



Buckinghamshire Council Local Lettings Policy Anstey Court, Waddesdon, HP18 0ND October 2022

Introduction

This is an overarching local lettings policy for affordable homes built on some new residential developments within the council administrative area.

Allocations to social rented homes in the are made through choice-based lettings (CBL), in accordance with the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy 2022. In exceptional circumstances, such as on rural exception sites or sites developed to meet the strategic aims of the Policy, the Council may determine whether a local lettings policy is appropriate for a development, and this will be assessed on a scheme-by-scheme basis. Individual and scheme specific local lettings policies will be drawn up in conjunction with the developing housing association partner and any other relevant parties, using the form in Appendix 1.

Factors to consider when determining whether there needs to be a local lettings policy for a scheme are as follows:

- The type of development (e.g. Section 106 site, Rural Exceptions site)
- The number of homes proposed (market and affordable)
- The layout and design
- Where the affordable homes are located (i.e. are they pepper potted amongst the market homes?)
- The size, type and tenure of the affordable homes
- The location of the development within the district (i.e. is it within the town centre or a housing estate?)
- What amenities are on the site and nearby
- Whether there are any particular anti-social behaviour issues that we are aware of within the vicinity of the development
- Are the affordable homes particularly suitable for certain households (e.g. people with support needs, single people, larger families)

It is important to note that if not enough applicants who conform to the local lettings criteria apply for a property, it will be allocated in accordance with the standard allocation policy.

Legislation

The primary legislation covering the allocation of social homes is The Housing Act 1996 Part VI (Allocation of Housing Accommodation) and Part VII (Homelessness) & The Localism Act 2011. The legislation prescribes that the council must give priority (called reasonable preference in the legislation), to certain groups in deciding how it allocates its homes.

Section 166A(6)(b) 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, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of s.166A(3).

Government policy

In recent years, Government policy has sought to ensure that affordable housing is provided on mixed tenure sites. PPS3 reinforces this message, requiring that new housing development contributes towards creating ‘sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities’, ‘supporting a wide variety of households in all areas.’

Government guidance

The Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities, June 2012, provides the statutory basis for so-called ‘local lettings policies’ which may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives.

For example, local lettings policies may be used 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, Armed forces or Care Leavers, for example.

The guidance allows for local lettings policies to be used in conjunction with CBL but it also states that overall, reasonable preference is still given to applicants in the reasonable preference categories and that the local lettings policies do not discriminate against applicants on racial or other equality grounds. The council will ensure that this applies to all of its local lettings policies.

Bucks Home Choice

Section 6.2 of the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy (BHCAP) 2022, allows for local lettings policies in order to achieve housing management and other housing policy objectives. It also mentions that local lettings policies will be published on the Bucks Home Choice website and will state the justification for its being adopted and operated. Strategic policy objectives includes the strategic aim of making the best use of the social housing stock within the Buckinghamshire administrative area.

Scheme details and lettings criteria

See Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Scheme details	
Scheme name	Anstey Court, Waddesdon, HP18 0ND
RSL	Fairhive Homes
Handover date	October 2022
Date nominations requested	To be advertised imminently (28-9)
Tenancy commencement date	October 2022
Total number of properties	16 flats
Number of affordable properties	16 social rented 1 bedroom flats

Property type and number of beds and persons	Nos. of units	Supported Housing /N	Rented	Intermediate
<u>16 x 1 bedroom, 1-2 person flats for those over 55 years of age as an independent living scheme</u>	16	N (independent living)	16	0

Justification for local lettings policy

This small development of 16 flats are all to be offered via Bucks Home Choice to applicants on the housing register at initial let. The units are delivered at a 'social rent' level and were partly funded by funding from the council to reduce the rent level to that of a social rent level rather than affordable rent of 80% of market rent. The scheme is high quality two storey accommodation with a lift and generous sized high quality flats overlooking open countryside.

The scheme itself sits at the bottom of Anstey Close, Adjacent to other blocks of flats for those

over the age of 55 which are owned by Thame and District Housing Association and also a number of other older person designated housing on the approach to this new scheme, which is at the end of a cul de sac within the village of Waddesdon, near Aylesbury, Bucks.

The scheme is designated for those over 55 and this agreement details how these specific properties may be able to partially meet one of the strategic objectives of the council and registered provider partners to make the best use of the available stock in the area.

Specifically in this case targeting those that are under occupying a **2, 3 or 4** bedroom **social rented home** within the Buckinghamshire administrative area that would like to move to a high quality, social rent flatted scheme, therefore freeing up larger homes for re let via the council's housing register.

In addition, as detailed in the Aylesbury sub group local lettings policy (<https://www.buckshomechoice.org.uk/choice/uploads/AVDCLocalLettingsPolicy-subgroups.pdf>), the scheme will give priority for 50% of the first lets, and 25% of relets, to those with a connection to the designated *South West* subgroup area of Aylesbury Vale (which includes Waddesdon village. The remaining 50% will be offered to other under occupiers of social housing, via the CBL system, outside of this sub group area. (Please note that this may be subject to change in the event of a change or repeal of the local lettings subgroup agreement).

In the event that applicants are exhausted the properties will be offered to remaining interested applicants who are not under occupying.

Lettings criteria

Priority to be given to applicants over 55 under occupying social housing within the Buckinghamshire administrative area.

50 % of first lets, and 25% of relets to be offered those with a local connection to the South West sub group. (Unless this particular lettings policy is changed or repealed in the future in which case this approach will be subject to amendment).

100% of first lets to be via Bucks Home Choice, the Council's housing allocation scheme and 75% of relets to be via Bucks Home Choice, the Council's housing allocation scheme, in accordance with the nominations agreement and Capital Grant Funding Agreement between Buckinghamshire Council and Fairhive, the owner of the properties.

Where a suitable applicant cannot be identified as above, the properties shall be let to an eligible and qualifying applicant who meets to age criteria via Bucks Home Choice, (or any such replacement method of allocation of Buckinghamshire Councils social housing).

Local lettings policy applies on initial letting or in perpetuity

In perpetuity.

