



South Bank Community Land Trust CIC
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Thirteen Housing Group
Local Lettings Policy

Board Approval Date: 25 June 2021
Review Date: July 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Bank is host to predominantly older Victorian housing stock, much of which is in a state of poor repair. These low value, low demand properties have resulted in low levels of interest of occupancy.
- 1.2 The properties have been left empty, boarded, and unoccupied which has left them in a poor state and decline in the area.
- 1.3 Partners are working together with the vision of delivering an attractive and good quality housing. The Community Land Trust (SBCLT) will own these properties and Thirteen Group Limited will manage them on their behalf.
- 1.4 The South Bank Community Land Trust is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to provide residents in housing need good quality, well managed, affordable homes. It has a focus on strengthening the community, improving the quality of local accommodation and reducing the number of empty homes in the area, with an aspiration in the future to build new properties.
- 1.5 This allocation and lettings plan will cover both advertising and initial lets in this area and will be subject to an annual review. SBCLT will advertise the properties to generate interest and send nominated customers to Thirteen Group Limited to complete viewings, application process, lets and Housing management.
- 1.6 Decisions around allocations will be based on a number of principles including affordability, tenancy sustainability and reducing the likelihood and impact of anti-social behaviour.
- 1.7 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council has agreed this policy with SBCLT and Thirteen as a local lettings policy for the purposes of its nomination rights, as defined within the Tees Valley Common Allocations Policy.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The South Bank Community Land Trust aims to strengthen the community, build an interest on the properties before they become void to ensure a quick let can be obtained to maximise income by minimising void loss and building a sustainable neighbourhood.

3. Criteria

- 3.1 Anyone over the age of 18 can apply for housing. They do not need to have a local connection or commitment to the community in South Bank, however in most cases preference in lettings will be given to those that do.
- 3.2 Application eligibility will be in accordance with SBCLT criteria and priority system (as set out within Paragraphs 4. and 5. of this policy).
- 3.3 Prior to any offer of accommodation applicants will be required to provide documentation to support their application – such as UK passport, driving license or birth certificate. This list is not exhaustive, applicants will be advised at the time what documentation is required based on their individual circumstances.

3.4 Applicants will need to meet the criteria set out on the advertisement for the property and offers will be subject to eligibility, verification, reference, and affordability checks.

4. Eligibility

4.1 The main provision of this policy will be to ensure balance within the community through the application of strict criteria and all applicants (and anyone intending to live with the applicant) will be expected to demonstrate a continuous commitment in their current or previous accommodation with regards to not having a history of anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance or criminal behaviour.

4.2 Significant housing-related debt will be defined as being in excess of £1,500 including rent arrears, court costs and rechargeable repairs.

4.3 If an applicant has not previously held a tenancy, then they (and anyone intending to live with the applicant) must be able to demonstrate that they do not have a history of anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance or criminal behaviour.

4.4 A financial assessment will also be undertaken to ensure applicants can afford a property and will not be placed into financial hardship (housing costs should not exceed 30% of net household income).

5. Assessed Priority for Accommodation

5.1 In instances where there is more than one household who is interested in a vacancy and each of those households meets the eligibility criteria within Paragraph 4. above, preference will be given to households who show a local or sustainable connection to South Bank and/or a demonstrable commitment to the South Bank community. Priority will be awarded to applicants who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have continuously resided in South Bank for at least 5 years
- Currently reside in South Bank or have done so during the last 5 years
- Have close relatives who currently reside in South Bank and have done so for at least the last 5 years (parents, siblings)
- Have employment, or verified offer of employment, in South Bank, have a verified self-employment based in South Bank or carry out recognised voluntary work in South Bank
- Have a child or children who do already, or will attend a South Bank Primary School, St Margaret Clitheroe, St Peter's Academy and/or Outwood Normanby schools, from the time of take-up of an offered property
- Have been a member of the South Bank Community Land Trust for at least the last three months
- Volunteer in South Bank for a charity, voluntary, community or faith group
- People who are leaving HM armed forces

Cumulative priority will be awarded to applicants who meet multiple criteria. For example, an applicant meeting four criteria would be awarded higher priority than an applicant meeting three criteria and so on.

NB – applicants who do not meet any of the above criteria may still apply, but will not receive any additional priority under this aspect of the policy.

5.2 In instances where the criteria within 5.1 above have failed to determine preference between two or more households, each household's level of housing need will be taken into consideration. Priority will be awarded to applicant's who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- People assessed by the Council as homeless and in priority need
- People assessed by the Council as owed the homelessness prevention or relief duty
- People assessed by the Council as being at risk of domestic abuse
- A household with a child in need or a care leaver
- Adoptive parents or prospective adoptive parents/foster carers
- People assessed by the Council as living in unsatisfactory housing conditions

Cumulative priority will be awarded to applicants who meet multiple criteria. For example, an applicant meeting three criteria would be awarded higher priority than an applicant meeting two criteria and so on.

NB – applicants who do not meet any of the above criteria may still apply, but will not receive any additional priority under this aspect of the policy.

5.3 In instances where the criteria within both 5.1 and 5.2 above have still failed to determine preference between two or more households, the date of receipt of application by SBCLT will be used as a tie-break, with the applicant with the earliest application date receiving preference.

6. Allocations

6.1 SBCLT will advertise void properties to generate interest or they will allocate via a registered waiting list. SBCLT will send over relevant contact details of the prospective applicant.

6.2 Properties will be allocated to applicants based upon the number of people in their household and according to the best use of bedrooms to reflect the criteria set out by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Each bedroom will be considered suitable for:

- One adult/adult couple
- Two children of the same sex both under the age of 16 years
- Two children both aged under 10 years regardless of their sex
- Any one child who cannot be matched with the above criteria
- Any other person aged 16 years or over

Properties will not be allocated to an applicant where doing so would result in their household either under-occupying by more than one bedroom or being overcrowded.

7. Lettings

7.1 Once the customer details have been received, Thirteen will arrange a viewing with the nominated applicant.

7.2 Assessment of applications:

Checks will be undertaken to ensure the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. The checks considered will include:

- Affordability
- Tenancy history
- Landlord references
- Character references
- Information in relation to household links and commitment to South Bank
- Housing needs information
- Provision of any supporting documents

7.3 Once the applicant has passed the relevant eligibility checks a tenancy commencement date will be agreed with customer.