



Local Lettings Plan

Lynher House, Tamar House and Tavy House

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1.0 Introduction

The Mount Wise Towers consist of 3 purpose built blocks tower blocks. Lynher House is located on Curtis Street, Tamar House on James Street and Tavy House on Duke Street. All are in close proximity to each other.

Each block is similar in size and has 17 floors consisting of the basement, ground floor and then 15 floors of 6 properties. Each landing is enclosed and has 2 bedsits, 2 one bed and 2 two bed. In total, each block has 90 flats. Two-thirds of the amount of properties across all 3 towers are either 1 bed or bedsits a high proportion of the residents living in these flats are single and live alone.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire which occurred in June 2017, cladding across hundreds of tower blocks around the country was tested. It was following these tests that Plymouth Community Homes were advised that the cladding on all 3 tower blocks had a combustible element. For this reason, several measures have been implemented to protect residents in the event of a fire. These consisted of Fire Wardens checking the landing every hour, the installation of a heat detector system and the purchase of sprinkler system for every flat. The procedure in the event of a fire was changed from the 'stay put' policy to one of a full evacuation out of the building should the communal alarm sound, however we have reverted to 'stay put' now the works have finished. There is still the chance that the emergency services could choose to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency, meaning lift access is likely to be prohibited, therefore we still need to consider suitability of applicants to ensure that someone could evacuate if needed to.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 To support the creation of a sustainable and balanced community by allocating tenancies can be sustained, contributing to meeting the housing needs of the city and of the whole community in the long term.
- 2.2 To help create and maintain Mount Wise as a place where people want to live and are happy to stay.
- 2.3 To help develop a sustainable, balanced and cohesive community by including a broad section and proportionate number of residents from a variety of social and economic backgrounds.

- 2.4 To be used as a guide for allocations, transfers and any future choice-based lettings adverts. The plan will apply to the allocation of the rented homes. Only in exceptional situations will an allocation be considered outside the LLP and this will need to be agreed with Plymouth City Council and PCH.
- 2.5 To achieve a fair balance between the needs of the existing community and the housing needs of the wider community of Plymouth.
- 2.6 To attain a mixture of occupancy levels and people with 'vulnerabilities' to encourage sustainability.
- 2.7 To make the best use of the housing stock.
- 2.8 To ensure any allocation is suitable given the possible need to evacuate.
- 2.9 To support residents and encourage active involvement and participation in the local and wider community.

3.0 Advertising and allocation process

- 3.1 This Local Lettings Plan applies for three towers in Mount Wise, these being Lynher, Tamar and Tavy House.
- 3.2 We will advertise the Homes through the Devon Home Choice system. The standard information with regard to property attributes and rent levels will be included.
- 3.3 Applicants may be matched to a property based on their housing needs assessment. Applicants may be permitted to under occupy a property by one bedroom provided the affordability check demonstrates the ability to meet rental requirements and they meet the criteria (eg. Via a mutual exchange)
- 3.4 The Devon Home Choice adverts will describe the property types and sizes available for letting, together with a link to the Local Lettings Plan detailing the intention to give priority to the group of applicants identified below. The standard information with regard to property attributes and rent levels will also be included.
- 3.5 Upon closure of the bidding process, applicants will appear on the shortlist in band and date order. The final selection of applicants to be verified for the vacancies will depend upon their application band (housing need), the length of time they have

been in this band, and the households ability to meet the requirements of the overall aims and objectives of this Local Lettings Plan. This may require some applicants to be considered before others irrespective of their relevant banding and dates.

4.0 Eligibility, Verification & Refusal of Applicants

- 4.1 We will require from the applicant proof of their identity if they are being considered for housing, prior to a property being offered.
- 4.2 As a member of Devon Home Choice we can, as part of the checking process, visit the applicant in their home, before we award a tenancy.
- 4.3 As a member of Devon Home Choice, we have the right to carry out any enquiries deemed necessary. Therefore, this entitles us to have access to any information we need in connection with the housing application. This might include information about any former tenancies or information about previous criminal convictions.
- 4.4 Plymouth Community Homes may visit applicants to confirm their housing need and circumstances.
- 4.5 All applicant(s) will be required to complete a pre tenancy financial assessment which will ensure that they are able to afford the property. This will include undertaking a Credit Check through a credit reference agency. If the applicant(s) fails the financial assessment, we may not offer a tenancy.
- 4.6 Refusals
- We reserve the right to refuse your application if it does not adhere to the principles of the local lettings policy or contravenes our principles. Such refusals should however be consistent with other overarching policies and agreements that may exist.
 - All offers of accommodation will be subject to the policies of PCH. We will inform an unsuccessful applicant of the reason behind our decision. Applicants can request a copy of the PCH Allocations Policy.
 - All offers of a tenancy made will be provisional until confirmed. Plymouth Community Homes reserves the right not to proceed with an offer where,

there is insufficient evidence to support an application, there has been a previous or current history of tenancy breaches or any offered tenancy is likely not to be sustainable or affordable.

If we assess that the applicant does not meet this criteria, we may not offer a home in the Mount Wise Towers.

5.0 Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.1 This scheme only considers those applicants who have not been involved in incidents of anti-social behaviour, serious harassment, nuisance or drug & alcohol misuse; within the last 5 years.
- 5.2 If an applicant has a history of tenancy breaches of anti-social behaviour or other types of tenancy breach, which has required Plymouth Community Homes, Devon & Cornwall Police or another Registered Social Landlord/Local Authority/Private Landlord to serve warning letters or take other informal / formal legal action (e.g. Acceptable Behaviour Contract / Notice Of Seeking Possession).

Your application will be assessed using the following criteria and maybe refused if any of these apply to your household:

- Where a current Notice of Seeking Possession on the grounds of Anti-Social Behaviour is in place.
- Where any current action is being taken in respect of anti-social behaviour (eg. Acceptable Behaviour Contract).
- If there has been an eviction for Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Where a previous Anti-Social Behaviour Order or injunction has been obtained against the applicant or member of their household.
- If a demotion of tenant has been obtained.
- Where there has been a conviction for actions that have directly caused issues of anti-social behaviour.

- If an applicant or member of the household has a current conviction or caution related to anti-social behaviour or where there is a potential risk to the household, neighbours, PCH staff/contractors or the wider community.
- Where any applicant or member of the household is known to have current or previous convictions which may have a direct impact on the local community, offers of accommodation will be subject to a risk assessment prior to any decision being made.
- Persons with a criminal record showing offences within the past 5 years (if these offences are of a minor nature, these can be disregarded, however, any offences related to violent crime, drug use or dealing, or the misuse of alcohol would exclude the applicant).

5.3 Harassment

- Is where a householder has been **cautioned** for crimes of harassment against others within the last 12 months.
- Is where the householder has been **prosecuted** for crimes of harassment against others within the last 5 years.

5.4 Nuisance

Is where a householder who is known to have caused Nuisance and Annoyance to others which could lead to tenancy action by a landlord within the last 5 years. This includes actions against a tenancy through environmental health or planning legislation.

5.5 Drug and Alcohol Misuse

In addition to Anti-Social Behaviour, substance misuse has been a cause for concern for both Mount Wise and PCH. If an applicant/household member is engaging with support services to address their substance misuse a Risk Assessments will be undertaken prior to a decision about the allocation of a property.

Applicants will not be considered if:-

- An applicant/household member has been **cautioned** for the possession or supply of illegal substances within the last 12 months.
- householder has been **prosecuted** for the possession or supply of illegal substances within the last 5 years.

6.0 **Known vulnerabilities**

We also will not allocate:

6.1 To a property 3rd floor and above to anyone with a current or past history of suicidal idealisation.

6.2 To anyone with a mobility issue that prevents them from using the stairs.

6.3 Where they are identified current or historic substance misuse disclosures or concerns PCH will undertake a risk assessment to ensure that the allocation is appropriate.

6.4 Where we have concerns about someone's mental health, we will also undertake a risk assessment to ensure that the allocation is appropriate.

In both cases (6.3 and 6.4) we will consider applicants who can evidence positive engagement with support services for a minimum 12-month period. This must have resulted in positive changes to their lifestyle which will enable them to sustain a tenancy and not present a problem to the local community

7.0 **Offers of accommodation**

All offers of a tenancy made will be provisional until a Risk and Affordability assessment is completed and is satisfactory. PCH reserves the right not to proceed with an offer where, in PCH's opinion, there is insufficient evidence to support an application, there has been a

previous or current history of tenancy breaches or any offered tenancy is likely not to be sustainable or affordable.

8.0 Equalities Statement

- PCH will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

- PCH will make this policy available in other languages and formats on request.

- PCH will carry out an equality impact assessment on this policy, in line with our corporate procedure.

9.0 Terms of tenancy

The specific tenancy terms that are offered will depend upon a number of factors. Applicants will be informed of the specific terms as part of the formal offer process and will be able to consider these before accepting an offer of accommodation. New tenants will be offered an Assured Shorthold tenancy which may include additional conditions. After the 12 first months the tenancy will be reviewed and the tenant advised if he/she has will become assured (non-shorthold) tenants. Any criminal convictions or anti-social behaviour that occurs within the initial 12 month starter tenancy period will result in the starter tenancy being extended or terminated.

10.0 Disputes

Applicants have the right to ask for a review of any decision relating to their application for an offer of accommodation with PCH. Requests for a review should be put in writing, within 7 calendar days of the date of the decision letter, advising the reasons for the request. The review will be undertaken by an officer of PCH independent of the original decision. The review request will be responded to in writing within 21 calendar days. PCH reserves the right not to hold the property vacant whilst the review is undertaken so that rent loss can be minimised.

11.0 Monitoring and Review

11.1 We will carefully monitor the allocations process and how the estate is forming to identify areas that we may need to review regarding future allocations of the estate.

We will collect and monitor the following information:

- number of refusals of offers and reasons
- number of transfers
- number of exchanges
- number and type of complaints about allocations
- number and type of complaints about anti-social behaviour
- number of children housed
- number and ethnicity of those housed
- origin of application
- number of re-lets
- reasons (if possible) for tenants leaving the properties

We will review this policy annually. If we don't review it within eighteen months, it will cease to have effect. The purpose of the annual review will include:

- to identify any trends or common complaints
- to make policy recommendations
- to explain targets not met or exceeded
- to identify and explain inequities between the partners' results
- to set objectives and agree action plans, if appropriate
- to set new targets, if appropriate.

All partners must agree and sign this document before it can be implemented:

Plymouth City Council

Signature.....

Print Name

Job Title.....

Date.....

Plymouth Community Homes

Signature.....

Print Name

Job Titles

Date