



ALLOCATION POLICY

Introduction

The allocation of properties will be made in accordance with Object A2.1 of the Constitution of Homes for Wells (“The Association”): To carry out on behalf of the community the business of providing housing and assistance to help house people and associated facilities and amenities for local people, key workers and others making a significant contribution to the local community and economy.

In establishing the Homes for Wells Allocation Policy, the Board is applying the following principles:

- To do so in a way which is transparent, objective and fair
- To ensure utmost confidentiality with respect to personal information concerning applicants

1. Criteria governing allocation of properties to applicants

Applications are invited from **Keyworkers*** (see Appendix) and/or people who live in the parish of Wells-next-the-Sea, and the adjoining parishes of Warham, Wighton, Holkham or Stiffkey. **Band A** applicants are given highest priority.

BAND A

An applicant meeting this criteria will have lived in the parish or adjoining parishes for more than 5 consecutive years full-time and meets the following:

- Is employed as a Key Worker (paid or unpaid) in the parish or adjoining parishes
- Is in insecure accommodation and has insufficient funds to rent or buy a property suitable to their needs within the parish or adjoining parishes

BAND B

An applicant meeting this criteria will have lived in the parish or adjoining parishes for more than 3 consecutive years full-time and meets the following:

- Is employed as a Key Worker (paid or unpaid) in the parish or adjoining parishes
- Is in insecure accommodation and has insufficient funds to rent or buy a property suitable to their needs within the parish or adjoining parishes

BAND C

An applicant meeting this criteria will have lived for more than 5 consecutive years full-time in the parish or adjoining parishes and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Is in insecure accommodation and has insufficient funds to rent or buy a property suitable to their needs within the parish or adjoining parishes
or
- Has insufficient funds to rent or buy a property suitable to their needs within the parish or adjoining parishes

BAND D

An applicant meeting this criteria will have lived for at least 3 consecutive years full-time in the parish or adjoining parishes and meets at the following criteria:

- Is in insecure accommodation and has insufficient funds to rent or buy a property suitable to their needs within the parish or adjoining parishes

BAND E

An applicant meeting this criteria will have lived for at least 3 consecutive years full-time in the parish or adjoining parishes and cannot afford to rent or buy a property in the parish or adjoining parishes.

BAND F

An applicant meeting this criteria will work as a Key Worker (paid or voluntary) and

- wants to live in the parish or adjoining parishes, but has no connection to the parish or adjoining parishes.
- Cannot afford to rent or buy a property in the parish or adjoining parishes

BAND G

An applicant meeting this criteria will have lived in the parish or adjoining parishes for less

than three years and cannot afford to rent or buy in the parish or adjoining parishes. Priority would be given to those applicants with family living in the parish or adjoining parishes. Family connections relate to a close family member and Homes for Wells will have the discretion to decide who a close family member is and will take account of the particular family circumstances and strength of relationships/dependence.

BAND H

An applicant meeting this criteria wants to live in the parish or adjoining parishes but does not have a connection with the parish or adjoining parishes.

2. Application procedure

2.1 All applications will only be considered by the Allocations committee on completion of a Homes for Wells application form agreed by the Housing Sub-Committee.

2.2 The applicant is to ensure that their application form is fully completed and kept up-to-date. The applicants must be able to provide evidence of the information given on the form if requested.

2.3 All applications, once submitted to the Allocations Committee will be placed in a banding. Date of receipt of the application will be recorded and the applicant informed of their banding.

2.4 It will be the responsibility of the applicants to inform the Association of any facts in their applications that cease to be accurate subsequent to the completion of the Application Form.

2.5 No information, apart from the number of bedrooms, shall be given about Homes for Wells properties to any new or existing applicants to ensure confidentiality.

3. Procedure for the Allocation of Newly Available Properties

3.1 The Board has established an Allocations Committee comprised of Board members and co-optees.

3.2 The Co-ordinator/Administrator will phone all the applicants who are eligible to apply for the property available, to confirm interest and accuracy of information provided in the forms.

3.3 The Co-ordinator/Administrator will provide the Allocations Committee with up-to-date information on the applicants via original application forms and a spreadsheet overview, one week prior to meeting.

3.4 On a new property becoming available, the Co-ordinator/Administrator will inform the Allocations Committee of a viewing time so that a member of the committee may view the property.

4. Allocations Committee

4.1 The Allocations Committee will be composed of a Chair and up to four additional members of whom at least one will be co-opted with the remainder being Board members.

4.2 The role of the Allocations Committee will be to consider applications for housing with Homes for Wells and in doing so shall apply the Allocations Policy. The committee will make recommendations concerning the applications for the available property to the Board of Homes for Wells.

4.3 The Co-ordinator/Administrator will be present at meetings of the Allocations Committee to ensure that the Allocations Policy and procedures are being adhered to and to take minutes.

4.3 The Allocations Committee shall meet as soon as possible after the deadline for applications.

4.4 The Allocations Committee will assess applicants on information contained in the application forms. It will conduct a thorough and objective assessment of these applications. The recommendations the Allocations Committee makes will be based solely on the information provided in the application forms. However, should there be occasions where further information would assist this assessment, the Allocations Committee will advise the Co-ordinator/Administrator and such further information will be obtained.

4.5 All recommendations of the Allocations Committee will be agreed by a simple majority. The Chair will have a casting vote.

4.6 After the placing of the applicants into bands, the Allocations Committee will take into account the following additional factors (which are ranked in order of priority):

1. The duration and level of their voluntary/community work;
2. The appropriateness to the size of property and its facilities to the applicant in comparison to the other applicants including size and number of bedrooms in current accommodation, if applicants have any children living with them permanently, if applicant has any of their own children coming to stay with them for access;
3. The length of time the applicants have been on the Association's waiting list for housing;

4.7 Affordability will be discussed with tenants before offering them a particular property.

4.8 All applicants shall be considered fairly and in line with the Association's Equal Opportunities policy.

4.9 The applicants being recommended to the Board for a tenancy shall be listed in order of priority: i.e. 1, 2, 3 and so forth.

4.9 The reasons why these applicants have been recommended to the Board shall be explained in writing by the Allocations Committee and this explanation shall be provided to the Board as part of the recommendation.

5. Decision on the Allocation of the Property

5.1 The recommendations of the Allocation Committee will be emailed to all Board members for approval.

5.2 The decision of the Allocation Committee will, in normal circumstances, be final but, if any Board member has concerns over the recommendations, these concerns must be emailed only to the Chairman of the Board within twenty four hours.

5.3 If there is a majority of Board members voicing concerns, then the Chairman of the Board will convene a Board meeting to review the Allocation Committee's recommendations.

5.4 The Board will have the power to approve or reject the recommendations. The decision will be made by a simple majority and, in the case of a tied vote, the Chair will have a casting vote.

6. Approval by the Landlord (To be used in cases where Homes for Wells manages a property for a private landlord)

6.1 The name of the first successful applicant shall be given to the landlord by the Co-ordinator/Administrator or other authorized person. If the landlord does not wish to accept that applicant the landlord will be given the name of the second successful applicant and so on. The landlord may request to meet a successful applicant.

6.2 If none of the three applicants chosen is acceptable to the Landlord, the Co-ordinator or such other person authorized by the Chair of the Board shall have a meeting with the Landlord to discuss the matter. The Chair shall then decide if the Allocations Committee is to meet again to allocate the property, excluding the applicants vetoed by the Landlord.

7 Conflict of Interest

7.1 Impartiality and integrity will be a crucial requirement of the members of the Allocations Committee. In the event that any member of the Allocations Committee or the Board of Homes for Wells is related to/has a close personal, business or other connection to an applicant he/she will disclose this information and will not participate in any Allocations Committee or Board discussion or decision during which the relevant application is under consideration. However, the Chair of the Allocations Committee and/or the Chair of the Board will have the option to invite the Member to comment if he/she considers that it may be of assistance.

7.2 The Co-ordinator/ Administrator will provide the Allocations Committee members with hard copies of the applications 7 days in advance of meetings in order to allow the Committee members to read all applications and for Members to signal if they consider that they may have a conflict of interest. In the event of a conflict of interest, they shall inform the

Co-ordinator/Administrator and the Chair of the Committee who shall invite a reserve Member to attend the meeting (the Member having a conflict of interest may still attend – see point 7.1).

7.3 The quorum for Allocation Committee meetings shall be three excluding members who have declared a conflict of interest. In the event that the meeting is not quorate the meeting will not proceed. A further meeting shall be convened as soon as possible with other Board members being co-opted to ensure that there is a quorum at such re-convened meeting.

8. The Allocation

8.1 The Applicants shall be notified of the results of the application by the Co-ordinator/Administrator as soon as possible after acceptance by the Landlord of one of the Allocation Committee's recommendations.

8.2 Homes for Wells will carry out the following searches and checks on the applicants:

- Evidence of employment (if relevant)
- References from current or previous landlord or personal reference where these are not available

8.3 The successful applicants shall have 48 hours, or longer by agreement, from notification that they are successful to confirm that they wish to proceed with the tenancy. Once the tenancy agreement has been produced, the applicants are expected to sign it as soon as possible. In the event of any undue delay by the applicants, the Association reserves the right to withdraw its offer and to offer the property to the next successful applicant.

8.4 Tenants will pay 14 days rent in advance. They will be encouraged to set up a standing order for rent. In the event of the successful applicant being unable to produce the required

cleared funds at the start of the tenancy then, following a discussion with the prospective tenant, the offer may be withdrawn and the property offered to the applicant next in priority. This is not a blanket policy and each case will be assessed case by case. Tenants who would be in receipt of full housing benefit are asked pay a small amount weekly until they build up at least 14 days rent in advance.

8.5 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the applicants will be offered a maximum of 3 properties and then removed from the Homes for Wells application list.

8.6 Applicants who have or have had rent arrears will be assessed on a case by case as to whether they are eligible.

8.7 Homes for Wells reserves the right to disqualify an applicant or applicants where they or a member of their household has been guilty of unacceptable behavior serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant including anti-social behavior, significant rent arrears, the provision of false or misleading information and intimidation of other applicants. The applicant can be disqualified at any time including on application, on receipt of any information which would demonstrate the applicant was unsuitable to be a tenant or on being considered for an allocation of a suitable property. The applicant will be able to appeal against the decision that they are unsuitable to be a tenant and are disqualified from joining the housing register. An applicant can apply to join the housing register at a later date providing that they can demonstrate that their circumstances or behavior has changed such that they now would be suitable to be a tenant.

8.8 Any applications recording an unspent conviction should be referred to the Board if in all other respects the application would normally have been accepted and duly classified. The referral to the Board should include any background information that might be considered relevant e.g comments from the Probation Service or the Police, the severity of the sentence and whether it had been fully served, any evidence that the offender had or had not taken steps to change behaviour etc .

8.9 Any grievances will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Grievance Policy.

9. Transparency and Confidentiality

9.1 The list of applicants and all information provided by applicants will be strictly confidential and will not be shared or discussed with any persons not members of the Board, the Housing Sub-Committee, Allocations Committee, Co-ordinator or the Administrator at any point. The same confidentiality applies to discussions within/between the Housing Sub-Committee, Allocations Committee, the Board and the Co-ordinator/Administrator with respect to individual applications.

9.2 However, personal confidentiality withstanding, the Board is committed to being as transparent as possible when reporting its decisions concerning allocations, in the minutes of its meetings, and in any other communications.

Appendix to Allocations Policy

Homes for Wells exists to house Key Workers (either paid or voluntary), who provide an essential service to the town and others with a proven local connection as defined in the policy.

- National Health Service staff (Wells Cottage Hospital and Health Centre)
- Paramedics
- Social workers
- Staff working in Alderman Peel High School, Wells Primary School and Wells Children's Centre
- Police officers, Community Support Officers and civilian police staff
- Firefighters
- Coastguards
- Lifeguards
- RNLI workers and volunteers
- Lifeboat Guild volunteers
- Postal workers
- Post office workers
- Harbour office staff
- Support workers (employed and volunteers) for the elderly and disabled
- Flood and coast watch volunteers
- Fisherman based in Wells
- Agricultural workers

And others making a significant contribution to the local economy in accordance with the allocation policy of Homes for Wells.