

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 21 October 2014

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Local Lettings Plans and Revisions to Council House Allocations Targets 2014/15

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval of the Prestonpans High Street Local Lettings Plan.
- 1.2 To seek approval for revised Council House Allocations targets from 1 November 2014 subsequent to the adoption of this lettings plan.
- 1.3 To note the development of further Local Lettings Plans is underway and proposals will come forward for these in April 2015.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Prestonpans Local Lettings Plan with effect from 1 November 2014.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the new recommended allocations targets to take effect from 1 November 2014.
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes that new targets will be set for 2015/16 to take into account the other three lettings plans currently in development.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The main purpose of the Allocations Policy is to meet the Council's legal obligations specified by Allocations and Homelessness legislation. The policy, along with other associated actions, also assists the Council to make best use of Council housing stock. In addition, the policy helps the Council to meet the Council Plan objective, along with other complementary actions, of balanced and sustainable communities through Local Lettings Plans.

- 3.2 The Local Lettings Plan model was approved by Cabinet in March 2007 and has been retained through several reviews of the allocations policy albeit with some minor modifications through the most recent review (effectively to widen tenure attributes).
- 3.3 Details of how Local Lettings Plans work can be found in the March 2007 report to Cabinet. Essentially these lettings plans operate alongside the Council's needs based allocations policy but will allocate vacancies according to the particular circumstances of the estate or area by letting to a household that will contribute to the sustainability of that community. A Lettings Plan may be required where there are subsequent issues that have occurred within an established community, and action is required to assist that community to become sustainable.
- 3.4 The attached Local Lettings Plan has been developed in tandem with staff, tenant representatives and elected members through their respective Local Housing Partnerships.
- 3.5 It is important to note that this lettings plan and future ones will not be used in isolation, but will form part of other regeneration and local initiatives and also work alongside other policies such as estates management and antisocial behaviour.
- 3.6 This lettings plan will be monitored and reviewed after one year of operating to ensure that the aims and objectives of the plans are being met
- 3.7 The Council must set appropriate targets for those with low housing need at such a level that make sufficient material and positive impact to Local Lettings Plans, but at the same time continue to allow the Council to meet its overriding legal obligations to the reasonable preference groups as defined in housing legislation.

Revised Housing Allocations Targets 2014/15

- 3.8 Taking account of all recent data, legal obligations such as homelessness duties and to the reasonable preference groups, optimum stock utilisation and sustainability objectives senior management within Community Housing propose the following percentage targets from 1 November 2014 to 31 March 2015 as set out in the table below.

Group	Proposed Targets
General Needs	65%
Transfers	30%
Sustainable Communities	5%

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed targets should enable the Council to meet its legal obligations under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 as well as help towards achieving the Council Plan objective to create balanced and sustainable communities.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 A Combined Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the implementation of the new Allocations Policy and was separately lodged in the Members' Library.
- 5.2 The Combined Impact Assessment has found no negative impacts.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None.
- 6.2 Personnel – None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Attached Appendix 1 – High Street, Prestonpans, Local Lettings Plan
- 7.2 Cabinet Report – Local Lettings Plans – March 2007
- 7.3 Council Report – Review of the Housing Allocations Policy – February 2014
- 7.4 Cabinet Report – Council House Allocations Targets for 2014/15 – May 2014

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Local Lettings Plan (LLP)

LLP Name:	High Street, Prestonpans (PP03 including The Antiquaries and Rollo Court)
Proposed Start Date:	1 November 2014
Proposed End Date:	31 October 2015
Date:	17 September 2014
Author:	Val Hynd

Reason for the introduction of a local lettings plan

- Please provide details outlining the need for a local lettings plan i.e. high demand for housing in rural communities or where there is an increasing incidence of anti-social behaviour. What are the aims & objectives of the plan?

Stock Profile of the local lettings plan area.

High Street	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
4 in block ground	4	16	6	0
4 in block upper	4	22	9	0
Double Storey	0	19	3	1
Maisonette	0	2	5	0
Tenemental Flat Ground	4	5	2	0
Tenemental Flat Upper	8	10	5	0
Rollo Court				
Tenemental Flat Ground	0	2	0	0
Tenemental Flat Upper	3	4	0	0
The Antiquaries				
Tenemental Flat Ground	3	6	0	0
Tenemental Flat Upper	5	10	0	0
Total	31	96	30	1

Total of 158 properties.

Over the past few years The High Street has been more problematic from a housing management perspective and statistics show that there has been a growing number of ASB cases, some of which have been serious cases resulting in 3 tenancies being converted to SSSTs. In addition demand for the area is low. The plan aims to introduce a more balanced profile of people living in the area and to promote greater sustainability for the community.

The objectives of the plan are as follows:

To lower the level of ASB complaints/management issues

To increase demand for the area.

To increase access to social housing for those with lower housing needs.

- Please provide evidence and/or sources of data analysis that supports the introduction of the local lettings plan.

Evidence obtained from the ASB database shows the number of cases for the High Street has increased year on year:

January to December 2011 - 2 cases

January to December 2012 - 6 cases

January to December 2013 - 5 cases

January to May 2014 - 5 cases

The cases above include:

1 drugs case

4 high level cases

3 cases resulted in the tenancy being converted to a SSST

In comparison to other streets in Prestonpans the level of cases is higher as the evidence below shows:

January to December 2011 - no more than 2 cases for other streets

January to December 2012 - no more than 2 cases for other streets with the exception of Acheson Drive, which had 5 cases

January to December 2013 - no more than 2 cases for other streets with the exception of Longdykes Road, which had 4 cases

January to May 2014 - no more than 2 cases for other streets

Void turnover:

The area is generally less popular than other lettings areas reflected in higher turnover of stock and number of offers made to re-let vacant properties.

2011/12 - 12 properties (1 x 4apt, 8 x 3apt and 3 x 2apt) 9 properties banded to General Needs and 3 properties to Transfer (one property was re-banded to General Needs). Average number of offers to acceptance was 2.75

2012/13 -9 properties (1 x 4 apt and 8 x 3apt) 8 properties banded to General Needs and 1 property to Transfer. Average number of offers to acceptance was 2.77

2013/14 - 33 properties includes 24 new build (4 x 4apt, 17 x 3apt, 11 x 2apt and 1 x 1 apt) 21 properties banded to General Needs and 12 to Transfer(one property re-banded to General Needs). Average number of offers to acceptance was 2.18

2014 to date - 7 properties (2 x 4 apt, 3 x 3apt and 1 x 2apt) 3 properties banded to General Needs and 4 to Transfer. Average number of offers to acceptance was 4.0

Allocations Analysis for local lettings plan area by year.

Year	Allocations	Refusals
2011/12	12	18
2012/13	18	11
2013/14	30	29
2014	8	8

The average number of offers to acceptance is higher than the average across East Lothian which was:

Year	Allocations	Refusals
2011/12	609	448
2012/13	578	391
2013/14	533	420
2014	245	108

Allocations Targets

- For allocations quotas out with Cabinet approved targets - please provide allocation breakdown by group targets and property type/size.

Local Lettings Plan Attributes

- If additional attributes form part of the local lettings plan, please provide details below i.e. no ASB, any age criterion. Please provide information as to how these attributes contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the plan.

No history of ASB

Tenure - sub tenant/private tenant

Economically active

All of the above would help to increase demand, reduce management and ASB issues and increase access to the social rented sector for applicants with lower housing needs.

Consultation

- Have you discussed the introduction of the local lettings plan with local tenants & residents groups (where applicable)?

No active group for the LLP area, however, the lettings plan has been sent to East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel for their information.

- Has the local TRA agreed to the introduction of the lettings plan?

Not applicable.

- Has the Local Housing Partnership considered and approved the introduction of the local lettings plan?

Yes - the proposal was discussed at the LHP meeting on 02/10/2013.
Final agreement was sought at the LHP meeting on 30/07/2014.

- Are strategic partners aware of the development of an LLP in their area, it makes sense for all social landlords operating within the same housing area to understand each other's initiatives and they are developed in a planned and coordinated way

No other social rented housing provider in the area.

Monitoring

- Is there an effective monitoring framework in place to make sure the aims of the local lettings plan are being met and there are no unforeseen consequences?

Yes, outcome will be monitored through Void and ASB database.

Review

- A local lettings plan should be reviewed on a regular basis, both on an operational and strategic basis and a decision made on whether to continue. Local lettings initiatives which go on too long are unlikely to be meeting their original aims.

Plan will be reviewed at the end of March 2015.