

## **LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN - OBSERVATORY WAY, MANSTON ROAD, RAMSGATE**

### **Summary**

This plan sets out the strategy and targets to support the sustainable letting of 22 affordable rent homes at Observatory Way, Manston Road, Ramsgate comprising:

- 8 x 1 bedroomed, 2 person flats
- 8 x 2 bedroomed, 3 person flats
- 6 x 2 bedroomed, 4 person flats

The properties are owned and managed by Town and Country Housing (TCH) and Thanet District Council (TDC) have nomination rights to the scheme. As well as helping to create a sustainable community when homes are first let, the plan aims to help prevent potential management problems occurring in the area.

### **Aims**

The aims of this local lettings plan are:

- To establish a community with a mix of applicant types and household sizes
- To meet local housing needs in accordance with TDC and TCH's allocations and lettings policies
- To agree targets for the number of economically active tenant households to prevent a concentration of residents wholly dependent on welfare benefits
- To support integration into the established local community
- To discourage anti-social behaviour by encouraging all tenants to sign up to a 'Good Neighbour Agreement'

### **Nomination Arrangements**

Thanet District Council have nominations rights to 100% of initial lets and 75% of subsequent lets from Town and Country Housing.

Applicants wishing to be considered for these homes, including existing Thanet District Council tenants wishing to transfer, must be included on the Council's housing register. Initial and subsequent lettings of most of the homes will be via the Kent Home Choice (KHC) choice-based lettings scheme. KHC advertisements will clearly state that a Local Lettings Plan applies and that this gives preference to certain groups of applicants as detailed in this document. The flats will be advertised by floor levels rather than individual addresses.

When properties are advertised through Kent Home Choice, applicants will be required to bid in the usual way. At the close of bidding, a shortlist of applicants that have placed bids will be produced by the Council.

Thanet District Council reserves the right to make direct nominations to some of the homes.

### **Form of Tenancy**

Existing tenants of TDC or another social housing provider who currently have a secure or assured 'lifetime' tenancy will be granted a periodic assured 'lifetime' tenancy. All other applicants will be granted a six-year fixed term assured shorthold tenancy that incorporates a 12-month probationary period.

## Lettings Plan Criteria

100% of vacancies will be allocated to the following groups of applicants, in order of their priority on the housing list, provided no applicant has bid for the same property who are more than one band above them on the housing list.

Initial let's shall be allocated in priority order as follows:

- 1) Transferring TDC tenants 30%** (4 x 2 bed & 2 x 1 bed, flats).  
Provided the TDC property they are leaving will be available to let to another household from the council's housing list. Priority will be given firstly to those under-occupying a property and secondly to those residing in tower blocks.
- 2) Applicants who are economically active, 50%** (7 x 2 beds & 4 x 1 bed)  
This will include households where one or more members are either employed for more than 16 hours per week or actively seeking employment. Applicants will need to provide evidence of one of the following:
  - i. A permanent employment contract
  - ii. A long-term temporary contract
  - iii. Self-employment
  - iv. Training for employment
  - v. Actively seeking work and in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance

Households that are unable to be economically active because they are full time carers; because a disability prevents them from working or because they are over working age regarded as economically active.

- 3) Applicants registered with TDC for a management move, 10%** (1 x 2 bed & 1 x 1 bed)  
Registered households who meet the criteria for a TDC management move.
- 4) Applicants owed a statutory duty by Thanet District Council, 10%** (2 x 2 bed & 1 x 1 bed)

## Household/ Property Matching

Homes will be allocated to households as follows:

Property Size	Household Size
1 bedroom, 2-person property	1 or 2 adults
2-bedroom, 3-person property	1 or 2 adults and 1 child
2-bedroom, 4-person property	1 or 2 adults and 2 children (where children can share)

## Shortlisting

The Council's allocations team will verify the applicants that TDC wishes to nominate and check that:

- Applicants and members of the household will not be the perpetrators of serious and/or ongoing nuisance or anti-social behaviour.
- Applicants have not been evicted for nuisance or antisocial behaviour from any previous addresses. Discretion may be exercised if the applicant can show that they have over a period of not less than 2 years rectified their behaviour.
- Applicants and members of the household do not have a serious or recent criminal conviction which will impact upon the management of the tenancy or

the local community. A risk assessment may be required in in such instances.

- Applicants do not have rent arrears or housing related debts for their current or a former home. If arrears are because of a delay in benefit payments the applicant will need to evidence this is the case.
- Applicants will not have been evicted for nuisance or anti-social behaviour from any previous addresses. Discretion may be exercised if the applicant can show they have over a period of not less than 2 years rectified their behaviour.
- Applicants and members of the household will not be the perpetrators of serious and/or ongoing nuisance or anti-social behaviour at their current home, or in the local community, or had any legal action as a result of nuisance or anti-social behaviour taken against them including a Notice of Seeking Possession.
- Applicants do not have a current Notice for any breaches in tenancy.

All applicants will be asked to complete a nominations interview with TCH. Risk assessments and landlord checks will be completed, and individual needs will be determined. Proof of eligibility to access public funds will also be confirmed at the interview.

### **Other criteria**

TCH will carry out affordability and needs assessments for all prospective tenants. This is to check they can afford the rent and other household costs and that any support needs are met so that they can sustain a tenancy. This process is part of TCH's affordability policy which all Local Authority partners have been consulted on.

TCH will not generally house applicants who own or have a legal interest in a property anywhere in the UK or abroad, unless the local authority determines it is unreasonable for them to continue to occupy it. TCH reserve the right to reject a nominee who has sufficient financial resources or equity to purchase housing either outright or through shared ownership.

No more than 25% of the homes will be allocated to households assessed as vulnerable where adequate long-term support packages are in place. Applicants may be rejected where TCH assesses that they will be unable to meet the conditions of a general needs tenancy without additional support and we cannot determine that this support is available and in place at the time of letting.

### **Good Neighbour Agreement**

Successful applicants will be required to sign up to the 'Good Neighbour Agreement' which will form part of the tenancy agreement. This will set a positive tone about expected behaviour and offers all new residents a sense of security and confidence in the landlord to be professional and prepared to deal with problems of anti-social behaviour. Residents are encouraged to participate in relevant engagement events.

### **Pets**

Residents may not have pets at this scheme, apart from guide or hearing dogs, as the facilities are not suitable. Pets will also not be allowed to visit.

### **Laminated/Wooden Flooring**

Laminated and wooden flooring will not be allowed in the flats

### **Equality Statement**

Thanet District Council's Equality Policy seeks to promote and uphold the principles of equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion within our employment practices, service design and delivery, procurement and partnership working.

As a council we will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation and will strive to promote equality of opportunity, understanding and foster good relations within our organisation and our community. The Equality Act came into force in October 2010. The legislation identifies a number of 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

Applicants with any of these protected characteristics will not be disadvantaged in respect of decisions made about the allocation of available homes. Homes will be allocated strictly in accordance with this LLP and the Thanet District Councils and Town and Country's Allocation policy criteria.

### **Review Process**

This lettings plan has been drawn up by Thanet District Council and Town and Country Housing. Both are positive about the principles of the lettings plan and are keen to see successful long-term lettings achieved at all new housing developments.

It is intended to review this Local Lettings Plan annually. The review may consider:

- Turnover of vacancies
- Any failed tenancies and the reasons for these
- Households accessing/needing support services
- Anti-social behaviour and the impact this may be having
- General tenant satisfaction
- Any changes to Thanet District Council or Town and Country Housing policies

### **Thanet District Council**

Signed.....



**Print name: Bob Porter.**

**Position: Head of Housing and Planning**

**Date: 14th January 2020**

### **Town and Country Housing**

Signed.....



**Print name: Keith Cane**

**Position: Regional Operations Manager**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020**