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**Plymouth**  
Community Homes



# Local Lettings Plan

## Albert Road

## Devonport

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This Local Lettings Plan applies to the Albert Road Blocks of flats in Devonport. There are 88 flats of which 24 have 2 bedrooms and 2 are leasehold. Over the past few years, there has been an increase in the levels of anti-social behaviour in this location. These flats are often occupied by tenants with a range of vulnerabilities, including those with addictions to drugs and alcohol. In order to try and improve the sustainability of the area, a Local Lettings Plan (LLP) is being introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

## **2.0 Purpose**

- 2.1 To ensure new lettings within Albert Road help achieve a sustainable and balanced community that will contribute to meeting the housing needs of the whole community in the long term.
- 2.2 To help create and maintain Albert Road as a place where people want to live and are happy to stay.
- 2.3 To help develop a sustainable, balanced and cohesive community by including a broad section and proportionate number of residents from a variety of social and economic backgrounds.
- 2.4 To be used as a guide for allocations, transfers and any future choice-based lettings adverts. The plan will apply to the allocation of rented homes.
- 2.5 To achieve a fair balance between the needs of the existing community and the housing needs of the wider community of Plymouth.
- 2.6 To attain a mixture of child density and occupancy levels to encourage sustainability.
- 2.7 To make the best use of the housing stock.

## **3.0 Lettings**

- 3.1 This Local Lettings Plan applies to the lettings of all future Albert Road vacancies.
- 3.2 We will advertise the homes through the Devon Home Choice system. The standard information with regard to property attributes and rent levels will be included.
  - Applicants may be matched to a property based on their housing needs assessment.
  - Where properties are advertised with specific preferences, these will only apply to applicants on a band C or above.

#### **4.0 Eligibility, Verification & Refusal of Applicants**

- 4.1 We will require from the applicant proof of their identity and address if they are being considered for housing, prior to a property being offered. A pre-tenancy assessment and affordability check will also be completed before an offer can be made.
- 4.2 As a member of Devon Home Choice we can, as part of the checking process, visit the applicant in their home, before we consider making an offer of a tenancy.
- 4.3 As a member of Devon Home Choice, we have the right to carry out any enquiries deemed necessary. Therefore, this entitles us to have access to any information we need in connection with the housing application. This might include information about any former tenancies or information about previous criminal convictions.
- 4.4 Refusals
- We reserve the right to refuse the application if it does not adhere to the principles of the local lettings policy or contravenes our principles. Such refusals should however be consistent with other overarching policies and agreements that may exist.
  - All offers of accommodation will be subject to the policies of Plymouth Community Homes. We will inform an unsuccessful applicant of the reason behind our decision. Applicants can request a copy of the Plymouth Community Homes Allocations Policy.
  - All offers of a tenancy made will be provisional until confirmed. Plymouth Community Homes reserves the right not to proceed with an offer where, there is insufficient evidence to support an application, there has been a previous or current history of tenancy breaches or any offered tenancy is likely not to be sustainable or affordable.

If we assess that the applicant does not meet this criteria, we may not offer a home at this scheme.

#### **5.0 Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

If an applicant or a member of their household has a history of tenancy breaches because of anti-social behaviour, or other types of tenancy breach, or they have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, which has required PCH, or any former landlord and/or Devon and Cornwall Police to issue warning letters or a notice of seeking possession, we will assess the application using the criteria below:- I

An application with a history of Anti-Social Behaviour or tenancy breaches within the last 5 years will not be considered however if an applicant is able to demonstrate a change in behaviour we will require a full risk assessment which will consider the following:

- Whether there has ever been any legal action for crime or anti-social behaviour (e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour Order, Criminal Behaviour Order, Civil and Criminal injunctions etc.)
- Whether a Notice of Seeking Possession has been served within the last 5 years for any breaches of tenancy
- Whether any other formal or informal tenancy action has been taken within the last 5 years (e.g. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Formal Warnings etc.)
- Whether there has been any involvement with the Family Intensive Intervention Project or the Individual Intensive Intervention Project.
- Whether the applicant or any other person included in the application has ever been evicted
- Whether a demotion of tenancy has ever been obtained
- Whether there are any current convictions or cautions which may create a potential risk to the household, neighbours, Plymouth Community Homes staff/contractors or the wider community.

## **6.0 Drug and Alcohol Misuse**

Any applicant or household member with a current dependency on illegal drugs or alcohol or has had a dependency within the last 12 months will not be considered.

If an applicant or household member had a dependency on illegal drugs or alcohol more than 12 months ago but within the last 5 years, they may be considered but a full risk assessment may be required.

Any applicant or household member currently taking a prescribed drug substitute (e.g. methadone) and engaging with support services may be considered for this scheme but a full risk assessment will be required.

Applicants will not be considered if:-

- An applicant or household member has been cautioned for any drugs or alcohol related offences within the last 2 years.
- An applicant or household member has been convicted for any drugs or alcohol related offences within the last 5 years.

## **7.0 Harassment**

A full risk assessment may be required if an applicant or household member has

received a caution or Police Information Notice for harassment within the last 12 months or has received a conviction for harassment within the last 5 years.

## **8.0 Nuisance**

A full risk assessment may be required if an applicant or household member has had any formal or informal action taken against them for behaviour which has caused a nuisance or interfered with the peace, comfort or convenience of other people living in their community within the last 5 years.

## **9.0 Other Breaches of Tenancy**

If an applicant or household member has had any formal or informal action taken against them for tenancy breaches by a Registered Social Landlord or Local Authority or Private Landlord within the last 5 years, a risk assessment may be required. Examples of tenancy breaches include, but are not limited to, poor condition of property, unauthorised alterations and untidy gardens.

## **10.0 Arrears**

We will not normally consider the application if the applicant owes over £500 to Plymouth Community Homes or any other landlord (e.g. rent arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs)

A provisional offer may be made to an applicant who owes under £500 to Plymouth Community Homes or any other landlord (e.g. rent arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs) providing they have a repayment agreement in place and have been making regular payments as agreed. Refer to PCH's Tenancy Allocation Policy Section 5 – 'Allocations and Debt'.

## **11.0 Community Sustainability**

- 12.1 Albert Road has a significant number of residents with high support needs, disabilities and other vulnerabilities. The intention of this local lettings plan is to consider applicants with a diverse range of needs and requirements in order to create a sustainable community.
- 12.2 We will only house applicants who have been assessed as vulnerable, e.g. applicants with mental health issues, if they are engaging with appropriate support services. An applicant may be excluded if they seem unlikely to meet the conditions of a general needs dwelling without additional support and we are unable to determine that appropriate support is available and in place at the time of letting.
- 12.3 A risk assessment may be required where particular vulnerabilities have been declared on the pre-tenancy assessment.

## **12.0 Equalities Statement**

- 14.1 Plymouth Community Homes is committed to equality of opportunity, for all the services provided. We aim to ensure that all applicants receive equal and fair treatment, free from direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds, including disability, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, marital status and sexual orientation.
- 14.2 We recognise that equality is very much part of our job and is not merely another initiative or add-on. Equalities issues are seen as fundamental to good management, with equalities monitoring being part of general service monitoring.

### **13.0 Tenancy Types**

#### **15.1 New Plymouth Community Homes' Tenants**

If the applicant is a new tenant to Plymouth Community Homes, they will be given a Plymouth Community Homes Assured Shorthold tenancy.

#### **15.2 Existing Plymouth Community Homes' Tenants**

If the applicant is an existing tenant of Plymouth Community Homes they will retain their existing tenancy type.

### **14.0 Monitoring and Review**

We will carefully monitor the allocations process and how the estate is forming to identify areas that we may need to review regarding future allocations of the estate.

We will collect and monitor the following information:

- number of refusals of offers and reasons
- number of transfers
- number of exchanges
- number and type of complaints about allocations
- number and type of complaints about anti-social behaviour
- number of children housed
- number and ethnicity of those housed
- origin of application
- number of re-lets
- reasons why tenants move out

We will review this policy annually. If we don't review it within eighteen months, it will cease to have effect. The annual review will include:

- identifying any trends or common complaints
- making policy recommendations

- explaining targets not met or exceeded
- analysing differences between different agencies results
- setting objectives and agreeing action plans, if appropriate
- setting new targets, if appropriate.

## **Plymouth Community Homes**

Signature:

Print Name: Lorraine Oliver

Job Title: Housing Officer

Date: 18 June 2019