



**Introduction of Local Lettings Policy
covering Hamminkeln Lane, Salters
Lane, Sedgefield.**

**Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration,
Economy and Growth**

**Councillor Kevin Shaw, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic
Housing and Assets**

Electoral division affected:

Sedgefield.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To set out the details relating to the introduction of a Local Lettings Policy for new build properties at Hamminkeln Lane, Salters Lane, Sedgefield.

Executive summary

- 2 The following report looks to explain the need for the introduction of a Local Lettings Policy within Sedgefield Borough and sets out background of the development and the prioritisation of applicants in line with the Durham Key Options (DKO) lettings process.
- 3 It is essential for Local Lettings Policies to be clear and concise especially where demand is expected to be high in terms of bids placed on the properties covered. There are 71 units which will fall under this policy and applicants will be prioritised in terms of their links to current residency within Sedgefield, as well as employment and any welfare reasons they may have to move.
- 4 The policy will be introduced in March 2021 and it is expected shortlisting for these properties will take place in March/April 2021.

Background

- 5 Durham Key Options is the Social Housing register for County Durham, administered by Durham County Council, of which Livin are a full partner to the scheme.
- 6 Livin process applications on behalf of Durham County Council and manage these applications into their own housing stock. Predominantly located across the old Sedgefield District. This covers larger towns such as Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor and Ferryhill.
- 7 From time to time, housing providers introduce Local Lettings Policies on certain stock or areas to prioritise applicants who have links specifically in terms of their residency, employment or welfare reasons. These are properties are advertised via Durham Key Options and the individual providers carry out admin duties around shortlisting said properties.
- 8 Livin wish to introduce a Local Lettings Policy (the Policy) which will cover 71 units within the Sedgefield Parish
- 9 All providers linked to Durham Key Options have agreed the terms of this Policy.

Local Lettings Policy

- 10 The local Lettings Policy will cover 71 units across Hamminkeln Lane, Salters Lane, Sedgefield. The breakdown of these units is below:
 - (a) 6 x Four Bedroom houses
 - (b) 22 x Three Bedroom houses
 - (c) 43 x Two Bedroom houses
- 11 The introduction of the Policy will be to meet the demand that is expected on the properties given the lack of affordable social housing in the area at the moment. It will also look to assist those local residents who may be struggling to afford higher house prices in Sedgefield be able to settle into long term, secure accommodation.

- 12 Households who have a connection to Sedgefield Parish will be given priority over those who do not live in the defined locality. This will be assessed using the following breakdown:
- (a) The applicant(s) must be currently resident in the “Local Area” and have lived there for a continuous period of 12 months; or,
 - (b) The applicant(s) must be in continuous full-time or part-time employment or formal employment training within the Local Area for at least 6 months prior to their housing application date (or date of offer of accommodation); or,
 - (c) Applicant(s) living outside the Local Area who have been awarded Welfare Priority following assessment of their housing need(s) within Durham Key Options and this is specifically to give or receive support. This priority will be considered where a move to the Local Area only would enable support provision; the person(s) giving or receiving the support must live in the Local Area and where failure to deliver this support could result in tenancy / independent housing instability.
- 13 All allocations will take place via Durham Key Options; therefore, applicants will have to meet the eligibility of the Durham Key Options (DKO) policy initially.
- 14 The attached Section 106 planning agreement does not stipulate the allocation of future voids, however, as Livin are a full partner of Durham Key Options, unless there is any change to this agreement, all will continue to be allocated in accordance with the structure set out at paragraphs 8(a) – 8(c).
- 15 The above structure mentioned at paragraph 8(a) – 8(c) will be prioritised by band. Where no applicants meet the local connection after the initial round of shortlisting, offers will then be made to any other suitable applicant as per the [DKO Lettings Policy](#).
- 16 It is expected demand for these properties will be high, therefore the need for a controlled approach to allocation is required.

Recommendation

- 17 That the Policy of Hamminkeln Lane, Sedgefield be implemented and reviewed on 12-month intervals to ensure consistency, but also to meet demand by ensuring consistent shortlisting processes are followed.

- 18 That allocations are monitored across each stage of allocation and statistics around the number of applicants allocated who fall under the local lettings criteria be studied.

The Policy

- 19 The properties are located at Hamminkeln Lane, Salters Lane, Sedgefield, TS21 3EE and comprise of 71 units.
- 20 The site falls within the Sedgefield Electoral division, located within the village of Sedgefield.
- 21 Livin own all 71 properties and 100% allocations will be made via the Durham Key Options system as long as Livin continue to be a full partner to the scheme.
- 22 All applicants must have an active Durham Key Options application and a bid must be placed via the bidding system through the Durham Key Options website.
- 23 The properties will be advertised for one cycle and only bids placed during said cycle will be considered for allocation.

Background papers

- 24 A link to the Durham Key Options allocation policy can be found in section 14 of this report.
- 25 Section 106 planning agreement for these properties attached.
- 26 Full Local Lettings Policy document attached.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Possibilities that legal challenge could occur based on the definitions of local connection set out in the policy. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis to eliminate the possibility of legal challenge.

Finance

None

Consultation

DKO partners specifically Believe Housing, Karbon Homes and North Star Housing who make up the DKO Board have been consulted on this proposal and have confirmed their agreement. In addition to this the portfolio holder for Strategic Housing and Assets was consulted in February 2021 on the policy and has provided full backing.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications to protected groups. Consideration taken as part of the overall Equality and Impact assessment for Durham Key Options.

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

Livin will work with Durham County Council's Neighbourhoods teams to ensure management of the site is carried out effectively in lines with tenant behaviour.

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None