

## Malvern Hills District Council

### RURAL LETTINGS POLICY (as provided 7<sup>th</sup>. March 2008)

The primary focus of the rural lettings policy is that it has regard for an applicant's connection with the surrounding area for which the housing has been developed.

The aim of the policy will be to enable people to remain or return to a locality, with which they have an association, relating to current or past residence, family connections, or employment, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable communities in rural areas.

The policy will apply to new rural affordable housing schemes and existing rural schemes governed by S106 planning agreements.

#### **LETTINGS POLICY**

The allocation of existing social housing stock will continue to be governed by the allocation criteria contained within the Common Housing Register. It should be noted that this criteria is based on housing need assessed by a points system which includes recognition of rural connections.

Currently applicants on the Council's Housing Waiting List (*Common Housing Register*) are allocated accommodation based on their level of need, as assessed by the points system. The same allocation procedure applies to all partner Registered Social Landlords who maintain their own waiting lists and points systems.

The Rural Lettings Policy, whilst being based on the Council's and Registered Social Landlord's existing points systems, will give greater priority to applicants having a local connection.

The objectives of the Policy will be to enable applicants to move to/or remain in the locality, according to the prioritised allocation criteria, in order to:

- enable applicants, in housing need, who have a connection with the locality
- give or receive support from or to close relatives
- enable applicants to move to/or remain the locality in order to sustain or take up employment opportunities.

## ALLOCATION OF ACCOMMODATION

Rural allocations will be made according to the following process:-

To ensure that the allocation of rural properties is undertaken in accordance with the above criteria, an authorised observer from the Parish Council and a Ward Member, where the housing scheme exists, will be invited to the allocation meeting to observe the process, but will have no authority to determine the specific allocations. The authorised observer and Ward Member will be present for allocations regarding Section 106 exception sites and first lets on new developments

Priority will be given to those applicants in housing need, who have a connection with the locality according to the following criteria ranked in priority order:-

- (i) living in the Parish or the designated surrounding Parishes or “catchment” areas as the principle place of residency for at least five years preceding the date of the application;
- (ii) working in the Parish or the designated surrounding Parishes or “catchment” areas for at least six months prior to the receipt of a housing application for the scheme;
- (iii) returning to live in the Parish or the designated surrounding Parishes or “catchment” areas, having lived in the area for at least five years out of the previous fifteen years;
- (iv) needing to live in the Parish or the designated surrounding Parishes or “catchment” areas in order to care for, or receive care from close relatives;
- (v) formal promise of work in the Parish or the designated surrounding Parishes or “catchment” areas;

*Note: In situations where dwellings prove difficult to let, then the properties can be open to let to those in housing need, under the following prioritised criteria:*

- (vi) anyone living or working in the Malvern Hills District Council area;
- (vii) anyone living in other parts of the country.

It should be noted however that the Council reserve the right to nominate applicants for rural vacancies, who do not meet the above criteria, where it is considered that the circumstances of the individual case warrant special consideration.

## PARISH AND CATCHMENT AREA GROUPINGS

Attached to this Policy are the details of the area groupings which will be utilised in the allocation of rural affordable housing. These are recognised as guidelines and can be subject to amendment when new rural housing schemes are developed.

No.	Grouping
1.	Bushley, Longdon, Queenhill, Holdfast
2.	Eldersfield, Pendock, Berrow
3.	Castlemorton, Birtsmorton, Welland, Little Malvern
4.	Upton-upon-Severn
5.	Hanley Castle, Hanley Swan
6.	Malvern Wells
7.	Ripple, Ryall, Hill Croome, Earls Croome, Naunton, Twining (Tewkesbury Borough), Strensham (Wychavon District)
8.	Severn Stoke, Kempsey, Norton-juxta-Kempsey (Wychavon District)
9.	Powick, Newland, Madresfield, Guarlford, Callow End
10.	Leigh, Bransford
11.	Alfrick, Lulsley, Suckley, Knightwick and Doddenham
12.	Broadwas, Cotheridge
13.	Rushwick
14.	Broadheath
15.	Kenswick, Martley, Wichenford, Holt, Clifton-on-Teme
16.	Hallow, Grimley, Holt
17.	Holt, Holt Fleet (Wychavon District), Shrawley
18.	Little Witley, Great Witley, Hillhampton, Shrawley, Holt
19.	Clifton on Teme, Lower Sapey, Martley, Shelsley Walsh, Shelsley Beauchamp, Shelsley Kings, Upper Sapey (Herefordshire)
20.	Astley, Dunley, Shrawley
21.	Abberley, Pensax, Menithwood
22.	Bayton, Mamble, Clowes Top (Wyre Forest District)
23.	Stockton, Stanford, Hanley William, Hanley Richard, Eastham, Lindridge, Knighton
24.	Bockleton, Kyre, Stoke Bliss
25.	Rochford, Tenbury, Burford (Shropshire)