



## **OTHA LETTINGS PLAN 2020-21**

OTHA prepares an annual Lettings Plan which sets out how OTHA will allocate housing that becomes available in the financial year.

### **1. Aims & Objectives**

Oak Tree Housing Association is a locally based housing association, which aims to provide and manage good quality, affordable homes for people in housing need. At 31 March 2020 OTHA owned 1730 self-contained and 4 non self-contained properties for rent.

OTHA's Allocation Policy covers the letting of all properties owned by OTHA as they become vacant, excluding properties held for decant purposes.

The prime aim of OTHA's Allocations Policy is to provide good quality rented accommodation to those in greatest housing need. OTHA seeks to build balanced and stable communities.

### **2. OTHA's Allocations Policy**

OTHA developed a joint Allocations Policy to determine how properties would be let, with Inverclyde Common Housing Register partners in 2011. This is a policy based on a quota system. Some quotas are let via referrals from agreed agencies, but most lettings are via a choice based lettings system.

Application processing is operated as a joint service through the Inverclyde Common Housing Register for the following partners:

- Oak Tree Housing Association Ltd
- Cloch Housing Association Ltd
- Larkfield Housing Association Ltd
- Link Housing Association Ltd (for properties in Inverclyde).
- Sanctuary Housing Association (for properties in Inverclyde)

#### Choice Based lettings

The Choice Based Lettings System applies to all lets which are designated to the transfer and housing list quotas will be advertised for applicants to indicate their interest by placing a bid. Any restrictions or conditions will be clearly advertised e.g. number of stairs, household size etc.

If a property is a transfer quota, the advertisement will state that priority is to Oak Tree tenants. If no tenants bid, then it will be let to the general housing list. Tenants of Oak Tree will also be able to bid for any other property and may be allocated a property from any of the ICHR partners (provided they met the conditions and had the highest number of points).

#### Direct Referrals

OTHA will accept direct referrals under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in relation to people affected by homelessness and community care groups.

## 2.1 Quotas

The target quotas in the current Allocations Policy in respect of relets by Oak Tree Housing Association are as follows:-

Source	Quota
Inverclyde Council – Referrals under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and leases of property to provide temporary furnished accommodation. The lets will be allocated according to the agreed protocol and property management criteria including any agreed area specific policies for sensitive letting.	Estimated 15% of lets
Inverclyde Council Referrals from HSCP for people with community care needs. The aim is to make the best use of OTHA's stock, particularly adapted or amenity housing.	Estimated 15% of lets
Management Transfer of existing OTHA tenants who require to be rehoused as a result of disposal or demolition of their property	Up to 12 relets
Of the remaining lets:-	
ICHR Transfer List for existing tenants of OTHA	10% of lets
Other referrals – e.g. Inverclyde Womens Aid	Up to 5% of lets
ICHR Choice Based lettings for all other applicants	Remaining % of lets (est 85% of net lets)

For relets, lets will be made to the various quotas in rotation according to the date a relet is notified, in order to fairly distribute the house type, area and demand level between the different quotas. If it is not possible to make a let to the allocated quota due to the list or referrals or applications being exhausted, the default quota will be the general housing list.

In relation to new lets, the HTSSC decide what quotas are to be applied in advance. This usually reflects the quotas above, but may be amended to take account of the nature of the building, the facilities offered and any specific client group named in the funding package or conditions of site transfer.

## 2.2 Strone Farm

The new build site at Strone Farm, Greenock is a development of 15 properties and it is estimated for completion in early 2020. The housing mix is as follows:-

Size	Type	Number
<b>2 bedroom</b>	House	2
<b>3 bedroom</b>	House	12
<b>4 bedroom</b>	House	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>

There is a high demand for 3 bedroom properties from the OTHA Transfer list and allowing a higher quota for Transfers would help meet housing need within our own stock. The proposed lettings plan for Strone Farm is as follows:-

Quota	Total no	Percentage
Section 5 Referrals	2	15%
Community Care referrals (via HSCP)	2	15%
Management Transfer	1	7%
Of the remaining <b>10</b> properties		
OTHA Transfer List via ICHR	3	30%
Other referrals (Womens Aid)	1	10%
ICHR Housing List	6	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2.3 Tweed Street/Tay Street

The new build site at Tweed Street/Tay Street, Greenock is a development of 69 properties and it is estimated that some of them will be completed in early 2020. The housing mix is as follows:-

Size	Type	Number
<b>2 bedroom</b>	Cottage Flat	6
<b>2 bedroom</b>	House	32
<b>3 bedroom</b>	House	28
<b>4 bedroom</b>	House	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

The policy of allocating up to 15% of lets to Section 5 referrals would mean that 10 houses were let in this category. There is not generally a large demand from Section 5 referrals for 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties therefore the proposal is to only allocate 5 to this category.

Additionally, the Association is unlikely to be able to rehouse 15% of the properties to Community Care Referrals because of the size, type and location of this site therefore the proposal is to allocate 5 to this category.

The proposed lettings plan for Tweed Street/Tay Street is as follows:

Quota	Total no	Percentage
Section 5 Referrals	5	7%
Community Care referrals (via HSCP)	5	7%
Management Transfer	7	10%
Of the remaining <b>52</b> properties		
OTHA Transfer List via ICHR	5	10%
Other referrals (Womens Aid)	3	5%
ICHR Housing List	44	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3. Sensitive Lettings

In rare cases, which will be documented with a proper audit trail with the reasons behind any decision, the policy may be departed from to allow for sensitive letting. The committee will be kept informed of any such cases(s), which will form no more than 5% of lets. This may occur in relation to individual lets to avoid a specific management problem arising or to deal with particular sensitivities. Examples of when sensitive lettings may apply would be:

- to refuse to house the perpetrator of domestic abuse close to the victim;
- to comply with Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements;
- to avoid future management problems for individuals who have already been the victim of serious and long standing problems through a previous let.
- Where an unusual opportunity to meet need arises (such as an adapted property or a particularly large property) or where a let arises in a special needs project, the decision can be taken not to apply the quota and to let in accordance with the Housing Manager's view of what will achieve the best use of the property.

#### 4. Low Demand

OTHA aims to ensure fairness by the application of the Allocations Policy. However, the effect of strict application in all cases may disrupt the aim of creating balanced and sustainable communities. Some areas are affected by a higher level of multiple deprivation & social exclusion. Specific properties or house types within areas and can be classified as 'low demand'. OTHA will put into place strategies to create more balanced communities, improve tenancy sustainment and to reduce turnover.

Strategies may include a different void standard, additional services, and physical changes to the property. In addition, any strategy may include changes to the policy affecting decisions around letting specific to the areas/properties or house types including:

- Allocation of quotas
- Restriction on the use of properties for leasing temporary furnished accommodation
- Positive priority for certain groups

Sensitive letting policies must be operated within the law and so discrimination on the grounds of age, disability or other protected characteristics is prohibited.

The areas considered as low demand in 2020-21 are:-

Maple Road Flats	101
Bow Farm Flats (Murray Street and Tasker Street	24
76 Belville Street Flats	9
9 Hope Street	7
Total	<u>141</u>

#### 5. Homelessness

OTHA will assist in the alleviation of homelessness in Inverclyde by accepting direct applications from homeless people via the choice based lettings housing list and by accepting Section 5 Referrals under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 from Inverclyde Council according to the terms of the agreed Section 5 Protocol.

OTHA also provides properties directly leased to Inverclyde Council for use as temporary furnished accommodation.

#### 6. Asset Management Strategy

The Association has been considering alternatives to the traditional method of letting properties in accordance with the Allocations Policy – particularly for the properties identified as low demand because of their location, property type or other characteristics.

The Association may need to take the decision to hold properties as unlettable or consider further disposal or demolition of properties in line with the Asset Management Strategy.

## 7. Maple Road Flats

The SMT and the staff team Maple Road working party have been working together with the community to agree the future of low demand flats in Maple Road.

At the Management Committee in February 2020 the decision was taken to close & empty 65 unimproved properties with a view to demolition over a 3 year period and in principal to retain 36 improved properties. However, demand and void loss will continue to be monitored closely and if the remaining improved properties remain as low demand, a phase 4 (year 4) demolition project could be taken forward.

This will now mean that a number of residents in the area will require to be rehoused.

There is no provision in the proposed ICHR Allocations Policy for Oak Tree HA to award points to specifically assist these residents. Anyone can apply and bid for properties.

The Association have agreed to apply Management Transfers to residents in the unimproved blocks this would allow properties to be identified that would suit the needs of those households needing to move. It would also mean that the timing of the moves could be planned to assist with the regeneration process. The maximum number of Management Transfers would be 20 and this would be dependent on completion of both the Strone Farm and Tweed Street/Tay Street sites.

## 8. Lettings Plan 2020-2021

The table below is based on an estimate of the number of properties that are likely to come available during 2020-21 using knowledge of the previous year's relets as a guide. The estimate for 2020-21 is 160 re-lets.

General needs standard accommodation has no specific adaptations or design features that would make it suitable for any particular group of people.

Amenity standard accommodation has design features that make them suitable for an older person or someone with a range of low level disabilities.

Adapted accommodation may have a range of adaptations and design features to reduce barriers and to make them suitable for a wheelchair user or an individual who has restricted mobility due to disability.

The projection for the number of lets for 2020-21 is as follows:-

Area	General Needs	Amenity	Adapted	Total
<b><u>Flats</u></b>				
Tenemental flat	65	10	0	75
Bow Farm flats	6	0	0	6
New build flats	36	14	1	51
<b><u>Main door properties</u></b>				
General/LSVT	9	0	0	9
Bow Farm Main Door	9	1	0	10
Newbuild Main Door	7	1	1	9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>160</b>

The properties will be let in accordance with the quotas as stated in 2.1 of this report and therefore the likely outcomes are as follows: -

Quota	Percentage	Number
Inverclyde Council – referrals under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 & leases of property to provide temporary furnished accommodation	15%	24
Inverclyde Council Referrals of people with Community Care Needs Management Transfers (up to a maximum of 12)	15%	24
Of the remaining 100 lets		12
ICHR Transfer list	10%	10
Other referrals – e.g Inverclyde Womens Aid	5%	5
ICHR Housing List	85%	85
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>