



Housing Allocation Policy

Mendlesham Community Land Trust's Housing Needs Criteria

Homes may be available under rental or shared ownership. In compiling a list of nominees who need accommodation in the Parish, Mendlesham Community Land Trust (MCLT) will apply the following:

1. **Conditions precedent** i.e. criteria which must be met in all cases

a) Housing Need: inability of such applicant to afford suitable accommodation on the open market whether for rental or purchase within the Parish.

MCLT will consider the applicant's financial circumstances, including their disposable income and savings, and how that measures against average income levels in the area, and whether the applicant can afford other accommodation or find other accommodation at an affordable price or rent.

Only those will be considered

- i) whose household income and capital are insufficient to buy or rent the home they need in the Area on the open market and
- ii) who are unable to relieve that housing need themselves.

b) Ability to afford MCLT home:

MCLT will require proof of household income, capital and other financial commitments so that the outgoings to which an applicant would be committed are affordable.

c) Requirement of the applicant for accommodation of the type available .

- i) Homes must be suited to the applicant's and family's needs in terms of size of the property available.

2. **Local Connection**

Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing regarding "need" and financial circumstances, consideration will be given to the following, **with preference given to applicants who are able to establish and prove a strong local connection with the Parish.**

An applicant shall be taken to have a strong local connection if he or she satisfies one or more of the following:

a) He or she is ordinarily resident in the Parish at the date of allocation

b) He or she was previously ordinarily resident in the Parish prior to the date of allocation and has family who ordinarily reside there.

c) He or she has a demonstrable need to reside in the Parish by reason of current employment in the Area or taking up permanent employment in the Area.

d) He or she has a demonstrable need to reside in the Parish either to support or to be supported by another member of his / her family who ordinarily resides in the Parish at the date of allocation.

3. Current Accommodation

Account will be taken of:

- a) The suitability / unsuitability of the current accommodation;
- b) State or repair of the current accommodation

4. Length of wait

Those who have applied to be considered and who have been waiting longest will receive higher priority satisfaction of all other factors is equal.

Under-occupation

MCLT shall have the discretion, if necessary, to permit applicants to under-occupy a MCLT home by one bedroom to ensure community sustainability and occupation by persons with a strong local connection.

Advertisement of properties

1. Two months prior to the expected completion of any new MCLT scheme the Trust will advise the Parish Council, Ward Councillors and District Council housing officer that MCLT will be seeking nominations.

2. At all other times MCLT will advise Suffolk County Council and District Council housing officer of the availability of MCLT properties so that they can advise the Trust of any potentially suitable applicants on the Housing Register. In such event the Local Authority will be permitted to contact such applicants and advise them that they may be eligible to apply to be placed on the MCLT waiting list.

3. Intermediate rent properties will be advertised, stipulating the details of the eligibility criteria and advising interested eligible persons to apply to MCLT.

4. Shared ownership properties will be advertised, stipulating the details of the eligibility criteria and advising interested eligible persons to apply to MCLT.

5. Properties will be advertised on MCLT's website, Parish Magazine, Parish Council and other suitable locations where appropriate.

6. Applicants will be considered against MCLT's criteria as set out. Applicants will also be advised that they should complete the relevant Local Authority housing application form.

Advertisement of selection criteria

MCLT clearly sets out on its website, in the Allocations Policy and the Application form the criteria used in the selection process and, where necessary, will provide support to potential applicants in understanding these.

Application process

Application forms for both rental and shared ownership properties are available from: ?????? Address Telephone or can be downloaded from MCLT's website: ????????

All applications should be submitted in paper form to the Secretary of MCLT at the above address.

Individual trustees are prepared to provide help to applicants should they have difficulty with the application process.

Declarations

All applicants for properties will need to provide a signed declaration that the information they have provided is correct. MCLT reserves the right to discontinue an application or seek possession of a property where false / inaccurate information has been provided deliberately.

Registration

When a completed application form is received MCLT will register the date of its receipt and write to the applicant confirming

- a) receipt of their application
- b) the size of the dwelling for which they have applied

The Housing sub-committee will conduct an assessment of eligibility (criterion 1) and decide whether further information and / or an interview is required.

Deciding priority

MCLT will maintain a list of applicants. When a home becomes available contact will be made with all those who satisfy all points on Criterion 1. Those who wish

to be considered will be asked to update their details and offered the opportunity to visit the property. Those who remain interested in the property will then be asked to advise MCLT within 5 days of their visit or at the most 10 days of being offered the opportunity to visit.

Taking account of Criteria 2-4 MCLT will then decide upon the applicant who on MCLT's sole discretion:

- a) meets Criterion 1
- b) justifies greatest priority under Criteria 2-4

For example, a high priority under Criterion 2 would be seen as more important than Criterion 4, but if there were equal weight under Criterion 2, Criterion 4 could become the deciding factor.

However, MCLT reserves the right to assess the weight of circumstances under each of all the Criteria 2-4 and to recognise particular individual circumstances.

These properties are subject to a Planning Obligation under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As these rural housing schemes must take into account the future needs of the village as well as current need, under-occupation may be allowed.

Decisions on applications are made by three members of MCLT's Board of Directors acting as a Housing Sub Committee. They may require an interview with the applicant to confirm that the criteria set out in this policy have been met

If an applicant refuses a property it will be offered to the next applicant on the waiting list. The timescale of the process will be governed by those in the Occupancy Cascade Process below.

Fair Process

MCLT is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all those who apply for housing through the Trust. Allocations will be made on the basis of financial hardship and no one will be discriminated against on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor that is strictly prohibited by law.

Occupancy Cascade Process

1.No MCLT dwelling shall be occupied either on first occupation or any other subsequent occupation unless it is allocated to a household which meets MCLT's Criteria set out above.

2.The terms and conditions set out above and in MCLT's Disposal Models document will apply to all first time and subsequent occupations so that MCLT

can ensure that the homes are occupied on similar terms by properly qualified beneficiary households.

Appeals Process

If an applicant feels that the decision made about their application is unfair, they may submit an appeal, in writing, to MCLT's secretary. This appeal must be made within 7 days of the decision, providing reasons.

A panel of at least 2 MCLT Board members will then hear the appeal within 15 working days. Members of the Appeals Panel will not have been involved in the earlier decision-making process. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be binding on all parties.

Notification of the Panel's decision will be provided within 21 days of the Appeal being heard.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by MCLT and updated where necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of those in housing need in an efficient, fair and transparent way.

Explanatory notes

Area - The Parish of Mendlesham and the immediately surrounding villages.

Family - A person shall be taken to be a member of another's family if he or she is the spouse, civil partner, mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, son, grandparent or grandchild of that other person or if he or she ordinarily resides with that other person without being legally married to or in a civil partnership with that person. Family also includes adopted and step relatives / half blood.

Local Connection - will be taken in the following order of priority:

a) Applicants who meet or have met the strong local connection criteria set out above for at least 3 years to the Parish of Mendlesham;

b) Applicants who meet or have met the strong local connection criteria set out above for at least 1 year to the Parish of Mendlesham;

c) Applicants who meet or have met the strong local connection criteria set out above for at least 3 years to the Parishes immediately surrounding Mendlesham;

d) Applicants who meet or have met the strong local connection criteria set out above for at least 1 year to the Parishes immediately surrounding Mendlesham

e) Anyone with a strong local connection with any Rural Village in the Mid Suffolk area without a time criterion.

Agreed by Board on	
Chair	
Secretary	
Review date	