

Report to:	Cabinet Member Communities & Housing	Date of Meeting:	April 2020
Subject:	Local Lettings Plan Request Andrews Lane, Formby		
Report of:	Head of Regeneration & Housing	Wards Affected:	Harington
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cabinet Member Communities & Housing		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek approval to agree to a Local Lettings Plan for Andrews Lane, development in Formby.

Recommendation(s):

(1) That Cabinet Member approves the use of a Local Lettings Plans by Torus for the new development at Andrews Lane in Formby.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The proposal will assist Torus (the provider) achieve a balanced community and a mix of people for the new build development in Southport, whilst still providing housing for those residents most in need.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

The Council could withhold approval from Torus to operate a Local Lettings scheme

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no additional revenue costs arising from the proposals in this report

(B) Capital Costs

There are no additional capital costs arising from the proposals in this report

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): NA
Legal Implications:

Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 requires Local Housing Authorities to have an Allocations scheme for determining priorities in allocating housing accommodation.
Equality Implications:
There are no equality implications

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Through the prioritisation of those residents in the top two bands and in most need of social housing
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Proposals help maintain community stability
Commission, broker and provide core services: The Council works with Registered Providers through Property Pool Plus to deliver its social housing allocations policy
Place – leadership and influencer: NA
Drivers of change and reform: NA
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: NA
Greater income for social investment: NA
Cleaner Greener NA

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD6017/20) has been consulted and notes the report indicates no direct financial implications for the Council in respect of these proposals

[Chief Legal and Democratic Officer](#) has been consulted and has no comments on the report (LD4200/20)

(B) External Consultations

Torus have consulted with Officers of the Council and the proposal will be taken to Cabinet Member Communities & Housing to consider

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix 1; Local Lettings Plan Andrews Lane, Formby

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment Andrews Lane, Formby

Background Papers:

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

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Torus housing association are pursuing a New Build affordable housing Scheme at Andrews Lane, Formby through a Section 106 Planning Agreement. The development will include:

- **27 homes available for Affordable Rent (8 x 2-bedroom houses & 19 x 3-bed room houses)**

1.2 Torus propose the use of a Local Lettings Plan (LLP) to allocate the AFFORDABLE RENTED properties on the site. The Council's own Allocations Policy (Property Pool Plus) Section 2.2 states:

Local Letting Plans

2.2.1 There may be occasions when Scheme Landlords will want to adopt Local Letting Plans for a limited period of time to address issues in particular neighbourhoods such as severe anti-social behaviour. This would involve the temporary use of revised allocations criteria for the affected area. Such plans will be developed and agreed with the relevant Scheme Council to ensure they do not unduly disadvantage those in reasonable preference groups. Local Lettings Plans will be published by the Scheme Partners and properties affected by such plans will be clearly identified when they are advertised.

1.3 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, ie. having the ability to by-pass

applicants to avoid potential lifestyle clashes that could arise by rehousing certain groups of applicants under one roof.

- 1.4 The PPP Allocations Policy is principally designed for the allocation and letting of individual properties. In many new-build developments housing associations are letting multiple properties at the same time; in this case 27 new affordable rented homes. The proposal from Torus, below, sets out their reasoning for an LLP and how the LLP would operate.
- 1.5 In summary, 60%, 16 of the properties will be allocated across the Priority Bands in the following percentage quotas:
- Band A – 5 (2x 2H, 3x 3H) - (32%)
 - Band B - 6 (2x 2H, 7x 3H) - (56%)
 - Band C - 2 (1x 2H, 1x 3H) - (12%)

The remaining 40 % (11 properties – 8 x 3-bedroom houses and 3 x 2-bedroom houses) of the properties will be advertised on PPP for applicants in all bands with priority given to applicants who are in employed or in full time education or training to help create a sustainable and balanced community.

The initial lettings of these 27 properties and any subsequent re-let within the first twelve months will be made in accordance with this proposal. Any continuation of the LLP after 12 months would have to be approved by the Council. Torus plan to allocate all the 27 properties from PPP, is seen as a positive.



<p>Local Letting Scheme Andrews Lane, Formby</p>
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Background

This development falls within the Harrington Ward, Sefton Borough Council. The borough consists of a coastal strip of land on the Irish Sea and extends from Bootle in the south, to Southport in the north. In the south-east, it extends inland to Maghull/Melling. The district is bounded by Liverpool to the south, Knowsley to the south-east, and West Lancashire to the east. The ward contains 4,796 homes, of which only 2% (101) are social rent.

This development consists of 27 newly built homes developed by Redrow consisting of 19 x 3-bedroom houses, 8 x 2-bedroom which are being offered for affordable rent.

Our Commitment

Torus understands the very important role we have to play in meeting the housing needs of customers on the housing register within Sefton and positively contributing to neighbourhood sustainability and cohesion.

This is our third local lettings scheme within the Sefton boundary. We currently have a number of local letting schemes in place within Liverpool and Knowsley.

The scheme aims to make a contribution to the overall sustainability of the area by helping to identify suitable tenants, who will settle and contribute to the local community, ensuring tenancies are sustainable for the long term.

In order to achieve this, we need to rehouse a good balance of tenants and a healthy mix of people with different lifestyles. On the whole however, the content of our local letting schemes do not diverge from the overall principles of the allocation scheme and we remain committed to rehousing people in need.

We will consult with officers and Elected Members within Sefton over the content of the local letting scheme; and it is our intention, with the support of this local letting scheme, to advertise 100% of the properties on Property Pool Plus (PPP). This approach reinforces our commitment to make sure applicants on the waiting list can maximise their rehousing opportunities via our new build schemes.

We are committed to creating sustainable neighbourhoods and want all our tenants to be able to live happy, healthy and full lives. We understand a local letting policy in isolation will not achieve this aim and that a joined-up approach across all services within Torus is required.

Demand and lettings potential

Information provided by the Property Pool Plus Partnership February 2020.

There are currently 6,294 people registered on Property Pool Plus (PPP) for accommodation in Sefton. 100% of allocations for this site will be from PPP.

The following tables provide a breakdown of demand for the Borough and the specific wards based on PPP applications and bids.

- Active PPP applications in Sefton

- Breakdown of Allocations by Priority Banding for Q3 across Sefton
- Average bids for houses within Formby

Active application breakdown in Sefton

Number of applications		
Band A	Total 281	4%
A – Health/Welfare	91	
A- Homeless (owed main duty)	8	
A – Homeless Relief Priority Need	34	
A – Regeneration	66	
A – Overcrowded (2 or more bedrooms)	82	
Band B	Total 1877	30%
B – Health Welfare High	671	
B – Overcrowded (by 1 bedroom)	521	
B – Disrepair	1	
B – Under Occupation	684	
Band C	Total 1368	22%
C – Health Welfare Medium	749	
C – Homeless (no priority need)	13	
C – Homeless Intentional with Priority Need	0	
C – Living with family & friends	606	
Band D	Total 731	12%
D – No assessed need and in employment	731	
Band E	Total 1909	30%
E – No assessed need	1909	
Band F	Total 128	2%
F – Reduced priority	128	
Total	6294	100%

Breakdown of Allocations by Priority Banding for Q3 in Sefton

Priority Band	Sefton No	Sefton %
Band A	56	28%
Band B	63	31%
Band C	29	14%
Band D	15	8%
Band E	36	18%
Band F	1	1%
Total	200	100%

Average bids for 2 and 3 bed houses within Formby

01/04/2017 – 16/04/2020	No advertised	No of Bids	Average Bid
3 Bed Houses	4	452	113
2 Bed Houses	0	0	0

If we examine the data for the applicants who have a recognised need for rehousing, we can see that demand from the Urgent Band is low and equates to just 4%. Combined the demand for applicants included in high and medium is 52%. We are therefore proposing to target a higher percentage of properties to these bands. Non priority bands combined demand equates to 44%.

We can determine from the number of bids received for 3 bed room houses within this area that there is a substantial demand for this type of accommodation. There is no data for 2 bed room houses.

Aims of the Local Letting Scheme

A local lettings scheme introduces flexibility into agreed allocation policies and the purpose of this local letting scheme for the development at Andrews Lane, Formby, Sefton is to achieve balanced, cohesive communities and sustainable tenancies. This scheme aims to make a significant contribution to the overall sustainability of the area by helping to identify suitable tenants, who will settle and contribute to the local community; ensuring tenancies are sustainable for the long term.

To help us achieve this we will aim to:

- Create a stable environment and feeling of safety and wellbeing within the estates, creating safe places to live that people are proud of and want to live in;
- Maintain current performance in terms of void turnover by improving the quality of the living environment and minimising anti-social behaviour, using robust processes and partnerships.
- In accordance with the Common Allocation Scheme, priority for offers will continue to be given to Sefton residents. Applicants included in Band A – F and living outside of the Sefton Borough will be considered in accordance with the 5% cross boundary limit as stated in the Allocations Policy.

Divergence from the standard policy

The local letting scheme for these developments differs from our principal Allocation Scheme in the following ways:

- All of the properties to rent on the developments will be let at affordable rents (80% of market rent). All tenants will be awarded the standard Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement but, in the event, any existing Torus tenant with protected rights accepts a tenancy, they will keep these rights.
- The provision of 1 reference will be requested. If an applicant has held a tenancy, then references will be requested from either the current or previous landlord and any offers may be overlooked if references are not provided or are unsatisfactory. However, all applications will be considered on an individual basis in this respect.
- Prospective tenants must attend a pre tenancy interview and financial assessment / benefits check to establish applicants' financial status and suitability for the scheme. This approach is standard practice for Torus and was adopted because of rent levels and welfare reforms;
- Applicants with support needs where no support package is in place will be encouraged to accept support. If a tenancy has failed previously due to support issues the offer may be withdrawn if the applicant refuses to accept a support package.

- Priority for at least 40% of the properties will be given to applicants who are in employment or full-time education/training (where they can demonstrate they have sufficient finance to pay rent). However, offers will be made in accordance with priority need. This criterion is to help create a sustainable and balanced community.
- Applicants will be required to sign the Good Neighbour Agreement

Applicants with a criminal record and history of antisocial behaviour will be considered in the context of whether they are suitable to be a tenant. If there is concern their activities have not abated and will have a negative impact on these properties, neighbours or surrounding estate, the offer may be withdrawn. This will be subject to information provided through a police check.

Where an applicant is rejected on the basis of their criminal record or past antisocial behaviour they will be notified in writing with an explanation as to why they are deemed to be unsuitable to be a tenant and giving advice as to what steps are available to them to make them suitable to be a tenant in the future.

Selection Process

All affordable rent allocations managed by Tours on this development will be subject to the agreed criteria and 100% of the properties will be advertised via PPP. Future voids will continue to be advertised on PPP, advising applicants that a local letting scheme is in place and applicants will be required to satisfy the strict criteria already specified. We will continue to give priority to suitable applicants in accordance with the appropriate banding and date order system. This local letting scheme will be reviewed annually.

Applicants will be invited to attend a formal interview (pre-tenancy assessment) before an offer is confirmed, whereby the local letting criteria, good neighbour agreement and any additional checks that may be necessary, will be discussed in detail. During this interview, applicants will be required to demonstrate they understand their responsibilities as a tenant to respect their neighbours and are capable of maintaining and sustaining their tenancy.

The following targets are being proposed in relation to the demand for the area as shown above. Allocating this way will ensure that those from the priority bands are given a fair chance of securing a property. This accounts for 60 % (16 properties – 11 x 3-bedroom houses and 5 x 2-bedroom houses) of the properties to be advertised. The remaining 40 % (11 properties – 8 x 3-bedroom houses and 3 x 2-bedroom houses) of the properties will be advertised on PPP for applicants in all bands with priority given to applicants who are in employed or in full time education or training to help create a sustainable and balanced community.

Band A	5	32%
A – Health/Welfare	1 (2H)	
A- Homeless (owed main duty)	1 (2H)	
A – Homeless Relief Priority Need	1 (3H)	
A – Regeneration	1 (3H)	
A – Overcrowded (2 or more bedrooms)	1 (3H)	
Band B	9	56%
B – Health Welfare High	1 (2H) 3 (3H)	
B – Overcrowded (by 1 bedroom)	1 (2H) 3 (3H)	

B – Disrepair	0	
B – Under Occupation	1 (3H)	
Band C	2	12%
C – Health Welfare Medium	1 (3H)	
C – Homeless (no priority need)	0	
C – Homeless Intentional with Priority Need	0	
C – Living with family & friends	1 (2H)	
Band D		
D – No assessed need and in employment	0	
Band E		
E – No assessed need	0	
Band F		
F – Reduced priority	0	
Total	16	100%

In the event there is insufficient demand:

Properties will be re advertised via PPP to applicants in all bands.

Consultation

In developing this policy, we have consulted with local Elected Members and Sefton Council, and they will continue to be involved in the ongoing monitoring and review.

Managing the Policy

All new tenants will be visited within 4 weeks of their tenancy start date to complete a settling in visit and will receive further home visits by Torus staff after 3, 6 and 9 months to determine their suitability to continue with the tenancy. During the visits, the following will be discussed:

- any issues raised by the tenant and/or any support needs;
- any tenancy matters including the rent account, any complaints/ASB, property damage;

Intended Outcomes

It is intended that by implementing changes to the way allocations are carried out and to allow a change of tenure within the area, the aims of the policy will be met and this will help us to create/sustain balanced and sustainable communities.

We will monitor and review the policy, using the following as indicators of the success:

- Turnover of voids
- Numbers of offers to let a property
- Average void period
- Rent loss
- Average length of tenancy

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Customer satisfaction survey

Approved

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Executive Director

.....
(Date)

Reviewed

.....
(Director of Landlord Services)

.....
(Date)

Torus

EQUALITY ANALYSIS

Sefton New Build Schemes – Local Letting Policy

Name of policy/procedure/activity/service being analysed	Andrews Lane New Build Scheme- Local Letting Policy								
Protected Characteristic Group affected (if not all)	Race	Sex	Disability	Age	Sexual Orientation	Religion or belief	Gender reassignment	Marriage & civil partnership	Pregnancy & maternity
Explain the aims of the policy/activity/service (Step 1)	To create safe homes for our tenants, that people are proud of and want to live in. We aim to achieve this through the application of a local letting policy for the new build properties in Sefton. This approach will help provide rehousing opportunities for those residents with a real commitment to the area and at the same time, make a positive contribution to the health and well-being of our tenants. We believe this approach together with ongoing tenancy management will help to deliver a safe and thriving area in a safe and welcoming neighbourhood.								
Explain the potential for, and any actual positive impact on these groups/individuals (Steps 2 & 3)									
Race	Our policy and procedure will be applied equally to all applicants irrespective of race. Applicants				Religion or belief		When people apply for rehousing and subsequently receive offers, the policy is applied equally to all		

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	from the BME community whose first language is not English may not understand the approach we take, but all staff are trained in the use of The Big Word and have access to a landline or a mobile phone. Information in different formats can be made available as required.		applicants irrespective of religion or belief and this will continue to apply to these schemes.
Sex	When people apply for rehousing and subsequently receive offers, the policy is applied equally to all applicants irrespective of sex and this will continue to apply to these schemes.	Gender reassignment	When people apply for rehousing and subsequently receive offers, the policy is applied equally to all applicants irrespective of gender reassignment and this will continue to apply to these schemes.
Disability	Our policy and procedure is applied equally to all applicants irrespective of disability. We can provide information in large print, Braille, on tape or CD. We can also arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter if required for hearing impaired customers	Pregnancy & maternity	When an applicant provides confirmation of pregnancy (Mat 1 form) to confirm there is an expectant mother in the family, this is taken into account when calculating bedroom entitlement. This approach will continue to be applied to these schemes.
Age	The minimum age requirement to obtain a Torus tenancy is 18 and this will apply to these schemes.	Marriage & civil partnership	When people apply for rehousing and subsequently receive offers anyone who describes themselves as being part of a couple, irrespective of marriage or civil partnership, the application of the bedroom standard is applied equally in terms of eligibility for housing and this will continue to apply to these schemes.
Sexual Orientation	This policy is applied equally to all applicants irrespective of sexual orientation.		
Explain the potential for, and any actual negative impact on these groups/individuals (Steps 4 & 5)			
Race	The process for applying for rehousing and the local letting scheme may not be easily	Religion or belief	There are no negative impacts on the service which is fully inclusive irrespective of religion or belief.

	what proportion of residents do not speak English, but we will arrange written translations or/and face to face interpreters for anyone experiencing a difficulty.		
Sex	There are no negative impacts on the scheme which is fully inclusive irrespective of sex.	Gender reassignment	There are no negative impacts of the policy which is fully inclusive irrespective of gender reassignment.
Disability	As part of the Allocation % targets we have discussed with Sefton Borough Council, **% of the properties will be targeted to applicants in the Priority bands (urgent, high and medium bands) all of which include applicants with a health/welfare condition and this will go some way to meeting the needs of applicants with a health condition that is compounded by their current living conditions.	Pregnancy & maternity	There are no negative impacts of the policy which is fully inclusive irrespective of pregnancy or maternity.
Age	There are no negative impacts on the scheme which is fully inclusive irrespective of age. However, older applicants may have a difficulty using PPP and staff will be happy placing bids on behalf of any applicant who might be experiencing a difficulty.	Marriage and civil partnership	There are no negative impacts of the policy which is fully inclusive irrespective of marriage and civil partnership.
Sexual Orientation	There are no negative impacts on the scheme which is fully inclusive irrespective of sexual orientation.		
Explain the actual opportunities, and the potential for opportunities that this policy/activity/service provides to advance equality and promote community cohesion (Steps 6 & 7)			

	All staff have been trained in the use of The Big Word language interpreting service and will help applicants to complete a PPP application and will place bids on their behalf if they have a difficulty using the system. We have consulted with local residents and Ward Councillors and the outcome is included in the LLP.		
Sex	This policy provides an opportunity to improve rehousing opportunities for those people with a real commitment to the area and this will be applied irrespective of the sex of applicants.	Gender reassignment	This policy provides an opportunity to improve rehousing opportunities for those people with a real commitment to the area and this will be applied irrespective of gender reassignment.
Disability	Although this scheme provides limited rehousing opportunities for applicants with a mobility difficulty, as tenants circumstances change in the future, there will be a facility to install minor adaptations such as hand rails, grab rails and bath seats etc to help them remain in their home.	Pregnancy & maternity	This policy provides an opportunity to improve rehousing opportunities for those people with a real commitment to the area and reflect the needs of families with expectant mothers.
Age	This policy provides an opportunity to improve rehousing opportunities for those people with a real commitment to the area and this will be applied irrespective of the age of applicants.	Marriage and civil partnership	This policy provides an opportunity to improve rehousing opportunities for those people with a real commitment to the area and this will be applied irrespective of marriage and civil partnerships.
Sexual Orientation	This policy provides an opportunity to improve rehousing opportunities for those people with a real commitment to the area and this will be		

Detail your conclusions about the policy/activity/service/ and reasons (Step 8)			
Race	This policy provides an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to providing sustainable homes and communities by providing homes in the areas customers choose to live, with the support of secure tenancies.	Religion or belief	There are no negative impacts on the service which is fully inclusive irrespective of religion or belief. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.
Sex	This policy will be applied, irrespective of the sex of applicants and provides an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to providing sustainable homes and communities by providing the types of homes people want in the areas they choose to live. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.	Gender reassignment	This policy will be applied, irrespective of gender reassignment and provides an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to providing sustainable homes and communities by providing the types of homes people want in the areas they choose to live. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.
Disability	As part of the Allocation % targets we have discussed with Sefton Borough Council ***% of the properties will be targeted to applicants in the Priority bands (urgent, high and medium bands) all of which include applicants with a health/welfare condition and this will go some way to meeting the needs of applicants with a health condition that is compounded by their current living conditions. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.	Pregnancy & maternity	This policy continues to recognise the needs of growing families where any member of the household is expecting a baby and provides an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to providing sustainable homes and communities by providing the types of homes people want in the areas they choose to live. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.
Age	This policy will be applied, irrespective of the age of applicants but recognises that some older	Marriage and civil partnership	This policy will be applied, irrespective of marriage and civil partnership and provides an opportunity to
	provides an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to providing sustainable homes and communities by providing the types of homes people want in the areas they choose to live. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.		homes people want in the areas they choose to live. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.
Sexual Orientation	This policy will be applied, irrespective of sexual orientation and provides an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to providing sustainable homes and communities by providing the types of homes people want in the areas they choose to live. We will continue to work with all strategic partners to achieve the strategic aims and meet the housing needs of our customers.		
What further work/activity needs to be done as a result of this Equality Analysis? (Step 9) N/A Identify what needs to be done, how it will be done and the date that it will be complete. N/A Who will be responsible for action plan completion? When will the (new) policy/activity/service/ be implemented? This policy will be implemented to coincide with the completion of the units.			
Lisa O'Connell, Service Lead allocations, in conjunction with staff from the local neighbourhood team will be responsible for delivering any actions arising from this			

When will this Equality Analysis be due for monitor /review? (Step 10) 12 months after the date all of the properties are let.

Who will complete the reviews?

Lisa O'Connell

Name of Service Manager	Lisa O'Connell	Date EA completed	April 20
Name of Head of Service/AD/Director to contact	Jan Calland		