

Local Lettings Policy

Author	Reason for change	Date
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Approval process for current version

Presented to	Date	Outcome
Services Committee	September 2021	Approved

Contributes to Strategic Plan	Service Satisfaction Successful Places
Risk ref	O15
Terms of Reference	Review and agree policies, and set standards, for the provision of housing management services to residents of properties owned or managed by Poplar HARCA

1. Introduction

The Committee will be aware that Poplar HARCA is a signatory to the Common Housing Register (CHR). With the Council and other RPs, this means that all applicants for housing are assessed according to the same policy for all available homes which are advertised.

The policy is, in the main, drafted to ensure that the statutory obligations of the local authority are discharged. Up to now, there has been very little discretion for a RP to 'flex' the policy in the best interests of its own tenants.

The CHR partners have recently approved a policy framework which allows for greater local discretion. To implement the policy, RPs must ensure that it is approved through their own governance arrangements.

As the policy has been agreed by the CHR partners, there is no discretion for the Committee to change it, which means it is either adopted as is or rejected in full.

2. Recommendation

That the Committee approves Poplar HARCA adopting the local lettings policy.

3. Examples of how the policy may benefit our tenants

Regeneration: the ability to take a decision on decant priority, and make direct offers to eligible residents, will significantly de-risk the decant process.

Infill: this will mean we can ring-fence hidden homes to our tenant households

Overcrowding Reduction: we already have an overcrowding reduction strategy in place, this formalises its operation

Under-occupiers: we know that most of our under-occupying tenants have a very specific 'want' in terms of where they would move to. This discretion means we can target these households directly with offers we know they will consider

Succession: we already exercise discretion for successors that are not eligible to stay in the property, this will therefore formalise the operation

Each CHR partner has its own vision, mission and aims.

To deliver their mission, each must consider the best interests of their residents, how best to utilise their stock, and the efficiency and efficacy of their housing management function.

Each also has contractual, statutory and regulatory obligations. They also share a commitment to the CHR, and supporting Tower Hamlets Council’s housing and community strategies.

Local demand for affordable housing overwhelms supply. Competing priorities have therefore to be carefully balanced to ensure fair, transparent and compliant lettings decisions in-line with the approved policy.

This supplement sets out when and how CHR partners can exercise discretion and make direct offers of available accommodation not advertised through Homeseekers. It takes advantage of local knowledge, and responds to local circumstances.

A partner adopting any aspect of this policy must approve its use through its governance structure.

To ensure no adverse impacts on the overall pool of properties available to the CHR, offers must be made through the lettings database, each partner the number and type of direct offers accepted must be reported to the CHR every six months, at which meeting the CHR partners will set, monitor and flex targets.

	Regeneration	Infill	Overcrowding reduction	Under occupiers	Succession
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communities affected by regeneration stay together b. Households affected by regeneration are not made homeless c. Support mixed tenure sustainable communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local residents disrupted by local development, benefit from it b. Garner local support for what can often be contentious building proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reduce damage to health and wellbeing caused by overcrowding b. Best use of available stock c. Exploit local knowledge d. Boost chain lettings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support tenants affected by the spare room subsidy b. Best use of available stock c. Exploit local knowledge d. Boost chain lettings 	Discharge statutory or contractual obligation
In-scope	All rented tenures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <25% of new homes All rented tenures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. True voids b. New build without grant c. Homes developed from redundant spaces d. Homes freed-up by under occupiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. At least one additional bedroom is released, or b. A 3+ bedroom property is released 	All rented tenures

Out of scope	<p>a. Re-provision affordable tenures ring-fenced to existing secure and assured tenants</p> <p>b. Adapted and wheel-chair accessible homes</p>	Adapted and wheel-chair accessible homes	Adapted and wheel-chair accessible homes	Adapted and wheel-chair accessible homes	-
Eligibility	Households eligible to vote on a landlord offer who do not own property	Households living on the estate who have been on the housing list for at least 12 months prior to publishing of new build proposals	Secure and assured tenants lacking at least 1 bedroom	Secure and assured tenants, plus separate households living with them for at least 5 years	Households owed a statutory or contractual housing obligation
Offer	<p>Only one reasonable and suitable local lettings policy offer will be made per household. e.g. if an offer is made for infill and refused, no offer will subsequently be made under any other of the policy provisions.</p> <p>The offer will not count towards the three offers allowed before sanction under the CHR Lettings Policy.</p>				
Offer: type	<p>a. Size of property to meet housing need according to lettings policy</p> <p>b. Like-for-like tenure</p>	Size of property to meet housing need according to lettings policy	Size of property to meet housing need according to lettings policy	Size of property to meet housing need according to lettings policy	Size of property to meet housing need according to lettings policy
Priority	Prevailing lettings policy	Prevailing lettings policy	Prevailing lettings policy OR No. of bedrooms lacking, then time on list	Prevailing lettings policy OR No. of bedrooms lacking, then time on list	-