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**Local Lettings Policy – Dinas Lane**

1. **Introduction**

This “Local Lettings Policy” (LLP) has been written to cover the allocations of Prima Group properties for rent on a new build development at Dinas Lane. This development is located within the Huyton Ward of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The development consists of 11 properties, comprising of 5 x 1-bedroom flats and 6 x 2-bedroom flats. All (100%) of the properties will be offered for affordable rent.

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

1. **Our Commitments**

Prima Group 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. Prima Group 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, Prima Group will seek to establish a stable, balanced community for the benefit of all the new residents and those in the surrounding area**.**

Over the past five years, Prima has allocated several new build developments via the Property Pool Plus Choice Based Lettings Scheme across the Liverpool City Region. The majority of these have been let without a Local Lettings Plan in place and has resulted in a considerable number of problems for the community, the residents, Prima Group and public services. These issues vary in terms from Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour, Criminal Damage, and instability within the communities. The impact has had a significant cost to the communities, residents, Public Services and Prima Group.

This development site will also include a second block of 9 flats which will be utilised as a supported housing scheme. Prima must also take into account the needs of the supported housing tenants’ vulnerabilities, when allocating the flats in the general needs block to minimise potential impacts.

Prima Group hope that the use of an LLP for this new development will allow us to minimise the risk of these issues by creating a balanced community whilst addressing the housing need of Knowsley residents.

**3. Demand**

As of January 2025, there are currently 2,699 active applicants who are eligible for a home on Property Pool Plus within the Knowsley sub region. The breakdown of applicants on Knowsley’s Housing Register are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HRA - Knowsley band** | **HRA - Minimum bed size** | | | | | **Total** | **% of register** |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |  |  |
| **Band A** | 141 | 95 | 27 | 23 | 5 | **291** | **10%** |
| **Band B** | 524 | 385 | 228 | 85 | 1 | **1223** | **49%** |
| **Band C** | 587 | 434 | 153 | 11 | 0 | **1185** | **41%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** | **1252** | **914** | **408** | **119** | **6** | **2699** | **100%** |

1. **Allocation criteria and selection**

All 11 properties (100%) will be advertised through Property Pool Plus, in accordance with the criteria detailed within this policy. Property adverts will state that allocations are subject to this policy and preference is to be given to applicants who meet specific criteria as set out in this LLP. This will help applicants make an informed decision on whether to bid on the property.

All 11 properties will be allocated to households who have been awarded a Band A or B priority for rehousing. This will ensure that allocations are made to households who have been assessed as having a priority need, whilst also supporting Prima Group in establishing a settled and sustainable community. As such, the allocation of properties will be split with a percentage in Band A and B, with 45% (5) of the properties to be allocated to Band A and 55% (6) 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 balanced community, preference will be given to applicants who are in employment, care leavers, wheelchair users and applicants who are currently under-occupying an existing social housing property. Subsequent lets will be allocated in line with the Property Pool Plus Allocation Scheme rules.

**Employment**

Prima Group will request that 3 out of the 11 properties (27%) will give preference to those in employment. As of January 2025, 19% of active applications on Knowsley’s housing register were verified as being in employment (working over 16 hours per week).

The aim of this LLP is to help improve the social position of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and reduce inequality and poverty by creating a balanced community. In other new build schemes in Merseyside where Prima Group have not requested a certain percentage of properties go to those who are in employment, we have experienced elevated levels of customer turnover within the first 18 months that has reduced tenancy and community sustainability.

**Rightsizing**

The number of applicants on Knowsley’s Housing Register who are under occupying their current accommodation is shown on the table below. As of January 2025, there are currently 221 active applicants currently under occupying their existing property by one or two bedrooms. A breakdown of these properties is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Under occupation by bedroom size** | **Number of households** |
| **Under occupying by one bedroom** | **158** |
| **Under occupying by two or more bedrooms** | **63** |
| **Total** | **221** |

To promote ‘rightsizing’ within the borough, Prima proposes that 2 (18%) properties will be prioritised for applicants who are current social housing tenants and are under occupying their property by one or two bedrooms. This will enable them to move into accommodation that meets their housing need, making available larger social housing properties for families in Knowsley.

**Care Leavers**

Prima Group are keen to support care leavers moving into permanent accommodation, the number of care leavers on Knowsley’s Housing Register as of January 2025 with need for a one-bedroom property is included in the breakdown below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowsley Care Leavers** | | |
| **Knowsley Housing Band** | **1 Bedroom** | **2 Bedroom** |
| A | 24 | 6 |

To ensure a care leaver sustains their tenancy and has appropriate support required for their needs, Prima would expect the care leaver to have a Personal Advisor (PA) for support and this arrangement will be ongoing throughout their tenancy until the age of 25.

If the support from the PA is terminated, Prima would expect the tenant or PA to advise Prima of this arrangement. A Prima housing officer will also engage with the care leaver on a quarterly basis once the tenancy commences to provide and additional support and ensure they sustain their tenancy.

**Verified Adapted Needs**

The number of applicants on Knowsley’s Housing Register with verified needs for an adapted one or two-bedroom property, as of January 2025, is shown on the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Verified Adapted Need** | | |
| **Knowsley Housing Band** | **1 bed** | **2 bed** |
| **A** | **18** | **5** |
| **B** | **22** | **16** |
| **Total** | **40** | **21** |

The Dinas Lane scheme offers four fully wheelchair accessible units (M4.3).

To promote the allocation of accessible housing to those most in need within the borough, Prima proposes that four (36%) of properties will be prioritised for applicants who are classified as having a verified need for adapted housing.

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowsley Housing**  **Band** | **Property size** | | **Total** | **%** |
| One bed apartments | Two bed apartments |
| **Band A** | 3 (1 x verified adaptation, 2 x care leaver) | 2 (1 x verified adaptation, 1 x rightsizing) | **5** | **45%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Band B** | 2 (1 x verified adaptation, 1 x employed) | 4 (1 x verified adaptation, 1 x right sizing, 2 x employed) | **6** | **55%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** | **5** | **6** | **11** | **100%** |

1. **Process**

Properties will be advertised via Property Pool Plus in a staggered manner with three – four properties advertised each week to ensure that applicants have multiple opportunities to bid. Adverts will state the priority for certain housing bands and preference criteria which will help applicants when making a choice about whether to place a bid.

If there are no suitable applicants on the shortlist with the advertised housing banding and preference, Prima Group will review the shortlist and allocate the property based on the applicant’s length of time on the housing register, disregarding the preference applied to advert/ particular property.

If no suitable applicants are identified through Property Pool Plus, Prima Group will discuss any other alternatives with Knowsley and then look to allocate the property through our own waiting list, including internal transfers based on the priority banding groups.

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 and references will be requested. Any applicant who has had an unsuccessful tenancy previously may not be considered for a property on this development which is in line with Prima’s Allocation Policy (Section. 4)

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

1. **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.

Prima Group will review this policy in consultation with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

1. **Allocation policy**

All other aspects of the allocation process will be conducted in accordance with the Property Pool Plus Housing Allocations Scheme Procedure and Prima’s Lettings and Allocation Policy.

This LLP will remain in place for all future lets, unless changed following review by Prima Housing and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

1. **Equality and Diversity**

Prima Group 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 Prima Group’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement we assess our policies and have completed an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to Dinas Lane 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, Prima Group have taken proactive steps to mitigate any potential negative impacts.