

CABINET DECISIONS ON REPORTS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC

The following report was presented to the OSC on 30 August 2019 for comment prior to determination by the Cabinet on 10 September 2019.

The following is an extract from those Cabinet minutes:

(1) Northumberland Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy 2019

Members were presented with the new draft Northumberland County Council Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy 2019, which informed how Northumberland County Council's Housing Service would assist and support tenants experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D). The report of the Communities and Place OSC was attached to the back of the report.

Councillor Jones introduced the report, highlighting that it incorporated the Home Office's most recent definition of domestic abuse. Scrutiny had made some valuable points about the report, particularly around gender and safeguarding issues, and she was content that the policy was robust. She was pleased to report that Housing Services was also now a member of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance.

Mr Soderquest added that staff were well placed to identify abuse and that the aim was to seek full accreditation with DAHA. The policy was intended to be gender neutral and would be reviewed to ensure the correct terminology was used throughout. The Council's services should protect tenants in their homes, and experience was bearing this out when staff were trained.

Councillor Gallacher presented the report from Communities and Place OSC. The Committee had supported the draft policy. He welcomed the clarification on gender neutrality, reference to the policy on the Homefinder website and staff training. The Committee had considered the report in some depth, and he thanked the staff for the work done.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the draft Domestic Abuse Policy, which sets out how the Council will respond to tenants who may be either victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse, be approved; and
- (b) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

(2) Food and Feed Safety and Standards Service Plan 2019/20

The report presented to Cabinet, for its consideration and endorsement, the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2019/20. The report of the Communities and Place OSC was attached to the back of the report.

Mr Soderquest highlighted the main points of the report which detailed how the service deployed its resources on an annual basis. A high percentage of 3-5 star premises presented less risk, and they therefore dropped down the inspection regime. There was no statutory responsibility to display ratings on the premises, and the inspection covered the premises and management, not the quality of the food. Regarding performance, the service had achieved or exceeded all of its performance indicators for 2018-19, whilst still supporting the Produced in Northumberland initiative (now 115 organisations).

In response to a question regarding charging, Mr Soderquest advised that the Council was not entitled to charge, but consultation and advice was offered over and above the standard inspection programme and charges were implemented where possible.

Councillor Gallacher advised that Communities and Place OSC had endorsed the report and had discussed the star ratings and preparation for Brexit. He thanked officers for a clear and robust report.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2019/20 be received and adopted; and
- (b) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

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