

Local Lettings Initiative Application

Landlord: **Taff Housing Association**

Area covered by the
Local Lettings Initiative: **2 to 20 Albert Street, Riverside, Cardiff, CF11 6BG**

Implementation date: **13 August 2018**

Review date: **13 August 2019**

Legislative setting

The statutory basis for 'local lettings initiatives' is set in section 167(2E) of the 1996 Housing Act. This allows for an Allocation Scheme to include policy priorities other than those specified in legislation provided that:

- they do not dominate the scheme; and
- overall, the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not.

Local lettings initiatives can be used to support these locally identified priorities and can be applied to certain types of property or those within a specific area.

Background

Albert Street is a purpose-build block of 4 x 1 bedroom flats, located above 6 x 2 bedroom maisonettes. The 2 bedroom properties have a small second bedroom and there is limited space for children to play. The block was completed in 2015.

Over the past 2 years, there has been a tenancy turnover rate of 20%. This consisted of one tenant abandoning their property due to issues from non Taff residents in the local area and another tenant surrendered their tenancy due to concerns over their family's safety. One tenant also mutually exchanged because of criminal behaviour in the area.

There have been a number of reported Anti-Social Behaviour incidences, some alleging drug use / dealing and physical assault which are currently under investigation by the Police and Taff Housing Association. There is also persistent noise nuisance as the scheme is surrounded by a public carpark and public pathways. The two communal hallways and staircases serving the flats to the top floor have suffered repeated acts of vandalism and theft.. These areas are often accessed by non-residents who then use them for illegal purposes.

A number of our current tenants present as vulnerable and are unable to control access to the communal areas and their own properties and we suspect that there are issues such as 'cuckooing' occurring.

The high turnover rate and the vulnerability of a number of current tenants, some with high support needs, exacerbates the problems already attributed to the block. Consequently, Albert Street is gaining a bad reputation. The

majority of the tenants feel disheartened with the constant disturbances and a significant portion are seeking to move away.

Taff are using all resources available in an effort to reduce and solve the problems in this block. We are working closely with the Police and have installed CCTV and other security measures. We are working closely with all our current tenants and other outside agencies. We believe that introducing a local lettings initiative into this scheme will assist Taff in solving this issue and improving tenant wellbeing.

Aims of the Local Letting Initiative

1. To reduce the level of Anti-Social Behaviour/ nuisance reports and communal area vandalism to 'normal' levels associated with a general needs block of flats
2. To help create and develop a stable community
3. To strengthen and empower the community
4. To enhance and improve the reputation the scheme

Criteria

We wish that all future general needs applicants for Albert Street fulfil the following additional criteria: -

- 1 that for the 2 bedroom properties the family make up is a couple with one child under the age of 10.
- 2 that for the 1 bedroom properties there is an age restriction of 35 years
- 3 consideration will be given to applicants who have been assessed under the criteria set out in Cardiff Councils Exclusions Policy, however Taff will check both tenancy and offending history to ensure the letting of the accommodation is successful in meeting the key aims of this initiative
- 4 that they have held a previous Council or Housing Association tenancy
- 5 that they have not breached the conditions of any previous social housing tenancy

Monitoring & Review arrangements

This Local Letting Initiative will be regularly monitored, in line with on our own in house procedures measuring the number of new lets, ASB incidents, rent arrears levels and general tenant satisfaction, tenancy turnover etc to measure the impact of the initiative.

The Initiative will be reviewed on an annual basis to ascertain whether the new arrangement have had the desired beneficial outcome on the housing management of the block and to assess whether the temporary measures can be removed. The lifespan of the initiative will depend on its aims being met but we anticipate that this initiative will be in place for a maximum of 3 years.

Mae'r ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.