

Summary of changes to the Keyways Housing Allocation Scheme: Consultation 2016

Number	Change	Location in new scheme	Page	Theme	Rationale
1	The local connection criteria for employment includes those who are eligible under the 'Right to Move' guidance. This is applies to current social tenants in England who are employed, or who has been offered employment in Kettering Borough AND who needs to move to avoid hardship.	Section 5.3	17	Right to Move, Qualifying Criteria, Priority Banding	'Right to Move' Statutory Guidance issued March 2015.
2	The local connection criteria for residency has been amended so that an applicant must be currently resident in Kettering Borough, as well as have a past residency of at least three out of the last five years. Previously an applicant did not need to be currently resident.	Section 5.3	17	Qualifying Criteria	We have found that an applicant who is resident outside the Borough, but has three out of five years past residency, can qualify but then lose their local connection the longer they live outside of the Borough. This is giving applicants false hope and unrealistic Housing Options.
3	Households accepted as Statutorily Homeless by Kettering Borough Council can be considered as having a local connection under special circumstances, even if they do not meet the set criteria.	Section 5.3	18	Qualifying Criteria	The local connection criteria for Statutory Homeless households differs to that of the Keyways Housing Allocation Scheme. This can cause the Council difficulty when discharging their duty to homeless households.
4	The amount of housing related debt an applicant can owe before failing to qualify has been increased. Applicants in an urgent housing need (defined as Band A or B) will now be considered if they have current or former rent arrears or recharge arrears up to £500, in addition to other housing related debt, up to £500. Previously, an applicant in urgent housing need would fail to qualify if they had a combined amount of housing related debt totally £500.	Section 5.4	19	Qualifying Criteria	A competitive rental market and changes to Benefit and Support Schemes under Welfare Reform have led to applicants reaching the previous £500 qualification mark far quicker. However, we feel that it is still important to separate rent and recharge arrears and other housing related debt such as Council Tax or Housing Benefit Overpayments, to ensure outstanding debt is taken seriously.
5	Additional circumstances have been identified where some existing social tenants may not qualify due to requiring specialist accommodation, and where their needs could better met in their current property.	Section 4.6	13	Qualifying Criteria	As an example, a tenant who has already had various adaptations fitted to their current property in the past, and requires a further adaptation, could have their housing need better met by further adapting their current accommodation. This would ensure we are making best use of housing stock in the Borough.

6	A new Band A criteria is proposed for those who are overcrowded with a severe need for additional space.	Section 6.1	23	Priority Band	Previously, the severe overcrowding band did not apply to tenants of the Council. The new band will ensure that all tenants of all tenures are awarded the same level of priority when overcrowded.
7	A new Band B criteria is proposed for households requiring family accommodation who have been served with a Section 21 notice. This criteria was originally awarded Band C; single households who are served with a Section 21 notice will remain in Band C.	Section 6.4	30	Priority Band	Homelessness of households with children, from the Private Rented Sector is currently the most common cause of homelessness in the Borough. Increasing their priority Band will mean the scheme can remain a viable homeless prevention tool.
8	A new Band B criteria is proposed for existing social tenants who meet the Right to Move criteria, and need to move to avoid hardship as a result of their employment location.	Section 6.4	30	Priority Band	'Right to Move' Statutory Guidance issued March 2015
9	A former Band D criteria for households with a low need for additional space (not entitled to separate bedrooms under welfare reform) has been removed.	Removed from Section 6.7	35	Priority Band	Due to an increase in the demand for family accommodation, these households have little to no prospect of being housed.
10	A new Appendix (A) has been inserted which sets out how we will apply our various preference criteria to different property types.	Appendix A	60	Preference	This will provide transparency and allow applicants to make informed choices when bidding.
11	Single parents and couples with one dependent child will no longer be eligible to bid for three bedroom houses, only two bedroom properties. These households currently receive a reduced preference for this property type.	Appendix B	75	Preference	Due to an increase in the demand for family accommodation, these households have little to no prospect of being housed in a three bedroom house.
12	Single applicants, couples, or households who need two bedrooms but have only non-dependent children resident will no longer be able to bid for flats with gardens (classed as family accommodation). These households currently receive a reduced preference for this property type.	Appendix B	75	Preference	There is a high demand for two bedroom family accommodation and these household types have little to no prospect of being housed in a two bedroom flat with a garden.
13	Any households requiring two bedrooms will be given preference on two bedroom flats (without gardens) over single applicants or couples who only require one bedroom. Previously we did not set any preference criteria on two bedroom flats (without gardens) and they were allocated to the applicant with the highest band and the longest effective date.	Section 7	37	Preference	Further to the proposal above, households containing only non-dependent children and requiring two bedroom accommodation will receive preference on two bedroom flats (without gardens) above those who only need one bedroom.

14	Households requiring a three bedroom property with six bed spaces (three double bedrooms) will now be given equal preference when bidding for parlour type properties (a three bedroom house with a separate room downstairs that can be used as a bedroom).	Section 11.5	52	Preference	Households requiring six bed spaces are at a disadvantage under the current scheme because there is a shortage of houses offering just six bed spaces.
15	Households containing only non-dependent children and requiring three bedrooms will not be eligible to bid for houses and will instead receive an offer of a property without a garden (maisonette / flat). These households currently receive a reduced preference when bidding for houses.	Section 11.3	51	Preference	Due to an increase in the demand for family accommodation, these households have little to no prospect of being housed in a three bedroom house. Non-dependent children are eligible to apply to Keyways in their own right, reducing the demand for larger accommodation.

How can you have your say?

We welcome your comments on the proposed changes, and any other parts of the Allocation Scheme that you feel should be reviewed. You can submit comments by email to ketteringkeyways@kettering.gov.uk or write to us at The Allocations Team, Kettering Borough Council, Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX. Please note we may not respond to your comments individually, but will consider them all as part of our consultation.

What happens next?

The consultation will run from 14th March to 22nd April 2016. Following this, further amendments may be made, taking into consideration the feedback, before the Housing Allocation Scheme is approved by Members at an Executive Committee meeting.