

DRAFT for discussion

Somerleyton Trust: Local Lettings Plan

1 Introduction

This Local Lettings Plan and the associated Allocations Policy are intended for use by the Somerleyton Trust. It is a new build scheme, consisting of 304 residential units for rent that will be allocated to a mix of incomes and include units for extra care.

This Plan aims to take account of the special circumstances of the development and recognizes the need to respond to the expectations and aspirations of local residents.

In establishing this Plan, the following principles have been applied:

- To do so in a way which is fair, open and transparent.
- To ensure utmost confidentiality with respect to personal information concerning applicants

2 Aims and Purpose

This local lettings plan is intended to support the implementation of the wider project aims and purpose, to deliver:

- community control (mutual accountability and community-rooted leadership)
- community value (keeping value locally and valuing people's input)
- community involvement (empowerment, engagement and voice)

3 Objectives of the local letting plan

- To meet the housing needs of the local community and the need to create a cohesive, member based management model.
- To ensure that all properties are allocated fairly, in an open manner and in accordance with the agreed objectives, and criteria relevant for their Income Band.
- To ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy is adhered to and that allocation of property does not discriminate against any

person(s) on the basis of a protected characteristic¹

- To provide housing for those referred in accordance with the Nominations Agreement who are in housing need and who wish to become members.
- To ensure that all properties in Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4 are allocated fairly and in accordance with the guidelines as recommended in the Homes and Communities Agency Regulatory Framework
- To ensure that planning policy for 'Affordable housing' is incorporated into this letting policy, as it applies to bands 1-4.

4 Target Income Bands

The **target income mix** is based on **Lambeth's current mix of household incomes** using a banding approach, as set out below, and adjusted on a 5 yearly basis to reflect the **London Borough of Lambeth's Housing Needs Assessment 2012** (June 2012, by ORS), and future updates.

Income bands	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7
	"Social Rent" terms		"Intermediate" rent				Market rent
			"Affordable Rent" terms				
Rent	Social rent	Social rent	Pegged @ 40% of household income	Market rent			
Gross household income (excluding housing benefits)	Under £15,000	£15 – £25,000	£25 - £35,000	£35 - £45,000	£45 - £55,000	£55 - £70,000	Over £70,000
% of Lambeth population currently in this income band ²	21%	20%	17%	13%	9%	8%	12%

Gross household income: As part of their tenancy agreement, residents are required to provide their annual tax returns (or other proof of income) to

¹ The Equality Act 2010 requires equal access to services regardless of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In the case of gender, there are special protections for pregnant women

² **London Borough of Lambeth's Housing Needs Assessment 2012** (June 2012, by ORS).

allow their gross household income to be calculated. An average income over a 3-year period will be taken, to allow for variance in income particularly with self-employed and freelance workers.

All the homes will be maintained and built to the same standard. If a household's income changes, they will move to a different rent band, but would not have to move home.

Ongoing viability: To protect the financial sustainability of the Trust, whilst providing greater security of tenure, the following guidelines will be adopted:

1. All households can move to higher income bands.
2. All households can return to the income band they first started on.
3. If a household's income falls below the band they started on, they will be given the opportunity to move to a lower band if there is availability of a suitable home.

Initial income mix: At first lettings, the rental mix will at least meet the Planning permission Unilateral Undertaking commitment for not less than 50% of all residential units to be Affordable Housing Units (i.e. social rent plus the government's defined rent of 80% market rent/ the Local Housing Allowance in Lambeth). The Somerleyton Trust will work towards achieving the Target Income mix within 10 years of first lettings.

Lettings will be advertised setting out the income band for which the flat is available. Applicants will only be accepted if their gross household income falls within the stated income band.

5 Minimum and Maximum Housing Standards

Applications will only be considered where the household size requirements comply with the space standards set out below. This is to ensure that a property is neither under nor over occupied, based on household size at the time of allocation. Below are the minimum and maximum household and size standards.

Bed-sitting Room	1 adult
1 bedroom	1 adult
	2 adults
2 bedrooms	2 adults sharing
	1 adult + 1 to 2 children

	2 adults + 1 to 2 children
3 bedrooms*	3 adults sharing
	1 adult + 2 to 4 children
	2 adults + 1 to 3 children
4 Bedrooms*	4 adults sharing
	1 adult + 3 to 6 children
	2 adults + 2 to 4 children

*Further discussion is required.

5 Exclusions from Eligibility

Applications cannot be accepted from households that include:

- People who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- People from outside the United Kingdom who fail the habitual residence test
- People from outside the United Kingdom who are in breach of or whose residence does not comply with the European Union Rights of Residence Directive and Statutory Instruments
- People who have been found guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour that would make them unsuitable to be a tenant of the Trust. Such serious unacceptable behaviour is defined as only that behaviour, by the applicant or member of his households, which would if the applicant were a secure tenant of the Local Authority, entitle it to a possession order on any ground in the Housing Act 1985.

6 Housing Needs Criteria

In considering applicants, the following criteria will apply:

The first THREE criteria (a, b and c) must be met in all cases.

(a) Local Connection

Applicants must have a local connection, such as:

- they were born or currently live in the Brixton or within one mile of the Somerleyton Road development (the area)
- they have family in the area
- they work or study in the area
- they were forced to leave the area due to a lack of affordable housing (e.g. under recent regeneration schemes)

(b) Clean Criminal Record

Applicants must not have recent criminal convictions or have been recently found guilty of anti-social behaviour or aggravated nuisance to neighbours or other members of the local community. This will not apply to applicants with spent convictions of more than 5 years old.

(c) Clear Rent Account

Applicants must not have rent arrears on a recent, previous or current account where there is no agreement in place to repay them or no evidence to show any agreement is being adhered to.

The next THREE criteria (d, e, and f) will be used to determine priority between one applicant and another, ranked within each income band.

The individual criteria are scored with the applicants scoring the most points to be considered first, in each income band.

(d) Key public sector workers

Applicants who are employed locally in key public services such as:

- Nurses and other NHS clinical staff
- Teachers and nursery nurses
- Police officers
- Social workers
- Firefighters

(e) Community Contribution / Co-operability

Applicants who can demonstrate that they actively contribute to the local community through:

- Working with a local charity, co-operative or community organisation
- Working for groups associated with young people
- Local committees, Council or community facilities (including school governors)
- Voluntary support for community members, organising clubs or events

(f) Current Accommodation

Account will be taken of:

- The unsuitability of the current accommodation
- Poor state of repair of current accommodation
- Homelessness prevention – people who are not homeless but may become so if not accommodated
- Need to move for medical or social reasons

(g) Statutory Homeless as Assessed by Lambeth Council

Allocation Policy (Initial Scheme Lettings)

1 Advance Publicity

An information leaflet will be published which describes the accommodation available and explaining the how the scheme is managed on co-operative principles and its training programme. This will be widely circulated through Lambeth Council, local, specialist and community agencies and community service employers in central London. It will be assumed that all applicants have read this leaflet.

2 Initial Lettings Timetable

The Somerleyton Road development is expected to be completed by **December 2018***; all applications for initial lettings will be made by **31st March 2018*** to enable sufficient time to complete the training programme for membership. It is intended that the selection of prospective members and reserves will be completed by **30th June 2018*** in order to commence the training programme in **July 2018***.

*NB: All the dates are indicative and are for the purpose of the consultation. The final dates will be dependent on the construction timetable.

3 Introductory interviews

Interviews will be conducted by the housing manager, who will report to the Trust's board.

The purposes of the interviews are:

- To confirm the details provided on the Application Form and previous tenancy history where applicable.
- To introduce the Trust's objectives and the training course.

- To ensure that applicants understand their responsibilities as tenants.
- To give applicants the opportunity to raise individual requirements relating to training arrangements (e.g. childcare, transport, access for people with disabilities, financial assistance with travel costs, help with language or literacy)

Every adult member of each household will be required to attend the interview which will be held in private. Applicants may be accompanied if they wish.

Where appropriate the housing manager may seek independent verification of information provided by applicants.

4 Selection

On the basis of information given on the Application Form and at interviews, the Allocations Group will decide which applicants to accept as prospective members and as reserves. The decisions the Allocations Group will be based solely on the information provided in the Application Form and in interviews. The decisions of the Allocations Group will be final.

5 Conflict of Interest

Impartiality and integrity will be a crucial requirement of the members of the Allocations Group. In the event that any member is related to/has a close personal, business or other connection to an applicant he/she will disclose this information and will not participate in any discussion or decision during which the relevant application is under consideration.

6 Transparency and Confidentiality

The list of applicants and all information provided by applicants will be strictly confidential and will not be shared or discussed with any persons outside of meetings of the Allocations Group.