

Management Response: KRiSP Storage Review June 2018

Review Objective:

KRiSP carried out a review of RBK housing (Housing revenue Account - HRA) stock for storage. The panel had the following four objectives:

1. Availability for storage (including buildings and land)
2. Scooter storage
3. Bikes and buggies storage
4. Garden Equipment storage.

Review Outcome:

KRiSP made six recommendations for service improvement focusing on allocations policy, monitoring and charging.

General comments:

Housing Management would like to express their appreciation to KRiSP for this report, which has involved an audit of known storage facilities, benchmarking against other local authority areas and consideration of health and safety factors.

Detailed response to recommendations:

Recommendation 1
To prepare a simple policy, overseen by a designated officer, covering storage. This should include a register, charging, allocation and restrictions on use.
The policy could be co-produced with Resident Service Officers and members of the proposed Resident Pool.
<p>Management response:</p> <p>There is currently a shed tenancy agreement in existence but we acknowledge that this may be out of date</p> <p>The shed tenancy agreement will be reviewed and expanded upon to incorporate other forms of storage and cover some of the additional issues highlighted in this review</p> <p>Housing management team would welcome resident input into this process and will set up a small working group to oversee the review.</p> <p>Timing of this action will be subject to officer resource and capacity.</p>

We accept this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

There should be a register of storage with a Unique Property Reference Number, overseen by a designated officer.

Management response:

- We acknowledge that the current known storage data does not constitute a comprehensive list of all resident storage facilities within and managed alongside HRA properties in the borough
- We accept that ensuring an accurate register is in place will enable increased efficiencies with respect to allocation and monitoring of storage facilities
- We will consider the best way in which to review, update and implement ongoing monitoring of a central storage register accessible to all relevant officers in synergy with the updated policy outlined in Recommendation 1
- Timing of this action will be subject to officer resource and capacity.

We accept this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

The Council should consider charging to ensure the register is up to date and income to cover costs of maintenance.

Consultation with residents on which types of storage should be charged, usage and level of charge.

Management response:

- We acknowledge that the current charging policy for storage is inconsistent with variable rates, and that a uniform charging system has the potential to release unused storage for residents in greater need and generate additional income
- However, the administrative changes would require additional officer resource and any changes made to fees and charges must be made in consultation with residents at a time when the council is already consulting extensively with residents on the principles and

co-design of the New Housing Service

- Whilst we agree in principle with this recommendation will investigate charging options it may not be appropriate to implement any changes at this time.

We accept this recommendation.

Recommendation 4

The Council should have a simple allocation policy and procedure demonstrating fairness. This should be published on the website.

Part of the co-production of the policy above.

Management response:

- We accept that there is currently no clear allocation policy and that storage is generally allocated on a first come, first served basis rather than prioritisation by need
- We will develop a simple allocation policy in consultation with residents as part of the storage policy design work outlined in Recommendation 1.
- The policy will be published on the website and available to view by residents.

We accept this recommendation.

Recommendation 5

The Council should monitor use of storage space to ensure safety.

Management response:

- The existing shed storage agreement prohibits the storage of dangerous / flammable substances or any obstructions to the surrounding area and stipulates that letting of the storage facility will be terminated if residents are found to be in breach of this agreement. Residents are also encouraged to report any suspected misuse of storage facilities in their neighbourhood.
- The review has identified that we have in excess of 1,800 storage units in the borough and routine monitoring of all these facilities would not be a good use of resources.
- Current health & safety inspections identify unlocked storage sheds and action is taken to resolve these. We consider this to be the area of greatest risk

- In addition we will consult with RSOs and fire risk assessors to identify any higher risk storage areas and put plans in place to reduce risk as appropriate

We partially accept this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

The Council should monitor trends in usage for storage.

Management response:

- There is currently no borough-wide record of demand for storage and we welcome the audit that KRiSP has conducted regarding resident priorities
- We will consider ways in which demand for storage and reason for use can be recorded via a waiting list as part of the development of a central storage register as outlined in Recommendation 2.

We accept this recommendation.

Additional learning

In an addendum to the report, KRiSP members highlighted the difficulties they experienced with engagement from some RBK staff and Resident Association representatives. This caused some initial delays in the information gathering phase. RBK recognises the importance of the work that KRiSP undertakes in the borough and is committed to supporting panel members wherever they can to carry out their reviews in a timely manner. The housing management team consider that for this review the KRiSP panel were given access to an adequate number of staff for interview but accept there may have been some delays experienced in making these arrangements.

In order to address this issue going forward and, as part of a review of the panel's terms of reference, it has been agreed that a lead officer in a relevant service area be appointed at the start of each review. The lead officer will act as a single point of contact for panel members throughout the review and will assist in the coordination of access to other officers as required.