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# SENIOR HOUSING OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

Hastings District Council (HDC) has been providing affordable and safe housing for seniors who would otherwise struggle to provide accommodation for themselves for over 60 years.

HDC owns and operates nine senior housing complexes comprised of 220 individual units located in Hastings, Flaxmere and Havelock North. The senior housing portfolio consists of exclusively one-bedroom units, 175 of which are single units and 45 of which are double units. The full portfolio is detailed below.

Complex Name	Suburb	Year Built	# of Units	Single Units	Double Units
			<b>220</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>45</b>
Swansea Village	Flaxmere	1978-1981	64	64	0
Parkhaven Village	Akina	1975	29	21	8
Elm Grove	Akina	1970	25	21	4
Tui Vale	Camberley	1964	22	18	4
Kereru Heights	Camberley	1967	25	21	4
Cambridge Court	Mayfair	1975	23	18	5
Cameron Court	Mahora	1986	10	0	10
Anderson Park Close	Havelock North	1967	6	0	6
Oakleigh Downs	Mayfair	1960	16	12	4

## DEFINITION

**Housing Need** is defined as households living in unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable housing and/or cannot easily meet their property requirements in the private rental market.

**Seniors**, in the context of this policy, are defined as peoples aged 65 or older.

**Affordable Housing** is defined by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) as any rental tenancy set at or below 80% of market rate.

## POLICY CONTEXT

The relevant legislation in relation to the senior housing portfolio is detailed below:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1986 – Sets out the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants;
- Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2010 – Improves tenant security and stability while protecting landlords' interests;
- Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019 – Introduced specific and minimum standards for heating, ventilation, moisture ingress and drainage, and draught stopping in rental properties;
- Local Government Act 2002 - Provides the general framework under which local authorities operate and defines the purpose and role of local government;
- Privacy Act 2020 - Sets out the principles for collecting, using, and disclosing personal information;
- Building Act 2004 - Sets out the rules for the construction, alteration, demolition and maintenance of new and existing buildings in New Zealand;
- Housing Improvement Regulations 1947 – Sets minimum requirements for housing.

Within HDC's strategic framework, the key strategies and plans that influence and inform the management and ongoing provision of the HDC senior housing portfolio is:

- Great Communities Strategic Overview 2021
- Long Term Plan 2021-2031

Other policy guidance is provided in the following strategies:

- Hastings Medium and Long Term Housing Strategy
- Positive Ageing Strategy

Other references in HDC produced plans and documents:

- Camberley Community Plan 2020-2025

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the senior housing portfolio is allocated according to need (as defined), remains affordable for tenants and is managed in a financially sustainable manner to support positive outcomes for tenants, communities and Council.

## PRINCIPLES

Hastings District Council will

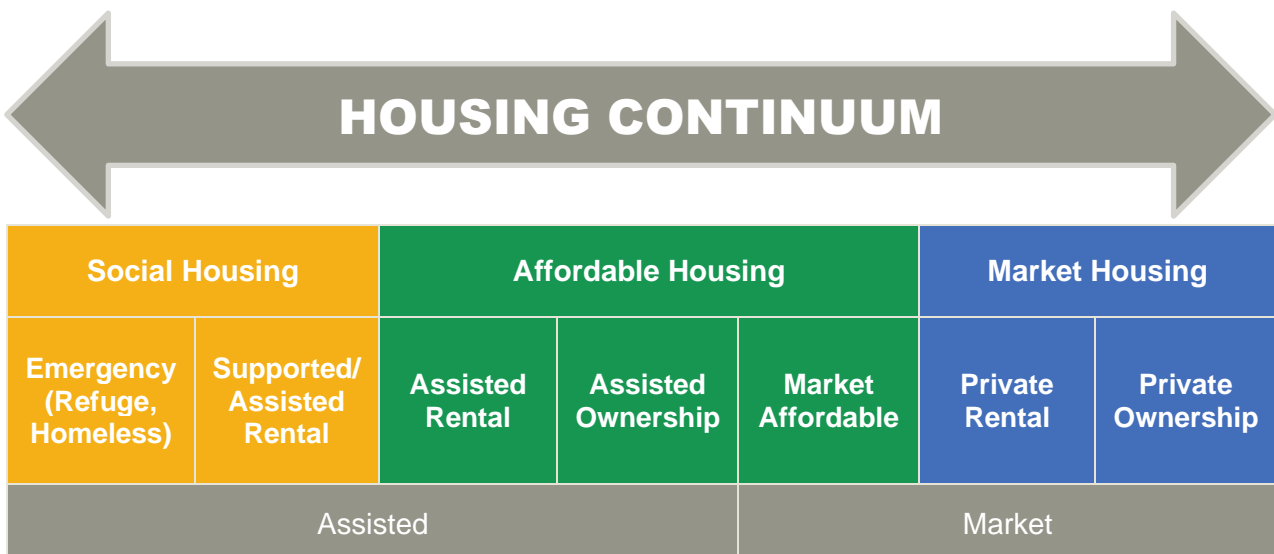
- allocate housing according to need and complex suitability,
- work in partnership to support tenants to live independently,
- respond to demand for senior housing equitably and efficiently,
- ensure the portfolio is managed in a financially sustainable manner,
- maximise occupancy of the housing portfolio, and
- manage the senior housing portfolio in a manner consistent with our obligations as landlords as defined in legislation.

## LEVEL OF SERVICE

Council will provide safe and secure housing.

Council properties will be maintained at least to minimum standards as set out by the Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019 and the Housing Improvement Regulations 1947.

Housing is a key area through which social and economic wellbeing can be influenced. Housing exists on a continuum, and Council's affordable senior housing portfolio is managed as a market affordable option. Council's role as landlord will not extend to the provision of social services to tenants. Council is bound by the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 as a private landlord.



### Welfare

Council reserves the right to consult with health and social welfare providers/professionals in circumstances where tenant needs arise beyond the remit and expertise of Council staff.

### Outsourcing of Operational Management

Council reserves the right to outsource some or all aspects of the operational management of the senior housing portfolio so long as the contracted services are executed in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for HDC affordable senior housing, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- be able to live independently (with or without support),
- be receiving a permanent benefit,
- have a good tenancy history and be of good character verified by two referees,
- meet residency requirements,
- meet age requirements, and
- meet the financial eligibility requirements.

### Residency Requirements

Primary applicants must be a New Zealand citizen or resident and have resided in Hastings District for three years. Exceptions to this can be made at the discretion of HDC in extenuating circumstances, which include but are not limited to the following:

- being a former resident of Hastings District,
- having family who reside in Hastings District,
- needing to move from a rural area of Hawke's Bay due to poor health or loss of accommodation.

### Age Requirements

Primary applicants must meet the following criteria:

- be of qualifying age for New Zealand Superannuation.

### Financial Eligibility

Applicants must also meet the financial eligibility requirements as defined under the Financial Eligibility Threshold.

The Financial Eligibility Threshold will be reviewed annually to align with national Superannuation and Veterans benefit increases. The Income Threshold Formula and Asset Threshold Formula will be reviewed every three years or when there is a relevant central government policy or legislative change.

### Financial Eligibility Threshold

Income Threshold Formula		
	Individuals	Couples
Source: Ministry of Social Development NZ Superannuation and Veterans Pension Rates	Less than 1.2 times the net NZ Superannuation amount, plus living alone allowance for singles	Less than 1.2 times the net NZ Superannuation amount, both must qualify
Asset Threshold Formula		
Source: REINZ Median House Price Hastings	7% Median House Price in Hastings	10% Median House Price in Hastings

Applicants must not own whole or part share in any real estate property and must not be beneficiaries (whether discretionary or fixed) of any trust unless under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of HDC.

Property which has been sold, transferred or otherwise disposed of in the last five years or property/assets that have been placed into a trust in the last 15 years qualify as assets unless under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of HDC.

Council reserves the right to accept tenants who sit outside of the eligibility criteria, in extenuating circumstances.

## **WAITLIST, PRIORITISATION AND ALLOCATION**

### **Waitlist**

Eligible applicants will only be placed on the waitlist once all criteria have been met and the required information has been received, reviewed and approved as sufficient.

The waitlist will be reviewed annually to assess applicants' current housing need. If previously eligible waitlisted applicants no longer meet the eligibility criteria or if applicants are uncontactable, the applicant will be removed from the waitlist. Applicants are considered uncontactable after three unsuccessful attempts at contact.

If an applicant declines two or more units for no legitimate reason, they will be removed from the waitlist. Applicants are eligible to reapply after six months or if their circumstances change.

### **Prioritisation and Allocation**

Waitlisted applicants are prioritised for housing allocation according to housing need, complex suitability and optimum occupancy considerations, not in date order.

An applicant's preference for a particular location will be considered, but it is not guaranteed.

Once prioritised, the suitability of the available unit and complex fit will be considered, and housing will be offered to the applicant.

## **TENANCY MANGEMENT**

### **Affordable Rent**

Rents will be set at a uniform rate for all units in the senior housing portfolio built or acquired before 1990 under Council's affordable senior housing provision.

Rent setting for Council's affordable senior housing will align with the guidance from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) on affordable housing and will not exceed 80% of the market rate in Hastings. The rental market alignment rate as a percentage of market rate within the threshold set by MHUD will be set through Council resolution.

In accordance with legislation, there will be an annual rent review. The review process will include benchmarking with current market rents. Any proposed adjustments to rentals will be reported to Council for a Council decision.

Council reserves the right to work with tenants on a case-by-case basis where extenuating circumstances may present, and Council may make decisions accordingly.

## Maximum Occupancy

If a unit is vacated and suitable for tenancy for more than three months with no suitable applicant on the waitlist or existing tenant requiring transfer able to be identified, Council reserves the right to advertise the property to ensure maximum occupancy. In this scenario, a one-year tenancy will be granted, and full market rent will be payable. At the end of the tenancy, the waitlist and existing tenant transfer requests will be reviewed, and if there are no suitable applicants, a further one-year term may be granted.

## Eligibility Reviews

Tenants are required to notify Council of any change in their circumstances that may impact their eligibility for affordable housing.

Tenants and other household members will be subject to a biennial declaration of their income and assets to determine their ongoing eligibility.

If a tenant's circumstances have changed, and the tenant no longer meets the eligibility criteria for Council's affordable senior housing, Council reserves the right to increase the tenant's rent up to market rate at the annual rent review.

If a tenant refuses to declare their annual income and assets on request, Council reserves the right to increase the tenant's rent to market rate at the annual rent review.

## Property Inspections

Each unit within the senior housing portfolio will be inspected at least once annually. Council reserves the right to perform additional property inspections as deemed necessary while ensuring appropriate notice is provided to tenants in keeping with legislative requirements.

## Length of Tenure

Council affordable senior housing portfolio tenancies will be recognised as "Periodic Tenancies" as set out in the Residential Tenancy Act 1986. Council is committed to the provision of secure tenure, subject to ongoing eligibility.

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy is maintained by Community Wellbeing and Services Group. The content of this policy will be reviewed every year.

## CHANGE HISTORY

Amendment(s)	Date	Updated by and authority