

Local Lettings Plan for Pembroke Street Flats, Devonport

Between Plymouth City Council (PCC) and Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) and Pembroke Estate Management Board Ltd (PEMB)

Context

Pembroke Street Estate Management Board was established in 1994 and has been nationally recognised as a pioneering resident-led housing management organisation. The EMB undertakes, in partnership with PCH, housing management for the estate including repairs and maintenance, estate and environmental maintenance and community development.

1. Purpose of Local Lettings Plan

This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) has been prepared to assist in the lettings of property in Pembroke Street and Clowance Street Flats (that form Pembroke Estate) in line with the policy and objectives of the Devon Home Choice Policy.

It is intended that 100% of the properties will be allocated through Devon Home Choice or PCHs current Allocation Policy, only in exceptional situations will an allocation be considered outside the LLP and this will need to be agreed with the PCC and the PCH.

2. Objectives of the Local Lettings Plan

The objectives of this Local Lettings Plan:

- To support the work within Devonport to achieve a sustainable and balanced community, this can contribute to meeting the housing needs of the whole community in the long term.
- To allocate sensitively with the aim of creating a 'sense of community'. This will strengthen and form the basis of a 'sustainable community'.
- To support the aims and the continued success of PEMB by recognizing and encouraging active involvement and participation in the EMB by new households.
- To achieve a fair balance between the needs of the existing community and the housing needs of the wider community of Plymouth.
- To attain a mixture of child density and occupancy levels to encourage sustainability.
- To make the best use of the housing stock.

3. Advertising and Allocation Process

The advert will describe the property types and sizes available for letting together with a link to the Local Lettings Plan detailing the intention to give priority to the

group of applicants identified below. The standard information with regard to property attributes and rent levels will be included.

Upon closure of the bidding process applicants will appear on the shortlist in band and date order. The final selection of applicants to be verified for the vacancies will depend upon their application band (housing need), the length of time they have been in this band, and the households ability to meet the requirements of the overall aims and objectives of this Local Lettings Plan. This may require some applicants to be considered before others irrespective of their relevant banding and dates.

4. Category of applicants given preference through this Local Lettings Plan

Priority will be given applicants who meet the following priority group criteria in the shortlist - these categories of applicants have equal priority.

Local connection:

A local connection for the Devonport area will be accepted through one of the following factors. Where the applicant lives, has lived or, where close family members live, has employment or other special circumstances.

Residency - Applicants must have lived in Devonport for a minimum period of six months in the last twelve, or three years out of the past five. Residency in the Devonport area must be by choice and not through for example "placement" or "detainment".

Family - Persons who can demonstrate a close family connection to Devonport in that the person's mother father son, daughter, brother or sister or a long established carer has been ordinarily resident in the above neighbourhoods for the past five years and where a caring dependency relationship can be evidenced

Employment - Applicants will have a local connection if the applicant is in permanent work with a minimum of a 16 hour contract for the previous 12 months, and not had a break in the period of employment for more than three months. Applicants serving in the armed forces, but ordinarily resident in Devonport will be judged to have a local connection in the same way as other applicants. Where an applicant is serving overseas, but leaves a household in residence, that applicant will be considered to have continuous residence in Devonport.

Exceptions to this may include special circumstances such as medical or support needs that are only available in a particular district and will be subject to individual review. Where an applicant has no local connection in any district within the United Kingdom, then they will be deemed to have a local connection in this area.

Downsizing tenants'

Priority maybe given to social housing tenants affected by the 'Bedroom tax', where applicable this priority will be set out in the advert.

5. Under occupation

Child density is widely agreed to be a key factor in the sustainability of any community, particularly on housing estates.

We aim to achieve a reasonable balance of child density that will allow for some natural growth of the families housed. We will use this LLP to manage the number of children allocated to a property and will consider if a property should be under occupied by one bed space however the household must be eligible for the number of bedrooms within the property. For example 2 units of 4 bed 8 properties within close proximity could be advertised to 4 bed 7 persons.

This will be considered and agreed between the PCH and PCC prior to advertising and the housing scheme mix matrix with the agreement will be attached to this LLP as an appendix to support.

6. Eligibility, Verification and Refusals

Pre tenancy assessments (PTA) will be carried out by PCH and/or Pembroke Street staff in order to perform a detailed verification and eligibility check before a formal offer is made. These will either be in the form of a home visit or at PCH or PEMB office. During the PTA the Pembroke Street Scheme will be discussed with the potential applicant. All applicants will need to demonstrate a willingness to adhere to the conditions of the enhanced tenancy agreement.

At tenancy sign up all new residents also sign the PEMB agreement which sets out additional conditions specific to living on Pembroke Street Estate. One important specification is that Pembroke Street operate a 'no dogs' policy throughout the estate.

All offers of accommodation will be subject to the policies of PCH. We will inform an unsuccessful applicant of the reason behind our decision. Applicants can request a copy of the PCH Allocations Policy.

This scheme only considers those applicants who have not been involved in incidents of anti-social behaviour, serious harassment, nuisance or drug & alcohol misuse; within the last 5 years;

Defining anti-social behaviour, serious harassment, nuisance and drugs misuse

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Applicants or a member of their household with known anti-social behaviour that has occurred during the last **five years** will not be offered a property including:

- Where there is a potential risk to the household, neighbours, staff or the wider community.
- Where a current Notice of Seeking Possession on the grounds of anti-social behaviour is in place.
- Where any current action is being taken in respect of anti-social behaviour, for example an Anti-Social Behaviour Contract.
- Where there has been an eviction for anti-social behaviour.
- Where a previous Anti-Social Behaviour Order or injunction has been obtained against the applicant or member of their household.
- Where a demotion of tenant has been obtained.

- Where there has been a conviction for actions that have directly caused issues of anti-social behaviour.
- Where an applicant or member of the household has a current conviction or caution related to anti-social behaviour or where there is a potential risk to the household, neighbours, or the wider community.
- Where any applicant or member of the household is known to have current or previous convictions which may have a direct impact on the local community, offers of accommodation will be subject to a risk assessment prior to any decision being made.
- Persons with a criminal record showing offences within the past 5 years (if these offences are of a minor nature, these can be disregarded, however, any offences related to violent crime, drug use or dealing, or the misuse of alcohol would exclude the applicant).

Harassment

Is where a householder has been **cautioned** for crimes of harassment against others within the last 12 months.

Is where the householder has been **prosecuted** for crimes of harassment against others within the last 5 years.

Nuisance

Is where a householder has caused a nuisance that has resulted in **legal action** by PCH or another social housing landlord within the last 5 years. This includes actions against a tenancy through environmental health or planning legislation.

Drug and Alcohol misuse

In addition to ASB, substance misuse has been a cause for concern for both Pembroke Street and PCH. Accommodation will not be offered to any applicants who have a history of substance misuse within the the last 2 years..

Applicants will also not be considered where

1. a householder has been **cautioned** for the possession or supply of illegal substances within the last 12 months.
2. a householder has been **prosecuted** for the possession or supply of illegal substances within the last 5 years.

If an applicant is regularly engaging with support services for at least 12 months and can prove that they have changed their behaviour, PCH will consider those applicants.

Offers of accommodation

All offers of a tenancy made will be provisional until confirmed. PCH /PEMB 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.

7. Equality

PCH will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

PCH will make this policy available in other languages and formats on request.

PCH will carry out an equality impact assessment on this policy, in line with our corporate procedure.

8. Terms of tenancy

The terms of the tenancy that will be offered will depend upon a number of factors and therefore applicants will be informed of this as part of the formal offer process so they are able to consider this before accepting an offer of accommodation.

9. Disputes

Applicants have the right to ask for a review of any decision relating to their application for an offer of accommodation with PCH. Requests for a review should be put in writing, within 7 calendar days of the date of the decision letter, advising the reasons for the request. The review will be undertaken by an officer of PCH independent of the original decision. The review request will be responded to in writing within 21 calendar days. PCH reserves the right not to hold the property vacant whilst the review is undertaken so that rent loss can be minimised.

10. Monitoring and Review

Careful monitoring of the allocations process and how the estate is forming must take place to identify early on, areas that may need to be reviewed regarding future allocations of the estate.

The following information should be collected and carefully monitored.

- Number of refusals of offers and reasons;
- Number of transfers;
- Number of exchanges;
- Number and type of complaints;
- Number of children housed;
- Number and ethnicity of those housed;
- Origin of Application;
- Number of re-lets;
- Reasons (if possible) for tenants leaving the properties

The plans for all individual schemes should be reviewed annually and if not reviewed with eighteen months shall cease to have effect. The purpose of the annual review will include: -

- To identify any trends/common complaints;
- To make policy recommendations;
- To explain targets not met or exceeded;
- To identify and explain inequities between the partners results;
- To set objectives and agree action plans, if appropriate;
- To set new targets, if appropriate.

All partners must agree and sign this document before it can be implemented:

Plymouth City Council

Signature.....

Print Name

Job Title.....

Date.....

Plymouth Community Homes

Signature.....

Print Name

Job Title.....

Date.....

Pembroke Estate Management Board

Signature.....

Print Name

Job Title.....

Date.....

Date: 14/03/17

Annual Review date: 13/03/2018