

Recommendations and Comments to Cabinet – from the Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel that met on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016

30<sup>th</sup> June – Cabinet

Part I

Key Worker Housing in the Royal Borough

**The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel agreed in principle with the recommendations in the report to Cabinet but felt that it was not a workable scheme as it currently stood as the report was lacking detail.**

The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel asked the following questions – they hoped the answers would be available for the Cabinet meeting on Thursday night:

<b>Question raised</b>	<b>Response</b>
That all Military Personnel (Army, Airforce, Navy) be included in the key worker definition.	It is not intended to extend the definition at this stage because the Army welfare team report that they are able to support their employees into accommodation options when they are discharged. We work with the military who already have a wide range of options for housing through Haig, Hythe and other providers.
If a key worker gained accommodation and then their location of employment changed (e.g. to High Wycombe) would they lose their accommodation?	Eviction would not be the automatic response. The management policies would dictate how the individual is supported through the change. They may change job and still be classed as a key worker.
How would the prioritisation of applications from key workers be undertaken? It was felt criteria needed to be clear from the start or it would be challenged.	We would prioritise this through the current allocations policy and the keyworker list
If a key worker changed profession would they lose their home?	Not immediately it would depend what they changed profession to / what they earned
Are there any limitations on who key workers could sell their property to?	Properties would not be eligible for sale under this scheme.
How does para 2.7 square with para 2.5 – will there be further refinement?	Yes

Question raised	Response
<p>Para 2.10 ('over the next 18 months...') – the Panel was under the impression that the Council did not have a defined policy type and that it preferred ownership to rental options?</p>	<p>While we offer home ownership options to those who want them e.g. DIYSO, affordability of home ownership for some is an issue and therefore the rental option needs to be considered and offered.</p> <p>Through RBWM Property Company Limited, properties will be initially established for rent which will provide an ongoing revenue stream. It will also allow an asset base to be built up against which the company can leverage and borrow monies if it wished in the future to grow the asset base further. Sale of assets will provide a 'one off' gain only.</p> <p>Alternative schemes have been created that will assist those seeking to purchase their own properties. In addition the provision of a rented portfolio provides an individual with options and some breathing space in which they can save for a deposit in order to buy their own home and therefore the rented portfolio is also providing a launch pad for this.</p>
<p>Are they 100% rented? On assured shorthold tenancies?</p>	<p>The Council is not able to offer an Assured Tenancy but housing associations can. RBWM Property Company Limited would not be proposing to offer an assured tenancy but provide a fixed term tenancy (this can be done on a one or two year basis) which can be either renewed or extended. This will enable the best use of the homes we have available and provide flexibility and freedom to cater for changing circumstances whilst at the same time not providing the same rights as a secure tenant. In circumstances similar to that of a school caretaker we could end the tenancy (with a reasonable notice period) if the tenant is no longer eligible.</p>
<p>It was suggested that they key worker document on the web had reduced in detail and might need to be re-looked at again.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p>Would salaries be looked at when deciding whether someone qualified as a key worker?</p>	<p>In a number of Boroughs, a salary cap (household income cap) has been put on those eligible to apply eg Westminster's scheme is aimed at assisting those in a salary band of £20-39K or a maximum</p>

Question raised	Response
	household income of £90k. This is a policy matter for RBWM to determine. Through Housing Options advice, those with a greater salary will be offered a more suitable product such as shared ownership.
It was stated that the shared ownership scheme might or might not involve a key worker – it was asked whether this was true as key worker housing was listed in the report under the key implications section as being a measure of success?	It is true a key worker could apply for shared ownership.
That the terms needed to be set out along with information about how it could be renewed (if renewal was an option).	Agreed