

## Local Letting Scheme Norbury Road & Highfield Green Developments (Kirkby)

### **Background**

This development falls within Kirkby, Knowsley Borough Council. Overall Knowsley is one of six Local Authority districts that comprise the Liverpool City Region. It is located at the heart of the North West, between Liverpool and Manchester and covers an area of 33 square miles; just over 10 miles from south to north, and up to 7 miles across. The Norbury development is within the Whitefield ward and the Highfield Green development falls within Shevington ward.

In recent years, Knowsley has experienced population loss but the rate of decline has slowed and national projections indicate the population should grow by 4,000 between 2011 and 2021. These developments will therefore make a small, but positive contribution, to population growth in Knowsley.

- The Norbury Road development consists of 20 x 3 bedroom houses and 2 x 1 bedroom Bungalows
- The Highfield Green development consists of 29 x 3 bedroom houses and 1 x 4 bedroom house.

Knowsley's excellent strategic position contributes to its importance as a location for employment in the Liverpool City Region and is home to several large industrial and business parks, including Knowsley Industrial Park and Knowsley Business Park, the Jaguar Land Rover car plant and Kings, Huyton and Prescot Business Parks. Together they play a crucial economic role as the base for around 3,000 businesses and we believe our approach to local lettings will help to strengthen Knowsley's position for offering strong employment links for its residents.

### **Our Commitment**

Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) understands the very important role we have to play in meeting the housing needs of customers on the housing register within Knowsley and positively contributing to neighbourhood sustainability.

We are committed to tackling social and economic inequality and at the same time, providing a fair and equitable service through a joined up approach in all of the services we provide. We are working in partnership with all agencies to strike a balance between supporting employment sustainability and routes into employment as well as making a difference in terms of benefit dependency and at the same time, meeting housing need.



The MHCLG (formerly DCLG) recognises very positive outcomes can be achieved from local letting schemes and this approach will support our commitment to develop sustainable tenancies and communities through our development programme.

We currently have a number of local letting schemes in place within Liverpool and one in Knowsley (Buckles Road/Field Lane Development, 2016), each reflecting the specific needs of their area when we take into account factors such as the levels of worklessness, anti-social behaviour, BME population and issues associated with child poverty. We intend to build upon the success we have achieved so far, by extending this approach to the Norbury Road and Highfield Green developments.

We do appreciate it is going to take many years to tackle some issues and that 'lettings' is only a small part of the joined-up action we need to take. Helping to tackle worklessness is one of our strategic priorities and helping move people off benefit and back into employment or training is high on our agenda.

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.

As with our previous development in Knowsley (Buckles Road/Field Lane), we will consult with officers and Elected Members within Knowsley 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 LMH is required.

In addition to our approach to lettings, LMH also offers a full range of social value programmes to support our neighbourhoods and to help residents prosper. We have attached at Appendix A, some examples of the significant projects we will be working on in the future together with a summary of a sample of projects and outputs of our current programme of events.

We have also developed a Community Regeneration Strategy to address issues of worklessness and low educational achievement; by reducing digital and financial exclusion, improving the health and wellbeing of residents, creating safe places to live and work, where people are proud of and want to live in. We will also continue to support those tenants who need additional help to manage their tenancy and stay in their home, wherever possible.



We aim to make a real difference within our communities; not just with bricks and mortar but by investing in local projects and helping to create new opportunities in the areas in which we work. Making a difference for people in their homes and neighbourhoods remains a top priority for us and we are determined to get the most out of our resources to keep investing and improving in the following priorities: -

- Increasing employment and self-employment opportunities.
- Increase access to digital services.
- Reducing debt.
- Reducing child poverty.
- Promoting and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

## **Context**

The Borough of Knowsley is one of the most deprived local authority areas in the country. Overall, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks the Borough as the second most deprived in the country. Around 50% of residents live in the 10% most deprived super output areas (SOAs). Both the scale and severity of deprivation in the Borough, ranks alongside the most deprived areas of the North West.

The Borough ranks first on the IMD for local concentration, a ranking which is based on the number of localised hot spots of deprivation (i.e. those ranked as most deprived). It also has some of the most widespread deprivation, with a national rank of 8<sup>th</sup> for the extent of deprivation which measures the proportion of a district's population living in the most deprived SOAs in the country. Of Knowsley Borough's 99 SOAs, 42 fall within the most deprived 5% in England, and 19 within the most deprived 1%. The problem of deprivation is particularly acute in northern parts of the borough, with the majority of SOAs in North and South Kirkby falling within the most deprived 5% in the country.

The extent of deprivation in the Borough is underlined in data on the earnings of the Borough's residents. They have the lowest median gross weekly pay (full time only) of all the districts of Merseyside, and the figure is around £70 lower than the UK average. Income Support claimants stand at 12.4% of the working age population, 3 percentage points above the Merseyside rate and 7 percentage points above the national average.  
(2014 Data)

## Demand and lettings potential

There are currently 2141 people registered on Property Pool Plus (PPP) for accommodation in Knowsley. 100% of allocations for these two sites will be from PPP.

The following tables provides a breakdown of demand for the Borough and the specific wards for the past 18 months, based on property pool applications and bids:

- Active PPP applications in Knowsley
- Average bids for houses and bungalows within the designated wards of the two developments
- Breakdown of lettings within both wards

### Active application break down in Knowsley

Provided by FirstArk on behalf of KMBC

	Number of applications
<b>Band A</b>	<b>94</b>
A- Health/Welfare (Urgent)	7
A- Homeless (owed main duty)	19
A- Regeneration	<del>23</del>
A- Overcrowded (2 or more bedrooms)	17
A- Homeless Relief in Priority Need	<del>28</del>
<b>Band B</b>	<b>617</b>
B- Health/Welfare (High)	90
B- Health/Welfare (Homeless prevention )	111
B- Overcrowded (1 bedroom)	161
B- Under occupation	253
C- Health/Welfare (Medium)	2
<b>Band C</b>	<b>529</b>
C- Health/Welfare (Medium)	237
C- Homeless / Prevention (no priority need)	19
C- Living with family and friends	273
<b>Band D</b>	<b>235</b>
D- No assessed need and in employment	235
<b>Band E</b>	<b>612</b>
E- No assessed need	610
(blank)	2
<b>Band F</b>	<b>54</b>
F- Reduced priority	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>2141</b>

**Demand: Highfield Area**
**Average  
Bids**

3 Bed house	12.6
Bungalows	11.7

**Demand: Norbury Area**
**Average  
Bids**

3 bed House	21.1
4 Bed House	20

**Applicants rehoused: Shevington Ward**

	Bungalow	House
<b>Band A</b>		<b>5</b>
A- Homeless (owed main duty)		3
A- Overcrowded (2 or more bedrooms)		2
<b>Band B</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
B- Health/Welfare (High)	3	1
B- Overcrowded (1 bedroom)		5
B- Under occupation	1	
<b>Band C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
C- Health/Welfare (Medium)	1	1
C- Living with family and friends		5
<b>Band D</b>		<b>3</b>
D- No assessed need and in employment		3
<b>Band E</b>		<b>4</b>
E- No assessed need		4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>

**Applicants rehoused: Whitefield Ward**

	House
<b>Band A</b>	<b>6</b>
A- Homeless (owed main duty)	5
A- Overcrowded (2 or more bedrooms)	1
<b>Band B</b>	<b>17</b>
B- Health/Welfare (High)	9
B- Overcrowded (1 bedroom)	8
B- Under occupation	
<b>Band C</b>	<b>4</b>
C- Health/Welfare (Medium)	1
C- Living with family and friends	3
<b>Band D</b>	
D- No assessed need and in employment	
<b>Band E</b>	<b>1</b>
E- No assessed need	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>28</b>

Demand from the Urgent Band is relatively low and equates to just 4%. The highest demand is from applicants included in the medium and high bands at 54%. We are therefore proposing to target a higher percentage of properties to these bands.

Given our proposal to advertise 100% of the properties via PPP it is equally important to address worklessness, improve health and wellbeing and help to improve the level of aspiration. We are also proposing to target a proportion of properties to applicants who are employed or in full time education or training. However, we do not intend to apply this in isolation to housing need and we therefore propose to advertise a proportion of the properties to applicants in all priority bands, giving priority to applicants who are employed or in full time education or training.

of Kirkby is a matter of concern and by targeting 50% of the lettings to applicants in employment or in full time education/training, will help to make a positive uplift to levels of deprivation in the area.

The average income for residents in Kirkby falls below the national average; this does mean households within both wards are less likely to have the finance in place to purchase their own home.

### **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 Norbury Road and Highfield Green developments is to achieve balanced communities and sustainable tenancies. 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 Knowsley residents. All other applicants will be considered in accordance with the 5% limit to applicants outside Knowsley who are in Bands A-C only.

### **Divergence from the standard policy**

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

- All of the properties 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 LMH tenant with protected rights accepts a tenancy, they will keep these rights.
- The provision of 2 references 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 being adopted because of both the 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 applicant refuses to accept a support package.
- Priority for 50% 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.
- Applicants will be required to sign the Good Neighbour Agreement (**Appendix A**).

Applicants with 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 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 allocations will be subject to the agreed criteria and 100% of the properties on this development 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.

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.

To help us achieve the letting criteria, in accordance with the nominations agreement, the following targets are being proposed for 100% of the properties being advertised on PPP and within this, 50% will be with priority given to applicants who are employed or in full time education/training.

### Norbury

Band	Sub Band	Proposed Target
<b>Urgent</b>	Health/Welfare	
	Homeless (owed main duty)	1 x 3 Bed House
	Homeless Relief In priority Need	1 x 3 Bed House
	Overcrowd x 2	0
	Regeneration	0
<b>High</b>	Health/Welfare	2 x 3 Bed House 2 x 1 Bed Bungalow
	Overcrowd x 1	2 x 3 Bed House
	Disrepair	0
	Under occupied	1 x 3 Bed House
<b>Medium</b>	Health/Welfare	1 x 3 Bed House
	NP Homeless	
	Intentionally homeless	
	Family/friends	1 x 3 Bed House
<b>Low</b>	Employed	
	Not employed	

The remaining 50% (11) of the properties will be advertised on PPP for applicants in all bands with priority given to applicants who are employed or in full time education or training.

## Highfield

Band	Sub Band	Proposed Target
<b>Urgent</b>	Health/Welfare	
	Homeless (owed main duty)	1 x 3 Bed House
	Homeless Relief In priority Need	1 x 3 Bed House
	Overcrowd x 2	1 x 4 Bed House
	Regeneration	
<b>High</b>	Health/Welfare	3 x 3 Bed House
	Overcrowd x 1	3 x 3 Bed House
	Disrepair	
	Under occupied	1 x 3 Bed House
<b>Medium</b>	Health/Welfare	2 x 3 Bed House
	NP Homeless	
	Intentionally homeless	
	Family/friends	1 x 3 Bed House
<b>Low</b>	Employed	2 x 3 Bed House
	Not employed	

The remaining 50% (15) of the properties will be advertised on PPP for applicants in all bands with priority given to applicants who are employed or in full time education or training.

This provides an opportunity for 100% of properties on this site to be advertised on PPP and allocations governed strictly by LMH's own allocations scheme – which includes priority being given to those applicants who can demonstrate full occupation of the property and can demonstrate they have the finance in place to pay the rent.

### **In the event there is insufficient demand:**

Applications from families in the priority bands, who can provide 1 good reference, will also be considered.

### **Consultation**



In developing this policy, we have consulted with local Elected Members and Knowsley 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 LMH 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**

Executive Director

(Date)

### **Reviewed**

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.....



(Director of Landlord Services)

(Date)

## Appendix A

### **Good Neighbour Agreement** Norbury Road & Highfield Green Developments

#### **Aims**

Residents in Norbury Road and Highfield Green developments believe that everyone has a right to live in a clean, tidy and peaceful environment. This agreement sets out what residents and LMH, as the landlord, are committed to undertake, in order to make this happen.

We are all different and need to be tolerant of each others' lifestyles. This agreement aims to provide a set of common principles and standards that we can all meet, in order to achieve neighbourhoods where:

- we are happy to live and get along with our neighbours
- we respect each other
- we are given support and good services from our landlord and other partner agencies working in our communities/neighbourhoods

#### **Purpose**

By signing this agreement, residents, LMH and partner agencies are committing to the well-being of our communities and understand that a 'Good Neighbour' approach and tolerant attitude is needed from everyone.

We will make a united stand against anyone who does not respect their neighbours, environment, homes or the law. Our communities and neighbourhoods will succeed if we all work together in:

- Preventing problems happening in the first place;
- Stating what is and is not reasonable behaviour to anyone who wants to move to the developments;
- Not tolerating crime, nuisance, harassment, or anti social behaviour;
- Supporting residents and witnesses who work with us to tackle and prevent nuisance and harassment;
- Taking all complaints of anti social behaviour seriously and dealing with them sensitively, appropriately and as confidentially as possible;

- Helping and encouraging you, as residents, to sort out problems between yourselves.
- Working closely with other agencies to deal with the whole of the problem;
- Making empty properties safe and secure as quickly as possible and acting promptly when residents report properties empty;
- Not tolerating wilful damage, neglect or vandalism anywhere on the locality;
- Making sure every resident enjoys the right to peaceful enjoyment of their home;
- Using all the legal tools and powers we have to tackle nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

As a resident of the Norbury Road and/or Highfield Green Development, I agree that looking after this locality is not just the landlord's responsibility; what I do is also vital.

I want to live in an area which is clean, tidy and safe, and where neighbours treat each other well and with respect.

**As a resident of Norbury Road / Highfield Green Development I am committed to:**

- Respecting other people whatever their age, background or lifestyle and being considerate about how my lifestyle may affect others, within my home and the local community;
- Showing tolerance and reasonableness before complaining; and talking to my neighbour to resolve issues in the first place
- Not breaking the tenancy conditions or the law;
- Letting children play. If children harass or disturb others, then complaints are justified and parents must be reasonable in their response;
- Not dropping litter or dumping rubbish and making sure that my rubbish is properly bagged and put out for collection on the allocated day;
- Not allowing damage to the property of other residents or areas of this estate, including graffiti;
- Not playing loud music late at night or at other times to the annoyance of my neighbours or other residents;
- Reporting incidents of nuisance or crime;
- Watching out for other people and their property and keeping a look out generally to help make this estate a safe place to live;
- Making sure that the front of my home and communal areas are kept clean and tidy, so that visitors to the area can see that we care about where we live;



- Keeping my dog/pets under control at all times. I will clean up after my dog/pets and will not let it bark/make noise to the annoyance of other residents.

**By signing this agreement, I accept responsibility for myself, visitors to my property and any other household members.**

I agree with these standards and will abide by them

Name .....Signature..... Date.....

Name .....Signature..... Date.....

Signed on Behalf of LMH .....

Date.....



## **Appendix B**

In January 2015 LMH and Liverpool In Work signed a partnership under the banner of Liverpool Mutual In Work. The partnership offers bespoke advice and services to LMH residents in relation to employment and training opportunities. LMH are funding 2 full time posts in Liverpool in Work who are referring our residents to Adult Learning Services for training to build their capacity for the work place and seeking to assist them back into work.

1. LMH is involved with 3rd sector consortia which has successfully secured European Funding to deliver paid work experience/training for 18-29years olds within the Liverpool City Region.
2. LMH has successfully bid with a 3<sup>rd</sup> sector consortia for European funding for Enterprise support for residents within the Liverpool City Region.
3. LMH successfully bid for European funding to support financial inclusion and digital inclusion to support residents within the Liverpool City Region.

LMH also has a full range of social regeneration activity undertaken across our neighbourhoods a small snapshot is in the table below (2018 Figures).

Project name	No. experiencing outcome (N)	Outcomes (N)	Social Impact	Project budget	Social return this period	Budget: Impact ratio
School Breakfast Clubs 17/18	591	591	£1,411,833	£45,000	£1,366,833	31.4
School Holiday Camps 17/18	211	422	£934,308	£95,000	£839,308	9.8
Activities for Older Adults 17/18	138	276	£877,568	£53,500	£824,068	16.4
Liverpool Mutual in Work 17/18 employment advice	157	187	£755,825	£105,000	£650,825	7.2
Health Bursaries 17/18	231	231	£707,725	£45,000	£662,725	15.7
Digital Hubs 17/18	280	366	£593,859	£105,000	£488,859	5.7
Access to Work 17/18 work experience	50	41	£563,596	£101,000	£462,596	5.6
Healthy Children 17/18	270	270	£541,332	£53,500	£487,832	10.1
Enterprise Hub self-employment programme	58	61	£134,515	£135,472	-£957	1.0
Welfare benefits advice			£3,500,000	£250,000		14.1