

# Local Lettings Policy for School Gardens, Ingleby Arncliffe

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Beyond Housing are developing eighteen affordable homes at School Gardens, Ingleby Arncliffe. This policy applies to the initial and subsequent allocation of the eight affordable homes for rent, composed of 2no one-bedroom houses, 2no two-bedroom houses and 4no two-bedroom bungalows.
- 1.2 Beyond Housing are part of the North Yorkshire Home Choice Partnership. A key aim of the partnership is to encourage and support, balanced, sustainable communities where people choose to live.
- 1.3 The partnership recognises that new build developments may have certain restrictions (Section 106) based on them when they are let where applicants must meet a specified condition.
- 1.5 To help achieve these aims a local lettings policy is to be introduced to Beyond Housing's new housing development at School Gardens, Ingleby Arncliffe. The policy will ensure that no group is excluded or disadvantaged due to their ethnic origin, sexuality, or religious beliefs and will support social cohesion.

Policy:
Approved:
Review:
Lead Officer:

## 2.0 Legal Framework for a Local Letting Policy

2.1 Section 166 A (6)(b) of the 1996 Housing Act enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall, the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of s.166A (3). A local lettings policy may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives. Before adopting a local lettings policy, authorities should consult with those who are likely to be affected.

## 3.0 Objective

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the allocations process for these new homes, not only gives preference to applicants in housing need, but also ensures that local housing needs are met by creating a sustainable community through effective allocations.
- 3.2 The North Yorkshire Home Choice Partnership Common Allocation Policy will remain the overarching policy, against which allocations are made. The local lettings policy is in place to ensure that lettings to this new development result in a settled and sustainable community and that obligations set out in the Section 106 agreement are met.
- 3.3 All bungalows will be designated Category 1, for applicants aged 60 plus or any age with a ground floor recommendation. Charges for all bungalows will be inclusive of Beyond Housing's Reach & Respond service.
- 3.4 The policy also aims to ensure that residents will maintain their tenancies in an excellent manner to achieve the highest standards for the development into the future.

## 4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 **North Yorkshire Home Choice Based Lettings Partnership-** A partnership made up of the former district and borough councils of Craven, Ryedale, Richmond, Hambleton, Harrogate, Scarborough and Selby.
- 4.1 **North Yorkshire Home Choice (NYHC)-** The choice-based lettings scheme where partner registered providers advertise their properties.
- 4.2 **North Yorkshire Home Choice Based Lettings Partnership Common Allocation Policy-** The document that sets out who is eligible to apply for accommodation and how priority will be determined when properties are allocated.

## 5.0 Responsibilities

- 5.1 **The Director of Housing** – has overall responsibility for the policy
- 5.2 **The Housing Operations Manager**- has responsibility for the implementation of the policy and ensuring compliance with the policy
- 5.3 **The Housing Manager**- is responsible for the operational delivery of the Policy
- 5.4 **The Housing Officer**- is responsible for allocating the properties in line with the Policy

## **6.0 Local Lettings**

- 6.1 The local lettings policy will be applicable to the initial and subsequent lets of affordable homes for rent.
- 6.2 All affordable homes for rent will be advertised on the North Yorkshire Home Choice website for a minimum of one week. Adverts will clearly state that there is a local lettings policy in place concerning the allocation of these properties. A copy of the local lettings policy will be shared with applicants upon request.
- 6.3 Applicants who bid on the properties will be shortlisted in conjunction with North Yorkshire Home Choice's Common Allocation Policy according to their housing need.
- 6.4 Of the shortlisted applicants, preference will first be given to those who have a local connection to Ingleby Cross or Ingleby Arncliffe.

A local connection is defined as;

- An applicant who has been a resident of Ingleby Arncliffe or Ingleby Cross immediately prior to the time the property is allocated for a period of at least twelve months.
- An applicant who has been a resident of Ingleby Arncliffe or Ingleby Cross for at least five of the ten years immediately preceding the allocation of the property.
- An applicant with a mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter or other close relative\* who has been a resident of Ingleby Arncliffe or Ingleby Cross for at least twelve months prior to the allocation of the property.
- An applicant giving or receiving care from a mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter or close relative\* who has been a resident of Ingleby Arncliffe or Ingleby Cross for at least twelve months preceding the allocation of the property.

- An applicant who has an offer of permanent employment in Ingleby Arncliffe or Ingleby Cross or been in permanent employment in Ingleby Arncliffe or Ingleby Cross for at least twelve months preceding the allocation of the property.

6.5 If a suitable applicant with a local connection as set out in 6.4 cannot be identified, then consideration will be given to applicants who:

- Have lived in the Stokesley sub area\*\* for at least twelve months at the time the property is being allocated **or**
- Has been a resident in the North Yorkshire District for a period of at least five of the ten years prior to the property being allocated **or**
- Has immediately prior to the property being allocated, a father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter or other close relative\* who has been resident in the Stokesley sub area\*\* for at least twelve months **or**
- Are giving or receiving care from some other close relative\* or person who has been a resident in the Stokesley sub-area\*\* for at least twelve months immediately prior to the property being allocated **or**
- Has immediately prior to the allocation being made been in permanent employment for six months or is taking up an offer of permanent employment in the Stokesley sub area

\* Close relatives will be validated by North Yorkshire Council

\*\* The Stokesley sub-area is defined as:- Great Ayton, Great Broughton, Hutton Rudby with Rudby, Bilsdale Midcable, Carlton, Crathorne, Easby, Faceby, Great Busby, Ingleby Greenhow, Kildale, Kirkby in Cleveland, Little Ayton, Little Broughton, Little Busby, Middleton on Leven, Newby, Picton, Potto, Seamer, Sexhow, Skutterskelfe, Stokesley, Swainby/Whorlton and Tame Bridge.

6.6 If a suitable applicant cannot be identified in the Stokesley sub-area, consideration will be given to applicants in the wider North Yorkshire Home Choice partnership area.

6.7 In order to achieve a balanced community applicants will be subject to robust landlord tenancy checks to demonstrate a continuous commitment in their current or previous accommodation with regards to: -

- Keeping their rent account in credit, showing a good history of rent payments over the past five years (or for the entirety of any shorter period if the applicant has not held a tenancy for the past five years).
- If an applicant held a tenancy longer than 5 years ago and any debt was left the applicant will need to demonstrate a proven change in behaviours and a commitment to reduce the debt.
- No evidence of anti-social behavior or criminal behaviour and being able to show an excellent history of tenancy conduct with no breaches within the last 5 years.
- Keeping their current/previous property maintained to a good standard with a well-maintained garden. Beyond Housing's transfer and garden standard will be used as a guideline for this.

6.8 If an applicant has not previously held a tenancy, their application will be reviewed against NYHC Allocations Policy.

6.9 Offers will not usually be made unless the above criteria can be fully evidenced. However, it is recognised that individual applicants will have differing housing histories and have experienced different circumstances over time. Therefore, all applications will be considered upon their own individual merits, with offers of accommodation only withheld where they clearly do not meet the criteria.

6.10 All allocations of a property will be made following the completion of an affordability check which indicates if an applicant can afford the property.

6.11 Feedback will be provided to non-qualifying applicants upon written request.

## **7.0 Consultation**

7.1 Beyond Housing will consult on this policy with North Yorkshire Council and other relevant internal and external stakeholders.

## **8.0 Review**

8.1 The policy will be subject to joint review by Beyond Housing and North Yorkshire Council within 3 years, who may jointly agree to extend its provisions for a further year. Earlier joint reviews may be conducted in response to any changes in legislation or good practice, whichever is the sooner.

8.2 The policy will be reviewed considering customer feedback from complaints, comments or compliments.

8.3 Customer feedback will be used when designing future local lettings policies for other new build developments.