

Local Lettings Policy - Lyneham

1. Introduction

This “Local Lettings Policy” (LLP) has been written to cover the allocations of Onward Homes properties for rent on a new build development at Lyneham. This development is located within the Whiston Ward of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The development consists of 19 properties, comprised of 12 x two-bedroom flats, 4 x two-bedroom houses and 3 x four-bedroom houses. All (100%) of the properties will be offered Social Rent via Property Pool Plus.

The LLP will run for the first phase of lets per property. Following the first round of lets, Onward Homes will review this policy in consultation with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, tenants, local residents, and Ward Members.

2. Our Commitments

Onward Homes are committed to all allocations being made using Knowsley’s choice based letting scheme “Property Pool Plus” and preference will be afforded to all those who are Knowsley Residents. Onward Homes are committed to ensuring all methods of allocating properties is done with the best interests of the customer, the community and the local authority at the heart of what we do, to achieve a well-balanced and sustainable community.

This LLP is intended to balance the requirement to re-house people in housing need with the requirement to ensure the creation of a balanced community. Through this LLP, Onward Homes will seek to establish a stable, balanced community for the benefit of all the new residents and also those in the surrounding area.

Over the past three years, Onward Homes has allocated several new build developments via the Property Pool Plus Choice Based Lettings Scheme in Wirral and Liverpool. The majority of these have been let without a Local Lettings Plan in place and has resulted in a significant number of problems for the community, the residents, Onward Homes and public services. These issues vary in terms from Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour, Criminal Damage and instability within the communities. The impact has been a huge cost to the communities, residents, Onward Homes, and the public purse.

In contrast, those development schemes where LLP’s have been in place has resulted in some positive success stories, particularly in building sustainable communities.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have recognised the positive impact of LLP’s, evidencing how they can help create a balanced community. Onward Homes hope that the use of an LLP for this new development will allow us to create the desired

balanced community and mitigate the above social problems whilst meeting the housing need of Knowsley residents.

3. Demand

As of April 2025, there are currently 2,836 active applicants who are eligible for a home on Property Pool Plus within the Knowsley sub region. The current breakdown of applicants on Knowsley's Housing Register are as follows:

Knowsley Housing Register Band	HRA - Minimum bed size					Total	% of register
	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds		
Band A	144	148	45	38	5	380	13%
Band B	570	381	235	90	1	1277	45%
Band C	577	437	153	12	0	1179	42%
Total	1291	966	433	140	6	2836	100%

4. Allocation criteria and selection

All 19 properties (100%) will be advertised through Property Pool Plus, in accordance with the criteria detailed within this policy. Property adverts will clearly state on the advert that allocations are subject to this policy and will clearly state where preferences are to be given applicants meeting specific criteria set out in this LLP. This will help an applicant when making their choice about whether to bid on the property.

All 19 properties will be allocated to households who have been awarded either a Band A or Band B priority for rehousing. This will ensure that allocations are made to households who have been assessed as having a priority to move whilst also supporting Onward Homes in establishing a settled and sustainable community. The allocation of properties will be split with a percentage in Band A and B that is reflective of both the overall demand within Band A and B and the assessed priority housing need. As such, circa 53% (10) of the properties will be allocated to Band A and circa 47% (9) to Band B.

All properties (100%) will be allocated to Knowsley residents for the first round of lets. To balance the needs of individuals on the housing register whilst also promoting a balance

community, preference will be given to applicants who are employment, homeless, or currently under-occupying an existing social housing property.

Employment

Onward Homes will request that 4 out of the 19 properties (21%) will give preference to those in employment. As of April 2025, approximately 20% of active applications on Knowsley's housing register were verified as being in employment (working over 16 hours per week). However, it is estimated that this percentage will be higher as applicants are not required to provide prove of employment for their Property Pool Plus application and therefore may not have provided this information so are not reflected in the above statistic.

By giving preference to those in employment, this will help create sustainability for the community both within the scheme and in the surrounding areas, reduce the risk of Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime and ensuring that the cost to the public services, Onward Homes and the Housing Management Function is not impacted as it has on other apartment schemes in Merseyside. In other new build schemes in Merseyside where Onward Homes have not requested a certain percentage of properties go to Employment, we have experiences high levels of customer turnover within the first 18 months that has reduced tenancy and community sustainability.

Rightsizing

There is a number of applicants on Knowsley's Housing Register who are under occupying their current accommodation. As of April 2025, there are currently 220 active applicants currently under occupying their existing property by one or two bedrooms. A breakdown of these households is as follows:

Under occupying	Number of active applicants
Under occupying by one bedroom	154
Under occupying by two or more bedrooms	66
Total	220

To promote 'rightsizing' within the borough, it is proposed that four (21%) properties will be prioritised for applicants who are current social housing tenants and are under occupying their current property by one or two bedrooms to enable them to move into accommodation that meets their needs. In turn, this will create a chain of lets and free up bigger properties

for larger families in Knowsley, helping to address the lack of larger properties available for larger families.

Homelessness

Homelessness is a growing issue within the borough of Knowsley, with homelessness rates continuing to rise. This is an issue that has a huge impact on people's lives, health and wellbeing. Onward Homes is committed to giving some preference to those who are homeless to meet the housing needs of Knowsley residents. As of April 2025, approximately 20% of active applicants on Property Pool Plus in Knowsley who were homeless and in need of housing. Therefore, it is proposed that nine (47%) properties will be allocated to applicants have been awarded a priority banding due to homelessness. Homeless applicants who are currently in Local Authority provided temporary accommodation will be prioritised for an allocation within this development for the purpose of making use of effective temporary accommodation within the borough. Should there be no applicants on the shortlist who are homeless and in temporary accommodation provided by the local authority, the properties will then be allocated to those who have been assessed as homeless.

Ground floor need

To promote the allocation of accessible housing to those most in need within the borough, it is proposed that two ground floor flats (11%) of properties will be prioritised for applicants are classified as having a verified ground floor housing need.

A full breakdown of the allocation of properties is as follows:

Banding	Property Type			Total	%
	2 Bed Flats	2 Bed Houses	4 Bed Houses		
Band A	5 (3 x homelessness 1 x employed, 1 x under-occupying)	2 (1 x homeless, 1 under-occupying)	3 (3 x homeless)	10	53
Band B	7 (2 x homeless, 2 x employed, 1 x under- occupying, 2 x ground floor need)	2 (1 x employed, 1 x under-occupying)		9	47
Total	12 (5 x homeless, 3 x employed, 2 x under	4 (2 x under- occupying, 1 x	3 (3 x homeless)	19	100

	occupying, 2 x ground floor need)	homeless, 1 x employed)			
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5. Process

Properties will be advertised via Property Pool Plus in a staggered manner. Approximately three to four properties will be advertised each week to ensure that applicants have multiple opportunities to place bids on several properties within the development. Adverts will state which properties will be advertised with priority for certain housing bands and preference to employment, homelessness or under occupation.

In the event that there are no suitable applicants on the shortlist with the required housing band stated on the advert who meet the agreed criteria or preference, the preference stated on the advert will be disregarded and Onward Homes will revisit the shortlist and allocate the property to the applicant with the oldest effective date on the shortlist with the housing band stated in the advert.

In the event that there are still not suitable applicants once the shortlist has been restored, the property will be readvertised to all within the stated housing bands, irrespective of preferences stated in this LLP.

At the point of lettings all applicants must have provided all proofs required and requested, or their expression of interest will not be considered. Applicants will also be required to undergo checks in relation to how they have managed previous tenancies. Any applicant who has had an unsuccessful tenancy previously may not be considered for a property on this development.

All applicants will be subject to an Affordability Assessment to make sure that applicants can afford the rent and other costs of the tenancy. Onward Homes reserve the right to not make an offer to an applicant who is unable to afford the property irrespective of their housing need.

6. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed after 6 months to ensure it meets the needs of the following:

- Residents living on the new development sites
- Surrounding Community
- Best practice and legislation

- The housing market in Knowsley
- Knowsley Council's strategic housing needs.

Onward Homes will review this policy in consultation with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, tenants, local residents, and ward members.

7. Allocation policy

All other aspects of the allocation process will be carried out in accordance with the Property Pool Plus Housing Allocations Scheme Procedure and Onwards Lettings and Allocation Policy.

This LLP only applies to the first round of lets, for subsequent lets the Property Pool Plus Housing Allocations Scheme Procedure will apply for all aspects of the allocation process, unless stated otherwise in a subsequent advertisement.

8. Equality and Diversity

Onward Homes will only participate in allocations schemes that are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and which offer equality of access to services for all applicants.

Choice Based Lettings schemes we participate in are equality impact assessed, and individual / internal policies are also impact assessed, in line with equality of access for applicants and any adverse/ positive impacts of those policies on our customers.

In line with Onward Homes Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement we assess our policies and have completed an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to Lyneham, Whiston which is attached in Appendix A. The impact of this LLP has identified no or low impacts for any protected groups of people. Where it has been identified that this policy may have negative equality impacts, Onward Homes have taken proactive steps to mitigate any potential negative impacts.

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of this LLP on applicants and customers, and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Overview:

Question	1. Name of document being assessed, and brief overview of its aims	Response	Lyneham LLP agreeing approach to 1 st allocation on new build scheme
	2. What involvement and consultation has been carried out in relation to this document?		Consultation has been carried out with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Onward Neighbourhood and Lettings Teams
	3. Who does this document affect? (i.e. employees / residents)		All Knowsley Residents applying for a home at Lyneham
	4. Any evidence used to support the EIA? (i.e. national stats, in-house stats)		Yes – detail contained in LLP

Protected characteristic	Potential for positive or negative impact, and actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity and inclusion	
Age	Positive	Negative Use of technology in accessing and utilising online Choice Based Lettings Systems (CBL's) may be a barrier for some elderly applicants. Preference to applicants in employment may have an indirect negative impact on elderly applicants
	Actions to Mitigate Impact Support will be offered to those customers unable to register online. Automated bidding may be available for some CBL's.	

	<p>Preference to employment has been set at 21% to reflect the employment rates of the community demographic. This is proportionate to the number of active applicants on Knowsley's housing register that are in employment, however it is expected that the number of Knowsley residents is slightly higher as applicants are not required to provide this information, there are still 79% of properties for applicants who are not in employment can be considered for.</p>	
Disability	Positive	<p>Negative</p> <p>Use of technology in accessing and utilising online Choice Based Lettings Systems (CBL's) may be a barrier for some applicants.</p> <p>Preference to applicants in employment may have an indirect negative impact on disabled applicants.</p>
	<p>Actions to Mitigate Impact</p> <p>Support will be offered to those customers unable to register online. Automated bidding may be available for some applicants. Assistive technology is not currently available on the Property Pool Plus website but the Property Pool Plus team are available to contact 5 days a week and can help talk applicants through the website and bidding process.</p> <p>Preference to employment has been set at 21% to reflect the employment rates of the community demographic. This is proportionate to the number of active applicants on Knowsley's housing register that are in employment, however it is expected that the number of Knowsley residents is slightly higher as applicants are not required to provide this information, there are still 79% of properties for applicants who are not in employment can be considered for.</p>	
Race	Positive	<p>Negative</p> <p>Applicants or customers whereby English is not their first language may have some difficulty in understanding the contents of the website (and this LLP) which may</p>

		impact their decision to bid on a property.
	Actions to Mitigate Impact Applicants or customers are able to translate the language used on the website or this LLP via google translate.	
Religion or belief	Positive	Negative None
	Actions to Mitigate Impact No known impacts linked to religion or belief	
Sex	Positive	Negative Preference to applicants in employment may have an indirect negative impact on women, who are statistically more likely to be the lead parent in single parent families or have carer responsibilities.
	Actions to Mitigate Impact Preference to employment has been set at 21% to reflect the employment rates of the community demographic. This is proportionate to the number of active applicants on Knowsley's housing register that are in employment, however it is expected that the number of Knowsley residents is slightly higher as applicants are not required to provide this information, there are still 79% of properties for applicants who are not in employment can be considered for.	
Sexual orientation	Positive	Negative
	Actions to Mitigate Impact No known impacts linked to sexual orientation.	
Gender reassignment	Positive	Negative Our records must show the legal name of the applicant and we will go through ID checks to confirm

		the identity of who we are speaking to.
	Actions to Mitigate Impact Where a person's ID does not match their chosen names, the team will ask for evidence of any name change or, if there has not been a legal change of name, will explain that to proceed with an application the legislation requires that formal documents use legal names. Where legal names must be used on legal documents a customer can request to be referred to by a different name and the team will respect this and ensure appropriate records are made to avoid "dead naming"	
Marriage and civil partnership	Positive	Negative
	Actions to Mitigate Impact No known impacts linked to Marriage & Civil Partnerships	
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Negative
		Evidence will be required to assess the person's Property Pool Plus application including proof of pregnancy (e.g. MATB1 form). If the person does not provide this evidence alongside the required documentation this may prolong the assessment of their application.
	Actions to Mitigate Impact To ensure the applicants are awarded the correct banding and property type, applicants will be required to provide evidence of pregnancy.	
Socio-economic background*	Positive	Negative
	Money advice will be provided where the pre-tenancy affordability assessment highlights concerns	Money advice will be provided where the pre-tenancy affordability assessment highlights concerns Preference to applicants in employment may have a negative impact on applicants for particular socio-economic backgrounds

	Actions to Mitigate Impact The Money Advice Team will proactively support customers to manage any debts prior to tenancy commencement. Those customers in financial hardship will be offered support in to assist then in accessing and sustaining their tenancy. All new customers will be referred to the Money Advice Team for a pre-tenancy financial review. Preference to employment has been set at 21% to reflect the employment rates of the community demographic. This is proportionate to the number of active applicants on Knowsley's housing register that are in employment, however it is expected that the number of Knowsley residents is slightly higher as applicants are not required to provide this information, there are still 79% of properties for applicants who are not in employment can be considered for.	
Any other area identified	Positive	Negative
	Actions to Mitigate Impact We have a variety of support services available, both internally and with partners, to ensure that those who require additional support to access housing is available.	

**Socio-economic background is not a protected characteristic but should be considered as best practice.*

Monitoring and review:

Date completed:	27/06/2025
How will you monitor the impact of your project once it has been put into effect?	Onward Homes will ensure it complies with the terms of the LLP as agreed with Knowsley.
Review date (if applicable):	In line with LLP review