

**Council: Tuesday, 4 November 2014**

**Motion:** Councillor Tom Davey

Protecting residents from domestic violence

Council abhors domestic violence and notes the severe and sometimes life-long impacts it has upon victims. Council recognises it has a duty to help safeguard against abuse, protecting those at risk and supporting efforts to prosecute perpetrators.

This is a duty the council takes seriously and has sought to reflect in its Housing Allocations Policy. Council notes that the proposed changes are designed and intended to help remove residents at risk of domestic violence from immediate harm. Council recognises that the previous policy encouraged people at risk to remain in harm's way by giving them a false sense of imminent housing through being in Band 1. Alternative accommodation was not always readily or swiftly available. The new scheme gives victims the option of presenting for immediate shelter where the level of threat means they are at risk by remaining where they are. Council believes giving people access to immediate accommodation is an important safeguarding step.

Council further notes that, once safe, more permanent re-housing arrangements can be explored, with existing secure tenancies being retained.

Council regrets that this change to the Allocations Policy has been misunderstood or misrepresented and used for political campaigning.

Council calls for the implementation of the policy to enable immediate access to safe accommodation for residents who are at risk, or victims, of domestic violence and for the council to work with partner organisations to ensure people are fully aware of their options should the situation sadly arise.

*Under Full Council Procedure Rule 23.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.*