

## One Vision Housing Request to extend Local Lettings Plans

Date of Issue:	29 November 2024
Date of Decision:	9 December 2024
Report to:	Cabinet Member Housing & Highways
Report of:	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth & Housing)
Portfolio:	Housing & Highways
Wards affected:	Linacre, Derby, Ravenmeols, Cambridge
Is this a key decision:	No
Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No

**Summary:**

To seek approval to agree to One Vision Housing (OVH) extending their established Local Lettings schemes at Oxford House and Strand House high-rise estates, Bootle; Smithy Green/Close, Formby and Hamlet Close in Southport.

**Recommendation(s):**

(1) The Council approves the continued use of Local Lettings Plans by OVH at Oxford House and Strand House estates, Bootle and Smithy Green & Smithy Close, Formby and Hamlet Close in Southport.

**1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations**

1.1 Attached at Appendix 1, is their review of the effectiveness of current Local Lettings Policies from OVH. OVH conclude that they would like to continue to extend their existing Local Lettings Plans (LLPs).

OVH decided they wished to introduce Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) in Strand House and Oxford House because they had seen a significant reduction in the numbers of applicants bidding for properties through Choice Based Lettings, which they wanted to address. Both these LLPs restrict letting of properties in Oxford and Strand Houses to those applicants over 55 years of age. This LLP also restricts letting of properties to those applicants over 55 years of age. OVH also wish to extend the LLP for future lettings of Hamlet Close in Southport to over 55 years of age, of which the initial lettings were carried out in 2019/20.

Following consultation with the Council the existing LLPs were approved for introduction in March 2013 for Strand House and Oxford House, and similarly at Smithy Green/Close in July 2014.

- 1.2 The Stock Transfer agreement requires OVH to allocate 75% of their vacant properties to Council nominations, in line with the Council's policy.

The Stock Transfer agreement states (Second schedule, Part 1, paragraph 2.3);

*... One Vision agrees that it shall not amend One Vision's Allocations Policy in so far as it relates to Nominees without the prior approval of the Council acting reasonably and having regards to the Act (Housing Act 1996).... Also, (Fifth Schedule, OVH Covenants, Appendix, section 6, states) .... One Vision shall act in accordance with One Vision's Allocations Policy as may be in force from time to time and shall consult the Council and give formal and reasonable consideration to any representation made by the Council to any proposed material change to the said policy:-*

*- Giving the Council 28 days' notice of any proposed material change and the reasons for it; and*

*- (subject to the Council notifying any representations to One Vision within 21 days of such notice) responding in writing to any such representations the Council may make in respect of the proposed change giving reasons why One Vision does not accept the Council's view if that be the case.*

- 1.3 The Council's own Allocations Policy (Property Pool Plus) states:

#### Local Letting Schemes

4.3.1 The local authority and registered providers can use local lettings schemes to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives subject to agreement with the local authority. The following list is intended to be illustrative and in no way prescribed or definitive:

- 1. Allocating accommodation in rural villages and giving priority to applicants with a connection to a particular parish.*
- 2. Creating more mixed and/or sustainable communities.*
- 3. Dealing with a concentration of deprivation.*
- 4. Ensuring properties that are particularly suited to being made accessible (e.g. ground floor flats) are prioritised for those with access needs.*
- 5. Relocating essential workers such as teachers, nurses and police officers within a reasonable travelling distance from their work.*
- 6. Supporting people in work/volunteering or who are seeking work or seeking volunteering opportunities.*
- 7. Dealing sensitively with lettings in rural areas to sustain communities by giving priority to those with a local connection of more than two years.*

8. Where a child to adult ratio could be lowered on an estate where there is high child density or, conversely, young single people could integrate into an estate where there is high ratio of older persons.

9. Where there are reasons to positively discriminate due to age, for example accommodation is only suitable for applicants under the age of 35 years, or over the age of state pension entitlement.

- 1.4 The statutory basis for “local lettings policies” is within Section 167(2E) of the 1996 Housing Act which enables accommodation to be allocated to people of a particular description, that fall within the reasonable preference groups, or provides that additional priority can be given to people in any of those preference groups.

In 2010, the Communities and Local Govt Department and Chartered Institute of Housing issued a Good Practice guide for the use of Local Lettings Plans. This recognises that Local lettings policies may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives. For example, local lettings policies may be used to “protect existing stable communities”, and “improving community stability and cohesion”. The guidance also describes the use of ‘Sensitive Lettings’ which can be used to address specific issues, such as the make-up of a particular block of flats, i.e., having the ability to by-pass applicants to avoid potential lifestyle clashes that could arise by rehousing certain groups of applicants under one roof.

- 1.5 The report from OVH, appended below, indicates that there have been some positive impacts since the introduction of the LLPs. More importantly OVH report that they have the support of existing tenants. Even though restricting demand to only those applicants over the age of 55 could limit demand, OVH believe they have been better placed to ‘market’ the blocks and vacant flats to the over 55’s, with more people of this age attracted to live there in the knowledge that there is a homogenous community.

OVH offer a further justification for limiting the age of future residents, on the basis that most of the existing community in each block are older people.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 None identified.

## **3. Legal Implications**

- 3.1 Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 requires Local Housing Authorities to have an Allocations scheme for determining priorities in allocating housing accommodation.

Amendments to Allocations policy and practices are subject to provisions included in the stock transfer contract between the Council and OVH, set out in the report below.

## **4. Corporate Risk Implications**

- 4.1 None identified.

## **5 Staffing HR Implications**

- 5.1 None to the Council as it has tendered the administration of Property Pool Plus to One Vision Housing to manage.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Proposals will assist OVH (the provider) address lettings difficulties at Oxford House and Strand House, as well as Smithy Green Formby and help maintain community stability by limiting occupation to people over the age of 55 years of age.

OVH also wish to extend the LLP on all future lettings in Hamlet Close in Southport to people over 55 years of age or over 45 years of age if the applicant is disabled, following the initial lettings to tenants in 2019/20 as the average age of tenants is currently 58 and around 40% of current tenants have a disability or impairment.

The local letting policies are required to be reviewed annually and authority sought from the Local Authority to continue their use. This report outlines review of the local lettings policies and a recommendation for their future.

## **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

The Council could withhold approval from OVH to operate a Local Lettings scheme and let them through Property Pool Plus to all ages, but this would risk destabilising the communities established within these schemes.

### **Equality Implications:**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed by One Vision Housing who have found that the Local Lettings Plans have a direct impact on residents and may have a differential impact across protected characteristics e.g., where lettings criteria are based on age. There is also a potential impact where lettings criteria support those in employment or those who have an offending history.

The key recommendation from the Impact Assessment is that each Local Lettings Plan is based on clear evidence supporting the implementation of a Policy that alternative accommodation is available for those who may be excluded by the Local Lettings Policy e.g., under 55+, and that the Policy is reviewed annually for success and effectiveness.

### **Impact on Children and Young People:**

The impact on children and young people could be seen as negative due to these proposed Local Letting Plans favouring people aged 55+, however the Council feels that this impact is mitigated by the introduction of the new Property Pool Plus policy that will overall prioritise care leavers. Also, other commissioned services, such as the Riverside Dispersed Accommodation also looks to support those families who would have otherwise struggled to find accommodation and offers support to the parents and their children.

### **Climate Emergency Implications:**

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

The lettings of accommodation within the borough does not have either a negative or positive impact on the climate emergency.

## **What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

### **(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD7850/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5950/24....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### **(B) External Consultations**

OVH have previously undertaken consultations with residents in the properties affected.

**Implementation Date for the Decision:**

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet Member decision.

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**Appendices:**

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A; OVH Local Letting Policy (LLP) Review

**Background Papers:**

Merseyside Property Pool Plus Allocations Policy <http://www.propertypoolplus.org.uk>

OVH Local Lettings Policy proposals (Oxford House & Strand House, Smithy Green), Report to Cabinet Member Communities & Housing 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

Cabinet Member approved a Local Lettings Plan separately for Hamlet Close on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019 <http://smbc-modgov-03/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=58662&Opt=0>

# Local Lettings Policy

Originator:	Policy and Strategy Team
Executive Management Team Approval Date:	XXXX
Review date:	2025

1	Introduction
1.1	As a responsible landlord One Vision Housing (OVH) seeks to allocate the properties it has available to rent in a fair and equitable manner. This is largely achieved by the majority (up to 75% for Sefton and up to 50% for other areas) of available to let properties being advertised and allocated via the sub-regional, Choice Based Lettings Schemes (CBL).
1.2	Within the CBL schemes, applicants for housing are banded according to the Government’s ‘reasonable preference categories, which ensure priority is given to those in the greatest housing need.
1.3	In order to address specific local housing issues, OVH is permitted, however, to develop ‘Local Lettings Policies’ where additional application and allocation criteria may be applied.
1.4	This Policy sets out the provisions OVH has in place for the development and implementation of Local Lettings Policies.
1.5	<p>The application of this Policy also ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, responsibility of the Regulator for Social Housing as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They shall demonstrate how their lettings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) make the best use of available housing and are compatible with the purpose of the housing</li> <li>(b) contribute to local authorities’ strategic housing function and sustainable communities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1.6	<p><b>Access and Communication</b></p> <p>OVH is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone. OVH will seek</p>

<p>1.6.1</p> <p>1.6.2</p> <p>1.7</p> <p>1.7.1</p> <p>1.7.2</p> <p>1.7.3</p> <p>1.8</p>	<p>alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for OVH or use its services.</p> <p>Working with our customers we have established a Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure we make best use of every customer interaction to meet customers' needs in our service delivery and ensure this information is kept up to date.</p> <p><b>Equality, Diversity and Human Rights</b></p> <p>OVH is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender Identity / Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation, Maternity and Pregnancy, Marital Status and Religion and / or Belief.</p> <p>OVH also recognise that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.</p> <p>OVH will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation. OVH will endeavour to ensure its staff and others with whom it works, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).</p> <p>This Policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OVH Allocations Policy</li> <li>• Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Statement of Intent</b></p>
<p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p>	<p>OVH will use Local Lettings Policies to address specific housing issues that may occur within its stock as and when required under the powers afforded to it in the 1996 Housing Act.</p> <p>Where OVH is considering introducing Local Lettings Policies in existing properties, it will consult with existing tenants in the specific type of accommodation, block or area where the Policy will apply, outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reason why the Policy is being considered</li> <li>• The additional criteria on application / allocation that will apply if the Policy is introduced</li> <li>• Any exemptions that will apply and in what circumstances</li> <li>• The period for which the Policy will apply and when it will be reviewed</li> </ul> <p>OVH will also consult with Sefton MBC or any other local authority in an area where a Local Lettings Policy is proposed, to ensure it is in line with the Local Authority's Tenancy Strategy objectives.</p> <p>OVH will limit the introduction of Local Lettings Policies or any other alternative means of allocating social rented properties to 25% of its stock in Sefton (as per nomination agreement negotiated as part of the Stock Transfer Agreement) to ensure the majority are let according</p>

2.5	<p>to the government’s reasonable preference categories.</p> <p>For other areas, OVH may allocate up to 50% of its stock through its own allocations policy including properties subject to a ‘Local Lettings Policy’ as per agreements negotiated with the local authority in question.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Policy</b>
3.1	<p>OVH may choose to apply a Local Lettings Policy within a specific geographical region, estate, block or across a specific housing type e.g. Independent Living accommodation, with the objective of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating balanced and mixed communities, including tackling areas of high unemployment and developing a community of mixed tenure, where possible</li> <li>• Reducing void rates and tenancy turnovers</li> <li>• Improving community stability and cohesion</li> <li>• Tackling low-demand areas and difficult-to-let estates</li> <li>• Reducing incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)</li> <li>• Preventing future problems occurring on newly developed estates or in relation to recently modernised properties</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>Additional lettings criteria, which may be applied to members of the applicant’s household include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority given to households who can demonstrate community contribution e.g. volunteering, active resident involvement</li> <li>• Age related criteria e.g. priority given to applicants ages 55+</li> <li>• Allowing households to under-occupy where affordability has been evidenced</li> <li>• Restricting families to flats below the third floor</li> <li>• Priority given to applicants with no previous record of ASB / or criminal activity etc.</li> <li>• Limiting lets to families with / without children</li> </ul>
3.3	<p>Additional criteria may be applied as either essential or desirable criterion. Where an applicant does not meet the essential criteria they will be by-passed for a property on the first round of bidding. If no applicant meeting the required criteria can be found on the first bidding round, OVH reserve the right to allocate the property to others from the waiting list or via direct lets as is appropriate for the accommodation type.</p>
3.4	<p>Local lettings criteria will be applied prior to homes being advertised through the sub-regional Choice Based Letting system (or any other mechanism used e.g. through web-based property vendors services). Property adverts will clearly display that Local lettings criteria apply and will specify what these are.</p>
3.5	<p>The introduction of Local Lettings Policies will be based upon an evidenced need and following consultation with tenants and the Local Authority. Policies will be subject to the Local Authority Approval, in addition to approval via OVH’s Executive Management Team (EMT), under delegated authority from the OVH Board.</p>
3.6	<p>Applicants have the right to appeal against a decision to allocate a property. Appeals will follow the Choice Based Lettings Appeal process. The request for a review can be made in</p>



	<p>person, by telephone or in writing within twenty-one days from the date of publication of the outcome of the property vacancy on the website.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
4.1	Local lettings criteria will be applied to property advertisements by Neighbourhood Service Officers at the first round of CBL bidding.
4.2	One Vision Housing will produce a shortlist for each property based on the relevant CBL Policy, taking into account reasonable preference groups and with additional local lettings criteria applied.
4.3	<p>Neighbourhood Service Officers will be responsible for verifying the top bidder and will check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants identity</li> <li>• Applicants eligibility for property</li> <li>• Verification checks</li> <li>• Additional evidence required to ensure local lettings criteria are met</li> <li>• That any referrals arising from local lettings criteria are set up, including to employment skills, debt advice and Welfare Benefit Teams</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Performance</b>
5.1	An annual review of the effectiveness of each Local Lettings Policy will be carried out and any extension of the Policy for a further 12 months will require agreement from EMT and the Local Authority.
5.2	<p>In general, the success of the Local Lettings Policy may be monitored across the following Key Performance Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of turnover</li> <li>• Average number of bids / void property in area</li> <li>• Number of ASB related cases in the area</li> <li>• Average Length of tenancy</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
6.1	<p>Prior to the introduction of any Local Letting's Policies, the following Key Stakeholders should be consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OVH involved customers</li> <li>• Current tenants in the areas where local lettings policies are being considered (if an area based local lettings Policy)</li> <li>• One Vision Housing Staff</li> <li>• Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council or any other Local Authority where OVH owns and manages properties and intends to introduce local lettings schemes.</li> </ul>

<b>7</b>	<b>Review</b>		
7.1	This Policy will be reviewed annually from the date of the Executive Management Team (EMT) approval or sooner if required by the changes to OVH working practices, changes in relevant legislation or as a result of system audits.		
<b>8</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>		
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	No	
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	An EIA Relevance Test was undertaken by the Policy and Strategy Manager and the Policy and Strategy Administrator in November 2024.	
8.3	Results of EIA	<p>This Policy has direct impact on residents and may have a differential impact across protected characteristics e.g. where lettings criteria are based on age. There is also a potential impact where lettings criteria support those in employment or those who have an offending history.</p> <p>The key recommendation from the Impact Assessment is that each Local Lettings Plan is based on clear evidence supporting the implementation of a Policy that alternative accommodation is available for those who may be excluded by the Local Lettings Policy e.g. under 55+, and that the Policy is reviewed annually for success and effectiveness.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Scheme of Delegation</b>		
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the policy and any amendments to it	Executive Management Policy	
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Operations Director- Housing Services	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Operations Director- Housing Services	
<b>10</b>	<b>Amendment Log</b>		
Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2022	Policy reviewed in line	See Section 6 above	There are no significant

	with review schedule		changes to the Policy in this review
3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2023	Policy reviewed in line with review schedule	See Section 6 above	There are no significant changes to the Policy in this review
XXXX	Policy reviewed in line with review schedule	See Section 6 above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Regulatory Standards included at 1.5</li> <li>• Revised wording at 1.6 in line with operational practice</li> <li>• EIA Information updated at Section 8</li> <li>• New LLP included for Morris Meadows</li> </ul>

## Lettings Policy – Oxford House

Area	Oxford House
<b>Rationale</b>	<p><b>Tenant Profile</b></p> <p>There are 83 flats in Oxford House.</p> <p>Approximately 33% of tenants have a known vulnerability or disability including visual impairments, hearing impairment and physical disability.</p> <p>Oxford house is a very settled and elderly community and as such One Vision wish to ensure the peaceful sustainability of this community.</p> <p><b>Demand:</b></p> <p>Oxford House – 83 properties</p>

Oxford House	2012/13 – Prior to LLP	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Turnover	8.5%	10.8%	6.0%	13%	5%	2%
No. of Voids	7	9	5	11	4	2
Re-let Time (Days)	30	23.8	32.7	12.25	15.75	14

**Age Demographic – 90% of tenants are over the age of 55**

**Lettings Criteria**

Essential:

- Oxford House will let to applicants aged 55 and over

**Performance and monitoring**

The impact of this Local Lettings Policy will be measured across:

- Level of Stock Turnover
- Demand / vacant property through Choice Based Lettings

Performance will be monitored monthly and feedback provided to OVH Executive Management Team every 12 months or by exception, where required.

**Consultation**

Current Residents:

Sefton Council: Sefton Council were consulted in October 2024. This included a period when the papers were made available online for potential call-in by Scrutiny.

**Approval**

EMT Date of Approval: November 2024

Sefton Council: Approval gained from Sefton Council in November 2024

# Lettings Policy – Strand House

<b>Area</b>	<b>Strand House</b>																																	
<b>Rationale</b>	<p><b>Tenant Profile</b></p> <p>There are 123 flats in Strand House.</p> <p>Approximately 37% of tenants have a known vulnerability or disability including visual impairments, hearing impairment and physical disability.</p> <p>A significant proportion of Strand House, approximately 70%, is Supporting People funded Category 1 support available to tenants aged 55 and over.</p> <p><b>Demand:</b></p> <p><b>Strand House</b></p> <p>Void performance has been analysed to review the effectiveness of the LLP in the three schemes.</p> <p><b>Strand House – 123 properties</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012/13 – Prior to LLP</th> <th>2019/20</th> <th>2020/21 YTD</th> <th>2021/2 2</th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>2023/24</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Turnover</td> <td>13%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>5%</td> <td>7%</td> <td>6%</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No. of Voids</td> <td>16</td> <td>12</td> <td>6</td> <td>8</td> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Re-let Time (Days)</td> <td>31</td> <td>11.9</td> <td>4.7</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Age Demographic – 78% of tenants are over the age of 55</b></p>							2012/13 – Prior to LLP	2019/20	2020/21 YTD	2021/2 2	2022/23	2023/24	Turnover	13%	10%	5%	7%	6%	5%	No. of Voids	16	12	6	8	7	6	Re-let Time (Days)	31	11.9	4.7	6	5	20
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<b>Lettings Criteria</b>	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strand House will let to applicants aged 55 and over</li> </ul>
<b>Performance and monitoring</b>	<p>The impact of this Local Lettings Policy will be measured across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of Stock Turnover</li> <li>• Demand / vacant property through Choice Based Lettings</li> </ul> <p>Performance will be monitored monthly and feedback provided to OVH Executive Management Team every 12 months or by exception, where required.</p>
<b>Consultation</b>	<p>Current Residents:</p> <p>Sefton Council: Sefton Council were consulted in October 2024. This included a period when the papers were made available online for potential call-in by Scrutiny.</p>
<b>Approval</b>	<p>EMT Date of Approval: November 2024</p> <p>Sefton Council: Approval gained from Sefton Council in November 2024.</p>

## Lettings Policy – Smithy Green

<b>Area</b>	<b>Smithy Green</b>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p><b>Tenant Profile</b></p> <p>Approximately 63% of tenants have a known vulnerability or disability including visual impairments, hearing impairment and physical disability.</p> <p>A significant proportion of Smithy Green, approximately 26%, access Independent living support available to tenants aged 55 and over.</p>

## Anti-Social Behaviour

Lettings within Smithy Green have traditionally been in the Independent Living category and the vast majority of longer term tenants are of an elderly profile. There have been a number of reported cases of anti-social behaviour within the locality associated with the clash of lifestyles of a generally older tenant profile and younger tenants that have moved in over recent years. Whilst OVH will take tenancy enforcement action against any tenant that after investigation is found to have been responsible for anti-social behaviour against their neighbours, the intention of this local lettings Policy to prevent the likelihood of anti-social behaviour occurring in the first place by maintaining the existing character of the blocks.

## Demand

### Smithy Green – 73 properties

Smithy Green	2012/13 – Prior to LLP	2019/20	2020/21 YTD	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Turnover	14.1%	4%	0%	10%	7%	3%
No. of Voids	11	3	0	7	5	2
Re-let Time (Days)	32	7	0	12	9.8	11

### Age Demographic – 88% of tenants are over the age of 55

## Lettings Criteria

Essential:

- Independent Living Service
  - Smithy Green will let to applicants aged 55 and over who meet criteria for the service
- General needs
  - 55+ no medical needs
  - If there are no applicants or the shortlist is exhausted then the available properties will be re-advertised and open to all applicants

<b>Performance and monitoring</b>	<p>The impact of this Local Lettings Policy will be measured across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of Stock Turnover</li> <li>• Demand / vacant property through Choice Based Lettings</li> </ul> <p>Performance will be monitored monthly and feedback provided to OVH Executive Management Team every 12 months or by exception, where required.</p>
<b>Consultation</b>	<p>Current Residents:</p> <p>Sefton Council: Sefton Council were consulted In October 2024. This included a period when the papers were made available online for potential call-in by Scrutiny.</p>
<b>Approval</b>	<p>EMT Date of Approval: November 2024</p> <p>Sefton Council: Approval gained from Sefton Council in November 2024.</p>

## Lettings Policy - Hamlet Close

<b>Area</b>	<b>Shakespeare Road, Southport</b>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p><b>Construction and demand features</b></p> <p>The Hamlet Close site comprises of 15 self-contained units (1 bed flats) in a communal block with shared access facilities, entrance points and hallways. The properties have design features suitable for customers with mobility issues.</p> <p>The site also comprises of 8 X 2 bedroom houses, which are not included in the context of this local lettings policy.</p> <p>As at November 2019 the properties are still under construction with handover</p>



expected in 2020.

A local lettings Policy has been approved by the local authority (Sefton MBC) for priority to be given on first round of bidding, where properties are advertised through the Choice Based Lettings scheme – Property Pool Plus (PPP), to applicants aged 55+ (upper floor) or 45+ (ground floor) where medical need is evidenced.

Approximately 22% of tenants have a known vulnerability or disability including visual impairments, hearing impairment and physical disability.

A significant proportion of Hamlet Close, approximately 78%, access Independent living support available to tenants aged 55 and over.

Where OVH choose to let properties in this block through its own allocations policy outside of the PPP system, the same lettings criteria will apply.

The decision to impose a local lettings policy on the Shakespeare Road development has been taken due to the high demand in the Southport area for 1 bed properties and to ensure the properties are targeted at those who need them most.

#### **Hamlet Close – 15 Properties**

Hamlet Close	2019/20*	2020/21 YTD	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Turnover	N/A	9%	4%	13%	13%
No. of Voids	N/A	2	1	3	2
Re-let Time (Days)	N/A	14	21	18.66	7

**\*Initial tenancies commenced in 19/20**

**Age Demographic – 64% of tenants are over the age of 55**

<b>Lettings Criteria</b>	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Living service (if this service is required) and general needs will let to applicants 55+ or 45+ (where medical need is demonstrated). In all cases priority will be offered to eligible applicants with demonstrated medical need</li> </ul>
<b>Performance and monitoring</b>	<p>The impact of this Local Lettings Policy will be measured across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of Stock Turnover</li> <li>Demand / vacant property through Choice Based Lettings</li> </ul> <p>Performance will be monitored monthly, and feedback provided to OVH Executive Management Team every 12 months or by exception, where required.</p>
<b>Consultation</b>	<p>Sefton Council: Sefton Council were consulted between 25-09-2019 and approval date 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. This included a period when the papers were made available online for potential call-in by Scrutiny.</p>
<b>Approval</b>	<p>EMT Date of Approval: 12-11-2019</p> <p>Sefton Council: Approval gained from Sefton Council on 03-10-2019 dependent on satisfactory consultation with residents</p>

## Lettings Policy – Morris Meadows

<b>Area</b>	<b>Netherton</b>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p><b>Construction and demand features</b></p> <p>The development consists of shared ownership and rent to buy houses and an apartment block containing 58 affordable rented flats (18 x ground floor, 20 x first floor and 20 x second floor).</p>

	<p>The property breakdown that is subject to the Local lettings policy is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 x 1-bedroom apartments</li> <li>• 33 x 2-bedroom apartments</li> <li>• 1 x 3-bedroom apartment</li> </ul>
<b>Lettings Criteria</b>	All properties will be advertised via PPP but priority for at least 24 (41%) of the properties will be given to applicants who are in employment or full-time education / training (where the applicant can demonstrate that they have sufficient finances to pay rent). However, offers will be made in accordance with priority need.
<b>Performance and monitoring</b>	Not applicable – new scheme. Information to be included at annual review
<b>Consultation</b>	Sefton Council: Sefton Council were consulted in October 2024
<b>Approval</b>	<p>EMT Date of Approval: November 2024</p> <p>Sefton Council: Approval gained from Sefton Council in October 2024</p>