

Brentfield Road Local Lettings Plan (LLP)

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Local Lettings Plan (LLP) applies to the Brentfield Road development, a community-led housing scheme comprising 19 one-bedroom social rent homes in the London Borough of Brent. The homes are managed by Sapphire Independent Housing (SIH) in partnership with Brent Community Land Trust (Brent CLT).

The purpose of this LLP is to support the creation of a balanced, sustainable and well-managed new community, while remaining consistent with Brent Council's Allocations Scheme, relevant housing legislation, and equalities duties. The LLP sets out locally tailored lettings criteria that reflect the unique nature of the scheme and its objectives.

To support the community-led nature of the scheme, Brent CLT will offer residents the opportunity to join the Trust as members. Membership requires the purchase of a £1 share, which provides the residents with voting rights on major decisions and opportunities for involvement in governance or volunteering.

This LLP provides a locally tailored variation to the Council's standard lettings approach, justified by the unique nature of the scheme and the specific housing needs it seeks to meet.

The Council receives 50% nominations (10 Properties) to the first lettings of these properties. This percentage will include two wheelchair accessible / adaptable properties ring-fenced for households on Brent's Housing Register that are eligible for such a home, existing tenants within the local area, and single homeless households owed the main housing duty by Brent.

Brent CLT and SIH will advertise all remaining properties via their direct lettings process.

2. Description of the Scheme and Local Context

Brentfield Road is a small, scheme of 19 one-bedroom homes, developed through a community-led process to meet localised housing need. All homes are general needs accommodation and are not designed or resourced as supported or sheltered housing.

The scheme is located in Stonebridge Ward, an area with existing concentrations of vulnerable households and nearby supported housing provision. Local and political stakeholders have previously expressed concerns about antisocial behaviour and the importance of ensuring new developments contribute positively to community cohesion and stability.

Given the small size of the scheme and the uniform unit mix, it is important carefully manage early lettings to ensure the long-term sustainability, management intensity, and success of the development.

3. Policy and Legal Context

This LLP operates within the framework of:

- Part VI & VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- Brent Council's Housing Allocations Scheme
- The Council's equality duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Statutory guidance on social housing allocations and local lettings plans
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards 2024

Local Letting Plans are a recognised and lawful mechanism for responding to specific local circumstances, including:

- Supporting balanced and sustainable communities
- Addressing management challenges or risks
- Ensuring new developments meet clearly defined local objectives

The criteria set out in this LLP are proportionate, evidence-based, time-limited, and subject to monitoring and review.

The above criteria will be applied in accordance with Brent Council's Allocations Scheme and is not designed to prevent the nomination or allocation of accommodation to applicants owed a duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 if required.

4. Objectives of the Local Letting Plan

The objectives of this LLP are to:

- Create a balanced and sustainable community within a small, single-unit-type scheme
- Support high levels of tenancy sustainment and low early turnover
- Prioritise applicants with a meaningful local connection to Brent and Stonebridge Ward
- Reduce management risk, including antisocial behaviour and tenancy failure
- Reflect Brent CLT's community-led purpose and long-term stewardship role

5. Letting Principles

Lettings under this LLP will be guided by the following principles:

- Fairness and transparency
- Compliance with Brent Council's Allocations Scheme
- Proportionality and equalities compliance
- Sustainability of tenancies and the wider community
- Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard
- Partnership working between SIH, Brent Council, and Brent CLT

6. Eligibility and Prioritisation Criteria

6.1 Core Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be eligible for social housing under Part VI & Part VII of the Housing Act 1996
- Be assessed as suitable for independent general needs accommodation
- Require a one-bedroom home

6.2 Local Connection (Primary Criterion)

Priority will be given to applicants who meet one or more of the following local connection criteria:

- Currently living in the London Borough of Brent with a minimum of [5] years continuous residence
- Having a close family connection (parent, adult child, or sibling) who has lived in Stonebridge ward for five or more years
- Is household member of an existing social housing tenants within the Stonebridge ward aged 18 or over and is
 - a child, parent, grandparent, or grandchild of the tenant, or otherwise need to live as part of the household – for example, because you are a care giver or receive care from, another member of the household
 - lives with the tenant as their main home
 - their move would relieve under-occupation or overcrowding in homes
- Working in Brent for a minimum of 16 hours per week for at least [2] years
- Applicants owed a statutory duty or falling within priority groups (e.g. care leavers, armed forces) will not be excluded where they do not meet the local connection criteria

6.3 Tenancy History and Sustainability

Preference will be given to applicants who meet each of the three criteria below: who:

- Able to demonstrate the ability to sustain a tenancy.
- Have no significant unpaid rent arrears (excluding arrears caused by verified Housing Benefit or Universal Credit delays) and no proven antisocial behaviour.
- Are assessed as able to sustain an independent one-bedroom tenancy without high support needs

6.4 Economic and Social Contribution (Secondary Weighting)

Where applicants meet the local connection and tenancy sustainability criteria, secondary weighting may be applied to applicants who:

- Are in employment, education, training, (subject to income limits to be agreed)

- Are key workers employed in Brent (e.g. health, care, education, emergency services)
- Demonstrate positive contribution to the local community (such as volunteering)

7. Achieving Social Mix

Shortlisting and offers will be managed to support an appropriate social and economic mix within the scheme. This may include:

- Avoiding over-concentration of households with similar age profiles, employment status, or support needs
- Making offers sequentially to achieve balance between working and non-working households
- Considering overall scheme composition rather than individual lettings in isolation

8. Role of Brent Community Land Trust

Brent CLT has a defined role within this LLP as the long-term community steward of the scheme. This role includes:

- Working with SIH and Brent Council to review lettings outcomes against LLP objectives
- Providing local insight and feedback to support good management and community cohesion
- Participating in scheduled LLP reviews and agreeing any necessary adjustments

This role does not constitute a veto over individual nominations but ensures accountability to the community-led purpose of the scheme.

9. Applying the Local Letting Plan: Nominations, Decisions and Timescales

9.1 How the Local Letting Plan Will Be Applied

The Local Letting Plan will be applied to all first lets and subsequent re-lets at Brentfield Road while the LLP remains in force. Lettings will be made through Brent Council's housing register and nominations process, with the LLP criteria applied at shortlisting stage.

Brent Council will generate a shortlist of eligible applicants who meet the core eligibility requirements for a one-bedroom general needs home. The shortlist will then be filtered and prioritised in line with the LLP criteria, including local connection, tenancy sustainability, and social mix considerations.

If two applicants have the same level of priority, then the effective date that the priority was applied will be the deciding factor.

9.2 Decision-Making Process

Nominations will be made from eligible applicants on the Council's Housing Register in accordance with the Allocations Scheme, including bids placed via the choice-based lettings system or through direct offers where applicable.

Additional supporting information, such as proof of identity, work, income and local connection may also be requested.

Decisions on nominations will be made through a partnership process involving Brent Council, Sapphire Independent Housing (SIH), and Brent Community Land Trust (Brent CLT), as follows:

Brent Council will be responsible for:

- Confirming housing register eligibility and banding
- Applying the LLP criteria at nomination and shortlisting stage
- Providing nomination information (including Direct Offers) and supporting evidence to SIH

Sapphire Independent Housing (SIH) will be responsible for:

- Assessing suitability of nominees for the property, including affordability and tenancy sustainment
- Carrying out standard pre-tenancy checks and property offers
- Making the final tenancy offer in accordance with this LLP and its own policies

Brent Community Land Trust (Brent CLT) will be responsible for:

- Reviewing anonymised nomination outcomes against LLP objectives
- Providing feedback on scheme balance, sustainability, and community considerations
- Participating in review discussions

Brent CLT's role is advisory and strategic, ensuring that lettings align with the agreed community-led purpose of the scheme. It does not involve approving or rejecting individual applicants however Brent CLT, SIH and Brent Council will meet periodically to review performance

9.3 Approval of Nominations

Formal approval responsibilities will be as follows:

- Operational approval of nominations and offers: Sapphire Independent Housing.
- Confirmation of compliance with the Allocations Scheme and LLP: Brent Council (Housing Allocations) and Strategic Housing Team.
- Oversight of alignment with LLP objectives: Sapphire Independent Housing, Brent Council Brent CLT, through scheduled reviews and monitoring

Named officers or teams from each organisation will be agreed and kept under review.

9.4 Timescales for Decision-Making

The following indicative timescales will apply to each letting cycle:

- Nomination shortlist issued by Brent Council: within 30 days of vacancy notification
- Initial suitability checks by SIH: within 5 working days of receipt of nomination
- Property viewing and provisional offer: within 5–10 working days, subject to applicant availability and verification checks by LBB
- Proceed with tenancy letting in line with Brent Council and SIH lettings policy

Where an offer is refused or withdrawn, the next suitable applicant will be considered without undue delay to minimise void periods.

If the applicant, or, in the case of a multiple applicants, all refuse, the Council should be offered the unit for a direct nomination. In the event it remains void, the Council (or Sapphire Independent Housing) may provide up to five more short listed applicants.

9.5 Dispute Resolution

- 1.1 Where any matter the subject of this agreement shall be in dispute, the Council and the Registered Provider (SIH) shall seek to use reasonable endeavours to resolve the same within 28 days of the dispute arising. Where appropriate, Brent CLT will be involved in discussions to resolve issues and ensure the LLP objectives are upheld.
- 1.2 If the dispute remains unresolved within 28 days of arising, the Council and SIH may refer the matter to a single expert with appropriate qualifications to address the issue. The expert must be jointly appointed by both parties within 14 days of the referral. If the parties cannot agree on an appointment, the expert will be nominated by the current President of the Law Society of England and Wales.
- 1.3 The expert will be instructed to produce their determination within 28 days of instruction. The determination of the expert (including any determination as to the responsibility for payment of their own costs and those of the parties) shall be final and binding upon the parties.

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