



## **SWAFFHAM PRIOR COMMUNITY LAND TRUST**

### **ALLOCATIONS POLICY AND LETTINGS PROCEDURES**

This document sets out how Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust, in partnership with Hundred Houses will allocate their eight houses on Rogers Road in Swaffham Prior.

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# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This is the allocations policy and lettings procedure for the Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust (SPCLT) which has been established to assist in supporting the housing needs of people within and linked to the Parish of Swaffham Prior (the “village”) and surrounding area.



- 1.1.2 SPCLT is a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Purposes and not having a Share Capital. Registered company no. 8824415. The Company is set up to operate as a Community Land Trust on a not for profit basis and the Company’s objectives are specifically restricted to the relief of financial hardship by the provision of Social Housing, and housing (upon terms appropriate to beneficiaries’ means) together with associated amenities, facilities and infrastructure.
- 1.1.3 Property prices and rental levels in Swaffham Prior have increased significantly over the last ten years. A Housing Need Survey in 2011 for the village identified 8 additional households in housing need, with a particular requirement for one and two bed houses.
- 1.1.4 Land at Rogers Road has been allocated for 20 houses through the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2014. The current planning policy requires 40% affordable housing.

SPCLT has been established to own the freehold of the 8 affordable houses on the Rogers Road development (“the houses”).

1.1.5 The houses (shown edged blue on the plan below) comprise –

- 2 x two bed detached bungalows (Plots 13 and 14)
- 3 x two bed semi-detached houses (Plots 17, 18, and 19)
- 1 x three bed semi-detached house (Plot 16)
- 2 x three bed detached houses (Plots 15 and 20)



1.1.6 All 8 houses will be let at affordable rents.

1.1.7 The allocation of the houses and review of tenancies will be undertaken in accordance with the SPCLT Allocations Policy to ensure that the objects of the SPCLT are met.

1.1.8 SPCLT have granted a long lease (125 years) to Hundred Houses Housing Association. Occupiers will become tenants of Hundred Houses and deal with Hundred Houses directly regarding management issues of the houses.

1.1.9 The SPCLT Board (“SPCLT”) currently comprises the following people:

A representative from the village Parish Council (the Parish Clerk)

A representative from Hundred Houses

A representative from the tenants of the houses

Four other members from the village

2.1.8 The SPCLT Allocations Panel will be made up of members of the SPCLT Board, to include at least one member representative from Hundred Houses.

## 1.2 The Allocations Policy

1.2.1 Priority will be given to eligible persons with a local connection to the parish of Swaffham Prior coupled with a housing need, using the Local Needs Housing Requirements cascade below. Applicants will be prioritized using the following criteria ranked in order of importance (a to d):

**a) Lived in the village for 6 out of the past 12 months; or**

**b) A minimum of 3 years residence in the village within the 15 years preceding the application; or**

**c) Where one or both parents or guardians or children of an applicant have resided in the village for a minimum period of 2 years prior to the application; or**

**d) Where the applicant has existing employment, or a verified offer of employment in the village for at least 15 hours per week.**

1.2.2 If the number of applicants at any one time is less than the number of available houses, then applications from eligible applicants in Reach and Swaffham Bulbeck (“second qualifying villages”) will be considered using the Local Needs Housing Requirements applied to the parishes of Reach and Swaffham Bulbeck

1.2.3 If applicants cannot be found from the second qualifying villages, eligible applicants in Burwell and Upware (“third qualifying villages”) will be considered using the Local Needs Housing Requirements applied to the parishes of Burwell and Upware.

1.2.4 If applicants cannot be found from the third qualifying villages, eligible applicants in Wicken, Lode, Longmeadow, Bottisham, Stetchworth, Dullingham, Burrough Green, Cheveley, Westley Waterless, Ashley, Woodditton, Saxon Street, Brinkley (“fourth qualifying villages”) will be considered using the Local Needs Housing Requirements applied to the parishes of

Wicken, Lode, Longmeadow, Bottisham, Stetchworth, Dullingham, Burrough Green, Cheveley, Westley Waterless, Ashley, Woodditton, Saxon Street and Brinkley.

#### 1.2.5 The Eligibility Criteria

Applicants will need to meet the following criteria to be eligible for an offer of housing from SPCLT:

a) **Inability to afford market rent and/or outright purchase** of the home that the applicant/family needs on the open market in the village. Evidence of household income and capital will be requested.

#### 1.2.6 The Priority Criteria

In addition to the Eligibility Criteria, the Priority Criteria below will be used where necessary to decide the **order of priority between more than one “eligible” applicant** ranked in order of importance (b to e):

b) **The applicant must be in housing need** e.g. sharing with parents, children or other households; in a low cost or rented home which is too big, too small or that is unaffordable for the household; or in accommodation (either rented or owned) that is physically unsatisfactory, poses a health risk to the applicant or is insecure eg at risk of homelessness. Because of the high demand in general for rented homes, applicants will only be considered for homes that meet their family need e.g. a family with one child may only be allocated a 2-bedroom home. Account will nevertheless be taken of expected changes and of factors such as visiting relatives or care needs. Need will be assessed on a case by case basis.

c) **Additional Local Criteria** such as a dependent relative, or applicants with non-dependant relative who could assist the applicant with childcare or similar needs, or applicants who have children at school in the village.

d) **Moving from one SPCLT house** to another.

e) **Those who have waited the longest** will receive higher priority if all other factors are the same.

1.2.8 SPCLT assess the weight of the circumstances under each of all the criteria from b) to e) and to recognise particular individual circumstances.

1.2.9 Applicants with a recent history of antisocial behaviour (occurred in the last five years) will

not normally be eligible to apply for housing. The SPCLT Board reserves the right to consider applicants with substantial mitigating circumstances.

1.2.10 Applicants with current rent arrears will not normally be eligible to apply for housing until the arrears are cleared. The SPCLT Board reserves the right to consider applicants with substantial mitigating circumstances.

### **1.3 Equal opportunities and diversity**

1.3.1 SPCLT is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity.

### **1.4 Monitoring and reviewing the lettings policy**

1.4.1 SPCLT will monitor the operation of the Allocations Policy by regularly reviewing it to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2.1 How to apply for a house**

2.1.1 To apply to go on the SPCLT housing register, applicants are required to complete an application form. An online form or paper form can be requested from the Parish Clerk who is the first point of contact:

**Mr Paul Catling**  
**Swaffham Prior Parish Clerk**  
**10 Adams Road**  
**Swaffham Prior**  
**CB25 0JU**

**Tel. 07040 908743**

**Email: [swaffhampriorparishcouncil@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:swaffhampriorparishcouncil@eastcambs.gov.uk)**

2.1.2 An applicant may include anyone on their application who may reasonably be expected to live with them as part of their household.

2.1.3 On receipt of the application the SPCLT Board may request additional information and supporting evidence so that the applicant's eligibility and housing need can be confirmed.

SPCLT will verify the information provided which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or visiting them at home. The SPCLT Board will meet as considered necessary and determine applications when a quorum of 50% of deciding members is present. All decisions will be unanimous.

2.1.4 After assessment the SPCLT Board will write to applicants to inform them whether the applicant has been accepted onto the SPCLT housing register, or give reasons if they have not. Where accepted they will be informed of:

- a) Their unique reference number
- b) The date that the application was placed
- c) The type of property for which the applicant is likely to be successful

If they have not been accepted onto the SPCLT housing register they will be given reasons why and information on the review process (see Chapter 6).

## **2.2 Date of registration**

2.2.1 The registration date of an application will be the date the housing application form is received by the Parish Clerk. If the form is sent by email the date the email is received electronically is the date of registration.

## **2.3 Multiple applications**

2.3.1 An applicant can have only one active application as a main applicant on the SPCLT housing register at any time.

## **2.4 Change of circumstances**

2.4.1 Where an applicant registered with SPCLT has a change in their circumstances they must promptly inform SPCLT. Applicants can obtain a change of circumstances form from the Parish Clerk, and it should be returned promptly. Change of circumstances received by SPCLT will be assessed based on the new circumstances. Examples of change of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive.

- a) Change of address
- b) People joining or leaving the household
- c) Pregnancy/birth of a child
- d) Relationship breakdown
- e) Change to the medical circumstances of anyone included on the application
- f) Death of a household member

- g) Death of a joint applicant
- h) Change of income and/or capital

## **2.5 Applicant's consent and declaration**

2.5.1 When an applicant applies for housing, they will be required to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- a) The information they have provided is true, accurate and complete.
- b) They will promptly inform SPCLT of any change in circumstances.
- c) They understand that information will be shared within SPCLT and with Hundred Houses.
- d) They consent to SPCLT or Hundred Houses making enquiries of any relevant persons to confirm the information on the application form is correct.
- e) They consent to the release of any relevant information either to SPCLT or Hundred Houses held by third parties or by SPCLT or Hundred Houses to third parties.
- f) The information provided may be used to help in the detection and prevention of fraud.

2.5.2 SPCLT or Hundred Houses may take legal action against applicants who withhold or provide false information regarding their housing application. Where an applicant has been let a house as a result of providing false information, SPCLT or Hundred Houses may take court action to obtain possession of the property.

## **2.6 Data protection**

2.6.1 SPCLT's policy on Data Protection is available on request.

## **2.7 Application review**

2.7.1 SPCLT will normally write and/or email applicants every year to see if they still wish to be on the SPCLT housing register. If there is no response within the required time limit (28 days from the letter or email being sent), the application will be cancelled. SPCLT will write or email the applicant to notify them of this. If an applicant contacts SPCLT within 28 days of their application being cancelled and indicates that they still want to be considered for housing, the application will be reinstated.

## **2.8 Cancelling an application**

2.8.1 An application will be cancelled from the SPCLT housing register in the following

circumstances:

- a) At the applicant's request.
- b) If the applicant no longer meets the eligibility criteria
- c) If the applicant no longer meets the Local Housing Needs Requirements
- d) When the applicant has been housed elsewhere.
- e) Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address.
- f) Where the applicant has died.

2.8.2 When an application is cancelled, SPCLT will write to or email the applicant or their representative to notify them.

2.8.3 Where an applicant wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date their new date of registration will be the date they re-apply unless there are overriding circumstances and at the full discretion of SPCLT.

## **Chapter 3**

### **3.1 Reviews of decisions**

3.1.1 If an applicant feels that the decision made about their application by the SPCLT Allocations Panel is unfair they may submit an appeal in writing to the Parish Clerk for review by the SPCLT Board. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision of SPCLT Board the applicant may apply to the designated senior Housing Officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council to carry out a review of the complaint.

3.1.2 Examples of circumstances that may be reviewed include:

- a) Decision not to relet a house
- b) Priority assessments
- c) Housing people in different accommodation to designated need size

The above list is not exhaustive.

3.1.3 The Senior Housing Officer's written opinion (either by letter or email) will be binding on all parties.

### **3.2 The Housing Ombudsman**

3.2.1 If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the East Cambridgeshire District Council review, the applicant can send a written complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

3.2.2 The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted at:

The Housing Ombudsman Service Norman House  
105 -109 Strand London  
WC2R 0AA  
Tel: 08457 125 973  
Website: [www.ihos.org.uk](http://www.ihos.org.uk)

## **Chapter 4**

### **4.1 Letting of accommodation**

4.1.1 Properties will be advertised in at least one edition of the village magazine and on the village notice board for a minimum of two weeks. The advertising will be carried out before homes become available to let. Advertising in second qualifying and third qualifying villages will occur as necessary if suitable applicants are not found within the village.

### **4.2 Property advertisements**

4.2.1 All adverts will include a description of the property and any other relevant information, for example rent charge, property size, and the length and type of tenancy.

4.2.2 Applicants should check the information contained in the property advert to see if they qualify to be considered for the property.

### **4.3 Shortlisting**

4.3.1 After the end of advertising the SPCLT will prepare a shortlist of applicants suitable for the house including new applicants and those already registered with SPCLT.

4.3.2 The highest eligible applicant will be offered an accompanied viewing of the property with SPCLT or Hundred Houses. This is to ensure that if the applicant who tops the shortlist decides not to take the tenancy, the property can be quickly offered to the next person on the shortlist.

4.3.3 After viewing the property the applicant at the top of the shortlist will be given 24 hours to accept or refuse the offer. If an applicant is offered a tenancy (verbally, by email or in

writing) and does not reply to accept that offer within the deadline given, SPCLT will take this as a refusal of the offer. If the offer is refused the next person on the short list will be offered the property. SPCLT will work down the shortlist in order

#### **4.4 Tenancy Duration & Review**

4.4.1 To ensure tenancy opportunity for new applicants, all tenancies are limited to a maximum duration of five years from commencement of the agreement.

4.4.2 Six months prior to the end of their tenancy, tenants will be invited to re-apply for an extension of their existing tenancy. Existing tenants will be given no formal priority over new applicants and all applications will be assessed on a case by case basis.

4.4.3 Re-applications are subject to the same eligibility and priority criteria detailed in section 1.2.4 and 1.2.5

#### **4.5 Formal offer of the property**

4.5.1 Once the applicant has confirmed their acceptance of the tenancy Hundred Houses will write to confirm the formal offer of the tenancy.

4.5.2 Once the house is ready to let the Hundred Houses will complete the tenancy sign up.

#### **4.6 Withdrawal of offers**

4.6.1 In exceptional circumstances an offer of a property may be withdrawn, for example:

- a) Where there has been a change in the applicants' circumstances
- b) Where the successful applicant has rent arrears or other housing related debts that had previously not come to light
- c) Following verification the applicant is not eligible for the property
- d) Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria

#### **4.7 Refusing an offer of accommodation**

4.7.1 Usually, if an applicant refuses an offer of a house by SPCLT they will remain on the SPCLT housing register unless the applicant wishes to be removed.

#### **4.8 Allocations to SPCLT or Hundred Houses board members or their family**

- 4.8.1 Members of the SPCLT board or their close family who require housing with SPCLT may apply for a house in the same way as other applicants. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.
- 4.8.2 If an applicant, who is a member of the SPCLT board or a member of their direct family, makes a successful bid for a property the Parish Council will be informed and must approve the letting prior to the formal offer being made.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5.1 Applicants' Rights to Information**

- 5.1.1 Applicants have the right to request such general information as will enable them to assess:
- a. How their application is likely to be treated under the SPCLT Lettings Policy
  - b. Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them.
- 5.1.2 Applicants have the right to request information held about their application which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account when considering whether to allocate them a house.

### **5.2 Data protection**

- 5.2.1 When an applicant applies to SPCLT they will only be asked for information that is needed to assess their eligibility and housing needs. The SPCLT will collect and keep data confidential.
- 5.2.2 These guidelines are in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 which covers both electronic and manual records and the Act governs everything SPCLT do with the personal data, including collecting, storing, using and disposing of it.
- 5.2.3 Confidential information held about applicants will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:
- a) Where the individual who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure
  - b) Where SPCLT or Hundred Houses is required by law to make such disclosures
  - c) Where disclosure is made in accordance with an information sharing protocol.

### **5.3 Requesting information**

- 5.3.1 Applicants are able to request copies of the information held regarding their application. This information is held in line with Data Protection Act guidelines. Please note that we cannot provide you with personal information about other people if doing so will breach the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Chapter 6**

### **6.1 Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust**

Company registration no. 8824415

Registered office:

50 High Street

Swaffham Prior

Cambridge

CB25 0LD

Chairman: Emma Fletcher [emmalindseyfletcher@gmail.com](mailto:emmalindseyfletcher@gmail.com) Tel. 01638 743426

### **6.2 Swaffham Prior Parish Council**

C/o Mr Paul Catling

Parish Clerk

10 Adams Road

Swaffham Prior

CB25 0JU

[swaffhampriorparishcouncil@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:swaffhampriorparishcouncil@eastcambs.gov.uk)

Tel. 07040 908743

### **6.3 Hundred Houses Housing Association**

C/o Jerry Morson

Operations Director

Hundred Houses Society

51 Scotland Road

Cambridge

CB4 1QW

[jmorson@hhs.org.uk](mailto:jmorson@hhs.org.uk)

Tel. 01223 376986

### **6.4 East Cambridgeshire District Council**

Principal Housing Officer

The Grange

Nutholt Lane  
Ely, Cambs  
CB7 4EE

housing@eastcambs.gov.uk

Tel. 01353 665555

## Chapter 7

### Definitions

<b>VILLAGE</b>	The area defined by the Parish Boundaries
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	Actually working in the village, not just employed by an employee who may or may not be in the village
<b>RESIDENCY</b>	Living within a fixed dwelling, be that ownership or renting
<b>SHARE CAPITAL</b>	Funds raised by issuing shares