eligible for these homes.
- II. In order to assist residents with downsizing, priority will be given to people under-occupying social homes.
- III. In order to meet the needs of vulnerable clients, consideration will also be given to making a direct let to those with an emergency housing need
- IV. In response to the pressure the Council is currently experiencing to provide temporary accommodation, priority will also be given to households currently occupying temporary accommodation
- V. We will aim to allocate a third of the units to residents who are economically active and working either full time or part time and not wholly reliant on benefits. This proposed allocation is not exclusive.
- VI. For properties with adaptations, we aim that priority will be given to those with disabilities that will benefit from these adaptations
- VII. Applicants who have support needs should have the relevant support in place at the point of letting, with a commitment from both the applicant and the support provider to continue the arrangement for as long as appropriate and in any event for a minimum of 3 months

Once the nomination has been received Sage Homes will assess whether the applicant/s meet the allocation criteria and will assess whether the accommodation is affordable for the individual households.

No major alterations to properties will be considered within the first 12 months of occupation.

5. Advertising & Lettings

All properties will be advertised to the BCP Home Choice Allocations Scheme

The adverts will describe the property types and sizes available for letting, together with a hyperlink to the LLP. The LLP will also be published on the BCP Homechoice website. Information with regard to property attributes and rent levels will also be included.

The properties will be openly advertised to all bands.

Upon closure of the bidding process, applicants will appear on the shortlist in band and date order. The final selection of applicants to be verified for the vacancies will depend upon their application band (housing need), the length of time they have been in this band and the overall aims and objectives of this Local Lettings Plan. This may require some applicants to be considered before others irrespective of their relevant banding and dates.

6. Exclusions

All applicants will be considered for housing based on their personal and housing history. Sage Homes will liaise with the Housing Options Team regarding any suitability/affordability concerns.

Bids will not normally be considered from those who have housing related debt or an outstanding notice for any breaches of tenancy with a registered social landlord.

If Sage Homes are to refuse a nomination, they will advise the Housing Options Team, BCP and the applicant/s.

Sage Homes will provide evidence to support their recommendation for refusal to Housing Options to consider and approve. Where a disagreement remains following initial consultation, the situation will be referred to the Head of Housing Options & Partnerships and the Head of Sage Homes.

7. Equality

We believe in treating everyone fairly and it's an essential part of our culture.

The plan aims to ensure that the scheme is representative of the local community and promote community cohesion.

The plan has been written in line BCP Council's Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This can be viewed at:

<https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/About-the-council/Equality-diversity-and-inclusion/Our-commitment-to-equality-diversity-and-inclusion.aspx>

The plan aims to ensure that the objectives set out above are met.

8. Terms of Tenancy

Prospective tenants need to be aware of the terms of Sage Homes' Starter Introductory Tenancy conditions.

These terms of tenancy will apply to all initial and future lettings.


9. Future Lettings

With regard to the information set out in section 4 of this Letting Plan, Sage Homes will advertise and allocate properties in accordance with the BCP Council's allocation policy and the BCP Home Choice Lettings Scheme.

10. Monitoring and Review

BCP Council will review this LLP. The review will include:

- Assessment against the purposes and objective of the LLP.
- Satisfaction of permanently relocated tenants with their new allocated properties.

Signed by: 

On behalf of BCP Housing Options & Partnerships

Dated: 18/09/2023

Signed by: Yasmine Ameen

On behalf of Sage Homes

Dated: 18/09/2023