Local Lettings Policy for a development of homes at Sherdley Green, St Helens, between Plus Dane Housing and St Helens Borough Council

October 2026

1. Introduction

This Local Lettings Policy (LLP) applies to the housing site at Sherdley Green, St Helens under development by Plus Dane housing association. There are 24 homes on the site for social rent. These consist of 24 x 2 bedroom apartments.

2. Background

Social rented housing in St Helens is let using the Under One Roof choice-based lettings system in accordance with the St Helens Borough Council allocation policy and the nomination agreement in place between the Council and Registered Providers with homes in the authority area.

The Homelessness Act 2002 enabled housing authorities to introduce flexibility into their letting policies. Local Lettings Policies were introduced as a targeted approach to implement additional flexibility to existing Choice Based Lettings Schemes which cover wider geographical areas and a range of differing estates. Local Lettings Policies enable properties to be allocated to applicants meeting the particular needs of an area. Addressing specific shortfalls at a neighbourhood level helps build and sustain balanced communities bringing them up to a similar level of other similar neighbourhoods.

Local lettings must not dominate the local authority's scheme at the expense of statutory reasonable preference categories and if used, their nature and scope must be published alongside the allocation scheme, but may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives. When used, a local letting schemes will not diverge from the overall principles of the allocation scheme and will continue to ensure the rehousing of people in housing need.

3. Reasons and aims for a local lettings policy in this location

Sherdley Green is a new housing development owned and managed by Plus Dane Housing. The first lettings of these homes are planned to take place in December 2026.

When making the first lettings Plus Dane Housing wishes to achieve a sustainable community with a mix of employment status and circumstances, typical of more longstanding neighbourhoods. The aim is to identify tenants who will settle and contribute to the local community both socially and economically which is harder to achieve if very high percentages of residents are not economically active.

This aim will be supported by using the lettings criteria set out below in section 4. These criteria seek to
1) reflect the mix of economic activity found in most established neighbourhoods.
2) bring continuity by allowing a number of families and individuals with existing links to the locality to access suitable housing in their community.

4. Criteria to be used in the local lettings policy

a) A percentage of applicants to be employed or in training or in education.

For lettings at Sherdley Green, 40% (10) of the homes will be allocated to applicants who are in settled/permanent (12 months+ contract) employment for 16 hours or more each week or full-time education/training and can evidence affordability in line with the council's allocation policy.

b) Priority to applicants with local connection to the location of the housing

Preference will be given to applicants with a local connection* to the ward of Bold & Lea Green for 30% (7) of all lettings.

In the event that either there are

- insufficient bids from applicants with a local connection who meet the minimum quota for applicants in employment, education or training

or

- insufficient bids from applicants who meet the stated local connection criteria

applicants from the wider borough of St Helens will be considered.

**local connection is defined as shown at appendix 1 of this policy.*

c) Preference to applicants with an assessed need for ground floor or a disability

For the allocation of the ground floor apartments, preference will be given to applicants who have an assessed need for ground floor accommodation and who will make best use of the facilities.

d) Care Leavers with child(ren)

In support of the Council's wider strategic aims with rehousing young care leavers up to the age of 25, Plus Dane Housing agrees to accept a nomination for a care leaver who is a parent of a child living with them, where the care leaver is prioritised by the Children We Look After / Futures (Leaving Care) team at St Helens Borough Council, for one of the 2 bed units, providing they have the expected levels of support from the local authority, such as appropriate wrap around support until the age of 21 years in place, a trustee until the age of 18 years, and with support, if requested, up to the age of 25.

This does not exclude other care leavers who may bid successfully for a unit under the wider criteria of this LLP.

5. Application of the Local Lettings Policy criteria alongside the St Helens Borough Council allocation scheme

In all other respects the provisions of St Helens Borough Council allocation scheme will apply to these lettings.

6. Process

Properties will be advertised on Under one Roof stating that a Local Lettings Policy applies, and that preference will be given to applicants from the ward of Bold & Lea Green.

The LLP will be available on the website and the advertisement will state this.

7. Review and Monitoring

The policy will be in operation for 12 months from the commencement of the first tenancy at the development and then subject to review, amendment, or withdrawal.

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Appendix 1:

Local connection to the wards is defined as follows. In accordance with the borough's full allocation policy, disregards apply to persons who are survivors of domestic abuse and Armed Forces personnel.

1) Residence - decisions made about local connection will be based on a person (or any person who lives with them or might reasonably be expected to) being normally resident within the wards named in the policy of their own choice for a minimum period of two years. Being normally resident includes permanent housing but also includes anyone who has nowhere to live, occupying interim accommodation provided under the Local Authority's homelessness duties, community care duties, or other duties. Persons who have been detained in the Wards named in the policy (e.g. in prison or hospital), will not be able to establish a local connection as this does not constitute a choice of being resident in the area. Nor will former asylum seekers who were previously accommodated under Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, section 98 (temporary support) or section 4 (hard cases support), or former asylum seekers previously accommodated under the Asylum Seekers (interim Provisions) Regulations).

2) Employment – a connection established by employment (including an apprenticeship) will be limited to the usual place of work Any work that is short-term (e.g. a contract of employment is less than 12 months), marginal (e.g. less than 16 hours per week and earnings allow for claiming Universal Credit or entitlement to Working Tax Credits), ancillary (e.g. occasional (even regularly) work is undertaken in the Wards named in the policy area, but the main place of work is outside the Wards named in the policy area) or voluntary (e.g. where no payment is received, or payment is made only for expenses) will not be taken account of. Transfer Applicants who are in Band A or Band B and need to move because they work in the Wards named in the policy area or need to move to take-up an offer of work will be exempt from this qualification criteria. When deciding, the Local Authority will consider evidence (the following list is not exhaustive, and the Local Authority will consider any other appropriate factors and local circumstances):
    a. The distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home.
    b. The availability and affordability of transport, taking account the level of earnings.
    c. The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home.
    d. Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and childcare, which would be affected if a move could not take place.
    e. The length of the work contract.
    f. Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve their employment circumstances or prospects, such as taking a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship.
    g. In circumstances where a job is being offered, and there is a need to move to take it up, and their intention to take up an offer of employment.
    h. Verification of employment, or an offer of employment, and acceptance of it from the employer, such as:
        i. a contract of employment;
        ii. wages/salary slips or bank statements in cases of zero hours contracts;
        iii. proof of receipt of tax and benefit information;
        iv. a formal offer letter.

3) Family associations – a connection established by family relationships will be limited to near relatives (e.g. parents/other guardians, siblings, adult children where there is sufficiently close links in the form of frequent contact) and their residence being within the Wards named in the policy for a minimum period of five years. Applicants who can prove they have a continuing caring responsibility for someone

who is resident in the Wards named in the policy area, and that this care could not be provided unless they were resident in the region, will be exempt from local connection requirements.

4) Other special reason – persons who need to be near special medical or support services which are only available in the Wards named in the policy area will be exempt from local connection requirements.

5) Care leavers – persons aged 18-21 or 25 if they are pursuing a programme of education agreed in their pathway plan, who are owed a duty under Children Act 1989, section 23C, by St Helens Borough Council will be deemed to have a local connection to the Wards named in the policy area.