



Local Lettings Policy

Hill View, Greatham

Hartlepool

**6x 2 Bed Houses
8x 3 Bed Houses
4x 2 Bed Flats**

August 2022

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1. Introduction

Hartlepool Borough Council recognises the need to develop stable, sustainable and harmonious communities and to achieve property allocations that best suit the needs of the individual and the neighbourhood whilst ensuring equal access to accommodation.

The properties are located in a new development site in Greatham – a small picturesque village on the outskirts of the Hartlepool borough. There are excellent road and bus links into Hartlepool town centre and surrounding towns with the village situated only 10 minutes from the A19. The village offers an opportunity to live in peaceful surroundings with a primary school rated 'Good' in the last Ofsted report, a local convenience store and two public houses. The weekly rent for the properties has been provisionally set at an affordable rent. The indicative rents are detailed in the table below however, it should be noted that these may be subject to change when the properties are revalued prior to advertising/re-let.

2 Bed House	106.15 per week
3 Bed House	118.15 per week
2 Bed Flat (Ground Floor)	96.92 per week
2 Bed Flat (First Floor)	94.49 per week

2. Aims

The purpose of this policy is to outline the allocations process for the new homes and to ensure it not only gives preference to households in housing need, but also ensures that local housing needs are met by creating a sustainable community from the outset. Through sensitive lettings, this policy aims to:

- Create a balance of lifestyles in a stable environment, which promotes a strong sense of community cohesion and long term sustainability;
- Contribute towards balance in the community ensuring that all sections of the community are represented;
- Give appropriate priority to those applicants with a commitment to the area such as employment, education, close family connections or are currently living in the village;
- Assist in the effective control of tenancies to mitigate management problems and increase the chance of tenants successfully managing and sustaining their tenancy. All tenants who have not previously been a social housing tenant will be awarded an Introductory Tenancy for an initial 12 months;
- Give sufficient priority to those in housing need whilst supporting a sustainable community with all properties to be advertised on Tees Valley Home Finder.
- Ensure that tenants can maintain their tenancies well to achieve the highest possible standards for the development into the future; and
- Increase the availability of rental properties in the locality and provide an opportunity for those who are unable to afford to buy properties in the area.

3. Method

All applicants will be assessed in accordance with the terms of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership Common Allocation Policy and more specifically the Local Lettings Policy for this site.

The following approach will be taken with all applicants bidding on the properties through Tees Valley Home Finder with the aim of building a sustainable community.

First consideration will be given to applicants who can demonstrate and prove a local connection to the local area Greatham before applicants who do not. Applicants will be considered as having a local connection to the local area if they fit one or more of the following categories:

1. Residency in the village (*for 6 out of the past 12 months or 3 out of the past 5 years*);
2. Close family connection in the village (*defined as parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, legal guardian*);
3. Full or part time employment/regular place of work is in the village or applicant is a recognised carer; or
4. Attendance at the local primary school - Greatham CofE Primary School.

All applicants will be subject to tenant referencing and will include the following background checks prior to any offer being made. The background checks will be used to inform decisions in the granting of tenancies.

- Disclosure of full housing history for previous 5 years for each applicant;
- Landlord reference(s) covering housing history for previous 5 years for each applicant (if applicable);
- A professional character/personal reference for every applicant and any occupants over the age of 18 years;
- If an applicant has not previously held a tenancy, then two personal/character references will be sought instead of one;
- Copies of rent statements from each applicant will be required for a 12 month period for those with rental history to prove effective rent account management either through keeping their rent account in credit or demonstrating a history of rent payments for a minimum of 12 months;
- Those who have not been renting 12 months prior to application will be asked to provide evidence to demonstrate ability to make regular payments for a minimum of 12 months e.g. mortgage, loan or credit card statement, utility bill or mobile phone contract;
- Affordability check, including income and expenditure assessment, if deemed to be required and verification of income;
- A police and anti-social behaviour check will be carried out on applicants and any occupants prior to an offer being made. The applicant will not be considered if there are any serious records of ASB in the last 5 years; and
- An inspection of each applicant's home to assess general living standards and to ensure there is no damage to the property caused by wilful damage or neglect and if applicable, to ensure the garden is well maintained.

All tenants will be offered a Local Authority Flexible Tenancy for a fixed period of time. The fixed term would normally be for 5 years, but could be for a minimum of 2 years. Tenants who have not previously rented social housing will be offered an Introductory Tenancy for 12 months initially, which will automatically be converted to a Local Authority Flexible Tenancy subject to the tenancy being conducted satisfactory without any serious breaches. Possession will be mandatory within the first 12 months of an Introductory Tenancy should any serious or consistent breaches of tenancy occur.

4. Monitoring

The effectiveness of meeting the agreed objectives of this Local Lettings Policy will be monitored by the Principal Housing Officer (People).

5. Review and Reporting

This Local Lettings Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Relets, refusals, reasons for termination and turnover as a percentage will be monitored. Number of anti-social behaviour cases, types and actions will also be monitored.