

Kings Moat, Wrexham Road, Chester CH4

1. Introduction

This Local Lettings Policy has been developed to deliver sustainable lettings for the new build homes at Kings Moat Garden Village Chester.

2. Aim of the framework

The aim of the Local Lettings Policy is to make a significant contribution to the overall sustainability of the area by helping to identify suitable tenants, who will settle and contribute to the local community, ensuring tenancies are sustainable for the long term.

As Kings Moat Garden Village is a new development, we want to make sure that we create a balanced and sustainable community from the beginning with tenants successfully managing their tenancies and making a positive contribution to the local area.

We aim to achieve this by housing a mix of different households and economic profiles, at the same time as responding to local housing need.

In addition, we aim to protect the capital investment made by Plus Dane through the delivery of sustainable tenancies.

3. Background

Kings Moat Village on the outskirts of Chester, is a new build mixed tenure development of 273 private homes, the majority of which are for sale, ranging in price between £300 and £450k.

Included within the development are 82 affordable homes, 33 of which will be for shared ownership along with 49 homes to be let at affordable rent.

The 49 affordable rent homes are a mixture of one and two-bedroom apartments and two and three-bedroom houses, broken down as follows:

- Thirty-three 1 bed flats, six 2 bed flats, six 2 bed houses and four 3 bed houses, all of which will be available for rent through Plus Dane.

Handovers are scheduled to take place from Spring 2022 through to Autumn 2024 with the four properties being handed over on or around 20 May 2022.

4. Proposal for scheme

The content of this framework does not diverge from the main principles of West Cheshire Home's Allocation Policy, and we remain committed to rehousing people in housing need.

The Local Lettings Policy will apply to homes owned by Plus Dane Housing on the Kings Moat Village development.

Homes will be advertised through West Cheshire Homes; however, we intend to include a local lettings criterion to ensure the sustainment and reputation of the new development along with the economic well-being of the scheme and area.

It is intended that a local lettings policy will apply on the first let to safeguard the reputation of the development and the significant investment being made in the new homes.

Specifically, this means for this this scheme that priority for applications will be given to those who:

- Are economically active to ensure an economic balance of incomes and to prevent a concentration of residents wholly dependent on benefits
- Are local volunteers, making a contributing to the local community.
- Do not have a history of anti-social behaviour.

Under this framework:

We **will** give 50% preference to applicants in continuing employment.

To ensure we create a balanced community on first letting, we may give preference to an applicant who fulfils this requirement above another applicant in greater housing need.

We **will** give preference to households able to demonstrate a stable and continuing employment history. All applicants will be subject to financial assessments to ensure affordability and sustainability.

We will **not** allocate to any household who have previously held a tenancy and are unable to provide satisfactory tenancy references for the preceding 2 years. For those households who have not held a tenancy before, an alternative reference such as one from an employer will suffice.

We will **not** allocate to any household that has been investigated and formally served with a written warning for breach of tenancy within in the previous 2 years.

We would **not** allocate to any household where any member of that household has any criminal convictions (excluding driving offences), police cautions, reprimands or formal warnings recorded against them in the previous 2 years.

4.1 Selection Process

The properties will be advertised on West Cheshire Homes advising applicants that a Local Letting scheme is in place and applicants will be required to satisfy the criteria specified.

We will continue to give priority to suitable applicants in accordance with the appropriate banding and date order system but shall give priority to those in employment where they can demonstrate they have sufficient finance to pay the rent.

Applicants given priority for employment should be working 16 hours or more at the close of the bidding cycle and be able to provide as evidence a contract of employment, letter from employer and/ or recent wage slips.

Volunteers must have been volunteering for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to close of the bidding cycle and be volunteering up to the point of offer and have been volunteering for a not-for profit organisation or a charity registered with the charity commission.

Applicants will be required to fully occupy the property in line with current bedroom eligibility needs.

In addition, applicants must demonstrate a local connection to the Cheshire West and Chester area.

Before any offer is made, all applicants will be required to undergo a formal interview, including a full reference check, when the local letting criteria and any additional checks that may be necessary will be discussed in detail.

As part of the interview process, all applicants will undergo an Entitled to assessment to ensure they are claiming their full benefit entitlement. In addition, to ensure the sustainment of the scheme, as a matter of course each applicant will be offered a tenancy sustainment referral to our in-house floating support team and, if required, we will sign-post to debt management support if it is needed.

5. Monitoring, Conclusion and Review

If the approach described above does not deliver a mix of residents to achieve sustainability of the scheme an alternative approach will be implemented.

Any decision to move to an alternative approach will be discussed and agreed with West Cheshire Homes Choice Based Lettings Team leader. This may entail widening the advert pool to applicants in the housing options band of the West Cheshire Homes. Any properties offered in this way will still be subject to the criteria of this Local Lettings Policy.

It is intended that this Local Lettings Policy shall apply to the first lets only. When a property on this development becomes available in the future, it will be advertised in accordance with our general Lettings Policy.

We will use the following indicators to measure the overall success of this Local Lettings Plan.

- Turnover of homes
- Average length of tenancy
- Number of Anti-Social Behaviour reports
- Tenancy Sustainment referrals