



# Lune Valley Rural Housing Association

## LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

### Introduction

This document sets out a Local Lettings Policy for homes owned and managed by Lune Valley Rural Housing Association.

- The aim of the policy is to support the mission of the Association which is to:
- Provide quality affordable homes in rural areas in and around the Lune Valley for people who are in housing need with a local connection;
- Provide homes for people who are in housing need with a strong local connection with their villages;
- To be an integral part of the communities in which we operate, working with tenants, parish councils and the wider community;
- Ensure that housing is retained for local people in perpetuity.

All vacancies will be allocated according to this policy except where a Section 106 agreement is in place with the Local Authority or where the Local Authority wishes to impose its definition of local connection.

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## **1 Codes of Guidance and Legislation**

In developing this policy the Councils have followed and fully considered the following housing legislation, regulations, statutory guidance, and strategies:

1. The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 as amended by Localism Act 2011 (England)
2. The Housing Act 1996, Part 7 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017  
Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local housing Authorities in England (2012)
4. Providing social housing for local people: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England (2013)
5. Regulator of Social Housing Tenancy Standard (2015)
6. Improving access to social housing for members of the armed forces: Statutory guidance (June 2020)

## **2 Properties covered by the policy**

Properties covered by S106 agreements are excluded from this policy. Details of properties covered by s106 agreements are included in Appendix 1.

The allocation of all properties owned by Lune Valley Rural Housing Association which are not covered by s106 agreements are subject to this policy.

## **3 Priority under local letting policy**

All vacancies will be allocated as per the criteria given below:

### CRAVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Craven District Council properties are all subject to s106 agreements.

### LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Lancaster City Council applies a cascade system where priority is given in the first instance to applicant with a qualifying local connection within the immediate parish; if there are no qualifying applicants, this is cascaded to the surrounding parishes and then to the City Council district. Applicants must meet Lancaster City Council's local connection criteria to register for housing (Appendix 5) and the additional criteria given in section 4.9 of Lancaster's Allocation Policy, **Rural Village and Market Town connections:**

*There is a severe shortage of social housing in rural villages and we aim to preserve rural communities. Therefore, additional priority is given to applicants who have a rural connection to a village or the market town of Carnforth.*

*A rural connection means that the applicant has either:-*

- *Lived in that village for at least six out of the past twelve months or three out of the past five years*
- *Previously lived in that village for at least 5 years*
- *Has permanent employment in a village and has worked in the village for the previous six months.*
- *Has close family who live in the village and have done so for the previous six months. Close family includes parents, adult children and adult siblings.*

## WYRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Great Eccleston**

Preference for vacancies in Great Eccleston will be given to applicants who can demonstrate a qualifying local connection to the ward of Great Eccleston. If there are no applicants with a qualifying local connection to this ward, preference will be given to applicants who can demonstrate a qualifying local connection to any of the following wards:

- Brock with Catterall
- Calder
- Garstang
- Hambleton and Stalmine
- Pilling

If there are no applicants with a qualifying local connection, the vacancy will be allocated to the applicant in highest need, as defined by the lettings policy of the local authority for that area.

## **4 Application Process**

Applicants must be registered for housing with the local authority in which they live. Applications will be prioritised in accordance with the Lettings Policy of their local authority. Applicants who are interested in a vacancy and are registered will be required to apply for properties when advertised in order to be considered for a vacancy.

## **5 Selection of Applicants**

When choosing registered applicants to be offered homes preference will be given to applicants who can demonstrate a qualifying local connection. The local connection criteria will be prioritised over general housing need.

Applicants must meet the following criteria

1. Preference will be given to applicants who will fully occupy the property; (The definition of full occupancy is given in Appendix 2)
2. All applicants will be subject to an affordability assessment to establish that the rent is affordable;
3. Preference for houses will be given to applicants with children under the age of 18;

## **6 Definition of Qualifying Local Connection**

**An applicant can demonstrate a local connection to the locality if one or more of the following apply:**

The intended household has, immediately prior to such approval, been continuously resident in the locality for two years.

The intended household is permanently employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week or has a firm permanent job offer in the locality for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Permanent employment will be taken to include contracts for a minimum of one year's continuous employment and the self-employed, on provision of evidence of a viable business. Where the intended household is on a zero hours contract, proof that a minimum of 16 hours per week has been undertaken for a period of at least 12 months and that the contract can reasonably be expected to continue.

Key workers who live or work in the parish and surrounding parishes. (The definition of a key worker is provided in Appendix 3)

They are currently in the Armed Forces and, immediately prior to joining they lived in the locality for at least two years and immediately before moving to this type of accommodation they lived in the locality for at least two years are an existing or former member of reserve forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service; or is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces and is having to leave Services Family Accommodation and immediately before moving to this type of accommodation they lived in the locality for at least two years.

They are currently in prison, in hospital or similar accommodation whose location is beyond their control and immediately before moving to this type of accommodation, they lived in the locality for at least two years.

Former residents (who previously lived in the locality for a period of at least two years) who wish to return to the locality having completed a post-secondary education course within the past two years.

They need to live in the locality either because they are ill and/or need support from a relative who lives in the locality, or because they need to give support to a relative who is ill and/or need support who lives in the locality. Proof of illness/support will be required from a medical doctor or relevant statutory support agency.

Close family (i.e. mother, father, adult sibling or adult child), who currently live in the district and have done so for the previous two years.

On advice from an appropriate professional it is clear that they need to live in the locality due to reported domestic violence, harassment and/or hate crime at their current address within the local authority area and moving to the locality will reduce the risk of harm and enable support, employment and/or educational needs to be met.

They previously lived in the locality for a minimum of 10 consecutive years.

They lived continuously in the locality for two years or more prior to being accepted as homeless under the Homelessness Act 2002 and placed in temporary accommodation outside of the locality.

They are subject to a court order which requires the applicant either to live within the locality or to access services/education within the locality.

Provides a community contribution in the district.

Asylum seekers who are granted refugee status or other form of leave (Exceptional leave to remain, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave) and were living in Home Office accommodation in the Lancaster district at the time their asylum claim was determined.

They are a care leaver who has been looked after by County Council and after care duties still apply under s23C of the Children Act 1989.

They are a care leaver aged under 21 who reside in the district and have done so for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16.

## **7 Insufficient Eligible Applicants**

If there are no applicants for the property it will be re-advertised as often as is necessary to let the vacancy.

## **8 Equal Opportunities Policy**

Lune Valley Rural Housing Association is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all who apply for housing and who meet the qualifying criteria. No one will be discriminated against on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor that is strictly prohibited by law.

## **9 Personal Information Policy**

All applicants' personal and financial information will be managed in compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent Acts and will be subject to appropriate confidentiality.

By submitting a Housing Register application and/or a bid under the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, an applicant consents to the processing of personal data about themselves.

Personal information only be used as required to assess any application or appeal. All Applicants have the right to see the information held about them and to receive a copy of the information kept in computer or paper files. This is a Subject Access Request (SAR).

Prospective tenants are strongly advised to take their own financial advice from individuals or organisations registered with the FCA.

## **10 Right of Appeal**

If an applicant is not satisfied with the assessment of their application for housing, they should appeal the decision to the local authority which is administering their application. If an applicant is not satisfied with a decision relating to the allocation of a property, they should appeal to the Managing Agent (South Lakes Housing Association) which made the decision.

## **11 Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed, and changes made as necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of those in housing need in an efficient, fair and transparent way.

**Next Review Date: May 2024**

## **12 Appendix 1 Properties subject to S106 Agreements**

### **Wyre Borough Council**

Willow Close, Forton  
Cherry Tree Close, Pilling  
Apple Tree Close, St Michaels-on-Wyre

### **Craven District Council**

Manor Close, Ingleton  
Marton Road (Walton Close), Gargrave  
Park Croft, Gargrave

### **Lancaster City Council**

Lindeth Close, Silverdale  
Burr Tree Gardens, Cowan Bridge  
Chesnut Drive, Bentham  
Craggs View, Over Kellett

## **Appendix 2 Definition of Full Occupancy**

1 bedroom for each person living in your home unless they're expected to share.

2 people are expected to share 1 bedroom if they're:

- 2 adults in a couple
- 2 children under 10
- 2 children under 16 if they're the same sex

## **13 Appendix 3 Definition of a key worker**

A key worker is a public-sector or private-sector employee who is considered to provide an essential service but who may be unable to afford to buy a property in the area where they work. The definition of a key worker was set out in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (revised 2006) and was revised by HM Government in June 2020 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## **14 Appendix 4 Definition of a care leaver**

The legal definition of a care leaver comes from The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 which states that a Care Leaver is someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday.

## **15 Appendix 5 Definition of Local Connection – Lancaster City Council Allocations Policy**

### **3.3.1 Local connection**

If an applicant does not have a local connection to the Lancaster district, then they will not qualify to join the Housing Register. This will apply to all applicants on the housing register and may mean that existing applicants on the housing register will no longer qualify to remain on the housing register.

A local connection means that one or more of the following statements applies to the applicant

- Lived continuously in the Lancaster district for the previous three years.
- You have previously lived in the Lancaster district for a minimum of 15 consecutive years. If this is the only local connection criterion that applies, then the applicant will be placed in Band E, regardless of whether any other factors in a higher band apply.
- Residence in a hospital, prison, residential school, student accommodation (where it is not their principal home), approved premises, residential rehabilitation facilities, supported accommodation and recovery house does not gain a local connection.
- Worked or provided a community contribution in the Lancaster district for the previous three years (See section 3.34 and 3.35).
- Is serving in the Regular Armed Forces or has served in the previous five years.
- Is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces and is having to leave Services Family Accommodation.
- Was previously living in Services Family Accommodation but is having to leave due to relationship breakdown with a member of the Armed Forces
- Is an existing or former member of the reserve forces, who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.
- Is an adult child of service personnel, who are no longer able to remain in the family home due to the impact of their family moving from base-to-base.
- Is a social housing tenant in another Local Authority area, who is needing to move to the Lancaster district to take up employment or apprenticeship opportunity within the district.
- Is a social housing tenant who has a need to move to the Lancaster district to avoid hardship

- Close family (i.e. mother, father, adult sibling or adult child), who currently live in the Lancaster district and have done so for the previous five years. If this is the only local connection criterion that applies, then the applicant will be placed in Band E, regardless of whether any other factors in a higher band apply.
- They have a continuing caring responsibility for someone who is resident in the Lancaster district, and that this care could not be provided unless they were resident in the district.
- They have moved to the Lancaster district to escape violence or harm
- They are a victim of domestic abuse who has fled to the Lancaster district.
- Applicants from the travelling community, who do not have a local connection to another local authority area
- Asylum seekers who are granted refugee status or other form of leave (Exceptional leave to remain, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave) and were living in Home Office accommodation in the Lancaster district, at the time their asylum claim was determined.
- They are a care leaver, who has been looked after by Lancashire County Council and after care duties still apply under s23C of the Children Act 1989.
- They are a care leaver, aged under 21 who reside in the Lancaster district and have done so for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16.
- They need to be near special medical or support services which are only available in the Lancaster district.

*The only exception to this will be, applicants who wish to move into and are eligible for, Independent Retirement Living (flatted accommodation only), where they will be placed in Band E and only be able to bid on this type of accommodation. See Appendix A for the local lettings plan for Independent Retirement Living Accommodation, which includes eligibility criteria.*

The Council may, in certain circumstances, agree some reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring authorities, which may involve local lettings plans being entered into that will define an area outside the district boundary. This will only apply in limited circumstances, to meet local need and under duty to co-operate arrangements, with other district councils.