



**KEYWAYS HOUSING
ALLOCATION POLICY**

Consultation

**April 2016
Housing Options Team
Corby Borough Council**

This document/publication is also available on our website www.corby.gov.uk and the Keyways website www.keyways.org.uk

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to:

Housing Options Manager
Housing Options Team
Corby Borough Council
The Corby Cube
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CONTENTS

Consultation process and how to respond	Page 4
Background	Page 5
Consultation	Page 6
• Statutory Homeless	Page 6
• Band C – On Notice	Page 7
• 2 Bedroom Flats/Maisonettes (without a garden)	Page 8
Consultee Information	Page 9

CONSULTATION PROCESS AND HOW TO RESPOND

Topic of this consultation:	Corby Borough Council Keyways Housing Allocation Policy
Geographical scope:	Corby Borough

Basic Information

To:	This consultation is aimed primarily at service users, internal sections of Corby Borough Council, Housing Providers, representative groups, community and voluntary organisations.
Responsible for consultation:	This consultation is being lead by the Housing Options Manager of Corby Borough Council.
Duration:	This consultation will run for four weeks from Wednesday 27 April 2016 to Tuesday 24 May 2016.
Enquiries:	For enquiries, please contact the following: Housing.options@corby.gov.uk 01536 464629/31
How to respond:	By email to: Housing.options@corby.gov.uk Or by post to: Housing Options Manager Housing Options Team Corby Borough Council The Corby Cube Parkland Gateway Corby Northants NN17 1QG

After the consultation:	A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published on the Corby Borough Council website within 3 months of the end of the consultation.
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BACKGROUND

The Corby Borough Council's Housing Allocation Policy is required to be reviewed annually.

A review is conducted to ensure that the local authority continues to:

- give preference to households who are in the most housing need (including the reasonable preference categories),
- allocates social housing efficiently,
- considers any impact from the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and subsequent benefit changes,
- and complies with the Regulations made by the Secretary of State.

Members of Corby Borough Council's One Corby Policy Committee approved the following policy changes on 26 April 2016, subject to consultation.

CONSULTATION

Statutory Homeless

There has been a marked increase in homelessness from Autumn 2015 onwards. This in turn has caused an increase in the use of temporary accommodation, B&B usage, B&B costs and storage of furniture costs. The council's temporary accommodation is currently being fully utilised and the shortage of move on accommodation has created a waiting list for temporary accommodation and officers having to place homeless households out of the borough or in B&B where available.

Below are the statistics of the percentage increase from 2014/15 to 2015/2016:

122% increase in homeless applications
140% increase in B&B costs
143% increase in storage of furniture costs
71% increase in households being placed out of the borough

Although the council has the power to discharge homeless duties into the private sector, this is nearly impossible due to the scarce availability and high competition for affordable private sector 2 bedroom accommodation.

This means that most homeless households are being awarded the highest band on Keyways (Band A) for a period of 4 weeks for one offer only.

However, 4 weeks choice on Keyways is causing a build-up of households in temporary accommodation which then causes the increase in B&B usage, increased costs and out of borough placements for other homeless households waiting for the temporary accommodation to become available.

Therefore the proposed revision for this criteria is:

All statutory homeless applicants will continue to be awarded the highest priority (Band A) however, have 4 weeks choice to bid on Keyways removed.

The software (Keyways) will auto bid for the next suitable property within the Corby Borough.

This will be considered as a final offer to the household and a discharge of homeless duty.

The above auto bidding currently happens on homeless applications after the four weeks

	<p><i>choice on Keyways has expired. This proposal is to bring this forward in the process to the date of being accepted as statutory homeless.</i></p> <p><i>(Exceptional circumstances will be considered where there is evidence that a household cannot live in certain areas of Corby for safety reasons i.e. Domestic Violence)</i></p>
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AGREE

 DISAGREE

 DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

Band C – On Notice

<p>Affordable <u>family</u> accommodation in the private sector is extremely hard to source resulting in families who have been given notice through no fault of their own depending more on the social sector.</p> <p>The current Band C awarded is proving insufficient to obtain a nomination through Keyways resulting in an increase in homeless applications and the family having to move to temporary accommodation. (households with dependent children are automatic priority need)</p> <p>In order to assist with the Prevention of Homelessness it is recommended that households with children be placed in Band B.</p>	
<p>Therefore the proposed revision is;</p>	<p><i>Create Band B for families who have been given notice through no fault of their own.</i></p> <p><i>Change Band C for non families who have been given notice through no fault of their own. E.g. Landlords selling their property or rent increases making the property unaffordable.</i></p>

AGREE

 DISAGREE

 DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

2 Bedroom Flats/Maisonettes (without a garden)

<p>Current entitlement to this type of property is nominated on band order to singles/couples or families.</p> <p>This is the only type of general needs property that is not offered in the <u>first instance</u> to a household that will make use of all bedrooms.</p> <p>The policy needs to be consistent throughout by making best use of stock and taking into consideration future changes to the rate of housing benefit in the social sector being capped at the relevant local housing allowance rate, aligning the rules to that of the private sector. (This would result in unemployed single households under 35 years of age being awarded the room rate only which will result in a shortfall and may make a 2 bedroom property unaffordable)</p> <p>Supported by the Keyways Working Party and Tenants Voice.</p>	
<p>Therefore the proposed revision is;</p>	<p><i>Households needing 2 bedrooms will be given preference for 2 bed flat/maisonettes without a garden (over single applicants and couples)</i></p>

AGREE

DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

CONSULTEE INFORMATION

Name of person completing the consultation;

Name of department/housing provider/agency;

Contact telephone number;

Email address;

Thank you in advance of your participation.