

Findhorn Ecovillage Land & Housing Trust Allocations Policy

Date of Consultation: September - October 2010
Version Number: 3
Originally Adopted: 3 July 2007
Amended: 7th December 2010
Review Date: December 2011



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Scope

This policy describes the circumstances by which an individual may apply to receive support from the Land & Housing Trust. It explains who may be eligible and who may be disqualified from such support, and how priorities will be allocated. It does not set out to describe the specific nature of such support, which will change from time to time and will be set out in a Housing Support Policy as may be applied to a specific property or cluster.

Context

Ekopia conducted a housing needs questionnaire in 2004 and produced proposals for a land trust in 2005 and 2006, which were discussed at various community meetings.

In September 2006 an agreement was reached between Ekopia Ltd., Duneland Ltd. and the Barrels East Cluster/Soillse Group. This set up the Land Trust as a division of Ekopia, the main aim of which is to provide subsidies to members of the community seeking affordable housing.

In 2010 an agreement was finalised to enable support for Station House Co-operative members to be realised.

In 2010 an agreement was discussed/reached with the Moray Council and Duneland Ltd. to enable affordable housing to be made available at the East Whins cluster.

Applications

Applications are welcome from any member of the community who wishes to be supported to reside in the area and who supports the purposes and aspirations of the Ecovillage and its associated community. These aims are broad and may be described as an intention to create a human settlement that is ecologically, economically, socially and spiritually sustainable. A commitment to the ideals expressed in 'Common Ground', (available from the New Findhorn Association) is expected.

Further reading is available in such documents as: 'The Essential Guide', available from the Titleholders' Association; The 'Deed of Community Conditions' also available from the Titleholders' Association; Numerous other books, magazines and publications.

Membership of Ekopia is not a pre-requisite of Housing Support, and neither is formal membership of any other community group or association, although such memberships may be reasonable interpreted as providing evidence of support for the Ecovillage.

Administration of Applications

The Land & Housing Trust is a division of Ekopia Ltd. It is administered by the Land Trust Committee who shall deal with all applications. Membership of this group is broadly representative of the many stakeholders involved. Initial membership shall comprise 2 representatives appointed by each of the Findhorn Foundation, New Findhorn Association and Ekopia.

Acceptance of Applications

A register shall be kept of all successful applications. This register shall be open to inspection by members of Ekopia, and residents of the Park given one week's notice.

The Register shall be reviewed annually by the Land Trust Committee.

Disqualifications and Exclusions

The following are criteria which shall disqualify any applicant.

1) One who is, or who has been in the 12 months prior to their application, a member of the Land Trust Committee.

(A close relative of either of the above shall not be disqualified, but must complete full details in the declaration of the application form. A 'close relative' is defined as a parent, grandparent, child, step-child, spouse or co-habittee.)

2) One who is not or has never been resident in the counties of Moray and Nairn for at least six months.

3) The following are criteria that, at the discretion of the Land Trust Committee, may exclude any applicant from the register who has a demonstrable history of unacceptable behaviour, including but not limited to:

evictions for anti-social behaviour

non-payment of rent
non-payment of other monies owing to local organisations.

4) Exclusions may also be based on financial circumstances (see below under Awards.)

5) Anyone wishing to receive Housing Support for a property which is part of a Cluster may also require to receive the acceptance of the Cluster group itself. Whether or not this is the case may be determined by examining the bye-laws of any particular Cluster.

Awards

Awards of support from the Land Trust shall be made according to the following criteria.

- a) Length of service to the community, including a suggested minimum period of two years work with an organisation affiliated to the Ecovillage.
- b) Financial circumstances.

Length of service to the community

This shall be measured by years of employment with or continuous part-time service (including paid self-employed status) to any organisation affiliated with the Ecovillage project. In the case of individuals of aged 65 or over, a prior demonstration of committed work shall be an acceptable criterion. Whether or not any given organisation has such an affiliation shall be determined by the Land Trust Committee from time to time.

Financial Circumstances

Candidates are expected to make a full disclosure of their financial circumstances to the Land Trust Committee (such information to be held in confidence by members of that Committee). The Committee shall take cognisance of the current Scottish Government 'Lift' scheme or its successor(s). This currently excludes those whose gross household income is:

- more than £19,700 for a single adult household.
- more than £25,100 for a 2+ adult household .

Shared Ownership housing is a financial partnership between the Land Trust and the occupant(s) of the house. The above criteria are therefore not intended to provide a rigid system of points, but are rather the basis for an attunement to an appropriate outcome for all concerned.

Equal Opportunities

Ekopia operates an Equal Opportunities Policy and the operation of Ekopia is based on the principle of full involvement where everyone, regardless of sex, marital status, disability, special needs, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependants or employment status, has an equal opportunity to contribute to and participate in the organisation.

We are therefore committed to the principle of equal opportunities and will work towards it in practice as a community organisation. This policy shall apply in full to this Allocations Policy.

Tenure

Shared Ownership

'Shared Ownership' support in which the individual is the owner or part owner of the property and wishes support with the capital costs of purchase.

Co-operative Ownership

This applies to housing co-ops and may take the form of support for either capital costs or rentals.

Rentals

It is expected that rental properties shall become available in due course at the East Whins cluster and perhaps elsewhere at the Park.

Change of Circumstances

Applicants whose names are maintained on the register shall keep the Land Trust Committee appraised in writing of any material changes in their circumstances. Failure to do so may result in their name being removed from the Register.

Appeals/Complaints

Any appeal against a decision made by or complaints concerning the operation of the Land & Housing Trust Committee may be made in writing to the Board of Ekopia Ltd.

Review of Policy

This Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Land Trust Committee who shall publish any suggested amendments and consult with the Board and ideally also the membership of Ekopia Ltd. and the community at large prior to implementing them.