

Senior Housing Policy

9 August 2017

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Senior Housing Policy is to ensure that Masterton District Council's senior housing assets and service is managed sustainably and fairly.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Masterton District Council-owned senior housing units and complexes.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Masterton District Council (MDC) acknowledges that there is a genuine need for long-term affordable accommodation for seniors in Masterton and that MDC has a role in meeting this need.

MDC is committed to retaining and enhancing our senior housing stock. MDC will ensure that:

- Council's investment in senior housing will include rates input;
- Council's senior housing units shall continue to be available for rental at below market rates for those with limited financial means;
- rental rates are reviewed at least every three years;
- applications for senior housing will be considered in a consistent and fair manner;
- the asset limit criteria is adjusted by changes in the Consumer Price Index every three years or as otherwise changed by resolution of the Council;
- senior housing is managed in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 1986; and
- any surpluses (or proceeds from divestment) will be:
 - applied to retire housing debt; or
 - retained for future maintenance, upgrades or development of senior housing units.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for senior housing, prospective tenants must meet the following criteria:

- New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.
- Aged 60 or above.
- Receiving a permanent benefit.
- Assets not exceeding \$25,000 if single and \$35,000 if a couple. Assets exclude furniture, cars and personal effects. Assets include cash in the bank, investments, shares, trust benefits, and interests in property.
- Not have owned a house in the past five years.

If accessible units are available, people with disabilities aged 55 or over (and receiving an invalid's or other benefit from the Ministry of Social Development), who are compatible with village living and who meet the other criteria above will be considered on a case by case basis.

TENANCY

Animals

Dogs are not allowed.

One cat (desexed) and birds may be allowed, at the discretion of MDC.

Welfare

MDC acknowledges its role as landlord and will be accessible and diligent towards the general welfare of its tenants. This will not extend to the provision of social services to tenants.

MDC will endeavour to provide its tenants with the contact information for professional services and service providers. MDC staff will consult with health, social welfare and other professional service providers where tenant concerns or difficulties arise outside of the MDC's expertise.

Additional Tenancy Provisions

Additional tenancy provisions will be detailed within the Senior Housing Procedure.

DISPOSAL/DIVESTMENT

MDC may consider disposing of some senior housing units or a complex if:

- improvements can be made to other housing units with the proceeds of the sale;
- the occupancy rate is considered unsatisfactory and there is no known interest in tenanting the vacant units; or
- they are considered to be uneconomic to maintain or upgrade.

MDC will consult with the local community and other elderly housing providers in the district before disposing of any complex.

MDC may not dispose of the Panama complex without prior approval from the Courts (as per the 1965 Supreme Court decision relating to the bequeathed property).

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Senior Housing Procedure

REFERENCES

Residential Tenancies Act 1986

Adopted by:	Masterton District Council
Date of Approval:	9 August 2017
Policy Number:	MDC023
Review Date:	August 2020

Appendix 1: Senior Housing Properties

MDC's senior housing properties were acquired through government incentives of low interest loans to provide affordable housing for older people with limited means.

MDC provides 74 units across four senior housing sites. The table below details the senior housing locations, the types of accommodation available at each location and the weekly rent.

Location	Units	Weekly Rent (17/18)
Panama Village Ngaumutawa Road	25 Bedsits	\$94.00
	15 One Bedroom Units	\$100.00
	4 One Bedroom (Double) Units	\$106.00
Laurent Place Between High Street and South Road	8 Bedsits	\$90.00
	4 One Bedroom Units	\$97.00
	6 One Bedroom Houses	\$107.00
Bodmin Place 182-184 Chapel Street	8 Bedsits	\$90.00
Truro Place 190 Chapel Street	4 One Bedroom Units	\$97.00
	4 Garages	\$10.00

Panama Village was originally bequest to the Wairarapa Hospital Board in 1938 and was subject to a Supreme Court decision in 1965 that transferred to property to the then Masterton Borough Council (refer to document ID 6045 in MDC's document management system).



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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Senior Housing Procedure is to provide clear guidelines for the provision, tenancy and management of Masterton District Council's senior housing assets and service.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Masterton District Council-owned senior housing units and complexes.

RECEIVING AND CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS

All applicants must:

- fully complete the tenant application form;
- provide two personal character references from a person who is not a family member; and
- provide a reference from a doctor advising they can live independently and look after themselves with a minimum of social service support (such as Meals on Wheels, District Nurse visits or home help with cleaning).

MDC will meet with applicants in person to determine their suitability. All suitable applicants will be placed on a waiting list and will be offered accommodation in order of their placement on the list.

The acceptance (or otherwise) of prospective tenants remains at the full discretion of MDC.

Applications from people living outside the Masterton district will be considered.

Location Preferences

An applicant's preference for any particular location will be taken into account and accommodated where possible. Tenants can transfer to another Council senior housing unit or complex only in extenuating or special circumstances, at the full discretion of MDC.

TENANCY

Rent

Rents will be set to recover all costs associated with operating the senior housing activity.

Tenants are required to pay a bond of two weeks rent on acceptance of a unit. Rent must be paid fortnightly in advance by direct debit or as arranged.

Occupancy

Only the person/s named on the tenancy agreement may reside at the premises.

Animals

Dogs are not allowed.

One cat (desexed) and birds may be allowed, at the discretion of MDC.

Vehicles

One vehicle that must be owned by, and registered to, the tenant with a current Warrant of Fitness.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed inside the units, in accordance with MDC's Smokefree Policy. Smoking is permitted outside but must not affect other tenants.

Change in Circumstances

A tenant's eligibility to occupy a unit will be re-assessed if reasonable grounds exist to indicate a change in eligibility status.

Where it is suspected that there are existing or impending eligibility issues for medical reasons, MDC will, in the first instance, seek to facilitate the provision of the appropriate social service support.

Subsequently, if the tenant is clearly unable to meet the eligibility on an ongoing basis, MDC will give the tenant notice to vacate. This is based on the need to protect the interest and wellbeing of the tenant and the interests and wellbeing of other tenants.

Any notice to vacate will be issued in accordance with the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

Level of Service

MDC is committed to providing safe and secure units in a good state of repair. Improvements will be made to units progressively as funds permit.

MDC will provide in all senior housing units:

- floor coverings;
- an electric range;
- one smoke detector;
- a rubbish and recycling bin; and
- a clothesline.

All other fittings, furnishings and chattels are the responsibility of the tenant.

Outdoor lawn and grounds maintenance is provided by MDC. The tenant is responsible for the small garden area adjacent to their unit.

Complaints

If more than three complaints are received about a tenant within a six month period, and those complaints are substantiated following an investigation, then MDC may work with the tenant and social agencies to find more appropriate accommodation.

If, after taking all reasonable steps, appropriate alternative accommodation cannot be found, MDC may issue the tenant with a notice to vacate. Any such notice will be issued in accordance with the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

MANAGEMENT OF SENIOR HOUSING

Marketing and Usage

MDC will maintain a waiting list of prospective tenants which will be regularly reviewed and updated. If a waiting list does not exist MDC will market and promote its housing units to ensure maximum usage.

Corporate Overheads

An appropriate corporate overhead will be applied to reflect the full cost of the senior housing activity.

Depreciation

Depreciation will be recognised as an operating expense. The funded depreciation will be utilised to fund the ongoing refurbishments of units on a cyclic basis.

Service Delivery

MDC currently administers and manages the senior housing units in-house. MDC may consider alternative arrangements or partnerships for the administration and management of units if it is demonstrably in the best interests of tenants and provides value for money.

MDC will consult with the community before changing its approach to delivering the senior housing service.

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE

This procedure will be reviewed every three years.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Senior Housing Policy

Smokefree Policy

REFERENCES

Residential Tenancies Act 1986