
Allocations Policy

Document History

Version	Date	Change	By
2.0	3/8/17	Board Approved – amendments incorporated	M Margrie
2.2	12/6/18	Minor adjustments to clarify Sec 106 requirements. Board approval not required.	M Margrie

Approvals

Version	Date	Approved By (Note minute number if applicable)	Equality & Diversity Impact Analysis Completed By
2.0	1/8/17	Board min 17044	M Margrie
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Allocations & Lettings

1 Policy

- 1.1 Cirencester Housing (CH) is a charitable housing provider working in Cirencester Town and surrounding parishes to deliver affordable homes for local people. We work in partnership with local authorities and parish councils to ensure the homes we provide meet continue to meet our objectives.
- 1.2 This policy has been drafted to assist CH in the allocation of its housing stock and ensure an equitable, effective and efficient service for those applying for a property. The policy is designed to accommodate the specialist requirements of local needs homes and ensure compliance with both regulatory and statutory obligations as well as accommodating scheme specific nominations and qualifying arrangements.
- 1.3 CH may provide a mixture of tenure developments with homes available to rent on an assured or starter tenancy or to buy on a shared ownership leasehold basis.
- 1.4 Some of CH's housing stock is available on a local connection basis, with qualifying criteria detailed in a legally binding Section 106 or Nominations Agreement. Please refer to paragraph 2.
- 1.5 Every application will be dealt with in a fair way and in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 1.6 CH will treat all applications confidentially as required by the Data Protection Act and our Data Protection Policy. We will provide appropriate details on applicants to our partners and regulatory bodies for recording and monitoring purposes. Local connection information may also be shared with parish council members for verification with the written consent of applicants.
- 1.7 It is a criminal offence to provide false or fraudulent information when applying for a property. Any applicants caught doing so will have their application disqualified or may risk losing their home should evidence later come to light that they submitted false information during the application process.
- 1.8 All applicants for rent on an assured or starter tenancy basis must be registered with the relevant local authority's choice based letting scheme and must be verified before an offer of accommodation will be confirmed. CH at its discretion may consider applicants who are not currently registered in the following circumstances:
 - 1.8.1 existing residents applying for an exchange within CH stock
 - 1.8.2 applicants who meet the local connection requirements for homes governed by a Section 106 agreement where they are:
 - 1.8.2.1 in the process of registration with the choice based letting scheme, and
 - 1.8.2.2 able to provide sufficient evidence for CH to determine the applicant meets the local authority's registration requirements.

2 Considering Applications

- 2.1 When selecting applicants Cirencester Housing will take into consideration:
 - 2.1.1 Local connection requirements per paragraph 3;
 - 2.1.2 Applications from existing residents who have a housing or social need;

- 2.1.3 Applications from family members of existing residents who can clearly demonstrate a need to provide or receive support from an existing resident and whom meet the requirements of paragraph 1.8;
 - 2.1.4 Applicants who meet the property bedroom size criteria. CH reserves the right to consider applicants who will be under occupying the property by one-bedroom space only; and
 - 2.1.5 For shared ownership property, the ability of the applicant to raise sufficient capital to purchase the specified equity share, but not be able to afford the outright purchase of property suitable to their needs in the area in which they are applying to live.
- 2.2 In order to maintain a balanced and sustainable community CH will:
- 2.2.1 consider applicants in line with estate specific criteria as summarised for each estate in paragraph 4;
 - 2.2.2 ensure that properties with adaptations are offered to suitable applicants in the first instance;
 - 2.2.3 let properties to those in priority need;
 - 2.2.4 consider under-occupation in the interests of community cohesion;
 - 2.2.5 understand and work with the local community to promote equality and diversity; and
 - 2.2.6 reserve the right not to offer a home to:
 - 2.2.6.1 A household with a record of any nuisance or antisocial behaviour; or
 - 2.2.6.2 A household with an undischarged county court judgement for debt or who owe monies to a housing association or local authority; or
 - 2.2.6.3 Any other household with financial or behavioural history that may make them unsuitable tenants for the property or development.
 - 2.2.7 Any decision taken based on paragraph 2.2.6 will be based on the application form and supporting evidence gathered as part of the assessment process.

3 Local Connection Requirements

- 3.1 CH will work with local authority partners in an appropriate way to deliver the requirements of Section 106 agreements.
- 3.2 CH will work with the parish councils and local communities to ensure potential applicants are aware of the homes available and how they can apply and qualify for them. Emphasis will be placed on the use of local advertising and awareness building as well as advertising in choice-based lettings system where applicable.
- 3.3 The following location connection requirements apply where referenced above:
 - 3.3.1 local connection is determined by considering the areas identified in the Section 106 agreement in the following priority order (1) the parish or parishes, followed by (2) the surrounding area.
 - 3.3.2 If a qualifying applicant cannot be found for the tenancy after a reasonable amount of time, CH may extend the local connection to encompass the local authority district boundaries. This will be done after consulting with the Chief Executive.
 - 3.3.3 Local connection requirements are detailed in Section 106 agreements and will differ from one estate to another. CH will summarise the requirements in the advertisement and will provide further details from the Section 106 agreement upon request. In general, the Section 106 local connection requirements will include criteria such as:

- 3.3.3.1 having for a continuous period of three or more years lived in the local connection area
 - 3.3.3.2 having one or more of the applicant(s) parents, grandparents or siblings living within the local connection area
 - 3.3.3.3 having been nominated by employers within the local connection area as key workers. Key workers mean a person who is in the opinion of the local authority required to reside with in the parish by virtue of confirmed offer of employment which provides a benefit to the local economy or social wellbeing of the community.
- 3.4 CH will verify applicants ability to meet local connection requirement and retain a record of allocation decisions.

4 Estate Specific Requirements

- 4.1 Estate specific requirements apply to the person making the application or the persons partner. As such, requirements will apply to the applicant, co-applicant and the partner of the applicant.
- 4.2 **Stonesfield Close, Southrop**
- 4.2.1 All properties will be allocated in line with the Section 106 agreement based on a verified local connection to Sothrop Parish, followed by the surrounding area consisting of the parishes of Lechlade, Eastleach, Hatherop, Coln St Aldwyns, Quenington and Fairford.
- 4.3 **Arlington Fields, Bibury**
- 4.3.1 All properties will be allocated in line with the Section 106 agreement based on a verified local connection to Bibury Parish, followed by the surrounding area consisting of the parishes of Northleach, Eastington, Aldsworth, Coln St Aldwyns, Quenington, Meysey Hampton, Barnsley, Winson and Coln St Dennis.
- 4.4 **Pethera Close, Cirencester**
- 4.4.1 Priority will be given to applicants who have a local connection to the Cotswold District, are over 55 years of age, and/or who have a medical or social need that can be met by the accommodation.
- 4.4.2 No 1 Pethra Close is a two-bedroom bungalow and priority will be given to those with a two bed need or a single person whose disability requires them to have a carer.
- 4.5 **Vyners Close, Cirencester**
- 4.5.1 All properties will be allocated in line with the Section 106 agreement based on a verified local connection to the Cotswold District.
- 4.6 **Jefferies Court, Cirencester**
- 4.6.1 Properties will be allocated to residents over the age of 55 or to those with proven medical needs. If there are no suitable applicants, any other letting will be treated as sensitive, taking into account the ages and medical needs of the existing residents.

5 Procedure

- 5.1 An initial assessment of applications will be carried out once the application deadline has passed. This assessment will examine applications to ensure they meet three basic criteria which are:
 - 5.1.1.1 applicants have a genuine housing need suitable for the type of property;
 - 5.1.1.2 applicants have appropriate financial resources; and
 - 5.1.1.3 applicants fulfil specific qualifying criteria.
- 5.2 Should no appropriate applicants be identified then CH will work with appropriate partners to continue seeking a suitable applicant.
- 5.3 CH will request detailed financial information from all households applying for a property and be sure that affordability levels are clearly identified, including other costs such as ground rents, services charges and insurance where applicable. Financial advice is not available from CH but we will highlight known mortgage lenders to those wishing to purchase a shared ownership property and support tenants wishing to seek appropriate benefits.
- 5.4 Once the initial assessment has been carried out a shortlist will be prepared and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within seven days. Those shortlisted will be contacted by CH, and an appointment will be made with the first applicant on the shortlist to assess them further.
- 5.5 CH reserves the right to request additional supporting material from applicants or make further enquiries about them should it be necessary or appropriate.
- 5.6 The application process is confidential – applicant details and the application will not be disclosed to anyone other than sharing local connection information supplied with local partners to verify accuracy.
- 5.7 Applicants are requested not make public any application for a Cirencester Housing Limited property, provide any information which is misleading either to CH or to anyone else, including other applicants. Interference of this or any other kind may be grounds for CH to reject an application.

6 Appeals

- 6.1 CH looks to operate a robust and transparent allocation procedure and all applicants have the right to appeal. Any appeals or requests should be made within 10 working days of the decision notification. Appeals should be made in writing and directed to the Chief Executive. The appeal will be investigated and appropriate actions or responses will be taken. A response will be sent within 10 working days.