

Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee

20 May 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Cabinet - Non-key Decision



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Cabinet Member	Cllr Kim Tanner, Cabinet Member for Finance & Housing
Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health
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Local Lettings Plan (LLP) Policy

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines a new Policy (**Annex A**) setting out an approach to Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) for affordable housing in partnership with Registered Providers, along with a Local Lettings Plan template (**Annex B**). The financial implications of this paper relate to staff time and resource.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance.
- 2.2 Within local lettings plans we prioritise households with a local connection to the area immediate to a development.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Approve the Local Lettings Plan Policy and Local Lettings Plan template, including amended ward groupings into sub housing market areas.
- 3.2 Delegate to the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing to make any minor amendments to the LLP Policy and/or template as experience in using them develops further.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) give a framework for allocating homes outside the Housing Allocation Scheme to address local priorities or issues. A report outlining an approach to using LLPs went to members in February 2020, including prioritisation of households with a local connection to the area immediate to developments and an aim of 50% of lettings to economically active households.
- 4.2 On some developments conditions are included in planning permission or a S106 agreement which can be achieved through an LLP. For example, Schedule 3, 1.1 of an amendment of the Section 106 agreement (March 2015) for the Peters Village development states “A local lettings plan will be agreed between the Council and the Owner (or other manager of the Affordable Rented dwellings) that will prioritise those households with a local connection to the adjacent wards of Wouldham, Burham and Eccles who will also have to meet the Council’s applicable housing allocation criteria for Affordable Housing”. Requirement for Local Lettings Plans are now included in S106 agreements for developments due to provide 10 or more affordable homes.

There may be circumstances where this is not appropriate or an existing S106 does not include the requirement, which will be handled on a case by case basis by the Planning case officer and Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager.

- 4.3 Any other aims a Registered Provider (or other manager of affordable housing provision) wishes to include in an LLP will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 4.4 The Housing Allocation Scheme refers to local lettings policies in section 5 setting out they may be used to make affordable housing available to a range of priority bandings across the register towards creating mixed and sustainable communities rather than concentrations of those with support needs.
- 4.5 The approach to Affordable home ownership sales is also captured in the LLP seeking to prioritise local households wherever possible.
- 4.6 LLPs have been agreed with several RPs over recent years including Town and Country, Moat, Orbit and Golding Homes. The process of agreeing LLPs and applying them to the occupation of new homes has given insight into the results of LLPs and how they interact with a range of factors including volume of delivery, demand and register numbers. The following are some examples of LLP criteria relating to recent rented homes delivery.
- 4.7 Winterfield Lane development also known as Orchard Mill, with Moat

There is an [LLP agreed with Moat](#) for the 100 homes at this development, 70 provided as Affordable Rent and 30 for Shared Ownership sale. During 2024-25 31 rented homes (20 flats and 11 houses) and 12 Shared Ownership homes have been completed. The 31 rented homes included 20 flats, both 1bed flats and 2bed flats across two blocks, along with 11 houses comprising of 4 x 4bed houses and

7 x 3bed houses. Taking the 3bed houses as an example, the local lettings plan resulted in 6 nominations being households with priority through residency to the sub area and 1 awarded exceptional circumstances, with 2 households from band B and 5 from band C. The three shortlists covering the seven 3bed houses had 41 – 44 bids on each shortlist. Of the seven nominations four were economically active. A total of 17 households were effectively skipped due to not having a local connection to the LLP wards, including 11 band B household, of which 6 were in temporary accommodation. **Annex C** shows a summary of the shortlisting for these seven 3bed houses.

Four 4bed houses were delivered in February 2025, providing another example of the LLP application: 3 x 4beds went to advert on Kent Home Choice and one was used for a direct nomination, with the LLP therefore not applied. Of the three houses advertised there were 13 bids, and all three nominations were for households with local connection priority in line with the LLP, one economically active and two not economically active. Two households were skipped due to not meeting the LLP criteria. This example is shown in **Annex C**.

There have been two blocks of 10 flats completed, taking the first block as an example there were no households with priority through the LLP criteria, with key points of shortlisting process as follows:

- first advertising round resulted in 5 bids for each of the 2bed flats, and no bids for the 2 x 1bed flats with wet room. No households met the LLP, so nominations were made in application date and band order: 2 nominations were made, 1 of which was later refused (and a direct nomination made for this ground floor 2bed flat)
- with 8 flats still available after the first round of adverts (6 x 2bed and 2 x1bed), a second round of adverts resulted in a further 2 nominations, from new shortlists of 8 bids for the 1bed flats and 5 bids for the 2beds but two of these were already nominated from the first shortlists and the remaining three bidding households were housed, so had been offered other tenancies.
- the second round of advertising led to nominations to the 2 x 1bed flats, no households met the LLP local connection criteria so medical need for ground floor and wet room was used to prioritise.
- the remaining 2bed flats were advertised for a third time but there were no resulting nominations, so direct nominations were made to these 6 x 2bed flats. With the ground floor flat, a total of 7 direct nominations were made to this block of 10 flats. No local connection priority applied, economic mix unknown.

4.8 Ditton Edge with Orbit

There is an [LLP agreed with Orbit](#) for 75 affordable homes at this development, comprising of 37 homes for Affordable Rent and 38 for Shared Ownership sale.

Seven 3bed houses for rent and 17 Shared ownership homes (a mix of 1, 2 and 3 beds) have been delivered so far. All seven 3bed houses were advertised on Kent home choice, the most recent group of 5 x 3bed completions received 28- 31 bids for each house, no households met the LLP criteria, so nominations were made by reverting to the top of the shortlist to allocate in application date and band order. The shortlists were then handed back to the Registered Provider to carry out their checks with a view to offering working from the top of the list.

- 4.9 The examples show the range of scenarios that can play out with a LLP in place, with supply, numbers active on the Housing Register, demand and preference for houses rather than flats and affordability all interplaying factors, with some shortlists showing demand outstripping supply and priority in line with the LLP applying to mix nominations, and other homes being advertised several times, with few or no households meeting the LLP and supply outweighing the number of bids.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 Implement the proposed **Local Lettings Plan Policy** set out in **Annex A** to deliver a consistent approach to the use of Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) on new affordable housing delivery.
- 5.2 Council staff will carry out shortlisting, including application of any LLP criteria, to inform nominations to Registered Providers. For large developments it may be agreed with the Registered Provider to jointly resource the shortlisting process.
- 5.3 The areas used for local connection are in the following ward groupings to make up housing sub-market areas:

Sub-area	Wards in sub-area	
Tonbridge	Trench	Higham
	Vauxhall	Judd
	Cage Green and Angel	Hildenborough
Rural East	East and West Peckham, Mereworth and Watlingtonbury	Bourne
Rural West	Pilgrims with Ightham	Borough Green and Platt
Malling and Kings Hill	East Malling, West Malling and Offham	Kings Hill
	Birling, Leybourne and Ryarsh	
Medway Gap	Larkfield	Aylesford South and Ditton
Rural North	Walderslade	Aylesford North and North Downs
Snodland	Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	Snodland East and Ham Hill

The housing area in which the development is located will be used unless the scale of the development requires an alternative.

- 5.4 **Annex B** gives a draft **LLP template**. It is proposed that this template is adopted for use for all new housing developments providing 10 or more affordable homes as a tool to prioritise households with connection to the area of the development (as defined in the housing allocations scheme) and aim to achieve 50% of lettings to economically active households.
- 5.5 Application of the LLP Policy to occupancy of new homes, including shared ownership sales, will be monitored as part of the implementation.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 Use of LLPs could continue without a Policy in place, although a policy will help set out the Council's approach to occupancy of new affordable homes along with clarifying this to RPs and customers.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 7.1 The approach has a resource implication in the form of staff time carrying out the relevant checks and co-ordinating the prioritisation of shortlists. This can be quite involved for large new developments when a number of units complete at a similar time.

This implication will be managed if possible through additional resource from seeking a financial contribution as part of the planning application – see paragraph 9.2. Staff time resources can be mitigated by a schedule of completions and early discussion between Housing Strategy, Housing Options and Registered Providers to agree timescales with staggered delivery of large sites along with use of the template LLP.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 Having an agreed Policy and template LLP will help us deliver a consistent approach to LLPs across the delivery of affordable housing. Processing shortlists in house will provide greater control on the application of the LLP prioritisation and resulting nominations to Registered Providers.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Section 166A(6)(b) of the 1996 Act enables the allocation of particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Section 166A(3) (to give overall priority to people in the reasonable preference categories). This gives the statutory basis for local lettings policies.

- 9.2 Legal Services advice about an option to charge developers for the administration of LLPs is being sought. We will update Members on this at the meeting.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 If approved the Policy will be available on the Council's website. A procedure for staff will accompany the Policy, which will be shared with RP staff during joint working on new LLPs and their application at occupancy stage of housing developments.

11 Implementation

- 11.1 The Policy will be implemented once approved.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

- 12.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

- 12.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

12.3 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex A: Local Lettings Plan Policy Annex B: Local Lettings Plan (LLP) template Annex C: Shortlist examples information