

Appendix B

Local Lettings Policy for Local Plan Policy SP1: Growth Strategy Sites

Legal and regulatory background

The purpose of a Local Lettings Policy is to ensure a balance between housing priority in accordance with a local housing authority's legal duties and responsibilities, and the longer-term sustainability of local communities.

The Council is required by law to allocate properties in accordance with its Allocation Scheme ensuring that reasonable preference is given to certain groups of people.

Section 166A(6)(b) of the Housing Act 1996 enables local housing authorities to allocate properties to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories. This enables the Council to create Local Lettings Policies which set out the circumstances in which other groups of people may be given priority for available properties.

The Council has a duty to co-operate with neighbouring local authorities in the formulation of its Local Plan. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (the **CBC Local Plan**) includes Policy SP1 which identifies 'Growth Strategy Sites' (the **SP1 Sites**). Policy SP1 makes provision for a number of new homes to meet Luton Borough Council's unmet housing need because Luton is unable to facilitate the development of sufficient numbers of homes within its own boundaries. This Local Lettings Policy has been designed specifically to assist Luton Borough Council in meeting its unmet housing need.

The application of this Local Lettings Policy also complies with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, published by the Regulator for Social Housing, under which registered providers of social housing are required to let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, taking into account housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants, making the best use of available housing, compatible with the purpose of the housing and contributing to local authorities' strategic housing functions and sustainable communities.

Local Lettings Policy for Policy SP1: Growth Strategy Sites

The Council has a duty to co-operate with neighbouring local authorities in the formulation of its Local Plan. Under the Local Plan, the Council is committed to provide 7,350 homes over a period of 20 years from 2015-2035 (the **CBC Local Plan Period**), to meet Luton Borough Council's unmet housing need. Luton Borough Council is unable to facilitate the development of sufficient numbers of homes within its own boundaries.

Under the CBC Local Plan), for the Local Plan Period:

- Around 70% of the homes provided by the Council to meet Luton Borough Council's unmet housing need (circa 5,145) are intended to be for market sale.
- Around 30% of the homes (circa 2,205) are intended to be affordable homes.
- Of the 2,205 affordable homes, around 25% are intended to be shared ownership (circa 529) and 75% are intended to be homes for rent (circa 1,654).

This Local Lettings Policy relates solely to the SP1 Sites listed within CBC Local Plan.

The use of Local Lettings Policies is described in paragraph 8.4.1 of Central Bedfordshire Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and each Local Lettings Policy is included in detail as an appendix to the Scheme.

Application of this Local Lettings Policy

During the Local Plan Period, the Council will monitor lettings data closely. Specifically, when making an allocation under the Housing Allocation Scheme, the Council will identify the applicant's most recent permanent settled accommodation. Where this address is outside of Central Bedfordshire, and within Luton Borough Council's boundary area, the letting will go toward satisfying the Council's duty to assist Luton Borough Council with its unmet housing need under this Local Lettings Policy. Shared ownership sales will be monitored separately through the Council's Housing Strategy & Implementation Team. This approach will be kept under review.

It is likely, based on current lettings trends, that the number of lettings each year under the Housing Allocation Scheme will enable the Council to meet the Luton Borough Council unmet housing need in line with the policy obligations of the CBC Local Plan. This position will be kept under review during the Local Plan Period. If, contrary to current projections, a shortfall arises so that the Luton Borough Council unmet housing need is not being met via Housing Allocation Scheme allocations, then this Local Lettings Policy shall come into operation.

For so long as the Luton Borough Council unmet housing need is being met via Housing Allocation Scheme allocations, then affordable homes on the SP1 Sites will be let in accordance with the Housing Allocations Scheme, and this Local Lettings Policy will not come into operation.

Lettings to the SP1 Sites under this Local Lettings Policy

The qualification requirements for the Housing Register or under this Local Lettings Policy (should it come into operation) are essentially the same whether an applicant is from Central Bedfordshire or outside of the area, and so reference should be made to the Housing Allocation Scheme for qualification requirements.

Should this Local Lettings Policy come into operation, only applicants:

- meeting the Housing Allocation Scheme requirements,
- who are from outside Central Bedfordshire, and
- where the household's most recent permanent settled accommodation was an address in the Borough of Luton,

will be able to be housed under its arrangements (**Qualifying Applicants**).

Qualifying Applicants looking to only apply for an SP1 Site property, will, like any other applicant, be expected to complete a full housing register application.

Under this Local Lettings Policy:

- Qualifying Applicants will be prioritised for properties at the SP1 Sites over other applicants qualifying via the Housing Allocations Scheme;
- Properties at the Sites will be advertised via choice based lettings; and,
- The relative priorities between Qualifying Applicants will be determined in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme.

The lettings made to the SP1 Sites will be kept under review as against the requirements of CBC Local Plan, once this Local Lettings Policy comes into operation.

If the measures outlined in this Local Lettings Policy to prioritise Qualifying Applicants for properties at the SP1 Sites are insufficient to meet the Council's duties under the CBS Local Plan, this Local Lettings Policy will be revised so as to incorporate additional or alternative prioritisation methods, or other mechanism to seek to make up any identified shortfall.

Any requests for reviews by applicants housed under this Local Lettings Policy, shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's usual review procedures as set out at paragraph 7 of the Housing Allocations Scheme.

General

This Local Lettings Policy should be read in conjunction with the Housing Allocation Scheme.

This Local Lettings Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes to the Council's working practices, changes in relevant legislation or guidance, insufficient numbers of Qualifying Applicants on the Council's Housing Register or as a result of internal reviews.

The Council's Annual Lettings Plan will set out, in advance, whether it is likely that this LLP will be required and will indicate the number of homes which must be allocated on an SP1 site, having regard to the anticipated shortfall (if any) in lettings to households whose last permanent settled accommodation was in Luton Borough, via the main Housing Allocations Policy.

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