

Committee:	Date:
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee	10 July 2014
Subject:	Public
Horace Jones House – Local Lettings Policy	
Report of:	For Decision
Director of Community and Children’s Services	
Summary	
<p>This report seeks approval from Members for a Local Lettings Policy for the allocation of homes at Horace Jones House - formalising the approach agreed by Community and Children’s Services Grand Committee on 13 June 2014. The policy sets out the priorities and qualifying criteria for applicants seeking one of the 43 affordable homes offered at the scheme. It sets out the City’s intention to prioritise existing social tenants in the Square Mile and living in the City’s housing estates elsewhere, the intention to exclude applicants who have breached their tenancy, and criteria for new applicants.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the Local Lettings Policy of Horace Jones House • delegate authority to the Director of Community and Children’s Services in consultation with Chairman to approve minor changes that may be required. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Horace Jones House is a development of 43 new affordable homes provided by the City of London Corporation (the City). This unique development is delivered on a site within the London Borough of Southwark next to Tower Bridge and close to the Mayor of London’s City Hall.
2. It was agreed by Community and Children’s Services Grand Committee on 13 June 2014 to set intermediate rents for these homes, and set priorities for their allocation that differ from the City’s agreed Allocations Policy through the development and agreement of a ‘Local Lettings Policy’ (LLP).

Current Position

3. The City of London’s Housing Allocations Policy allows for the use of local lettings policies. These policies will normally be time limited and may seek to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives. They are subject to approval by Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee, and expected to be time limited.

Proposals

4. The draft 'Horace Jones House LLP' is set out Appendix 1.
5. The LLP governs the allocation of the 29 homes that the City of London will nominate tenants for, and the 14 units for which the London Borough of Southwark have agreed nomination rights.
6. Prospective tenants must meet the qualifying criteria for the housing waiting list of the City of London or LB Southwark (depending on the nominating authority). For City nominees they must live in the City of London (or one of the City's estates outside of the Square Mile) and have done so for a minimum of twelve months, or have been employed in the City of London for a minimum of twelve months.
7. Priority will be given to existing social tenants. Within this group, those who are overcrowded, under occupying or who have a severe medical need will be prioritised in line with the approach and definitions of the City's Housing Allocations Scheme.
8. Applicants will have to demonstrate their ability to meet the intermediate rent levels charged for these homes. Such rents are greater than traditional social rents, but significantly below market rents. At Horace Jones House rents will be set at 40 per cent of the market rent.
9. No maximum income level will be set for existing social tenants. However, new applicants will be subject to maximum income levels to ensure allocation is to those who are unable to meet the housing needs in the local market (in line with the definition of affordable housing).
10. It is proposed the LLP is put in place for a period of three years, after which it will require review and/or renewed agreement.
11. The proposed policy will apply solely to the 43 units at Horace Jones house. As such its adoption will not dominate the allocations scheme at the expense of the statutory reasonable preference categories (such as homeless households) who will be continue to afforded reasonable preference by City's Allocations Policy.
12. Officers consider that the Horace Jones LLP is consistent with our general allocations policy.
13. Its adoption will diversify the City's affordable housing offer through the provision of homes at an intermediate rent – increasing the choice available to, and opportunities for, those on medium incomes. In giving priority to existing social tenants it will provide opportunities for transfer, and generate additional lettings within our stock for others in housing need. The prioritisation of those who are overcrowded or under occupying will support better management of our stock.
14. As a public body the City of London is required by the Public Sector Equalities Duty to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
15. An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Horace Jones House LLP has been completed (see Appendix 2). The assessment suggests that the adoption of

the LLP will create housing opportunities within our stock that will mitigate the negative impacts identified. By creating voids within our social rented homes the City will be able to meet those whose housing need is prioritised within the overall Housing Allocations Policy.

16. Unanticipated circumstances may require minor adjustment or addition to the LLP. It is proposed that authority to approve such changes is delegated to the Director of Community and Children's Services in consultation with Chairman to approve minor changes that may be required.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The City's Corporate Strategy seeks a world-class City that supports our communities through the appropriate provision of housing, and supports a safer and stronger City by supporting community cohesion. The proposed approach to rent, allocation and tenure at Horace Jones House supports the delivery of that vision, and is integral to the City's strategic priorities for housing set out in its Housing Strategy.

Implications

18. The Housing Act 1996 enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories. This is the statutory basis for so-called 'local lettings policies' which may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives.

Conclusion

19. The LLP proposed provides the basis by which the homes at Horace Jones House can be allocated in line with the wishes of Members and the wider housing objectives of the City of London.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Horace Jones House Local Lettings Policy
- Appendix 2 – Horace Jones House EqIA

Background Papers:

- Horace Jones House Report – Community and Children's Services Grand Committee, 13 June 2014
- Amendment to the Allocations Policy – Housing and Almshouses Sub Committee, 22 May 2014

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