

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CABINET
BOARD

14 September 2018

Report of the Head of Commissioning, Support & Direct Services –
A.Thomas

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

TAI TARIAN LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval of two local letting policies proposed by Tai Tarian (Appendices 1 and 2) and to obtain ongoing delegated authority for the Head of Commissioning, Support & Direct Services to approve any further such proposed local lettings policies.

Executive Summary

2. Tai Tarian have put forward two proposed local letting policies which requires member approval before implementation. Due to the likelihood of Tia Tarian wishing to put forward future proposals for local letting policies, it is suggested that the Head of Commissioning, Support & Direct Services is granted delegated authority to approve any further such proposed local lettings policies.

Background

3. The Council and Tai Tarian's Joint Lettings Policy, 2015 states that:

“Nothing contained in this policy shall prevent Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Tai Tarian from developing and agreeing local lettings policies to meet specific local issues and where relevant these

local lettings policies shall apply in addition or instead of the provisions in this policy.”

4. No such policies have up to this point been proposed.
5. Council legal advice is therefore that, in the absence of any alternative governance arrangements being explicitly agreed, such policies currently require political approval, prior to implementation.

Approval of currently proposed local lettings schemes

6. The justification given in both instances for the two currently proposed local lettings policies is the need to create balanced and sustainable communities in instances where this may not otherwise occur.
7. Officers in the Council’s retained Housing Service are satisfied that this reason is, on balance and in both instances, valid and the measures proposed to facilitate same are justified proportionate.
8. Officers do not therefore object to their implementation from a wider strategic perspective.
9. Furthermore, both policies provide that anyone not offered a particular allocation because of the implementation of either policy will still be considered for an allocation elsewhere, in accordance with the overarching Joint Lettings Policy.
10. Officers are therefore also satisfied that successful joint working between operational Council teams and Tai Tarian in fulfilling their statutory duties to meet accommodation need will not be unduly affected.

Ongoing delegated authority to approve local lettings policies

11. If these local lettings policies prove to be successful in creating balanced and sustainable communities in instances where this may not otherwise occur, then it is likely that Tai Tarian will want to make more frequent future use of similar policies.
12. The Head of Commissioning, Support & Direct Services is satisfied that Officers in the Council’s retained Housing Service would be able to advise

her on the validity of the reasons given for any further such local lettings policy proposed by Tai Tarian, going forward.

Financial Impact

13. There are no anticipated financial impacts arising from this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

14. In order to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, an EIA Screening Exercise has been undertaken in respect of both of Tai Tarian's currently proposed local lettings policies.
15. It is not believed that either unduly affect applicants with any particular protected characteristic(s) because anyone not offered a particular allocation because of the implementation of either policy will still be considered for an allocation elsewhere, in accordance with the overarching Joint Lettings Policy.
16. Officers in the Council's retained Housing Service will undertake an EIA Screening Exercise in respect of any future proposed local lettings policy and the outcome will inform their advice given to the Head of Commissioning, Support & Direct Services as to whether or not such should be authorised.

Workforce Impacts

17. There are no anticipated workforce impacts arising from this report.

Legal Impacts

18. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

19. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

20. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

21. It is recommended that Members approve the following two local lettings policies currently proposed by Tai Tarian, copies of which are appended to this report:
 - a) Tai Tarian Local Lettings Policy - Initial Letting of Properties in New Developments (Appendix 1); and
 - b) Tai Tarian Local Lettings Policy - Bush Row (Appendix 2).
22. It is further recommended that on-going delegated authority be granted to the Head of Commissioning, Support & Direct Services to approve any further such proposed policies.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

23. To enable Tai Tarian to implement local lettings policies required to create balanced and sustainable communities in instances where this may not otherwise occur.

Implementation of Decision

24. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

25. Appendix 1 - Tai Tarian Local Lettings Policy - Initial Letting of Properties in New Developments
26. Appendix 2 - Tai Tarian Local Lettings Policy - Bush Row

List of Background Papers

27. None

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Tai Tarian Local Lettings Policy

Initial Letting of Properties in New Developments

Purpose

Creating balanced and sustainable communities in new developments (first lettings).

Background

Extract from NPTCBC's Lettings Policy 2015:

“Nothing contained in this policy shall prevent Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Tai Tarian from developing and agreeing local lettings policies to meet specific local issues and where relevant these local lettings policies shall apply in addition or instead of the provisions in this policy.”

This agreement therefore sets out the criteria for the first lettings of properties in new developments built by Tai Tarian using Social Housing Grant/other Welsh Government Housing capital grant or acquired as the affordable housing contribution in a private development.

For each new development the split will be as follows:

NPTCBC Housing Options Team (HOT):

HOT will nominate eligible individuals to be considered for up to 50% of vacancies in all new development. Nominees who are not eligible for an allocation in line with the Shared Lettings Policy will not be considered.

Where a nomination rate of 50% could be considered to impact on the sustainability of the scheme then Tai Tarian and HOT will work together to identify suitable alternative accommodation through existing housing stock (current/future vacancies) up to the 50% nomination threshold.

Adult Social Services

Where a nomination rate of 50% homeless households could be considered to impact on the sustainability of the scheme, nominations for the remainder of the 50% will be sought from the Housing Options Co-ordinator (Adult Social Services) of suitable applicants they are at the time supporting to secure accommodation under a statutory duty to do so other than those under homelessness legislation. The number of units thus allocated will then be netted off the balance for which alternative properties are sourced for use by HOT.

Tai Tarian:

Tai Tarian will determine the remaining 50% of allocations to be made to the new development.

Applicants who have been identified by HOT as having a homeless duty owed to them will not be considered.

Applicants who have been assessed as having no housing need (i.e. bronze band) will not be considered unless an allocation to them would be considered to contribute to the overall sustainability of the scheme, they have been nominated by the Housing Options Co-ordinator (Adult Social Services) or the property they are vacating could be used to meet the needs of an applicant with housing need.

The Process

Tai Tarian and HOT to agree in advance the mix of properties to which nomination rights will apply (see appendix 1)

Tai Tarian will invite expressions of interest for their 50% through an advert that utilises the Homes by Choice process as well as other proactive marketing.

HOT will be requested to provide a list of nominees at the same time Tai Tarian invites expressions of interest as set out above.

Anyone expressing an interest in the scheme or being nominated by HOT must have a 'live' application with Tai Tarian. This means that the

applicant has to be considered eligible for allocation in line with the Shared Lettings Policy.

Applicants who express an interest in the scheme will be considered in accordance with the banding scheme and within that in date of application order. Consideration overall however will be to the sustainability of the scheme and take into consideration the nominees put forward by HOT.

Applicants who respond to the expression of interest campaign and who have been identified by HOT as having a homeless duty owed to them will not be considered.

Applicants who respond to the expression of interest campaign and who have been assessed as having no housing need (i.e. bronze band) will not be considered. That is unless an allocation to them would be considered to contribute to the overall sustainability of the scheme, or the property they are vacating could be used to meet the needs of an applicant with housing need.

The Housing Options Coordinator (Adult Social Care) may submit an expression of interest for applicants who have low housing need where the location and the size of unit would meet their housing requirements and in so doing discharge the Council's duty, as part of their Care & Support Plan, to help the applicant secure suitable accommodation.

Expressions of interest will be open to all live housing applicants – waiting list and transfer however Tai Tarian will decide on a scheme by scheme basis whether there will be a cap on transfer cases for each scheme, this is to ensure there is a mix of applicants in each scheme, for sustainability and meeting housing need.

For any nomination HOT and Adult Social Care are to provide full background information on the nominated applicant, including details of support requirements (this to include any support plan in place/proposed for the applicant) which must be accepted by the applicant

Adapted Accommodation:

Under the terms of the Shared Lettings Policy a property that has been adapted to benefit disabled applicants can be allocated outside the Homes by Choice scheme. The process for this involves matching an identified applicant from the Waiting List for the area who needs the type of property that is available.

This is ratified by an Occupational Therapist who confirms the property is suitable for the applicant.

For the purpose of New developments where an Adapted property is available it is proposed that the following applies:

Tai Tarian will identify potential applicants from the Waiting List and make a shortlist of applicants that may be considered based on matching the applicants needs to the property type, location and disabled facilities (including potential aids/minor alterations)

A request to be sent to the Housing Options Coordinator (Adult Social Services) for NPTCBC to put forward any case for consideration based on matching the persons needs to the property type, location and disabled facilities (including potential aids/minor alterations) as confirmed by Social Services Occupational Health Service.

Any person to be considered must be eligible for the waiting list

A joint assessment is to be completed with NPTCBC to determine the applicants to be considered (number of applicants shortlisted to be based on the number of properties available eg – 1 property = 3 applicants)

Once a shortlist of applicants is completed then an assessment of each applicant is undertaken which may require an OT assessment to determine whether the property meets the needs of the shortlisted applicants.

A decision is made by Tai Tarian based on the assessment process above

Review of agreement:

It is proposed that Tai Tarian and HOT review the process both during and after the allocation of properties in Wembley Avenue and Cartref to ensure it is workable for both parties.

Proposed developments 2018:

Scheme	Number of Units	Nomination rights
Wembley Neath	4	HOT will be asked to nominate as follows: 2 x 1 bedroom flats
Cartref Skewen	17	HOT will be asked to nominate as follows: 2 x (2 bed) houses 4 x (1 bed) flats 2 x (1 bed) Social Services nominations / substituted flats already in the ownership of Tai Tarian for HOT. Tai Tarian will discuss and agree with NPTCBC the allocation of the one bed bungalow. It is expected that anyone that NPTCBC would like to be considered for this allocation be registered as an applicant for housing with Tai Tarian.
Llys Wern	8	HOT will be asked to nominate as follows:

Up to 4 x 2 bedroom houses

Evelyn Terrace

Number of units to be confirmed

Royal British Legion

Number of units to be confirmed

Ynys Y Gwas

Number of units to be confirmed

Llansawel Crecent

Number of units to be confirmed

Tai Tarian Local Lettings Policy

Bush Row

Purpose

To produce a local lettings agreement with the aim of creating a balanced and sustainable community at Bush Row, Melyn

Background

Extract from NPTCBC's Lettings Policy 2015:

“Nothing contained in this policy shall prevent Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Tai Tarian from developing and agreeing local lettings policies to meet specific local issues and where relevant these local lettings policies shall apply in addition or instead of the provisions in this policy.”

This agreement therefore sets out the criteria for the letting of properties at Bush Row, Melyn.

Reason for the Local Lettings Agreement:

Bush Row contains 32 number apartments contained within two buildings. It consists of 16 x 1 bed apartments and 16 x 2 bed apartments over three storeys. It is located in the Melyn area of Neath approximately half a mile from the centre of Neath town. The buildings have recently undergone an external works programme with the intention of commencing an internal works programme shortly.

Current Issues:

There is evidence of drug dealing and heavy drug use in the blocks with numerous visitors frequenting the blocks particularly in the evenings. There is suspected drug dealing taking place in 5 properties resulting in recent raids at two properties by the police. Other residents are fearful of

their safety and some have requested transfers out of Bush Row due to the drugs problems. It is also an area that the police have identified that potential 'cuckooing' is taking place from a Birmingham drugs gang. The residents affected by this have been identified as having a vulnerability or high support needs.

There are also potentially two businesses being run without permission which will need investigation and the appropriate action taken.

The block has a reputation which is affecting its lettability and we are working on changing perceptions and ensuring residents are safe and secure in their homes.

This will involve the following proposals for managing the block, working with current tenants and allocating any vacancies.

Block management proposals:

Regular visits and presence in the blocks to ensure all residents are meeting their tenancy obligations.

Number 16 is going to be utilised as an office in the short term and will be used by officers of Tai Tarian, local PCSOs and contractors.

CCTV will be installed shortly in the external areas with additional cameras being installed when the internal works programme is completed.

Close working with the police to ensure information is exchanged and the appropriate actions are taken by both the police and Tai Tarian.

Upgrades to the security of the blocks with new doors, door entry system and removal of the trade button facility together with additional lighting and fencing to secure the rear garden areas.

Advice and support is being offered to those tenants who require additional help to manage their tenancies.

Application requirements:

For future vacancies it is proposed that we will only consider applicants who meet the following criteria, subject to reviewing the Local lettings agreement:

Applicants with no current drug addictions or substance misuse;
Applicants with no criminal convictions in the last 5 years that would affect a tenancy (eg, violent offences, drug related offences, theft or other serious offences) or being investigated for an offence of this nature;
Applicants with no drug convictions (possession/supply);
Applicants with no or low level support needs;
Applicants who can evidence that they have conducted a tenancy satisfactorily or if they had not held a previous tenancy applicants who can supply satisfactory references;
Applicants who have not been involved in anti-social behaviour in the last 2 years;
Applicant households who are not offered an allocation of a flat in Bush Row will be considered for an allocation elsewhere in accordance with the Shared Lettings Policy.

By reducing applicants with a history of such behaviour from automatically being offered housing in the area, it is anticipated that this will support the settlement of existing tenants and residents as well as encouraging prospective tenants to Bush Row and neighbouring communities, thereby facilitating the development of sustainable communities in which households will want to remain.

The Process for letting:

Tai Tarian will invite expressions of interest for available properties through the Homes by Choice scheme in the first instance.

If any applicant who expresses an interest for a property has involvement with the Council's Housing Options Team (HOT) then discussions will take place between Tai Tarian and HOT on the suitability of the applicant

Anyone expressing an interest in the scheme or being nominated by HOT directly outside the Homes by Choice scheme must have a 'live' application with Tai Tarian. This means that the applicant has to be considered eligible for allocation in line with the Shared Lettings Policy

Applicants who express an interest in the scheme will be considered in accordance with the banding scheme and within that in date of application order. Consideration overall however will be to the sustainability of the scheme so that some vacancies may be advertised as suitable only for persons currently employed on a part-time or full time basis.

Expressions of interest will be open to all live housing applicants – waiting list and transfer however Tai Tarian will decide whether there will be a cap on transfer cases, this is to ensure there is a mix of applicants in each scheme, for sustainability and meeting housing need.

For any applicant who has an open case with HOT, a full background information on the prospective applicant is required from HOT.

The decision on any allocation will be made by Tai Tarian based on the facts of the application and how the allocation would assist with the sustainability of the community at Bush Row.

Review of agreement:

It is proposed that Tai Tarian and HOT review the arrangements for any future vacancies after a period of 12 months. This will involve an analysis of allocations made during the period and how the tenancy has been conducted.

If there are insufficient allocations made to demonstrate the successful outcome of the local lettings agreement in relation to Bush Row then it is proposed that, subject to agreement, the period is extended to 24 months.