

BROADLAND COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Broadland Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Development Panel of Broadland District Council, held on Wednesday, 17 January 2024 at 6.01 pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: J Bailey (Chairman), E Laming (Vice-Chair), L Douglass, K Leggett, M Murrell, R Potter, D Thomas and S Ward

Cabinet Member in Attendance: Councillor: N Harpley

Officers in Attendance: M Pursehouse (Assistant Director of Individuals and Families), S Oldfield (Partnerships & Innovation Lead) and J Hammond (Democratic Services Officer)

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

18. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

19. POLICY FOR CUSTOMERS EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families introduced the proposed Policy which was designed specifically for customers experiencing and perpetrating Domestic Abuse to give clear and succinct information about what services the Council could provide to assist.

Members were informed that Domestic Abuse was the second highest cause of homelessness, just behind the cost of private sector rental fees. Current Housing data showed that within the districts of Broadland and South Norfolk there were an average of 13 cases of Domestic Abuse each month. In October 2023 there was a 62 percent rise in homelessness resulting from Domestic Abuse recorded, compared to the same month in 2022.

Members were advised that Domestic Abuse could come in many forms:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

Discussion turned to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and the Partnerships and Innovation Lead explained that the accreditation was the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. DAHA accreditation used a triangulated assurance method of assessment (Data & Information, People and Observation) to ensure standards of good practice were embedded in an organisation and its workforce. In order for the accreditation to be maintained, a continued programme of monitoring was utilised.

The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families further explained that all tier 1 and tier 2 local authorities in Norfolk were working to complete the accreditation.

In response to a query, the Partnerships and Innovation Lead confirmed that a number of Housing Associations were also working towards DAHA accreditation, including Clarion Housing Association and Saffron Housing Trust who were the two main housing providers in Broadland and South Norfolk. The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families added that once the Council was accredited it would aim to promote best practice to all its partner agencies.

Members were advised that the Policy would also have a focus on those perpetrating Domestic Abuse in order to reduce the risk of re-offending. It was noted that in some cases the perpetrator had witnessed abuse or was the victim of abuse as a child.

A member requested that the Policy include support for victims with pets to ensure that the pets were taken care of, and where possible, not separated from their owners. Officers confirmed that they would look to add this into the Policy before it was put to Cabinet. Officers further advised that the Council worked with a number of charities who arranged foster placements for pets until their owners were in a position to care for them again. In response to an additional query, the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families added that he was investigating whether pets could be allowed in some of the properties provided by Housing Associations.

It was suggested that emergency contact details be added to the website as a 'floating link' to appear on every page of the Council's website. The Partnerships and Innovation Lead advised the Committee that she was working with the Communications and IT teams to update the relevant pages on the website, she would investigate whether it was possible to add 'floating links' to the website or find an alternative solution if it was not possible.

The Committee were pleased to see a specific Domestic Abuse Policy being put into place and after further discussion it was unanimously,

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet agree the Policy for customers experiencing domestic abuse.

(The meeting concluded at 6.37 pm)

Chairman