

Summary of Focus Group discussions

Following extensive consultation and engagement with residents and Bristol City Council, LNT held a series of meetings to discuss the criteria in detail to help refine the policy before producing a final draft for consultation. We invited equalities groups, residents who had previously completed the local lettings policy survey or shown an interest in the policy development and experts from Bristol City Council housing allocation team who could advise on the practicalities and implications of any proposals.

Although attendance was low we had a useful discussion which identified key areas of contention, practical implications of administering the scheme and helped us produce a further draft. Below is a summary of the discussion points that we brought to the focus groups (based on feedback from our previous draft).

Discussion Point 1: Being eligible to access the policy

We needed to create criteria that were sufficiently specific and clear for both applicants and those assessing applications, can be evidenced and administered without unnecessary cost or delays to the process.

Eligibility to access the local lettings policy was principally about what constitutes an eligible local resident or other relevant connection to the area. Using responses to the survey we discussed each criteria in turn. Respondents from the survey supported the following as potential the criteria required to demonstrate a meaningful need or connection to live within Lockleaze, one of which would need to be met in order to be eligible to access the LLP.

Criteria	Discussion	Recommendation
Accessing the LLP	General feedback from the session identified that the current draft does not make it clear enough that the primary filter for accessing any housing allocations policy is first and foremost meeting the definitions of housing need according to Home Choice Bristol. The LLP is then applied to new homes to those who are eligible.	An explanation of this at the top of the policy in bold to avoid confusion - BCC to provide.
Housing Tenure	Helpful question around whether this will apply to all tenures and definitions of affordable housing: social rent, affordable rent and intermediate sale products such as shared ownership.	Invite BCC to confirm and include how the LLP will apply to the various forms of affordable housing provision
Minimum residency	Discussion about what makes a Lockleaze resident, while some may want a lengthy requirement there are	2 years felt both fair and practical as a

<p>requirement: suggestion 2 or 3 years in Lockleaze</p>	<p>a number of reasons why this isn't desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy is about supporting people in housing need also meeting their other social needs eg. education, work, social connections; arguably these are formed after a relatively short time so a long eligibility requirement would seem unfair - Long length of time could be construed as age discrimination under the Equalities Act - Individuals in temporary accommodation could be in Lockleaze for 2 years and might wish to stay in Lockleaze; if the length of residency was more than 2 year they would likely be excluded 	<p>residency requirement. BCC already have systems for checking addresses and residency for 2 years so this provides little additional burden. We should consult agree/disagree</p>
<p>Applicants with dependent children attending school in Lockleaze</p>	<p>Discussion with concern about admissions arrangements of school (varied and not all in local authority control, where geographical boundaries exist these don't necessarily map to ward boundaries) and whether that should be a determinant of housing priority. Concerns about game playing and people putting children into certain schools to gain unfair advantage in housing allocation. It was reiterated to the group that only people who are in housing need as per the HomeChoice Bristol banding system will be able to access the LLP. This helped to clarify that not all families of children attending Lockleaze schools would not be able to access the LLP.</p> <p>There was debate that not all local schools are serving only local people. This weighed against the significant support for children provided by schools and the serious detriment moving homes and therefore schools can create in a young person's life. Also schools provide strong community connections between children and parents.</p> <p>Discussion arguing that the issue might be more relevant for primary age children where there is an expectation they would need support getting to school, whereas by secondary age there is a reasonable expectation that they can use public transport without parental support.</p> <p>It should be noted that results from the LLP survey that 'Families of children schooled in Lockleaze' as receiving the second highest number of top priority from the 71 respondents (as of 09.09.21).</p>	<p>Given the debate we should consult further on whether families with children at local schools should be a criteria for the Lockleaze Local Lettings Policy to apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary only 2. primary and secondary 3. Neither
<p>Applicants</p>	<p>Some discussion about how this would be applied,</p>	<p>Not to include in</p>

<p>living outside of Lockleaze with caring responsibilities in Lockleaze</p>	<p>nature of housing need, potential for abuse of housing allocation system. We considered the potential of using at receipt of carers allowance for someone living in Lockleaze, or employed by someone living in Lockleaze as evidence of meeting the criteria. Overall, not strong support for this measure as some debate about level of housing need if adequately housed outside of the area (Not eligible) and potential for misuse.</p>	<p>criteria</p>
<p>Former residents of Lockleaze who would like to return</p>	<p>We identified there were 2 categories of people here: 1. Residents of Crome Road (or other similar) who were moved out of Lockleaze 10 years ago and told they could return. Discussion about whether we could find any evidence of promise to return (or was this an urban myth). If adequately housed then they wouldn't be in housing need and therefore not on housing register and therefore couldn't be housed. Would need to find evidence of firm commitment for BCC to pursue this further. 2. Residents who are in housing need, for some reason are no longer able to be in Lockleaze (e.g. no fixed abode, in temporary accommodation) but Lockleaze was their last known address or they spent significant time in Lockleaze (at least 2 years). Discussion identified concern if someone had been evicted (ie. for drug dealing from their social housing) that this would apply, would need to be clear that they weren't evicted from Lockleaze. Would need to demonstrate in housing need.</p>	<p>Consider including those in temporary accommodation or no fixed address who could evidence 2 years residency in Lockleaze prior to current situation. Identify how to exclude people who have been evicted from Lockleaze. (BCC to advise on wording and this policy)</p>
<p>Community contribution, eg . Volunteer locally</p>	<p>No strong support in survey consultation or focus group for this category. Concern about cynical volunteering to get priority on housing register, burden on community organisations to demonstrate volunteering commitment (eg.what intensity, over what time period?). Too difficult to manage, setting of parameters and not strong support within the emerging surveys.</p>	<p>Not to include in criteria</p>
<p>Work in Lockleaze (anywhere or specifically community based occupation?)</p>	<p>Some support from BCC and in discussion about individuals in housing need, employed locally in Lockleaze having priority for housing. Would support reducing travel to work (Climate action/ Liveable Neighbourhoods/ 15 minute city) support a local circular economy, help low paid roles in Lockleaze (charitable, care, retail) into housing. Employers and their employees are part of building community and creating more community connection.</p>	<p>Suggest consult on including those employed in Lockleaze for min 2 years prior as eligible for Lockleaze Local Lettings Policy. Question should those employed in</p>

		Lockleaze be eligible: Yes all employees/ yes Only employees in charitable, social and health care roles/ no/ other?
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There was a discussion about whether any of the above criteria could be given greater priority or not and it was agreed for various reasons (ethical and practical) they could not, so either you were eligible based on one of the above or not.

In discussion, as previously, sometimes people got confused imagining the system allocating housing based on the above criteria alone. In all discussions we must make abundantly clear: **Applicants will still need to be in housing need as defined by the HCB banding system and on the housing register.** This is eligibility criteria will define and establish the Lockleaze connection aspect of the LLP for priority, which will create a priority subset within the existing system (see attempt at diagram at end of document).

Discussion Point 2: Defining Lockleaze Boundary

It was agreed for administrative convenience and fairness the boundary would be the same as Lockleaze ward boundary, with the exception of those sites on the edge of the boundary (i.e. the Brunel Ford site) where as it is on the border it would be reasonable to apply the policy to the surrounding few streets in the neighbouring ward for those in Housing Need.

Consultation question: Should this be a strict Lockleaze Boundary or where developments are at the edge of the ward the immediate streets neighbouring are also eligible?
 Only Lockleaze/ Lockleaze and neighbouring streets/ Other

Discussion Point 3: Exceptions for new Community-led Housing Developments

- Applying the Local Lettings Policy in perpetuity (not just the first let only)?
 Discussed the need to think about a period of time rather than just first let, and maybe review over time. So what about applying policy for first five years of a property? BCC need to balance Lockleaze need with City-wide need, local residents strongly in favour of policy in perpetuity [insert pie/stats] Some of this for BCC to consider (both administratively and also in terms of policy objectives). Keen for LNT CLH to be in perpetuity and should be manageable.

Consultation question: LLP should apply for
 First let/ first 5 years/ other?

- Opportunities to identify and engage with occupants allocated homes earlier than the 4 - 6 weeks proposed
Identified as desirable not just for CLH as way of communicating with new neighbours, possibly inviting to management committee representation (where such exist). For BCC to consider
- Increasing flexibility within the policy
 - Administrative simplicity will be key to enable Bristol City Council to implement the LLP. However, where there is an identified specific need that is not perhaps not met by the banding system, could CLH schemes be more agile in responding to an identified local need?

Policy should be subject to periodic review of number of applications and housing allocated via LLP and local housing need to consider if still fit for purpose or in need of review.

The LLP survey suggested the following groups should also be prioritised, each discussed briefly:

suggestions submitted through consultation:

- Refugees - need to be clear on definitions. If asylum seeker under Home Office remain HO's responsibility until granted leave to remain and then enter the system as anyone else - need to meet residency requirement and housing need requirement, can be temporarily housed by Home Office while determining status (outside of BCC system) then handed over to appropriate local authority. If under particular scheme eg. Syrian resettlement scheme, treated differently not part of main Home Choice until they receive settled status. Not addressed through this policy unless as everyone else when settled status.
- Single parents still living with their parents in Lockleaze because they can't afford their own place. Should still meet criteria of living in Lockleaze for 2 years so don't need separate category - should test this in the consultation.
- Families in Lockleaze struggling to afford private rent. If they are adequately housed then they are not in housing need and therefore not on Home choice, though might be eligible for shared ownership. Might be in housing need eg. overcrowded and then might be eligible under residency or school or employment criteria.
- Single young person living with their parents but will never get the chance to get on the property ladder. If they are adequately housed then they are not in housing need and therefore not on Home choice, though might be eligible for shared ownership.

Discussion of LLP applied on re-lets of existing properties

We discussed at length the benefit of creating movement in the Lockleaze social housing stock by encouraging those who are over-supplied with bedrooms to downsize, in Lockleaze. They are currently Band 1 though may not be active on the housing register or aware they are eligible

for a smaller home. Whilst not everyone wants to downsize (e.g. they want extra rooms for families to stay, want larger social space that comes with more bedrooms) we know there are residents who would like to remain in the area, and their current property has become too much to handle, bedroom tax is expensive but local 1 beds never come up and they do not want to move out of the area. We also know that overcrowded families are in need of multi-bedroom homes, (although the majority of the demand in BS7 and in Bristol is for 1 and 2 bed homes, with 1 bed homes making up half of the demand). In Lockleaze, some 70% of the housing stock is a 3 bed home, so new developments seek to balance the housing stock with a focus on 1 and 2 bedroom properties. By creating a Local lettings policy, not just on the new homes but also on any local properties where people downsize we are increasing the chance that local people in housing need benefit from new developments by creating helpful movement in the system to help appropriately match housing need and housing stock, and encourage a connected community across the generations. It would be good to pilot local lettings on re-lets in Lockleaze.

Individual Comments through the Survey

- Refugees
- Homeless people
- Local young people not registered with homechoice but registered for help to buy, or young single people
- Single mothers still living with their parents in Lockleaze because they can't afford their own place.
- People living close to Lockleaze e.g. Horfield
- Foster children/teens
- large families that have outgrown their home.
- Families in lockleaze struggling to afford private rent
- Single mothers, single young person living with their parents but will never get the chance to get on the property ladder
- People on benefits in lockleaze who are currently private renting and who have been on the list for 10 plus years like myself
- Families from the area
- Families where there's overcrowding
- Family's with connections to the area
- All housing in the lockleaze area should be offered to locals first or those forced out by concrete cancer. Then to those with family in the area.