

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Title of report:** Kirklees Council Pet Policy

**1. Purpose of report:**

- 1.1 This report is to obtain approval from Cabinet for a new Pets Policy for Kirklees Council (KC) properties to be implemented by Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing and Pinnacle Group. (See Appendix 1)
- 1.2 It is essential that KC has a robust policy to enable effective management of pet associated issues and to provide clear guidance on pet ownership for both officers and tenants.
- 1.3 The policy will replace an existing KNH Good Pet Keeping Guide with a more robust and consistent approach to enable responsible pet ownership in KC tenanted properties. It also gives KNH and Pinnacle Group officers the ability to be clearer with tenants where accommodation or choice of pets are not suitable.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	Yes, it affects council tenants in all wards
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b>	Yes
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	Yes
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Karl Battersby - 18.05.20
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Eamonn Croston - 18.05.20
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	Julie Muscroft - 20.05.20
<b>Cabinet member <u>portfolio lead for Housing and Democracy</u></b>	Cllr Cathy Scott

**Electoral wards affected:** All wards

**Ward councillors consulted:** Cllr Cathy Scott, Portfolio lead for Housing and Democracy

**Public or private –** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** - Yes

## 2. Summary

- 2.1 The report outlines a proposal for the introduction of a new KC Pet Policy developed for approval by the Council. It is essential that KC has a robust policy to enable effective management of pet associated issues and provide clear guidance on pet ownership for both officers and tenants.
- 2.2 The policy will replace an existing KNH Good Pet Keeping guide with a more robust and consistent approach to enable responsible pet ownership in KC owned properties. It also gives KNH and Pinnacle Group officers the ability to be clearer with tenants where accommodation or choice of pets are not suitable.

## 3. Information required to take a decision

- 3.1 A Good Pet Keeping guide, developed by KNH in September 2012, was designed to provide pet owners with guidance on their roles and responsibilities to both their pets and neighbours.
- 3.2 Over the years it became apparent that this guide is no longer robust enough and a transparent KC Pet Policy is required to support effective tenancy management and enforcement action where needed in both KNH and Pinnacle Group managed properties.
- 3.3 There has been an increase in concerns raised regarding the level of potentially dangerous dogs in high rise accommodation, flats with shared communal space and the impact this has on communities and people's quiet enjoyment of their homes.
- 3.4 Problems with dog fouling and nuisance from pets is prevalent in parts of some neighbourhoods, particularly in and around communities with shared communal space.
- 3.5 There is inconsistency in the current approach in granting permission for the keeping of pets in varying property types, despite tenants needing permission being a condition in the KC Tenancy Agreement and outlined in the KNH Good Pet Keeping guide.
- 3.6 The proposed new KC Pet Policy provides a clear and balanced approach in relation to pet keeping. It also ensures relevant controls are in place to prevent issues of pet nuisance escalating, including information on suitable property types.

The key aims of the new KC Pet Policy are:

- To ensure pets are kept in line with the terms of the policy and the KC tenancy agreement
- That suitable property types are identified in relation to keeping cats and dogs
- That tenants are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping pets
- To provide clear guidance to Officers
- To ensure complaints about nuisance pets can be dealt with swiftly and effectively and in accordance with all associated policies and good practice guidance.
- To ensure that all tenants are treated in a fair and equitable way.

## 4. Proposal

- 4.1 KNH and Pinnacle Group acknowledge that pets can offer significant benefits to their owners and consider that properly managed pets contribute positively to tenants' lives in terms of companionship, enhancing wellbeing and improving quality of life.
- 4.2 In most cases, tenants who keep pets do so responsibly and in a manner that does not adversely affect their neighbours, their community or people who have reason to visit them.
- 4.3 However, KNH and Pinnacle Group must act to prevent and deal with situations where problematic issues relating to pets adversely affects the safety or quality of life of neighbours, the wider community or other people who have reason to visit including officers.
- 4.4 The Council also has a responsibility to ensure it takes appropriate action where it feels pets are subject to inappropriate or irresponsible pet ownership, where the pet is adversely affected.
- 4.5 The scope of the new KC Pet Policy proposals covers the areas outlined below and links to the current KC Tenancy Agreement, the Anti-social Behaviour Policy and the KNH Good Practice guide on responsible pet keeping.
  - Relevant legislation – Dangerous Dogs Act, Animal Health and Welfare Act and the Dangerous Wild Animal Act.
  - Permissions
  - Type of pets that can be kept and accommodation suitability
  - Existing tenants with pets
  - Conditions under which permission will be granted or refused
  - Tenant responsibilities
  - Dangerous Dogs and Index of Exempt dogs
  - Actions that will be taken where pets are kept inappropriately or cause nuisance to neighbours
  - Assistance Pets – e.g. guide dogs
  - How pet associated tenancy management issues will be addressed.
  - Micro chipping and neutering requirements

## 5. Implications for the Council

- 5.1 **Working with People**

It is acknowledged that the keeping pets have positive impact on people lives and offers significant benefits including enhancing wellbeing.
- 5.2 **Place Based Working**

The proposed policy will deliver outcomes that in addition to supporting sustained and successful tenancies will enhance wellbeing and improve quality of life for individuals as well as families.

**5.3 Climate Change and Air Quality**

The proposal in this report will not have any impact on climate change or air quality.

**5.4 Improving outcomes for children**

There are no implications for improving the outcomes for children.

**5.5 Legal Implications**

This will reduce the likelihood of legal action against KC due to the behaviour of pets in council accommodation.

**5.6 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this policy.

**6. Consultees and their opinions**

- 6.1 KNH Neighbourhood Forum representatives, KNH Tenant and Leaseholder Panel, Pinnacle Group and KC Adult Social Care (in respect of extra care housing) have all been consulted and contributed to the development of the new KC Pet Policy. Cllr Cathy Scott - Portfolio lead has been consulted and is supportive of the policy.

**7. Next steps and timelines**

- 7.1 Approval of the proposed KC Pet Policy at Cabinet in May 2020 will be followed by policy implementation in June 2020.

**8. Officer Recommendations and reasons**

- 8.1 That Members support and approve the proposed new KC Pet Policy.

**9. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

- 9.1 That Members approve the KC Pet Policy for the reasons outlined in this report.

**10. Contact officers**

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Sarah Clayton - Head of Service KNH – [sarah.clayton@knh.org.uk](mailto:sarah.clayton@knh.org.uk) 01484 221000

**11. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Kirklees Council Pet Policy

**12. Service Director responsible**

- 12.1 Karl Battersby, Service Director, Growth and Housing  
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