

Housing - policy and strategy implementation and updates

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Portfolio: Housing and communities

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

This report is to provide a brief outline of each of the attached Appended reports

Recommendations:

The recommendations for each report can be found within the individual Appended reports

1. Background

- 1.1 Key changes in our housing approach have included the significant increase in temporary accommodation stock, both councils becoming registered providers and the creation of Broadland Living which in time will provide affordable housing due to the successful capital bid through the local authority housing fund.
- 1.2 All these changes create new policy requirements for the Council. Some of these changes are mandatory, some are discretionary but are self-imposed as the new business model has provided a great opportunity to provide a more economically viable holistic housing offer to our residents.
- 1.3 This document provides high level information on each of the documents being presented to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Development

Panel, including their purpose, their interconnectivity to other policies/strategies within and the required governance process for each.

2. Background of relevant documents

2.1. Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 1)

2.1.1. The purpose of the tenancy strategy is two-fold

- To provide guidance and levels of expectations to social and private landlords in our district, the rent that is charged, the type of tenancy afforded to our residents and the strategies within the council that may impact their service delivery
- This provides officers and members a voice in a sector that we otherwise have minimal control
- In turn this provides the council companies parameters on how they should oversee their tenants, what tenancies should be afforded and in what circumstances

2.1.2. Whilst the strategy has no specific enforcement power, it allows officers and members a realistic minimal expectation to make sure concerns and issues are raised when required.

BDC Governance	Date
BDC Exec team	26/01/24
BDC Communities, Housing & Planning Policy	06/03/24
O&S pre cabinet	16/04/24
Cabinet	23/04/24
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2.2. Tenancy Policies (Appendix 2)

2.2.1. As the council is now a registered provider and has the capability to provide a range of tenancies (Localism Act 2011) it is essential that the council now has a tenancy policy itself. Much of this document will not be utilised, however each tenancy that the council can provide in law must be explored and detailed when it would be utilised to allow justification of why such a tenancy is not provided.

2.2.2. The policy also clarifies how the council will support tenancy sustainment and prevent unnecessary eviction, tackle tenancy fraud and ensure the appropriate management of tenancies.

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2.3. Temporary Accommodation placement policy (Appendix 3)

2.3.1. The purpose of this document is to set out Broadland Council's policy for accommodating homeless households in temporary accommodation. This document has not been required as placements traditionally were able to be made locally resulting in limited challenge. However, as supply shrinks and the importance of utilising our own stock becomes ever greater due to financial pressures challenges may increase in the future. This covers placements made in the following circumstances:

- Interim placements under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 while the client's homelessness is investigated.
- Temporary accommodation placements for those accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the Housing Act and waiting for rehousing.
- Section 190 duty to accommodate intentionally homeless applicants

2.3.2. The document aims to make sure that were we challenged regarding a placement, and that challenge were to be escalated to the ombudsman that we would have suitable coverage to mitigate any punitive action.

2.3.3. The document will also provide core structure and guidance to officers

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2.4. Private rental sector offer (Statement on Accommodation Offers to Discharge Homeless Duties) – (Appendix 4)

2.4.1. Access to housing continues to be very difficult. The council through their robust strategic approach to housing delivery, have had good levels of social housing for some time. However, despite this delivery there remains too few for our demand. Customers can be unwilling to consider other options, this policy details when

other options can be utilised, under what legal powers and how that power can be utilised to discharge our duties.

2.4.2. At present we have people in temporary accommodation who are not as proactive as we would like to find a private rental property for many understandable reasons. This policy would provide the framework in empowering people to move to a home, rather than waiting for their perfect outcome. We need to be clearer about how we shape our support for residents to offset the cost of TA which has risen for 2 primary reasons:

- Overall demand being greater than supply
- Throughput through TA being far longer, in many instances more than triple pre covid levels

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2.5. **S202 – Procedure for Conducting Internal (Statutory) Reviews of Homeless Decisions - (Appendix 5)**

2.5.1. This document details our homeless reviews, and the instances by which they can occur. This document is required due to three core reasons:

- Broadland currently have no approach detailed within their constitution. This means the power is not delegated to the officers currently undertaking the reviews. Officers are currently acting within a best practice model.
- Broadland and South Norfolk have two differing approaches, South Norfolk being very administrative and Broadland lacking oversight. A complimentary approach would be desirable, however is not essential.
- Officers anticipate that now further outcomes are being made available greater than the traditional offer of a social house, that further reviews may occur. It is essential that we create policies and procedures, and constitutional changes are in place to allow the council to lawfully act upon these reviews.

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3. **Issues and Risks**

- 3.1. **Resource Implications** – there are no resource implications as all aspects can be delivered in house.
- 3.2. **Legal Implications** – the policies within will address areas of the business that could potentially face legal challenge.
- 3.3. **Equality Implications** – any policies or strategies within that could raise equality concerns have been subject to an equality impact assessment and will be attached to the paper
- 3.4. **Environmental Impact** – There are no known environmental impacts
- 3.5. **Crime and Disorder** - each report details how crime and disorder may be impacted. The documents attached however is to make sure landlords are held to account, homelessness and rough sleeping is reduced and throughput to suitable long term accommodation is efficient. A decent and sustainable home is the foundation to living a strong and prosperous life, thus reducing the risk of crime being committed
- 3.6. **Risks** - Each risk detailed within each policy paper

4. **Conclusion**

- 4.1. These reports address several infrastructure concerns that have occurred as a result of becoming an registered provider, in addition to other aspects that make sure all aspects of our housing service are subject to high standards but protected from unreasonable legal challenge. Whilst we have avoided such challenges up to this point the more competition there is for limited housing the more likely challenges will be forthcoming.

5. **Recommendation**

- 5.1. For Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Development Panel to review and consider all detailed policies within the appendices and recommend to cabinet that they be adopted