

# Local Letting Policy Waterdale Gardens



Lead Director: Executive Director of Communities  
& Regeneration

Reference: POL 71

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## **1 Introduction & Aim**

The Local Lettings Policy (LLP) Waterdale Gardens sets out Cobalt's approach to the first lets of the affordable rent homes that are part of the Waterdale Gardens development. This policy is an exception to the Merseyside Sub Regional Allocations Policy, aiming to ensure we have a balanced approach to achieve tenancy and neighbourhood sustainability.

## **2 Policy Statement**

The Local Lettings Policy (LLP) has been developed to supplement the Merseyside Sub Regional Allocations Policy. It enables Cobalt to allocate our homes fairly, consistently and transparently, but provides some flexibility to enable Officers to manage the risk in the allocation of properties, particularly around the sustainability of communities.

The policy applies to the first let of affordable rent homes on the Waterdale Gardens development.

## **3 Policy Principles**

### **Supporting the regeneration of the Stonedale Crescent area**

A Local Lettings Policy will enable Cobalt to support the decant of customers living in the Stonedale Crescent area and facilitating further regeneration. It will also give priority to existing Cobalt customers living in the Croxteth area and will help create sustainable communities.

The Waterdale Gardens development is part of a wider regeneration project across the Stonedale Crescent/Invergarry Road area in Croxteth. The recent new build development on Altbridge was also part of the same regeneration scheme and due to the success of delivering local lettings on Altbridge, the principles contained within this Local Lettings Policy consistent.

Principles of the allocations:

- 50% of the affordable rent properties will be allocated in accordance with the priority within the sub regional allocation policy (Property Pool Plus)
- 50% will be let via Property Pool Plus however allocation criteria will be in accordance with this Local Lettings Policy

## Criteria for Local Lettings Policy

We will operate a points based system for transparency. Priority will be given to applicants in order who:

1. Are directly impacted by the regeneration in Stonedale Crescent (their homes are due to be demolished in a future phase)
2. That meet the criteria for Cobalt's Rightsizing scheme enabling us to free up larger family homes
3. Are in housing need AND have a positive local connection to our neighbourhoods such as they are an existing resident, have a family connection or work in the local area to sustain community cohesion.

Criteria	Points awarded
Stonedale Decant	10
Existing Stonedale resident with a housing need	4
Cobalt customer downsizing (1 point per room capped at 3)	Max 3
Active role in the community including school and work or give/receive support in the Croxteth area	1

The total number of properties included in the development is broken down as follows:

- 4 x 1 bed flat
- 4 x 1 bed flat wheelchair accessible\*
- 23 x 2 bed house
- 2 x 2 bed house wheelchair accessible\*
- 11 x 3 bed house
- 2 x 3 bed house wheelchair accessible\*
- 4 x 4 bed house
- \*M43 accessible units

The scheme also has rent to buy and shared ownership homes as part of the development, but the allocation of these will be managed separately to this policy.

The Local Lettings Policy has been developed with Liverpool City Council who have approved the principles contained within this policy.

### Best Use of Stock

Cobalt will always aim to make 'best use' of its available housing stock and fully occupy properties.

### Period of Allocations / Local Lettings Policy

Cobalt will adopt the Local Lettings Policy for the first lets of the properties as detailed above. Subsequent allocation will be in line with the Sub-Regional Allocations Policy.

## Adapted, purpose-built and specialist homes

All adapted, purpose-built or specialist properties will be advertised through the Sub Regional Allocations Scheme, Property Pool Plus and attempted to be matched to applicants requiring those adaptations or property type.

Adapted properties that are not successfully allocated through the Sub Regional Allocations Policy, will be let by through our internal transfer list for to applicants with a medical need, aiming to best match the property to a suitable applicant.

## 4 Risk Management

The key risks associated with non-delivery of this Policy are:

<b>Risk Register Ref:</b>	<b>Risk:</b>
<b>ST08 Neighbourhood and Communities Service Standards</b>	Failure to maintain the quality of neighbourhoods of communities or to provide services that meet relevant standards within agreed resources
<b>Risk Consequences:</b>	<b>Management and Mitigation:</b>
Increase in turnover and decrease in demand Poor reputation of our neighbourhoods	Key partnerships with agencies such as Liverpool City Council Neighbourhood Plans Neighbourhood Inspections and Impact Days
<b>Risk Register Ref:</b>	<b>Risk:</b>
<b>FV 10 Poor management of empty homes and tenancy turnover</b>	Poor management of empty home results in poor relet times, void costs and rent losses which increase beyond levels assumed in the approved Business Plan
<b>Risk Consequences:</b>	<b>Management and Mitigation:</b>
Increasing void costs and associated void rent loss Decrease in demand and reputation of our neighbourhoods	Range of KPI's on voids, allocations and turnover reported to EMT, Board and HNC Pre tenancy support through the application process Tenancy Wellbeing Officers

## 5 Regulatory & Legislative Compliance

Cobalt's Allocations Policy and this associated Local Lettings Policy takes into account legal and regulatory requirements including:

- Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards - Tenancy Standard
- Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards -Neighbourhood and Community Standard

## 6 Links to Other Key Documents

- Tenancy Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Property Pool Plus Sub Regional Allocations Policy

## 7 Governance of this Policy

<b>Equality Diversity &amp; Inclusion (ED&amp;I)</b>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the policy development.</p> <p>This policy will be communicated with our customers through a variety of methods including our customer newsletter, website and social media to ensure all Cobalt customers have access to and awareness of the policy.</p> <p>All adapted properties will be allocated in accordance with the Sub Regional Allocations Policy (Property Pool Plus) or through Cobalt’s medical transfer list to applicants who meet the need for the adapted home.</p> <p>Throughout the application process Cobalt will have regard to any reasonable adjustments that applicants require, this may include alternative application processes and additional support with obtaining required application information.</p>
<b>Financial and Links to VfM</b>	<p>There are cost impacts in relation to decants who transfer to a new home, however these costs are included in existing decant budgets.</p> <p>Transfers in accordance with this policy will create additional void costs. This will be monitored through our void spend and turnover KPI’s.</p>
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	<p>All GDPR legislation will be adhered to.</p>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<p>No impact of Health and Safety.</p>
<b>Development and Consultation</b>	<p>This Local Lettings Policy has been developed through consultation with key internal teams including Housing Management and Development and Growth.</p> <p>Consultation has been completed with Liverpool City Council’s Strategic Housing Team who has agreed the principles included in this policy.</p> <p>Customer consultation has been completed with our Tenant Consultative Panel (TCP).</p>

