



## Local Lettings Plan (LLP) for Hermitage Park, Aylesford

(planning references 20/02749/OAEA and 22/02862/RM)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Lettings Plan applies to the 81 homes in phase 1 of the Hermitage Park development, Aylesford, with 50 homes for rent and 31 homes for shared ownership sale provided by Orbit Group:

Tenure/type	1bed flat	2bed flat	2bed house	3bed house	4bed house	Total
Affordable Rent	27	23	0	0	0	50
Shared Ownership	9	6	9	5	2	31

Note: there is no lift access in the blocks of flats.

- 1.2 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) has nomination rights to the rented properties managed by Orbit Group and this Local Lettings Plan (LLP) is designed to support sustainable lettings on the development balanced with maximising meeting housing need to prevent potential management problems.
- 1.3 There may be exceptional circumstances in which TMBC and Orbit agree to allocate a home outside of this LLP.
- 1.4 This LLP gives priority to applicants with a local connection to the immediate area of the development, those with a local connection to wards in Medway Gap area comprising Larkfield ward or Aylesford South and Ditton ward will have highest priority. This plan will also aim to achieve 50% of lettings to economically active households to prevent a concentration of residents wholly dependent on welfare benefits.

### 2. Choice Based Letting Scheme

- 2.1 Affordable homes for rent will be advertised by Orbit via Kent HomeChoice (Choice Based Letting (CBL) scheme). For first let, this will be as early as possible prior to handover of the scheme. Advertisements will clearly state a Lettings Plan applies giving priority to applicants with a local connection to the immediate area.

- 2.2 Applicants wishing to be considered for homes, including existing tenants seeking a transfer, must be included on the Council's housing register. When vacant properties are advertised, applicants should bid in the usual way on Kent HomeChoice. A shortlist of applicants will be produced when the bidding cycle closes and prioritised as set out below. The highest priority applicant will usually be offered the property.

### 3. Prioritisation criteria

- 3.1 There are three considerations that will inform the prioritisation of households for the allocation of properties:

- A) Local connection
- B) Economic activity
- C) Medical need for ground floor flat.

- 3.2 Ground floor flats will be considered using the above prioritisation criteria and medical need for a ground floor or accessible home. Households with a need for ground floor accommodation who also meet prioritisation criteria A or B will be prioritised for these homes. Next priority will be to those with a medical need for a ground floor home, regardless of meeting criteria A or B.

- 3.3 A) Local connection

Priority will be given to households with a local connection to Larkfield ward or Aylesford and Ditton ward, in line with the definition of local connection in the Council's [Housing Allocation Scheme](#).

- 3.4 Households in temporary accommodation (TA) will have their local connection considered based on their last settled accommodation before placement in TA, or through family. This is to ensure they are treated fairly, regardless of where they are placed in TA.

- 3.5 B) Economic Activity

This plan aims for 50% of homes to be let to economically active households; where the lead or joint applicant is permanently employed or in work-based training.

Applicants will be required to evidence their employment or training information to Orbit as part of the offer and pre-tenancy checks.

- 3.6 Households not able to be economically active because they are not working age, are full time carers, due to a disability or impairment, will not have the economically active element of priority considered, i.e. they will be treated in a neutral way and not bypassed due to not working should they be next in line to be offered once the other criteria of this local lettings plan has been applied.

- 3.7 C) Medical need for ground floor

Ground floor flats will be prioritised for households with a medical need for them. Prioritisation criteria A and B will be applied to prioritise households with a medical need for ground floor.

If there are no suitable households with a medical need for an accessible home the remaining homes will be allocated in the same way as the other flats, with criteria A and B applying in the first instance.

- 3.8 Households not able to be economically active because they are not working age, are full time carers or due to a disability or impairment, will not have the economically active element of priority considered, i.e. they will be treated in a neutral way and not bypassed due to not working should they be next in line to be offered in line once the other criteria of this local lettings plan have been applied.

#### **4. Shortlisting**

- 4.1 Orbit's Lettings team will contact households who have placed a bid for a property to check and verify if they meet any of the criteria outlined in this plan and assign priority in the order set out in 3.0, in consultation with the Council's Housing Solutions team.
- 4.2 This may be before the end of the bidding cycle to speed up the process, but it must be made clear to households that the contact is to check information and it is not an offer of housing.
- 4.3 In the event of two or more applicants sharing top priority in line with the criteria in this lettings plan, housing register application date will be used to determine priority.
- 4.4 If there are more homes available than households on the shortlist who meet the prioritisation criteria or no households meet the criteria, homes will be allocated on banding and application date order.

#### **5. Allocation Process**

- 5.1 Homes will be allocated as follows:
- Orbit will notify the Council when shortlisting is complete and provide evidence of the shortlisting process for verification purposes
  - Orbit will invite the applicant at the top of the prioritised shortlist for interview and to view the home
  - Applicants will need to provide any information requested, and confirm they meet Orbit's criteria as outlined in Orbit's [Letting of Homes Policy](#).
- 5.2 Orbit will allocate the homes in line with this local lettings plan and TMBC's [Housing Allocation Scheme](#).
- 5.3 Applicants will be offered an assured non-shorthold tenancy in line with Orbit's [Tenure Policy](#).

## 6. Intermediate housing – approach to shared ownership sales

6.1 All homes will be pro-actively advertised by Orbit through Orbit's website and other platforms such as Share to Buy including local promotion, as appropriate.

6.2 There are two considerations that will inform the prioritisation of households, for both initial sales and resales in the following order:

A) Households awarded priority for Help to Buy under any relevant government policy or guidance and capital funding criteria in place at the time of sale. For example, serving military personnel and former members of the British Armed Forces honourably discharged in the last two years.

B) Local connection

Where demand for initial sales from eligible buyers outweighs supply, priority will be given to households with a local connection.

Top priority will be given to households with a local connection to Larkfield ward or Aylesford South and Ditton ward in line with the definition of local connection in the Council's [Affordable Home Ownership Discount Sale Policy](#) or equivalent Council policy in place at the point of sale.

Secondary priority will be given to households with a local connection to the rest of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough.

6.3 For re-sales, priority will be given to households with a local connection within the marketing period alongside the Help to Buy criteria for any interested buyers. If there are no interested eligible buyers with a local connection, homes may be sold to any household eligible for Affordable Home Ownership in line with relevant government criteria and Orbit's policy criteria in place at the time of sale.

## 7. Review Process

7.1 This lettings plan has been drawn up in partnership between Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Orbit. Both parties are positive about the principles of the lettings plan and are keen to see successful long-term lettings achieved at the new development.

7.2 This lettings plan will apply for all lettings and sales on this development for two years from the date of this agreement. Both parties will then jointly review the agreement, with a view to extending it for another two years along with making any changes needed. Any changes will be agreed by both parties.

7.3 Orbit will collect household data to enable compliance with the principles of this agreement to be monitored and will share this with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council annually. The review may consider:

- Turnover of vacancies
- Failed tenancies and the reasons for failure
- Households accessing or needing support services

- Anti-social behaviour and its impact
- General tenant satisfaction
- Sales and re-sales information
- Any changes to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council or Orbit's policies.

## **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council**

Signed by:



Name(s):

Designation: Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Date: 1 April 2025

## **Orbit Group Ltd**

Signed by:



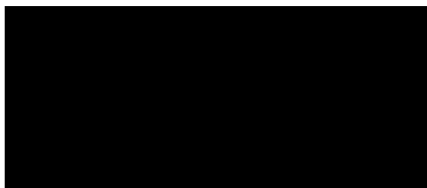
Name(s):

Designation: Deputy Company Secretary

Date: 20 March 2025

## **Orbit Housing Association Ltd**

Signed by:



Name(s):

Designation: Deputy Company Secretary

Date: 20 March 2025