

# Rural Local Lettings Policy

## February 2011



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This policy covers all new rural affordable housing development schemes granted planning permission after February 2011.

## **1.0 Aims and Objectives**

1.1 The aim of the Local Lettings Policy is to enable people to remain or return to a locality to which they have a connection, and to develop sustainable communities within rural areas. The local connection will relate to current or past residence, family associations or employment in the relevant Parish.

## **2.0 Planning Policy**

2.1 Local Plan Policy SC 11 (Affordable Housing) provides for negotiation for affordable housing on private development sites of 3 or more dwellings in rural areas.

2.2 Local Plan Policy RAP4 allows “the development of affordable housing in the rural areas to meet the local needs of a village or parish in exceptional circumstances”. These exceptional circumstances relate to:

- the evidence of need
- the scale and location of the development, and
- the ability of the homes to meet the particular need in perpetuity

## **3.0 Areas covered by the Policy**

3.1 The Local Lettings Policy will apply to the allocation of affordable housing in Parishes where a need has been identified by way of a current housing needs survey. At February 2011 the Local Lettings Policy applies to the following Parishes:

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Date of Housing Needs Survey</b>
Baginton	February 2008
Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton	January 2009
Ashow and Stoneleigh	July 2009
Bishops Tachbrook	August 2009
Cubbington	November 2009
Budbrooke	January 2010
Lapworth	February 2010
Bubbenhall	May 2010

3.2 The Policy will be reviewed on a six monthly basis to take account of new surveys being undertaken and new developments being completed. The Parishes that the Policy may be applied in are:

Ashow	Baddesley Clinton	Baginton	Barford
Beausale, Haseley, Honiley and Wroxall	Bishops Tachbrook	Blackdown	Bubbenhall
Budbrooke	Cubbington	Eathorpe	Hatton
Hunningham	Lapworth	Leek Wootton	Norton Lindsey
Offchurch	Old Milverton	Radford Semele	Rowington
Sherbourne	Shrewley	Stoneleigh	Wappenbury
Wasperton	Weston under Wetherley		

#### **4.0 Allocations**

4.1 All allocations will be made in accordance with the HomeChoice Allocation Policy which is in operation at the time of allocation. Where the HomeChoice Allocation policy has been superseded all allocations will be made in accordance with the Council's Allocation Policy which is in operation at the time of allocation.

4.2 The only exceptions to this will be;

1. The properties will not be included within the Band quotas for HomeChoice to ensure all applicants with a local connection are considered.
2. In the first allocation of affordable housing schemes where the Housing Needs Survey for the Parish has identified a need for singles/couples without children but no 1 bedroom houses, or 1 or 2 bedroom flats/maisonettes are constructed on the site. Only in these circumstances will single/couple households without children be permitted to bid for a two bedroom house. This will be in addition to the standard property types they are eligible to bid for.

In these instances the properties will be allocated by band, then local connection. In circumstances when two or more households have the same band and local connection the allocation will be made to the household who has waited the longest date on Homechoice.

This exception is in order to ensure their housing needs, as identified by the Housing Needs Survey used to support the new development, can be met.

## **5.0 Defining the Local Connection Hierarchy**

- 5.1 In addition to the HomeChoice Allocation Scheme eligibility criteria, applicants will also need to demonstrate their need to be housed in the locality, this will be by fulfilling at least one of the following criteria (listed in priority order);
  - 5.1.1 people who currently live in the parish and have done so continuously for at least the last 2 years and are seeking more suitable accommodation;
  - 5.1.2 people who have lived in the parish for at least 2 years out of the last 10 years;
  - 5.1.3 people who used to live in the parish and who have immediate family (restricted to mother, father, son, daughter, brother or sister) living in the parish
  - 5.1.4 people who have relatives living in the parish to whom it is essential to live near for support e.g. elderly relatives, young families; and
  - 5.1.5 people who are employed in the parish in permanent paid work, other than that of a casual nature and have been for at least 12 months
- 5.2 In the event there are no suitable applicants who fulfil any of the above criteria, the properties will be allocated to applicants who can demonstrate any one of the above criteria (in priority order) in relation to the adjoining parish/es specified in the appropriate schedule of the S106 agreement.
- 5.3 If there are no suitable applicants who fulfil any of the above criteria for the stated parish or the adjoining parish/es specified in the relevant schedule of the S106 agreement the property will be further advertised on HomeChoice without the need for applicants to demonstrate any of the above criteria. At this point the property will be included within the Band quotas.
- 5.4 All applicants would need to be registered on the Council's Housing Register and be in housing need according to the HomeChoice Policy that is in operation at the time.

## **6.0 How to apply for housing**

- 6.1 Any person wishing to be considered for a property in the Parish must apply for housing in the normal manner. The standard housing application form will need to be completed in full and be accompanied by the relevant supporting evidence.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of the application it will be registered and assessed in accordance with the HomeChoice Allocations Policy in operation at the time. Applicants will be informed in writing of their priority by confirming

which Band they have been placed in and the number of bedrooms they require. The accompanying booklet will provide further details on the HomeChoice Allocations policy and will also detail the type of property they are eligible to bid for.

## **7.0 Advertising and Re-letting**

- 7.1 Properties will be advertised via the Council's Home Choice Scheme as detailed in the HomeChoice Allocations Policy.
- 7.2 If there are no bids from applicants in the preferred Band, the property will be offered to the highest placed applicant in the next Band who has the highest local connection to the parish.
- 7.3 If upon advertisement it has not been possible to rent the properties to a applicant fulfilling the criteria set out above the properties shall be offered to applicants who demonstrate any of the criteria as set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) but in relation to neighbouring Parishes who will be named in priority order in any S106 Agreement.
- 7.4 In the case of re-lets of two bedroom houses for rent only, if upon advertisement it has not been possible to rent the properties to an applicant eligible for this type of property and who fulfils any of the criteria as set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 in relation to the specified Parishes, the properties shall be offered to single and couple applicants with no children who fulfil any of the criteria set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) in relation to the Parish or neighbouring Parish/es (in priority order).
- 7.5 If upon advertisement it has not been possible to rent the properties to an applicant fulfilling the criteria set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) in relation to neighbouring Parishes the properties shall be offered to applicants registered on the HomeChoice Allocation Scheme who do not have a local connection to the Parish or neighbouring Parishes. In the case of two bedroom houses for rent these will only be available to households who are eligible to bid for this size property.

## **8.0 Re-Sale of Shared Ownership or Low Cost Affordable Housing**

- 8.1 Properties will be advertised via the Council's HomeChoice Scheme for applicants who demonstrate their need to be housed within the locality by fulfilling any one of the criteria as set out in 5.1.1 – 5.1.5 (in priority order) in relation to the specified Parish/es.
- 8.2 If after two successive advertisements no suitable applicants with a local connection have applied for the properties, they will be advertised via the Council's HomeChoice scheme for all eligible applicants to apply.
- 8.3 If after a further period of advertisement no suitable applicants apply for the properties then the owner shall have the right to advertise the properties generally.

## **9.0 Existing Council owned Affordable Housing**

- 9.1 The provisions set out in 5.1 – 5.3 will be applied to re-lets of existing Council owned affordable housing within a Parish where a housing need has been identified by way of a current housing needs survey.
- 9.2 Adjoining parishes will be those physically adjoining the main Parish in question and will only include Parishes within Warwick District.

## **10.0 Applying this policy**

- 10.1 There will be no individual agreements for particular schemes, unless there is a specific need for a Local Lettings Policy; the above policy will apply to all and should be read in conjunction with the HomeChoice Allocations Policy.

## 11.0 Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Affordable Housing	Housing to be provided to those persons identified by the District Council as being in need of affordable housing as defined in the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 and that will be available to persons who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally on the open market within Warwick District. It will comprise housing for rent, shared ownership, low cost or on an intermediate tenure and at all times be allocated to applicants registered on HomeChoice Allocation Scheme.
Relatives living in the parish to whom it is essential to live near for support (5.1.4)	<p>Will be assessed on a case by case basis, however in most cases the person who requires the support will already be resident in the parish, the relative who needs to provide support will be the one seeking to move to the parish.</p> <p>Support will be assessed on a case by case basis but an example would be to provide substantial care (for example assistance with dressing, washing and preparation of food) for an elderly parent who would otherwise be unable to carry these tasks out themselves.</p>
Current Housing Needs Survey	Comprehensive assessment of the housing needs of the parish recorded in a document specifying the types, sizes and tenures of affordable housing required. A housing needs survey is valid for a period of 5 years.