

One Vision Housing Local Lettings Plan for Moor Lane, Crosby new-build development

Date of Issue:	1 May 2025	
Date of Decision:	12 May 2025	
Report to:	Cabinet Member Housing & Highways	
Report of:	Assistant Director - Economic Growth & Housing	
Portfolio:	Housing & Highways	
Wards affected:	Victoria	
Is this a key decision:	No	No
Included in Forward Plan:		
Exempt/confidential report:	No	

Summary:

To seek approval to agree to One Vision Housing (OVH) Local Lettings scheme at their new-build development in Moor Lane, Crosby.

Recommendation(s):

(1) The Council approves the Local Lettings Plans by OVH at their new-build development in Moor Lane in Crosby.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

1.1 One Vision Housing are pursuing a Local Lettings Plan for their new build development in Moor Lane, Crosby.

The development consists of 72 units social rented apartments. The breakdown of these properties are as follows:

- **47 x 1-bedroom apartments**
- **25 x 2-bedroom apartments**

- 22 of these are on the first floor
- 22 of these are on the second floor,
- 22 of these are on the third floor, and
- 6 are on the fourth floor

- 1.2 The Stock Transfer agreement requires OVH to allocate 75% of their vacant properties to Council nominations, in line with the Council's policy.

The Stock Transfer agreement states (Second schedule, Part 1, paragraph 2.3);

... One Vision agrees that it shall not amend One Vision's Allocations Policy in so far as it relates to Nominees without the prior approval of the Council acting reasonably and having regards to the Act (Housing Act 1996).... Also, (Fifth Schedule, OVH Covenants, Appendix, section 6, states) One Vision shall act in accordance with One Vision's Allocations Policy as may be in force from time to time and shall consult the Council and give formal and reasonable consideration to any representation made by the Council to any proposed material change to the said policy:-

- *Giving the Council 28 days' notice of any proposed material change and the reasons for it; and*
- *(subject to the Council notifying any representations to One Vision within 21 days of such notice) responding in writing to any such representations the Council may make in respect of the proposed change giving reasons why One Vision does not accept the Council's view if that be the case.*

- 1.3 The Council's own Allocations Policy (Property Pool Plus) states:

Local Letting Schemes

4.3.1 The local authority and registered providers can use local lettings schemes to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives subject to agreement with the local authority. The following list is intended to be illustrative and in no way prescribed or definitive:

1. *Allocating accommodation in rural villages and giving priority to applicants with a connection to a particular parish.*
2. *Creating more mixed and/or sustainable communities.*
3. *Dealing with a concentration of deprivation.*
4. *Ensuring properties that are particularly suited to being made accessible (e.g. ground floor flats) are prioritised for those with access needs.*
5. *Relocating essential workers such as teachers, nurses and police officers within a reasonable travelling distance from their work.*
6. *Supporting people in work/volunteering or who are seeking work or seeking volunteering opportunities.*
7. *Dealing sensitively with lettings in rural areas to sustain communities by giving priority to those with a local connection of more than two years.*
8. *Where a child to adult ratio could be lowered on an estate where there is high child density or, conversely, young single people could integrate into an estate where there is high ratio of older persons.*

9. Where there are reasons to positively discriminate due to age, for example accommodation is only suitable for applicants under the age of 35 years, or over the age of state pension entitlement.

- 1.4 The statutory basis for “local lettings policies” is within Section 167(2E) of the 1996 Housing Act which enables accommodation to be allocated to people of a particular description, that fall within the reasonable preference groups or provides that additional priority can be given to people in any of those preference groups.

In 2010, the Communities and Local Govt Department and Chartered Institute of Housing issued a Good Practice guide for the use of Local Lettings Plans. This recognises that Local lettings policies may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives. For example, local lettings policies may be used to “protect existing stable communities”, and “improving community stability and cohesion”. The guidance also describes the use of ‘Sensitive Lettings’ which can be used to address specific issues, such as the make-up of a particular block of flats, i.e., having the ability to by-pass applicants to avoid potential lifestyle clashes that could arise by rehousing certain groups of applicants under one roof.

- 1.5 The PPP Allocations Policy is principally designed for the allocation and letting of individual properties. In many new-build developments housing associations are letting multiple properties at the same time; in this case 72 new affordable rented homes. The proposal from One Vision Housing, below, sets out their reasoning for an LLP and how the LLP would operate.

- 1.6 In summary, priority for at least 31% of the properties (22 of the properties) will be given to applicants who are in employment but still made in accordance with priority banding.

This criterion is to help create a sustainable and balanced community.

Priority for at least 20 (28%) of the properties will be allocated to applicants over 55 years old. The remaining properties will be allocated in line with the Property Pool Plus policy.

100% of the properties will be let inline with this LLP. At least 75% of future voids will continue to be advertised on PPP in line with our Nominations Agreement with Sefton Council.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None identified.

3. Legal Implications

- 3.1 Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 requires Local Housing Authorities to have an Allocations scheme for determining priorities in allocating housing accommodation.

Amendments to Allocations policy and practices are subject to provisions included in the stock transfer contract between the Council and OVH, set out in the report below.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

- 4.1 None identified.

5 Staffing HR Implications

- 5.1 None to the Council as it has tendered the administration of Property Pool Plus to One Vision Housing to manage.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The availability of new build properties by a Registered Provider in such a high demand area is to be welcomed by the Council. The Council should look to support its largest Registered Provider to make this development as sustainable and successful as possible.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The Council could withhold approval from OVH to operate a Local Lettings scheme and let them through Property Pool Plus to all ages, but this would risk destabilising the communities established within these schemes.

Equality Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed by One Vision Housing who have found that the Local Lettings Plans have a direct impact on residents and may have a differential impact across protected characteristics e.g., where lettings criteria are based on age. There is also a potential impact where lettings criteria support those in employment or those who have an offending history.

The key recommendation from the Impact Assessment is that each Local Lettings Plan is based on clear evidence supporting the implementation of a Policy that alternative accommodation is available for those who may be excluded by the Local Lettings Policy e.g., under 55+, and that the Policy is reviewed annually for success and effectiveness.

Impact on Children and Young People:

The impact on children and young people could be seen as negative due to these proposed Local Letting Plans favouring people aged 55+, however the Council feels that this impact is mitigated by the introduction of the new Property Pool Plus policy that will overall prioritise care leavers. Also, other commissioned services, such as the Riverside Dispersed Accommodation also looks to support those families who would have otherwise struggled to find accommodation and offers support to the parents and their children.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

The lettings of accommodation within the borough does not have either a negative or positive impact on the climate emergency.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD.7962/25.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.6062/25....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

OVH have undertaken consultations with Councillors of Victoria ward regarding this LLP proposal. Cabinet Member has also been consulted.

Implementation Date for the Decision :

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet Member decision.

Contact Officer:	Graham Parry
Telephone Number:	0151 934 3927
Email Address:	Graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A; Local Lettings Plan Moor Lane 30.1.25

Background Papers:

Merseyside Property Pool Plus Allocations Policy <http://www.propertypoolplus.org.uk>

Appendix A



Local Lettings Policy

Introduction

This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) has been developed to deliver sustainable lettings for the new build homes at Moor Lane, Crosby, L23 2SF.

The site is mixed tenure consisting of three commercial units and 72 social rented apartments:

- 3 x ground floor (commercial units)
 - 22 x first floor
 - 22 x second floor,
 - 22 x third floor 6
 - 6 x fourth floor
-
- Property breakdown is as follows:
 - 47 x 1-bedroom apartments
 - 25 x 2-bedroom apartments
 - 3 x commercial units

The allocation of this high number of apartments within a single location increases risk to both One Vision Housing (OVH) and the wider community if appropriate and sustainable lettings are not achieved.

OVH therefore proposes to vary the standard allocations criteria for the prioritisation of applicants for these homes.

Aim of the framework

The aim of the Local Lettings Policy is to make a significant contribution to the overall sustainability of the development and area.

Moor Lane is a new development within the community, and we want to ensure that a balanced and sustainable community is created from first allocation by identifying customers who will settle, sustain and make a positive contribution to the local community.

We aim to achieve this by housing a variety of households, with different lifestyles and economic profiles, whilst at the same time still providing housing to customers in housing need.

In addition, we aim to protect the capital investment made by OVH through the delivery of sustainable tenancies.

Background

Moor Lane is a new build scheme set in Crosby, Manor Ward and consists of three commercial units and 72 social rented apartments. Handover of this development is scheduled to take place in April 2025.

Local Lettings Policy criteria

The local letting scheme for this development differs from our principal Allocation Scheme in the following ways:

- All the apartments in the development will be let at a social rent including service charges.
- The provision of 2 references will be requested. If an applicant has held a tenancy, then references will be requested from either the current or previous landlord and any offers may be overlooked if references are not provided or are unsatisfactory. We will also consider one reference from Homeless Hostels if no other reference is available. All applications will be considered on an individual basis, and an unsatisfactory reference may result in the re-assessment of an applicant's Property Pool Plus (PPP) application in line with the PPP.
- Prospective tenants must undertake an affordability assessment to establish their financial status and suitability for the scheme. This approach is standard practice for OVH and was adopted due to welfare reforms and rent levels to ensure affordability and sustainability.
- Priority for at least 22 (31%) of properties will be given to applicants who are in employment. However, offers will be made in accordance with priority need. This criterion is to help create a sustainable and balanced community.
- Priority for at least 20 (28%) of properties to be allocated to applicants over 55 years old. Statistics show that 33% of the population are aged 55 or over Nationally but over 55 's in the Manor Ward are 48% of the population within this area and so we wish to offer the opportunity of housing within this scheme for this cohort.
- Applicants with a criminal record and/or a history of antisocial behaviour will be considered in the context of whether they are suitable to be a tenant in line with the PPP. If there is concern their activities have not abated and will have a negative impact on these properties, neighbours or surrounding community, an offer may not be made or withdrawn. This will be subject to information provided through a police check. Where an applicant is rejected based on their criminal record or past anti-social behaviour they will be notified with an explanation as to why they are deemed unsuitable to be a tenant and given advice as to what steps are available to them to make them suitable to be a tenant in the future.

Selection Process

All allocations managed by OVH on this development will be subject to the agreed PPP lettings criteria and 100% of the properties will be advertised via PPP. At least 75 % of future voids will continue to be advertised on PPP in line with our Nominations Agreement with Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council. Applicants will be advised that a local letting scheme is in place and will be required to satisfy the strict criteria specified above.

We will continue to give priority to suitable applicants in accordance with the appropriate banding and date order system. This local letting scheme will be reviewed annually.

In accordance with OVH policy applicants will undergo an affordability assessment before an offer is confirmed, whereby the local letting criteria, and any additional checks that may be necessary, will be discussed in detail. During this interview, applicants will be required to demonstrate they understand their responsibilities as a tenant to respect their neighbours and can maintain and sustain their tenancy. They will also need to demonstrate full occupation of the property.

All properties will be advertised via PPP but priority for at least 22 (31%) of the properties will be given to applicants who are in employment. However, offers will be made in accordance with priority need.

Applicants given priority for employment should be working 16 hours or more at the close of the bidding cycle and be able to provide as evidence a contract of employment, letter from employer and/ or recent wage slips.

Monitoring, Conclusion and Review

If there is insufficient demand properties will be re-advertised via PPP to applicants within all bands and consideration will be given to those who under occupy subject to affordability.

If the approach described above does not deliver a mix of customers to achieve sustainability, then an alternative approach will be implemented.

Any decision to move to an alternative approach will be discussed and agreed with Sefton BC and Propety Pool Plus.

It is intended that this Local Lettings Policy shall apply to future lets and an annual review will take place.

We will use the following indicators to measure the overall success of this Local Lettings Plan.

- Sustainability and average length of tenancies
- Void property numbers and demand
- Number of Anti-Social Behaviour reports
- Equality Impact Assessment for this LLP
- Consultation with the ward members prior to going to Cabinet Member