

29 March 2022



Title	Key Worker Policy
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision
Report Author	Marta Imig, Strategic Lead, Housing
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/a
Corporate Priority	Housing
Recommendations	Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee is asked to: Approve the revised Key Worker Policy.
Reason for Recommendation	This proposed revised policy will ensure that these homes are let in a fair and transparent way.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The existing Key Worker Policy (in Appendix A) was approved on 14 April 2021, with a review period after 12 months, following consultation.
- 1.2 The proposed revised policy draft (in Appendix B) has been consulted on with the Council's wholly owned housing company Knowle Green Estate Limited (KGE).
- 1.3 The revised policy seeks to simplify the process and slightly widens the definition of a key worker, specifically it removes the requirement for health workers and education workers to be "employed by a public sector organisation". This enables agency workers employed in healthcare and education in Spelthorne to access key worker housing. In addition, the definition was expanded to include workers of publicly funded organisation as well as workers of registered charities, and other workers who can be assessed and agreed on merit. This change is being proposed after the difficulties encountered by KGE in the allocation of key worker housing to its flats at Benwell House. In that case, Dexters Estate Agents had to be involved to find suitable applicants outside of the Housing Register.

2. Options analysis and proposal

Option 1: To reject the policy

The Committee will not adopt the revised policy, the existing version of the policy would remain in place until new revised version of the policy is agreed.

Option 2: To adopt the proposed revised policy (recommended)

The adoption of the policy will ensure that homes are let in fair and transparent way to the residents who require key worker housing, in accordance with the revised definition of a key worker.

Option 3: To adopt an altered version of the proposed policy

To propose changes to the proposed policy, consequently adopting a revised version of the policy.

3. Financial implications

3.1 There are currently no financial implications in the adoption and implementation of the proposed revised policy as it has been based around existing resources and technical capabilities. A wider review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy is taking place, we propose to make all software changes required at the same time to provide efficiencies.

3.2 In operation, should a key worker no longer qualify to remain in their home, and the Housing Provider has to commence possession proceedings, there may be a financial impact on the Council should it have a duty to provide emergency accommodation under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). The policy makes clear, however, that the Housing Provider and the Council will work together to support tenants affected, to minimise the risk of them requiring this.

4. Other considerations

4.1 N/A

5. Equality and Diversity

5.1 An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out and is provided in Appendix C.

6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

6.1 The proposed revised policy does not have an impact on the Council's sustainability / climate change position.

6.2 The operation of the Council's Housing Register is managed online, with email used as primary contact methods, reducing the use of paper and printing. The sign-up process for new tenants has now moved to a fully digital service.

7. Timetable for implementation

7.1 Once approved, the policy will be implemented immediately.

7.2 This policy will be comprehensively reviewed every 5 years.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Existing Key Worker Policy

Appendix B: Proposed Key Worker Policy - review

Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment for Acquisition of Key Worker Policy