

Allocations Policy

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Policy reviewer:	Head of Commercial	Policy owner:	Head of Commercial
Review period:	3 years	Next review due by:	5 June 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Twenty11 was established as a provider of homes in the Wycombe District in 2018. It is a wholly owned subsidiary company of Red Kite Community Housing Limited (Red Kite) and shares its vision to realise the potential of its communities.
- 1.2 Twenty11 provides homes to a wide range of customers in the Wycombe District and other local areas who have a housing need, not just the traditional tenure of socially rented homes. The rental level of these homes includes qualifying rent, discounted rent, exceptional discounted rent and market rent. The rental and ownership products offered by Twenty11 are likely to grow and change to reflect changing demand in the local housing marketplace.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the approach taken by Twenty11 when allocating homes for rent.

2. References

- 2.1 This policy has been drafted in line with our vision and values, relevant legislation and best practice.
- 2.2 This policy has been developed in line with Twenty11's governance regulations and delegation procedures and legislation. As an unregistered provider of housing, Twenty11 is not subject to the regulatory requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing (or any other body which may replace it) but it is subject to Regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Head of Commercial is responsible for ensuring that this policy is kept up to date and consistent with any new Twenty11 strategies or policies that are related.
- 3.2 It will be reviewed every three years, or following a change in legislation, regulatory requirements or as a result of learning, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

4. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- 4.1 Twenty11 is a Community Benefit Society which is registered in England with the Financial Conduct Authority.
- 4.2 All information relating to allocations will be managed in line with data protection laws.
- 4.3 All applications and allocations will take into consideration the Equalities Act 2010 and related guidance.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Market rent** is the amount of rent that can be expected for the use of a home, in comparison with similar privately rented properties in the same area. Market rent is the point of comparison for determining the discounted value of a qualifying or discounted rent.
- 5.2 **Qualifying rent** is the rent level that most Twenty11 homes will be advertised at. This rent level is 80% of the market rent.
- 5.3 **Discounted rent** is a rent level that is between 50% and 80% of market rent in the local area for the type of home. Eligibility for a discounted rent from the advertised qualifying rent will be determined by personal circumstances in accordance with the Twenty11 Rent Policy.
- 5.4 **Exceptional discounted rent** is a rent level (with a discount of up to 60% upon market rent) which Twenty11 may consider offering under certain limited circumstances for a period of time for a special reason to a tenant.
- 5.5 **Local Housing Allowance Rent** is the rental level which will apply when tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- 5.6 Qualifying rent is the rent level at which we will advertise our sub-market rent homes for rent in Twenty11.
- 5.7 An **Assured Shorthold Tenancy** is the tenancy type offered by Twenty11. It is usually for a fixed term, such as 12 months, and is the most common tenancy used by landlords which are not local authorities or Registered Providers.

6. Key Principles

- 6.1 We will provide a range of housing solutions across the local housing market.
- 6.2 Twenty11 aims to be a strategic partner of the local authority by providing homes for those in housing need.
- 6.3 Our approach to rents, tenancies and housing management will assist some Twenty11 customers to realise their potential.

7. Policy Statement

- 7.1 Twenty11 intends to be a strategic partner of the local authority by providing housing solutions that meet the needs of the local community.
- 7.2 We are responsible for ensuring that our approach to lettings is transparent, fair, non-discriminatory and effectively controlled and monitored. We will take into account the needs of individuals as well as equality and diversity issues.

7.3 Twenty11 will provide a range of housing solutions to the local market place. The Twenty11 Allocations Policy is therefore considered to be a Local Lettings Policy as it seeks to achieve balanced and sustainable communities with a housing product range tailored to different types of customer.

7.4 We will let homes for each housing product in the following way:

7.5 **Market Rent**

7.6 Twenty11 owns a portfolio of market rent homes. These homes may be let to any customer who expresses a desire to rent the home, but we may prioritise applicants who have a family or employment connection to the location of the home.

7.7 Homes will be available on a first come first served basis to customers who demonstrate they can afford to pay the rent for the term of the tenancy agreement, pay the appropriate deposit and do not meet the exclusion criteria set out in this policy.

7.8 Market rent homes will be advertised through a variety of online and print media in a similar way to other market rent opportunities from other private landlords.

7.9 Market rent homes will be let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy for a period that is agreeable to Twenty11 and the customer.

7.10 **Twenty11 Qualifying and Discounted Rent**

7.11 Twenty11 rent homes will be let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy for an initial 12 month starter period. Upon successful completion of the starter period a further tenancy period of up to five years may be offered.

7.12 An Assured Shorthold Tenancy does not offer the same security of tenure or statutory rights, such as preserved Right to Buy or mutual exchange, that are offered by local authority landlords or Registered Providers. As a result, Twenty11 rent homes are only open to applications from customers who have not previously been a tenant of Twenty11's parent company Red Kite Community Housing.

7.13 When letting homes at a Twenty11 qualifying or discounted rent we work in partnership with Wycombe District Council (WDC) and other local authorities to provide homes for those in greatest need of housing. Every local authority allocation scheme in England must ensure "reasonable preference" is given to certain categories of applicant as set out in sub-section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996. These provide guidelines to WDC in determining who is in greatest need.

7.14 We will mainly advertise homes for Twenty11 qualifying or discounted rent through the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme by which social and affordable housing is allocated throughout Buckinghamshire and other local authority areas.

However, we may choose to use additional or alternative methods to advertise our empty Twenty11 homes where we consider that this will best meet the needs of the community. This may include making a direct offer to an applicant who has been verified as eligible by Twenty11 when we consider it is suitable to do so.

- 7.15 We may choose to advertise some homes as being available for a particular customer group so that we can meet the needs of the local community. For example, we may choose to invite applications for some homes from people under 35 only.
- 7.16 We may choose to advertise some homes as not being eligible for a discounted rent so that we can manage the overall financial viability of individual schemes and Twenty11.
- 7.17 We will endeavour to allocate homes for Twenty11 rent in accordance with the eligibility criteria in the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy and this Policy.
- 7.18 We will use the bedroom size criteria in line with the relevant choice based lettings scheme operating in the area of the home. For example, where homes are offered in the area of operation for Bucks Home Choice we will allow one bedroom for:
- i. Every adult couple
 - ii. Any other adult aged 16 or over
 - iii. Any two children of the same sex aged under 16
 - iv. Any two children regardless of sex aged under 10
 - v. Any other child aged under 16
 - vi. A non-resident carer (where the claimant and/or their partner have a disability and need overnight care)
- 7.19 A bedsit or studio flat may be offered to a single adult however a pregnant woman will not be allocated a home without a separate bedroom.
- 7.20 All applicants must be aged 16 years or over and any that are 16 or 17 years of age may be required to have a guarantor if allocated a property.
- 7.21 We will evaluate the individual circumstances of the nominated applicant and may choose to offer a lower rent than the advertised rent that will allow a customer an opportunity to realise their potential and move to a new rental or ownership product at the end of their tenancy term. This rent may also change during the course of the tenancy depending on the customer's circumstances.
- 7.22 We require applicants to undergo an affordability assessment alongside a 'needs and risk' assessment. Where an applicant is unlikely to be able to maintain the tenancy we may not make an offer or may withdraw the offer of accommodation, unless we are satisfied that a suitable support plan is in place to mitigate the risk.

7.23 Although owner occupiers are not normally accepted, they may be considered for sheltered housing if they are assessed as suitable and certain conditions are met. These will be tailored to the individual's circumstances but could include a requirement for their home to be sold within a specified period.

7.24 Exclusion criteria

7.25 We are committed to providing high quality rented housing to as many people as possible, however in certain circumstances we may exclude applicants from renting a Twenty11 home. Applicants or tenants who have been excluded in this way have the right to appeal the decision. We reserve the right to exclude applicants' nominees in the following circumstances:

- a) They have previously been a tenant of Red Kite Community Housing;
- b) They have not successfully completed a Twenty11 pre-tenancy assessment;
- c) They have at any time used a property for illegal purposes and have been evicted for this e.g. sublet, serious criminal activity like cannabis farm;
- d) They owe rent or other charges or debts to us or another landlord;
- e) They have been evicted for rent arrears on a previous tenancy, either with a registered provider or private landlord, within the last five years;
- f) They caused or are causing nuisance and/or annoyance to neighbours or visitors;
- g) They committed criminal offences in or near the home and may pose a threat to neighbours or the community;
- h) They have been violent towards a partner or members of the household or their visitors;
- i) They have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour including being verbally or physically abusive towards a member of staff, contractor or anyone acting on the landlord's behalf;
- j) They have allowed the condition of their home and any associated areas e.g. garage, shed, garden, patio etc. to deteriorate through neglect or damage;
- k) They have (or have attempted to) obtain a tenancy by deception, for example, by giving false or misleading information;
- l) They have paid money to illegally obtain a tenancy;
- m) They do not qualify for housing e.g. applicants for social housing from abroad who have no recourse to public funds or the right to rent;
- n) They own or have a legal interest in another property;

- o) They have lost accommodation provided in connection with employment due to their conduct;
- p) They are unlikely to sustain a tenancy with us, as determined via our financial assessment and/or needs and risk assessment;
- q) They may pose a safeguarding risk to other tenants or their visitors.

7.26 We will evaluate the need to exclude applicants on a case by case basis according to the severity of the situation. For example, we will take into account the timescales, the impact and any other circumstances. The decision to exclude an applicant will require final approval by a Head of Service.

7.27 **Withdrawal of offer**

7.28 In certain circumstances, we reserve the right to withdraw an advert or offer of accommodation. These circumstances may include but not be limited to:

- a. Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria;
- b. When it has been established that the home needs extensive works, which may include adaptations required for a particular applicant (or household member);
- c. Where it is identified that the home is unsuitable for the tenant and/or a member of their household;
- d. When the home has been advertised, but the existing tenant has withdrawn their notice;
- e. When the home has been advertised but withdrawn for a direct let for an urgent case.

7.29 If an offer is withdrawn the applicant will have a right of appeal. Any appeal must be made to the Empty Homes Team Leader or another manager of a similar level within 24 hours of the decision. The appeal will be heard within 5 working days.

8 **Related Policies and Strategies**

8.1 This policy directly supports, and is supported by, other policies, procedures and strategies that we have in place. These include:

- Twenty11 Tenancy Policy
- Twenty11 Rent Setting Policy
- Red Kite Group Asset Management strategy
- Red Kite Group Development Strategy
- Red Kite Group Inclusion & Well-being Strategy
- Twenty11 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Red Kite Group Feedback Policy

- Twenty11 Allocations Procedures