



# **Moray Council Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027**

## **Easy to read version**

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## **Background**

We have been building and letting new build Council housing since 2011 in order to help and alleviate housing need in Moray.

Housing law requires that we let properties in a way that gives reasonable preference to people in the greatest housing need, makes best use of housing stock, maximises choices and helps sustain communities. It also gives us the discretion to use a separate process from our Allocations Policy to let different parts of our housing stock. We let all new build properties using a local lettings plan.

## **What is a local lettings plan?**

Local lettings plans are used by landlords to develop policies and letting activities that:

- respond to local housing need and demand;
- help to suitably match applicants to properties; and
- help achieve a balanced housing mix within a particular area.

It is important to note that local lettings plans work alongside our needs based [Allocations Policy](#).

## **Why do you need a local lettings plan?**

New build developments are unusual when letting properties due to the number that are available for let within a short period of time and in one area. We think that we need a local lettings plan to manage the letting of these properties. It will set out any differences from our [Allocations Policy](#) that use to let properties under the plan. We will only use the local lettings plan for the first allocation of new build properties. After this any let will be in line with our [Allocations Policy](#).

## **What are the aims and objectives of the local lettings plan?**

The overall aim of the local lettings plan is to:

- have an open and transparent framework which considers and addresses local need and circumstances when allocating properties; and
- create sustainable communities.

The objectives are to:

- help to maintain a well-balanced and sustainable community;
- make the best use of housing stock and meet housing need;
- encourage social inclusion, making sure a broad range of households are represented;
- protect tenants and residents from any risk of any antisocial behaviour coming into the area;
- be responsive to applicant housing support needs and their ability to maintain a tenancy; and
- help deliver the [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#) responsibilities.

### **Are there any rules that apply to Local Lettings Plans?**

Local lettings plan must meet with all relevant legislation overseeing the allocation of houses. The main legislation is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 which was amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

In addition local lettings plans:

- should operate alongside the main Allocations Policy and act as an additional set of circumstances that will be considered or rules that will be applied;
- should apply to a specific geographical area and be supported by evidence on why it is needed;
- should have clear outcomes and be time limited; and
- must be published.

### **Where will the local lettings plan cover?**

This local lettings plan will cover all new build council housing in Moray between 2022 and 2027.

### **How will you create sustainable communities?**

By prioritising applicants by their top three areas of preference, the local lettings plan allows offers to be made to those who have stated that they want to live in the letting area where the new build development is.

Whilst reasonable preference must be given to those with a range of vulnerabilities, in order to create and maintain a sustainable community, we will also consider the profile and needs of people living in the area. We will try and avoid any over concentration of vulnerable tenants with similar needs within the new build developments. We aim to have a balance between households that will need additional support and those that will not.

We have agreed to increase supply of accessible ground floor properties to meet the needs of people with mobility issues. These are often older people. Wherever possible, these properties are built in clusters and close to services and amenities. Through this Plan, we will consider the mix of households housed in these clusters, with the aim of creating supportive and sustainable micro-communities. We will also consider any services and facilities near to the housing development.

### **How do you make the best use of specialist housing?**

Some new build properties have facilities for households who have specific needs, for example wheelchair accessible housing. In such cases, a property may have been designed in order to meet the identified need of a specific household. For these cases, properties will be “pre-allocated” to the specific household. For other properties, our Housing Occupational Therapist will assess those households on the Councils’ Housing List. This will make sure that best use is made of our specialist housing.

### **How will new build properties be let under the local lettings plan?**

Our Housing List is made up from three groups of applicant – homeless list, waiting list and transfer list. We normally apply quotas for allocating to each group, which are agreed yearly by Committee. Under the local lettings plan, we will not apply these quotas. Instead we will let properties in a way that achieves the objectives detailed above. This will include considering if an applicant has included the lettings area as being in their top three areas of choice to live instead of focussing on the number of points they have been awarded under the [Allocations Policy](#).

### **Who decides which applicants receive an offer of a new build Council house?**

We have a Lettings Plan Panel made up by officers from the Council’s Housing Service, with input from other relevant services, for example Community Care, Social Work etc, when needed.

The Panel will review shortlist of potential applicants from the Council's Housing List. We will make sure that robust checks are carried out on applicants' current tenancy histories, support requirements etc. This information is considered by members of the Panel. They will then decide who offers of housing will be made to. Any decision to bypass an applicant for a property must be related to the stated objectives of the Lettings Plan.

We will closely monitor the local lettings plan on an ongoing basis to ensure that no groups or individuals are unfairly disadvantaged. We will make sure that a full audit trail of decisions is maintained and are monitored on an ongoing basis to make sure that no individual or group are unfairly disadvantaged.

### **Are there any reasons you would exclude an applicant from receiving an offer?**

A satisfactory tenancy check will be required before an applicant will be shortlisted for consideration of an offer of housing.

Exclusions will apply where an applicant (or member of their household) is considered to pose a risk to the local lettings plan aims and objectives due to any of the following:

- an applicant or member of their household has been evicted for antisocial behaviour or subject to an antisocial behaviour order within the last three years;
- where the applicant or member of their household has been evicted from a tenancy for rent arrears in the last three years;
- where the applicant or a member of their households has a history of convictions for criminal behaviour, drug dealing or abuse; or
- the applicant has high support needs but has previously failed to accept support or engage with support services provided.

### **Where will I find the Local Lettings Plan?**

Once the Local Lettings Plan has been agreed by Committee, we will publish it in our [website](#).

### **When will the Local Lettings Plan be reviewed?**

The Local Lettings Plan will be reviewed as part of the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029. Any changes will be considered and agreed by Committee.