



LOCAL LETTINGS INITIATIVE

WELLPARK AREA: TRADITIONAL TENEMENTAL PROPERTIES – BANK STREET, DEMPSTER STREET, HOPE STREET, LYLE STREET, LYNEDOCH STREET, REGENT STREET, GREENOCK

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The legislative and regulatory framework for the allocation of social rented homes is covered through the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and latterly through the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 1.2 Landlords have a duty to make and publish rules covering priority for allocation of houses, transfers and exchanges. However, landlords also have the discretion to develop their allocation policy and practice to meet the needs of the communities in which they operate.
- 1.3 A Local Letting Initiative (LLI) is used to take into account specific local factors, including low demand – to stimulate demand. The LLI must:
- Comply with all relevant legislation
 - Be operated alongside the main policy, and act as an additional set of circumstances that will be considered or rules that will be applied.
 - Apply to a specific geographical area and be supported by evidence on why it is required
 - Have clear outcomes and be time limited
 - Be published
- 1.4 Landlords must consult with tenants, applicants and other key stakeholders when developing an LLI and have an effective monitoring framework in place to make sure the aims of the LLI are being met.
- 1.5 This LLI will also assist with achieving Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) objectives of:
- giving priority to people in the greatest housing need;
 - making best use of the housing that becomes available;
 - working to create communities where people want to live.

- 1.6 The Allocations Policy, legislation and guidance allows for the introduction of LLI's to assist a community to become sustainable.
- 1.7 The Scottish Social Housing Charter introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act. 2010, provides standards that all social landlords should be achieving for their tenants and requires landlords to make best use of available stock. This initiative will assist in achieving this.
- 1.8 This LLI sets out where we are looking to amend the standard Allocation Policy to assist in the allocation of traditional tenemental properties in the Wellpark area. This area is demonstrating a significant issue with perceived anti-social behaviour and a higher occurrence of low demand properties that is affecting our relet and tenancy sustainability performance as reported in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For the purposes of this initiative, the Wellpark Area refers to properties owned by the Association within the traditional pre 1919 Tenemental properties contained within the Association's Wellpark Management Area. The Area consists of:
 - Bank Street (21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27), Greenock
 - Dempster Street (5, 7, 9 & 11), Greenock
 - Hope Street (1)
 - Lyle Street (8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15) Greenock
 - Lynedoch Street (10, 12, 18, 24, 36 & 44), Greenock
 - Regent Street (25, 27, 29, 31, & 35a), Greenock
- 2.2 This Lettings initiative excludes the following:
 - 20 units designed or provided to specifically meet the needs of individuals with learning or physical disabilities;
 - All other non-tenemental pre-1919 properties within the Wellpark area
 - All addresses not included at 2.1 above
- 2.3 In July 2020 the Association's board considered a report regarding the Wellpark area that detailed issues with demand in the area and proposed investment and the establishment of a supported housing project in this area. As part of the report, it was proposed that a Local

Letting Initiative be developed for the area prior to the allocation of properties resuming.

2.4 It is important that we make best use of our housing stock, which includes how these are allocated. Scottish Government guidance requires that houses are let in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need, which makes best use of the available stock and helps to sustain communities.

2.5 The Scottish Government publication “Social Housing Allocations – A Practice Guide” refers to Local Lettings Initiatives, noting that legislation allows Registered Social Landlords to operate separate allocations policies for different parts of their stock. However, a Local Lettings Initiative cannot take into account:

- (i) how long a household has been resident in the area
- (ii) previous rent arrears which are no longer outstanding
- (iii) age of applicant
- (iv) income of applicant

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of this initiative is to attempt to reduce the turnover of empty homes within the Wellpark area and increase rates of tenancy sustainability within the area. As at 31st March 2020 the Wellpark area’s turnover rate was 15.63% as opposed to the Association average of 10.46%, it is generally accepted that an association of Cloch’s size should have a turnover rate of circa 10%. Tenancy sustainability in the Wellpark area stood at 80.85% at the end of the same period against a Cloch average of 86.03% overall. It is hoped this initiative will improve both these figures long term.

3.2 This local lettings initiative will attempt to include people who can assist in creating a diverse community, and one in which people want to live and work in, now and in the future.

3.3 It will meet the wider aims of creating sustainable communities and making the best use of available stock. The intention is to minimise the possible stigmatisation of tenants with vulnerabilities and/or support needs and allow them to maintain their local connection to the area and maximise tenancy sustainment.

4 ALLOCATIONS

4.1 To ensure that allocations are made to those that can assist with the local lettings initiative, preference will be given to the following applicants: –

- “Key workers” who wish to move to be closer to their place of employment
- People who have been approved to adopt but do not currently have a property of sufficient size
- Those with a proven unbroken satisfactory RSL tenancy history of at least 3 years (this can be more than one tenancy but an unbroken period)
- Meeting the housing needs of those who have a local connection
- Individuals who require to be in the area due to employment or who need to give or receive support from family members
- People with learning disabilities (referral from HSCP) where a support package is in place
- People with physical disabilities (referral from HSCP) where property adapted/suitable for mobility issues
- Young Care Leavers (referral from HSCP) where a support package is in place
- Armed forces personnel leaving full time regular service with a local connection to the area
- People who have not previously held a tenancy but are fleeing domestic violence, harassment and hate crimes.

5 EXCLUSIONS

5.1 Exclusions will apply where an applicant (or a member of their household) poses a risk to the local lettings initiative due to any of the following: –

- No previous tenancy history (excluding young care leavers who are accepting support package from the local authority)
- Current or previous history of drug or alcohol misuse, antisocial behaviour, or harassment. This includes where warnings have been issued by the local authority, previous landlord(s) regarding conduct or an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or Good Neighbour Agreement have been required.
- Been evicted from a tenancy for rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, any other significant breach of tenancy or having been subject to an ASBO in the last three years.
- Current or previous arrears with no agreement in place or payments made toward the debt.
- Having support needs but previously failed to accept support or engage with support services provided.

5.2 This is in addition to all current Allocations Policy exclusions as detailed in the current Allocations Policy (ICHR Policy).

6 MONITORING & REVIEW

- 6.1 The LLI will be implemented from 1 April 2021. This approach will be reviewed by the Association after 12 months to establish how successful the initiative has been in improving the reputation of the Wellpark community. Cloch will monitor this by assessing tenancy turnover, recording the number of refusals and reported anti-social behaviour.
- 6.2 Cloch's Housing Services Team will monitor the effectiveness of the LLI on a day-to-day basis and if the initiative is having a detrimental effect on the ability to re-let properties the LLI will be considered by the Association's Housing & Property Services Sub-Committee (H&PSSC) to approve amendments or early withdrawal of the scheme. Reports will be submitted to the H&PSSC on a quarterly basis to monitor the continued effectiveness of the LLI.
- 6.3 The aim is that all future allocations will be in accordance with the overall ICHR Allocations Policy once the turnover rate is in line with the average for other Management Areas within the stock with similar property types.

7 IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES

- 7.1 By adopting this Lettings Initiative, we recognise that additional criteria will be required to be set when advertising properties and additional checks will need to be undertaken during the lettings process. This may result in increased void times and the possibility that properties may need to be re-advertised more often in order that an applicant is found who meets the criterion.

8 COMPLAINTS

- 8.1 Any applicant who feels aggrieved by their treatment under this LLI can ask for a copy of the Association's Complaints Handling Procedure, which is available on the Association's website or at our office. Applicants also have a right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Complaints Policy details the way in which applicants can complain and the timescales for responding.

9 EQUALITIES COMMITMENT

- 9.1 Cloch Housing Association Ltd is committed to tackling discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status, racial grounds, or grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.
- 9.2 Cloch seeks to embrace diversity, promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate any unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work.

