



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You



Badersfield Resident

24 April 2020

Dear resident

Old officers mess, Badersfield

Following the recent changes regarding the use of the site, we wanted to give you a full update on the latest developments.

As you may already be aware, during the coronavirus outbreak Broadland District Council has looked to make use of the former officers' mess at Badersfield for temporary accommodation for those in the community who find themselves in some form of housing need. In addition, the Home Office has purchased temporary accommodation at the site for up to 94 asylum seekers.

These are two completely separate arrangements, with the Council currently housing up to 20 households at the site.

It is our understanding that the Home Office arrangements have been put in place because coronavirus restrictions have meant the normal immigration mechanism for managing and processing asylum seeker applications has been suspended.

Normally, applicants are placed in what is termed Initial Accommodation, where they are processed and provided information about life and cultural practices in the UK. They stay there for a month before being dispersed to accommodation, such as B&Bs, across the country. It is this normal dispersal mechanism and process that is suspended.

Adding to this situation, is an increase in the number of people coming forward and presenting themselves to authorities as seeking asylum.

We understand that these two factors have led to temporary accommodation centres being set up across the UK, identified in quick time due to the pressing need. Due to the emergency, any form of consultation by the Home Office has not been undertaken. As a result, the police, Broadland District Council and other public sector agencies were provided with little or no advanced notification of this facility being established.

Cromwell Housing operate and manage the site, along with SERCO who supports the asylum process with accommodation and operations across the UK. SERCO are highly experienced in this work with years of experience with their regional manager working alongside Cromwell to ensure the necessary provisions and structures are in place.

Broadland District Council and Norfolk Police held a site meeting with SERCO and Cromwell this week to fully understand and satisfy ourselves that these arrangements will support vulnerable residents and the local community.

It is important to be clear that this accommodation is not a detention centre but community accommodation. All residents at the site are required to sign in and out when they leave and return as well as remaining in the premises after 9pm each night. All residents are required to sleep at the accommodation each night. A system is in place to record breaches, which will count against their asylum application. While they are advised to remain on site, they cannot be lawfully stopped from leaving.

All residents have information provided to them in their own language including current social distancing measures. This will be backed up by Cromwell staff and supported by Norfolk Police. Experience from other locations and the normal dispersal accommodation is that most individuals adhere to the guidelines.

The information provided from the Home Office is that this is a temporary facility currently expected to be in operation for up to six months. This will be kept under constant review. The Council has received no information that there is any intention to use this site as a permanent centre for those seeking asylum in the UK. As previously advised Broadland District Council will house tenants there for the duration of the current crisis.

Your local police beat officers and response officers from North Norfolk and Broadland will be providing additional patrols in your area to reassure any community concerns. Broadland Council Housing staff will be working with the tenants we have placed in this facility to provide support and prepare to move them into more sustainable accommodation.

The Police and Council recognise local community concerns and we will continue to support local communities with information, advice and appropriate patrol presence to reassure communities. To feed any general concerns about the facility then please contact me on mpursehouse@broadland.gov.uk. if you are worried about your safety or the safety of others then please contact Norfolk Police on 101 or enquiries@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

Yours sincerely

Mike Pursehouse
Assistant Director
Broadland District Council

Superintendent Chris Harvey
District Commander - Broadland
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