

Cabinet



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Friday, 5 April 2024

A meeting of the **Cabinet** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices on **Monday, 15 April 2024 at 10.00 am.**

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately one and a half hours

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item are requested to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. It will not always be possible to accommodate requests after that time. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel:01263 516010, Email:emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so should inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed. Please note that this meeting is live-streamed: youtube.com/@nndcedemocracy/streams

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Cllr W Fredericks, Cllr L Shires, Cllr T Adams, Cllr A Brown, Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr C Ringer, Cllr J Toye, Cllr A Varley and Cllr L Withington

All other Members of the Council for information.
Members of the Management Team, appropriate Officers, Press and Public



If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance
If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact us

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A G E N D A

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

1 - 6

To approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 March 2024.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

To receive questions and statements from the public, if any.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

7 - 12

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (see attached guidance and flowchart)

5. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

To receive oral questions from Members, if any

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendation to Cabinet at the meeting held on 20th March 2024:

Agenda Item 12: Progress Report on Net Zero:

(C) all reports to the Council's decision-making bodies should include a section on net zero impact so that a change in the carbon footprint is highlighted and explained.

8. HOUSING STRATEGY - UPDATED ACTION PLAN

13 - 32

Executive Summary	This report sets out a review of the Council's existing Housing Strategy (2022-2026) including an evaluation of progress against the existing aims and action plan; and proposes an updated action plan for the period 2024 - 2027
Options considered	A range of interventions were considered as part of the development of the current Housing Strategy. These have shaped the proposed updated action plan
Consultation(s)	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples' Services Officers identified in the action plan in Appendix B

Recommendations	It is recommended that Cabinet agree the proposed new Housing Strategy actions set out in Appendix B of this report
Reasons for recommendations	To ensure the Council's Housing Strategy continues to provide a framework for delivery of the Corporate Plan aim "Meeting our housing need".
Background papers	None

Wards affected	Districtwide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples' Services
Contact Officer	Nicky Debbage / Graham Connolly, Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager, nicky.debbage@north-norfolk.gov.uk / graham.connolly@north-norfolk.gov.uk

9. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2024

33 – 100

Executive Summary	<p>NNDC is responsible for assessing and addressing housing need in the District. The Council's Allocation Schemes sets out the rules, criteria and procedures that determine how we allocate affordable homes to households in North Norfolk.</p> <p>The current Allocations scheme has broadly been in place for over 14 years and now requires review to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that there is a consistent and fair approach for our Registered Provider (RP) partners to letting homes to meet the greatest housing needs.</p> <p>Following consultation with partner RPs and feedback from customers, a proposed new Allocations Scheme has been produced.</p> <p>The proposed new Allocations Scheme will require statutory consultation before any changes could be implemented</p>
Options considered	The Allocations Scheme is a statutory policy of the Council which must be relevant and effective, not providing an up to date Allocations Scheme in line with current legislation is not an option
Consultation(s)	RP partners Customers of "Your Choice Your Home" Staff across housing / housing related teams
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the proposed allocations scheme summarised in this report and attached as Appendix A - Agree that NNDC undertake statutory consultation with key stakeholders - Agree that, following consultation, a further report be bought back to Cabinet for consideration ahead of formal adoption of the Allocation Scheme -

Reasons for recommendations	To ensure the Council has an effective Allocations Scheme in place – a statutory policy of the Council
Background papers	None

Wards affected	Districtwide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples' Services
Contact Officer	Nicky Debbage, Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager, nicky.debbage@north-norfolk.gov.uk

10. CABELL PARK - FURTHER UPDATE

101 - 106

Executive Summary	<p>Cabbell Park is situated on Mill Road in Cromer and was previously the home of Cromer Town Football Club.</p> <p>Ownership of Cabbell Park was taken on by NNDC in 2015, with a section at the front of the site sold to make way for a new medical practice. The capital sum from this sale (approx. £360k) is held for the purpose of providing/improving football facilities in the town.</p> <p>Cromer Youth Football Club (CYFC) have for many years been seeking a home for their club. Since the late 80s they have been playing matches at various satellite sites across the district, including Fearn's Field, Northrepps, Southrepps, Bodham, East Runton and more.</p> <p>A project is currently underway to build a 3G football facility on the adjacent Academy/Sports Centre site, for which the youth football club are a partner club.</p> <p>It is proposed that Cabbell Park could become the home of CYFC. This report provides further information regarding potential costs for such a project</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The necessary improvements are made, and additional facilities added, to Cabbell Park to enable CYFC to lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations. 2. Do not follow option one and investigate further options for the site.
Consultation(s)	This proposal has been loosely discussed with CYFC, Norfolk FA, NNDC Estates Team, The Local Member and senior officers prior to the report being brought forward.
Recommendations	That cabinet instruct officers to deliver this project as outlined in this report, providing the necessary improvements and provision of additional facilities to Cabbell Park to enable Cromer Youth Football Club to

	lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations.
Reasons for recommendations	This is the first time in 30 years that a tangible option exists to provide a home for CYFC, a solution which will also maximise the use of Cabbell Park. A permanent home in Cromer for the club would enable them to grow and secure football in the town for a number of years to come. Football clubs for many are the heart of the community and this is an opportunity to bring this back to the town.
Background papers	NA

Wards affected	Cromer Town & Suffield Park
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Liz Withington
Contact Officer	Colin Brown, Leisure and Locality Services Manager

11. ROCKET HOUSE, CROMER

107 - 114

Executive Summary	<p>The Rocket House building is a multi-let property with community facilities on Cromer East Promenade that requires substantial repairs, maintenance and energy improvement works to ensure a sustainable future for the building.</p> <p>Following the previous report to Cabinet on 4th September 2023, detailing options available, a visit to the property and technical briefing was made available for members.</p> <p>To gain further clarity over the damp issues, at the 8th January 2024 Cabinet meeting it was agreed to commission further additional investigation into the fabric of the building to identify the cause of damp, establish remedial options and budget costings. This investigation has since been completed and officers seek approval to use the existing capital budget and move forward with repairing the building.</p>
Options considered	Options have been previously considered in the 4 th September 2023 Cabinet report. All options in that report remain open following the investigations into the building condition.
Consultation(s)	Local Members
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <p>1.1 Delegate to and the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, the existing allocated capital budget to action remedial works as soon feasibly possible to the property, as</p>

	<p>outlined in the Intrusive Inspection and Damp Investigation Report, subject to the vacation of the tenant (RNLI).</p> <p>1.2 Delegate to and the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake energy improvement works to the property in order to increase the energy performance rating to the required standard for leasing.</p> <p>1.3 Delegates authority to the Asset Strategy Manager to commence negotiation of terms for a new lease, with the existing RNLI tenant, with a further report back to Cabinet in accordance with governance procedures.</p>
Reasons for recommendations	To address the ongoing issues with damp in the building and increase the energy performance of the building for leasing.
Background papers	Cabinet reports September 2023 and January 2024

Wards affected	Cromer Town and Suffield Park
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr L Shires, Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr A Varley, Cllr L Withington
Contact Officer	Renata Garfoot, Asset Strategy Manager Renata.garfoot@north-norfolk.gov.uk

12. SHERINGHAM - ENABLING LAND

115 - 120

Executive Summary	An area of land (“the enabling land”) adjacent to the Reef Leisure Centre had been marketed with offers received and with Cabinet supporting one particular option on 2 March 2020. The proposed purchaser has obtained planning consent for a 37 room apart-hotel. It is now requested there be an extension to the legal agreement to provide time to satisfy the relevant purchase condition in the agreement.
Options considered	Alternative options have been considered and can be found in exempt appendix B and C.
Consultation(s)	PFH for Finance and Assets
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet resolve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To grant a 4 month extension to the legal agreement to enable the purchaser sufficient time to satisfy the remaining offer condition.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor the progress of the party to ensure they satisfy the remaining offer condition, to be delegated to the Asset Strategy Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets. To explore the previous offers submitted for this site, in parallel to the extension.
Reasons for recommendations	To ensure the sound management of the Council's land holding and assets.
Background papers	Cabinet paper Sheringham Enabling Land 2 nd March 2020

Wards affected	Sheringham
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr, L Shires
Contact Officer	Renata Garfoot. Asset Strategy Manager. Renata.Garfoot@North-Norfolk.gov.uk

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution:

"That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act."

Information in this appendix (Agenda Item 12) involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A (as amended) to the Local Government Act 1972.

This paragraph relates to:

Para 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:

The information is commercially sensitive, relating to commercial options being considered by the authority. Releasing this information would be likely to have a prejudicial impact upon third parties as well as the Council in obtaining best value.

14. PRIVATE BUSINESS

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CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 11 March 2024 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Cllr W Fredericks (Deputy Chair)	Cllr L Shires
Cllr T Adams (Chair)	Cllr A Brown
Cllr H Blathwayt	Cllr P Heinrich
Cllr C Ringer	Cllr A Varley
Cllr L Withington	

Members also attending:

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
Cllr J Toyne
Cllr L Vickers

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Democratic Services Manager, Director for Place & Climate Change, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer, Director for Resources / S151 Officer, Assistant Director for Planning and Policy and Performance Management Officer

30 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment: Minute 26 should read **Clare** Road not Blair Road.

31 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

33 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

34 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chairman advised members that they could ask questions throughout the meeting as matters arose.

35 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The following recommendations were made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 14th February:

Local Economic Strategy & Action Plan:

(A) that an appendix to the full strategy and action plan be produced to show all the different sectors to the economy in North Norfolk and when available information be provided in the document that sets out the value of each sector to the local economy, and

(B) the strategy part is extracted from the full document into a shorter summary form that could be more quickly read.

Cllr P Heinrich, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, said that there had been a full debate on the strategy and he was happy to accept the recommendations.

RESOLVED

To accept the above recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

36 BUDGET MONITORING P10

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced this item. She began by explaining that the forecast gap had widened slightly due to an overspend on temporary accommodation, adding that the reasons for this were set out in section 2.34 of the report and saying that the Council had no choice but to react as it had a legal duty regarding homelessness. She referred to pages 21 – 22, where interest and the potential for borrowing was set out. She reminded members that borrowing was needed for the purchase of waste vehicles but the Council was now in a position where it may be needed to support with cashflow, caused by council tax precept collection. She then asked the DFR to speak about plans to address the deficit going forward. The DFR said that any borrowing would be short-term until interest rates came down. Regarding the current financial position, she said that there had been some windfall income of £135k relating to a VAT issue from 2009 and this would be used to offset the deficit.

Cllr W Fredericks thanked officers for their hard work. She said that it was important to continue to lobby central government and it had been successful in part, as representatives from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) were coming to visit the district on Wednesday, following extensive pressure. They would be in attendance for several hours to learn about the unique housing-related challenges presented in North Norfolk, due to its demographic and the pressure placed by second homes. She said that she would continue to lobby hard for support when she met with them on Wednesday.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED to

- 1) Note the contents of the report and the current forecast year end position.
- 2) Note the actions to take some short term borrowing and to call back some of the investments that are in our pooled funds.
- 3) Approve the use of the Economic Regeneration Reserve as required as proposed in paragraph 2.25.
- 4) Approve the use of £0.2m of the Treasury Management reserve to cover the overspend as proposed in paragraph 2.42.

- 5) Note that officers will work together to take action to reduce the overall projected General Fund deficit at the for 2023/24.

Reason for the decision:

To update members on the current budget monitoring position for the Council.

**37 REPORTING PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27
ACTION PLAN 2023-24 - TO END OF QUARTER 3 - 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

The Chairman introduced this item. He explained that only one action had been flagged as being unable to be completed during 2023/2024: 'Working with partners to agree an investment in local housing initiatives, funded through the second homes council tax premium'. This had been delayed due to the legislation that allowed it not coming into effect until 2025. He said that in the meantime, discussions with neighbouring District Councils and Norfolk County Council about the retention of second homes council tax income were ongoing and a report would be coming back with draft proposals.

He then highlighted the following key areas of the report – regarding the Local Plan Examination, the Council was now awaiting feedback. Coastwise drop-in events had been very successful so far. Huge success had been achieved in bringing a banking hub to Holt and the completion of the Cedars Building in North Walsham.

Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Waste Management, said that regarding Action No.2 – 'Develop a response to the waste and resources strategy', although it was highlighted as green, that was due to the work that had been undertaken by the Council, which was on target. The one risk associated with this was central government's insufficient allocation of funds to roll out the food waste collection programme, which was taking longer than the Council would like.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr C Ringer and

RESOLVED

To note the report.

38 LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, Cllr Heinrich, introduced this item. He began by thanking officers for all their hard work. He said that page 65 of the report set out the range of consultations and discussions that had taken place and this ensured that it was a strategy that worked with the Council's partners to support the best economic development and growth. Cllr Heinrich said that he supported the recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman said that the case studies in the document highlighted key successes. He asked for a timescale for the production of an Executive Summary.

It was proposed by Cllr P Heinrich, seconded by Cllr H Blathwayt and

RESOLVED

To endorse the Economic Strategy & Action Plan and recommend to Full Council its formal adoption.

Reason for the recommendation:

Adoption by the Council will serve to illustrate the importance and value that NNDC places on its role in helping to create a vibrant, healthy and sustainable local economy.

39 FORMER SHANNOCKS HOTEL SITE, SHERINGHAM

The Chairman began by saying this case demonstrated the difficulties faced by local authorities when attempting to bring empty sites back into use. He said that the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process had been started some time ago and it had taken a while to explore every possible avenue whilst trying to work with the landowner. He said that it was a costly process and he knew the site had impacted on the town. He concluded that the correspondence that had been received that morning could not be discussed in public session.

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, referred members to page 140, section 1.4 of the report, which set out the timeline for the process so far. She said that the site had been left empty and untended for 18 months now and a decision needed to be taken now.

Cllr W Fredericks commented that this process was incredibly difficult and had taken a huge amount of officer time so far. She said that work had been ongoing throughout the process behind the scenes at officer level.

The Monitoring Officer reminded Cllr Brown that he had an interest in this matter. He asked for clarification on his interest. She explained that it was not a direct interest but the decision taken today could have an impact on a property that he owned as a leaseholder. Cllr Brown said that he would abstain from taking part in the discussion and from voting, adding that he did not accept the category of an 'indirect interest'.

The Assistant Director for Planning (ADP) then introduced the report. He said that it had been a long and complicated process to reach this point where a final decision needed to be taken. He outlined the two options – to keep going and compulsory purchase the site or to withdraw from the process, leaving it in the ownership of the current owners.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their hard work on this complex project.

Cllr L Withington said that she had a good understanding of some of the complex issues around this site, as a former town councillor and now local district member for Sheringham. She said it was regrettable that the process had not been started in 2017, as concerns had been expressed in the town as early as 2010. She said that the town had now lost confidence that the landowners would complete the development of the site in a timely manner or at all. She therefore urged Cabinet to move forward with the CPO, adding that it would send a strong message to other landowners with similar sites. She added that there were now some repairs required to the neighbouring site due to it being exposed following the demolition of the Shannoeks Hotel and the landowner had not allowed access. She said that this behaviour was indicative of the landowner's attitude to the site and the challenges presented.

Cllr L Vickers said that it was important to see the bigger picture of the whole of North Norfolk, especially with budgetary challenges. She urged officers to consider the blight caused by the derelict building at 9 Norwich Street, Fakenham. The

Chairman asked her to only discuss the former Shannoeks Hotel site as this was the matter under discussion.

Cllr L Vickers said that she had concerns that there was a conflict of interest that could impact on decision-making. The Chairman replied that this was not relevant, adding that Cllr Brown was a victim of the situation at 9 Norwich Street, Fakenham. Cllr Vickers said that her concerns related to the residents of Fakenham. She did not agree with the Chairman that this was becoming a political issue.

Cllr L Shires said that the community of Sheringham had waited for 14 years to get to the point of being able to draw this to a close. She was disappointed that the discussion was straying into other areas.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that the discussion was becoming difficult. She had some sympathy with Cllr Vickers as the issue in Fakenham highlighted that the Administration was not addressing concerns and issues in other parts of the district. The Chairman replied that 9 Norwich Street was not on the agenda for discussion. The Sheringham site was at a far more advanced stage and the focus was on reaching a decision regarding how to progress with this. He added that there were a lot of avenues that needed to be followed regarding the Fakenham site to secure the future of the building.

The Assistant Director for Planning (ADP) advised members that the owners of the former Shannoeks Hotel site, Sheringham, were aware of the report and had provided comments. He then drew attention to paragraphs 3.2 – 3.5 of the report which set out the work that had been undertaken by the Council to date, including demolition. However, he added that there were no indications that any development was about to commence on the site and due to its prominent position on the seafront, it could be considered that priority should now be given to addressing these issues.

Cllr L Withington welcomed the ADP's comments regarding demolition and said that the town was very grateful that it had been done. She also said that it was widely acknowledged that NNDC had done everything to engage with the owners of the site. Ample time had been allowed for them to respond and take action but they had not done so. She added that because the process had been undertaken so thoroughly, she was confident that any appeal against the CPO would not be successful.

The Chairman said that this was a lengthy and costly process and the public did not always appreciate this. He said that the rest of the discussion on this item would take place in private session.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.

At 10.40am the meeting went into private session, returning to public session at 11.43am.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

1. To continue with the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process and authorise the Director for Place & Climate Change to complete the service of the General Vesting Document relating to the former Shannoeks Hotel site, Sheringham.
2. To bring back a report to Cabinet outlining the options for future use of the site.

Reason for the decision:

To provide a clear position for discussions with the current owners and to thereafter enable officers to conclude matters.

40 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

41 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 11.46 am.

Chairman

Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

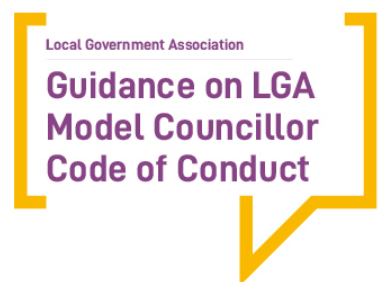
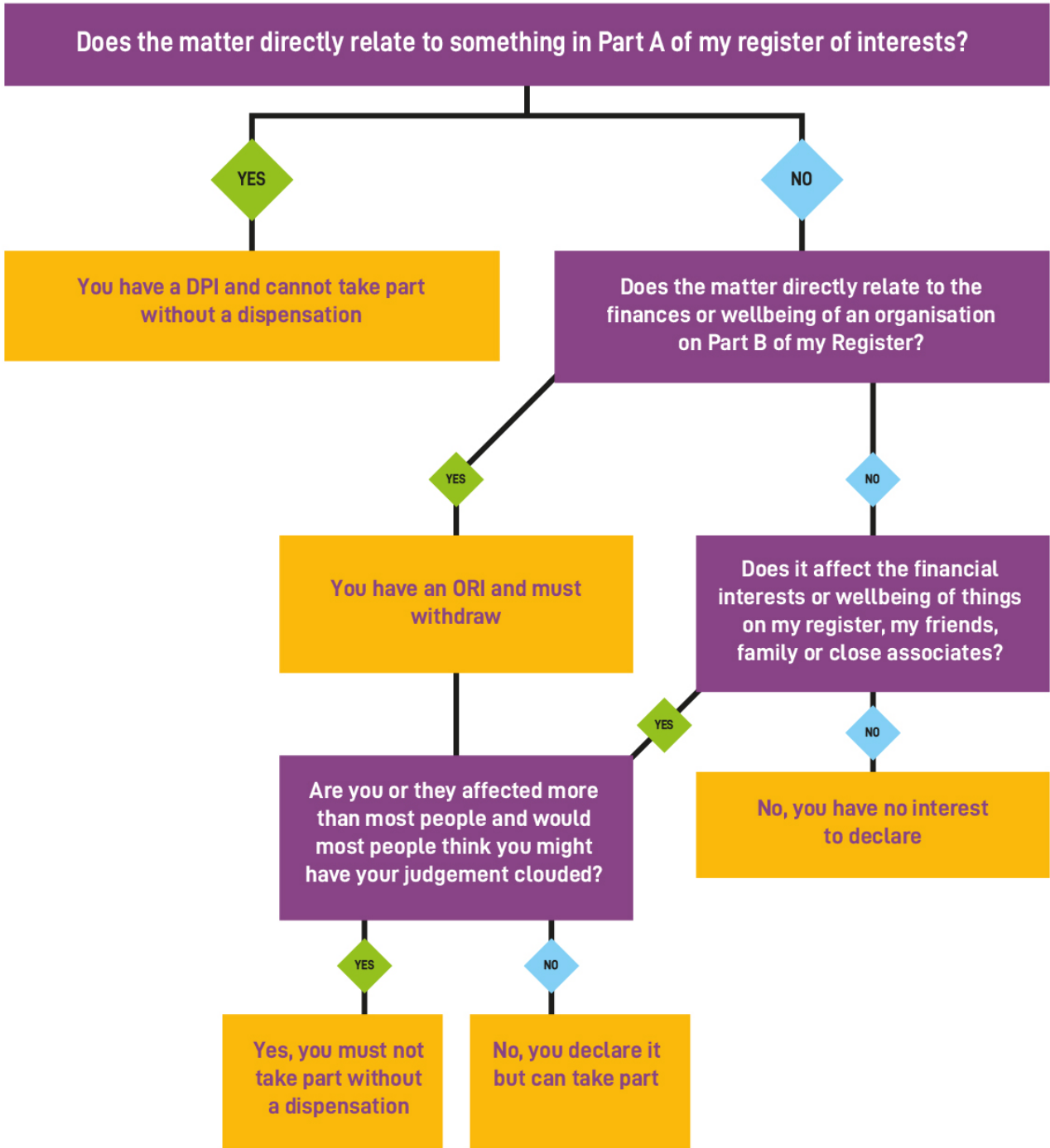
	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

<p>You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authorityb) any body<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) exercising functions of a public nature(ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)



Housing Strategy – Updated Action Plan 2024-2027	
Executive Summary	This report sets out a review of the Council’s existing Housing Strategy (2022-2026) including an evaluation of progress against the existing aims and action plan; and proposes an updated action plan for the period 2024 - 2027
Options considered	A range of interventions were considered as part of the development of the current Housing Strategy. These have shaped the proposed updated action plan
Consultation(s)	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples’ Services Officers identified in the action plan in Appendix B
Recommendations	It is recommended that Cabinet agree the proposed new Housing Strategy actions set out in Appendix B of this report
Reasons for recommendations	To ensure the Council’s Housing Strategy continues to provide a framework for delivery of the Corporate Plan aim “Meeting our housing need”.
Background papers	None

Wards affected	Districtwide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples’ Services
Contact Officer	Nicky Debbage / Graham Connolly, Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager, nicky.debbage@north-norfolk.gov.uk / graham.connolly@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Meeting our Housing Need.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Effective delivery of the Housing strategy actions will help the council tackle housing need and potentially reduce some costs to the Council such as the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless households the Council has a duty to accommodate.
Council Policies & Strategies	NNDC Housing Strategy 2021-2025

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	NA
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	NA

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council adopted the current Housing Strategy and Action Plan in 2021. We have delivered many of the original actions in the Action Plan. There have been some significant successes, see section 3. Unfortunately there remain many challenges to housing in the district; high levels of homelessness, the need to improve the energy efficiency of housing in the district and the housing needs of older residents being three of the more pressing challenges.
- 1.2 The Council has adopted a new Corporate Plan for 2023/27. This includes specific actions to help 'Meet our Housing Need'. We have taken the Corporate Plan actions and added a number of additional actions to create a new Action Plan for 2024-2027.
- 1.3 The remainder of this report considers what we have delivered in the current Housing Strategy Action Plan. The report also introduced the proposed actions for the new Action Plan and seeks the support of Cabinet for this plan.

2. Background – The Current Housing Strategy

- 2.1 Cabinet and Full Council approved The Council's current Housing Strategy in 2021. The Strategy sets out the Council's priorities for housing and the actions the Council plans to take to improve housing in the district. The Strategy takes account of the substantial housing challenges in North Norfolk and with housing being a high priority for the Council.
- 2.2 The resulting Strategy identified four high level aims:
 1. Increasing the supply of new housing – this aim particularly focusses on delivery of affordable homes; supporting others to do this and looking at whether the Council could do this directly; and supporting different types of development such as community-led.
 2. Improving housing stock condition in the private sector - this aim focusses on improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty; plus tackling disrepair and empty homes.
 3. Making better use of existing housing - this aim focusses on improving access to existing homes through our allocations policy but also accessing other forms of housing like private rented or low cost home ownership.
 4. Supporting vulnerable residents - this aim focusses on preventing homelessness and supporting those facing homelessness; as well as

ensuring provision of specialist homes and support for those who need these.

- 2.3 Appendix A provides detailed information of the actions included in the existing Housing Strategy Action Plan. Note that operational teams do the vast majority of work to tackle the housing challenges in North Norfolk on a daily basis.

3. Current Housing Strategy - Successes

- 3.1 Some of the successes of the Current Housing Strategy include:
- 3.2 **Increasing the Supply of New Housing** - We have a permanent Community Housing Enabler who has developed a pipeline of c250 affordable homes (with completion between 2024/25 and 2026/27) on exceptions housing sites working with RPs, land owners, local communities and Homes England.
- 3.3 To support RPs to deliver more homes we have a report from Bidwells consultants on making the planning process easier and we have provided top-up grant funding to RPs using section 106 monies and the Community Housing Fund monies. We have also reached out to local developers to encourage them to build affordable homes
- 3.4 **Improving Stock Condition in the Private Sector** - In 2022 we appointed an Energy Officer to help maximise the number of households in the district who receive grant funded energy efficiency retrofit works. In 2023/24 nearly £450,000 of Home Upgrade Grant will deliver improvements to 41 homes (mostly in the Stalham area) benefitting low income households and helping to reduce the district's CO₂ emissions.
- 3.5 The Council is also signed up to Eco-flex which gives local residents access to grant funded retrofit works using money from energy company obligations¹. The Council's energy officer has approved 42 Eco-flex applications² so far in 2023/24.
- 3.6 **Making Better Use of Existing Housing** - A major challenge is ensuring the existing affordable housing stock has the biggest impact on meeting housing need. We have produced a revised allocation policy due to be considered by Cabinet. This aims to meet the competing needs for affordable homes from homeless households and others in high housing need.
- 3.7 **Supporting Vulnerable Residents** - Using grant supported by match funding the Council will soon own 25 homes for use as temporary housing/move on housing. These homes provide better quality housing to homeless households and at less cost than the alternative of bed and breakfast hotels (the council can claim £98 per week for the costs of placing a household in bed & breakfast. Typically the cost is £700 per week, meaning the net cost to the Council is over £600 per week).

¹ Energy company obligations (ECO) – part of Energy Company profits used to pay for energy efficiency retrofit works to properties with poor energy efficiency occupied by low income households.

² The Council is involved in confirming the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. It is likely, but not certain that eligible applicants will go on to receive grant funded improvement works.

4. The Need to Review the Strategy?

- 4.1 Since the development of the Strategy in 2021, and despite significant activity to deliver Housing Strategy actions and continuing to deliver quality housing services, the District faces severe housing challenges.
- 4.2 Many of the issues faced in North Norfolk are in line with national housing pressures:
- Continuing rises in house prices and rising interest rates, meaning owner occupation is unaffordable to many households.
 - A decline in the numbers of private rented homes available, but sharp increases in rents with very few homes available within housing benefit (Local Housing Allowance) levels putting private renting beyond the means of many low earning households.
 - Rising construction costs and slowing delivery of new homes in an uncertain market, and in particular, a reduction in delivery of new affordable homes. In North Norfolk we face further challenges as a result of nutrient neutrality requirements
 - Rising energy prices bringing a sharp focus to the need for energy efficient homes.
 - An ageing population requiring suitable homes and support services.
- 4.3 We have updated the data underpinning the Housing Strategy, see Appendix C to this report. Some of the key headlines from this data for North Norfolk's housing situation include:
- In 2022 the median house price of £300,000 - which was 10.6 times the median income.
 - In June 2020 a review of properties for rent found 82 properties available for rent, with 15 within the local housing allowance (LHA) rate. In August 2023 there were 68 properties for rent, with only two within the LHA rate (which has not risen since 2020). Average rents rose between 26% - 39% (depending on property size). The current LHA for a 3-bed house is £710 per month, the average rent for a 3-bed in North Norfolk in 2023/24 was £1,197 – a gap of £487
 - 9% of homes are Second Homes plus a further 3% are Holiday lets. Between 2019 and 2023 the increase in second & holiday homes was 954. In the same period the total number of homes built was 1,731 – effectively meaning the 'loss' of 55% of additional homes to local households.
 - Over the nine years 2013-2021, 918 new affordable homes were built, an average of 102 per annum. In 2023/24 (post nutrient neutrality requirements) 18 were built.
 - There were 557 households on the housing register as at 31st March 2023 (an 18% increase of in these higher need cases. By contrast housing associations let only 281 homes in the year (a 41% decrease).
 - Energy efficiency and fuel poverty remain an issue especially in the private rented sector. With proportionately more homes in the in the low Energy Performance bands E – F
- 4.4 An additional change, since the 2021-26 Housing Strategy, is that the Council has adopted a new Corporate Plan 2023-27. The Corporate Plan identifies revised priorities for Meeting Our Housing Need: Address Housing Need,

Tackle the Impact of Second Homes and Holiday Lets, and Promote Best Use of Housing Stock and Good Housing Standards.

- 4.5 Whilst there have been some changes, the new Corporate Plan still identify similar housing challenges and priorities. The existing Housing Strategy high level aims and objectives still reflect the housing objectives in the Corporate Plan and the existing Housing Strategy remains relevant.
- 4.6 However, since 2021 some challenges have grown and others are less prominent. Additionally, good progress has been made in delivery the actions identified in the 2021 Housing Strategy action plan and it is clear that new / updated actions are needed for the remaining period of the existing Housing Strategy (to 2027) which include new Corporate Plan actions.

5. Some of the Key Challenges for the New Housing Strategy Action Plan

- 5.1 The Council is supporting an increasing number of homeless households. The impact of homelessness is devastating to those affected, including many children. It is also costly to the Council because government subsidies cover only part of the cost of providing temporary accommodation. So many of the actions in the action plan have a focus around homelessness including actions to increase the delivery of affordable homes and the possibility of additional direct delivery of temporary housing by the Council.
- 5.2 The district has a small, and we believe declining, private rented sector. More good quality private rented homes would reduce the pressure on the limited stock of affordable homes. The economy, legislation and the alternative holiday let market make this a difficult area for the Council to influence. We believe there is merit in re-viewing the option of the Council setting up a housing company to develop homes for market rent (and possibly additional temporary housing).
- 5.3 The district has only two RPs developing general needs affordable housing we also have few small scale developers interested in delivering affordable homes. We will continue our efforts to encourage more RPs and SME developers to work in the district.
- 5.4 The full details of the New Housing Strategy Action Plan appear in Appendix B. It is recommended that Cabinet agree the revised Housing Strategy Action Plan now to provide a framework for actions to tackle the significant housing challenges the district faces. However, we recognise that other work is ongoing, including the Homelessness Task and Finish Group, which may identify further actions and additions to the Action Plan. The Action Plan should be considered as a live document that can be revised to accommodate new actions to tackle housing issues.

6. Corporate Plan Objectives

- 6.1 Delivery of the Housing Strategy action plan will help deliver the Council's Corporate Plan Priority - Meeting Our Housing Need

7. Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 7.1 Effective delivery of the Housing strategy actions will help the council tackle housing need and potentially reduce some costs to the Council such as the

cost of temporary accommodation for homeless households the Council has a duty to accommodate.

8. Financial and resource implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications in this report, any financial implications will be identified for individual projects included in the Housing Strategy action plan.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1 There are no direct legal implications in this report, any legal implications will be identified for individual projects included in the Housing Strategy action plan.

10. Communications issues

- 10.1 There are no direct Communications issues in this report, any implications will be identified for individual projects included in the Housing Strategy action plan.

11. Risks

- 11.1 Without an effective Housing Strategy action plan the Council risks not being able to deliver against the Corporate aim of Meeting Our Housing Needs.

12. Net Zero Target

- 12.1 The actions in the Housing Strategy action plan to improve energy efficiency will also help reduce CO₂ emissions in the district.

13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 13.1 The actions in the new Housing Strategy Action Plan aim to support access to housing and housing related services. We will consider implications for equality, diversity and inclusion as we deliver specific actions in the Action Plan.

14. Community Safety Issues

- 14.1 We have not identified any community safety issues.

15. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 15.1 The current Housing Strategy has provided a good framework for delivery of a range of projects to help tackle housing challenges in the district. The Housing Strategy is still relevant and reflects the Corporate Plan priorities. However, many of the actions in the existing Housing Strategy action plan have now been delivered and new actions are required to provide a framework for work going forward. Therefore It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Agree the proposed new Housing Strategy actions set out in Appendix B of this report.

Appendix A – Summary of Actions Delivered in the Current Housing Strategy Action Plan

Increasing the Supply of Housing	
Direct Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigated Council housing company – for development and purchase of existing home to use for Temporary Accommodation and market rent. Concluded not viable.
Supporting Delivery by Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned consultants (Bidwells) to research making the planning process easier for affordable housing. Permanent Enabling Officer role put in place to support Registered Providers (to provide an informal pre-application, communications with communities, site finding & liaison with landowners, etc.). Put in place programme of s106 / Community Housing Fund grant and loans RPs. Negotiated higher levels of grant and allowing cross-subsidy & grants on Exception scheme with Homes England. Established approach to try to attract and support Small & Medium Enterprise developers to deliver affordable homes.
Supporting New Types of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigated options to support more market rent homes, which resulted in improved information on website, support to Holkham Estate development including market rent units Supported use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) – with a number of RP schemes now using MMC in development Support provided (grant/loans, information) to existing, and development of one new, Community-led Housing organisation

Improving Housing Stock Condition in the Private Sector	
Improving Energy Efficiency and Reducing Fuel Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned private sector energy efficiency and stock condition data report New post of Energy Officer introduced to maximise North Norfolk residents access to energy efficiency grants Lobbied for longer-term government funding for energy efficiency works

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a clear energy efficiency support offer to households (in partnership with Norfolk Warm Homes) • Promoted and provided support to households to access grants, especially in targeted areas (e.g. Stalham) • Investigated whether the Council should provide accreditation or directly deliver energy works (rejected) • Worked with Country Estates and other landlords to promote best practice and access energy grants
Tackling Disrepair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigated options to help tackle disrepair • Introduced programme of small grants to tackle disrepair issues linked to DFG cases
Tackling Empty Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigated options to tackle empty homes • New post of Empty Homes officer introduced

Making Best Use of Existing Homes	
Managing the Loss of Affordable Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced monthly meetings with Flagship to discuss potential disposals • Purchased a Flagship disposal home to be used for Temporary Accommodation • Provided s106 grant to Flagship to repair and retain a home that was planned to be disposed of • Provide grant and loan to facilitate Homes for Wells to purchase Flagship disposals
Supporting Access to Home Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigated whether the Council should offer mortgages for shared ownership buyers (rejected). • Prepared the Council for the introduction of First Homes as a possible new tenure
Allocating Homes Fairly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenced the review of the current allocation policy • Accessing Alternative Housing Options, specially Private Rented Sector • Investigated Private sector leasing scheme (rejected due to lack of willing landlords, unsuitable properties and complex legal and insurance issues)

Supporting Vulnerable Residents (to access & sustain suitable housing)	
Prevention of Homelessness and Help for those who are Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded homeless accommodation accessing government grants (NSAP, RSAP and LAHF) so Council now has 23 homes for temporary housing for homeless households, refugees and ex-rough sleepers.
Provision of Specialist Housing – New and Adapted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured provision of specialist older persons accommodation included in emerging Local Plan Reviewed use of Disabled Facilities Grants to improve services to vulnerable customers.

Increasing the Supply of Housing		Lead	Date
Direct Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-test viability of Council owned housing company – to provide a supply of decent / affordable market rented homes (& potentially expand TA) 	Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage	September 2024
Supporting Delivery by Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement solutions to the challenging Nutrient Neutrality issue which is holding up some new residential developments in the district through developing appropriate mitigation schemes (<i>Corporate Plan action</i>) Share data at a parish level to improve support for affordable homes (<i>Corporate Plan action</i>) Take forward with partners a programme of new affordable homes (<i>Corporate Plan action</i>) Deliver actions arising from the Bidwells consultancy report into making the Planning process easier for affordable homes Look at opportunities for linking delivery of more affordable homes with Coastal roll-back initiatives and share learning Support more ambitious programme of affordable homes developments through supported by Second Homes premium (<i>Corporate Plan action</i>) Investigate innovative ideas to increase level of affordable housing (e.g. NNDC purchases / obtains option on land, NNDC achieves outline planning permission) 	<p>Martyn Fulcher</p> <p>Anna Clarke</p> <p>Anna Clarke</p> <p>Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage/Russell Williams</p> <p>Rob Goodliffe/Anna Clarke</p> <p>Tina Stankley/ Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage</p> <p>Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>April 2025</p> <p>June 2026</p>
Supporting New Types of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further discussion with Country Estates re: opportunities for market rented, rather than for sale, homes Investigate Options to work with employers to develop homes for key workers 	<p>Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage</p> <p>Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage/Stuart Quick</p>	<p>June 2025</p> <p>December 2025</p>
Improving Housing Stock Condition in the Private Sector			

Improving Energy Efficiency and Reducing Fuel Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Norfolk Warm Homes to identify and promote grant opportunities Identify funding to extend Energy Officer role Look for opportunities to pilot Green Heat Network Fund scheme in new development Identify and programme in energy improvements to the Council's portfolio of TA homes 	Kate Rawlings	March 2025
		Kate Rawlings	March 2025
		Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage/ Kate Rawlings	September 2025
		Renata Garfoot	September 2024
Tackling Disrepair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Shared Prosperity Funding for enabling work to support energy efficiency grants 	Kate Rawlings	March 2025
Tackling Empty Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding to extend Empty Homes Officer role 	Sean Knight	March 2025
Making Best Use of Existing Homes			
Supporting Access to Home Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate use of Principle residence/local connection covenant in place of staircasing cap on shared ownership homes Pilot a Rent To Buy scheme on a new development 	Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage	June 2026
		Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage	March 2027
Allocating Homes Fairly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and implement allocations review 	Lisa Grice	April 2025
Accessing Alternative Housing Options, specially PRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce publicity about the increase in Local Housing Allowance to attract more Private Rent landlords to let to lower income households Investigate a Council rent deposit guarantee / gift scheme to help households access private rented homes 	Graham Connolly/Nicky Debbage	April 2024
		Lisa Grice	April 2026
Supporting Vulnerable Residents (to access & sustain suitable housing)			
Prevention of Homelessness and Help for those who are Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a Value for Money Review of the Council's Temporary Accommodation provision (<i>Corporate Plan action</i>) 	Nicky Debbage	June 2024

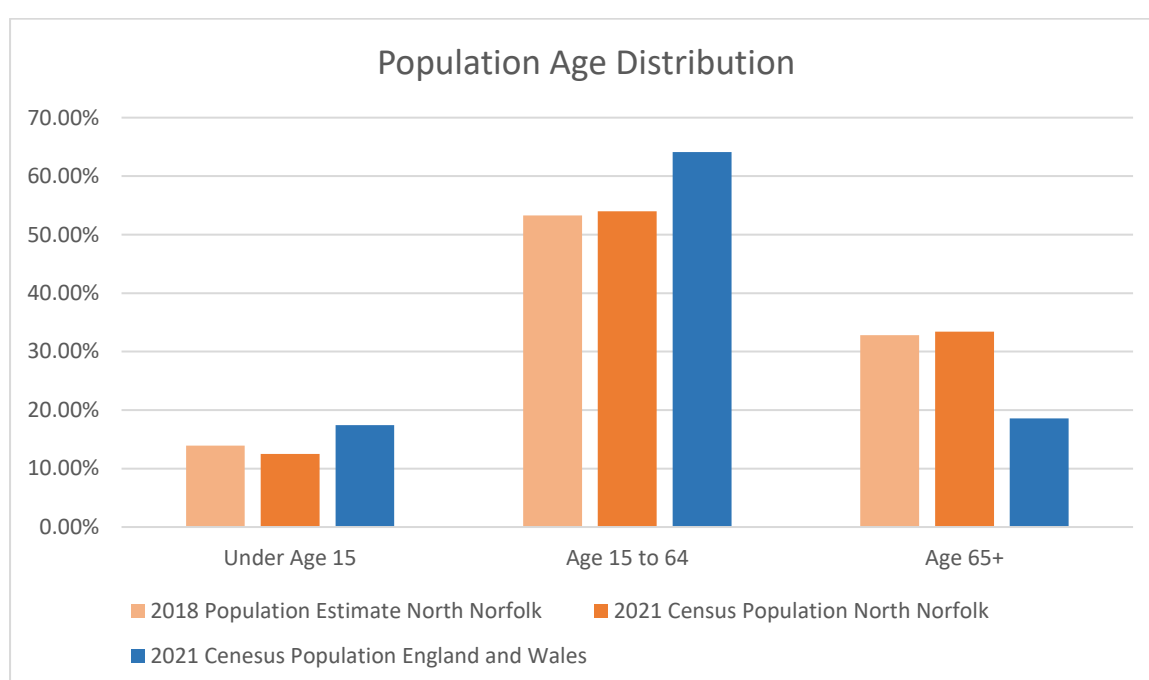
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to look for funding opportunities to deliver more TA units • Produce a new Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 	<p>Nicky Debbage</p> <p>Lisa Grice</p>	<p>April 2025</p> <p>December 2024</p>
Provision of Specialist Housing – New and Adapted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support development of extra care housing 	Nicky Debbage	March 2027

Housing Strategy Refresh 2023

Population and Age

Between 2011 and 2021 censuses the population of North Norfolk grew from 101,499 to 103,000 an increase of 1.5%. By comparison in the same period the population of England and Wales grew by 6.3% and the population of the East of England grew by 8.3%.

In 2021 33.4% of the North Norfolk population was aged 65+. This is the highest proportion for any district in England and Wales. By comparison the proportion aged 65+ in England and Wales was 18.6%. By contrast North Norfolk has lower proportions of younger ages. Only 12.5% of the population is aged under 15 (17.4% in England and Wales). The comparison with the 2018 population estimates show that the aging of the population is ongoing.



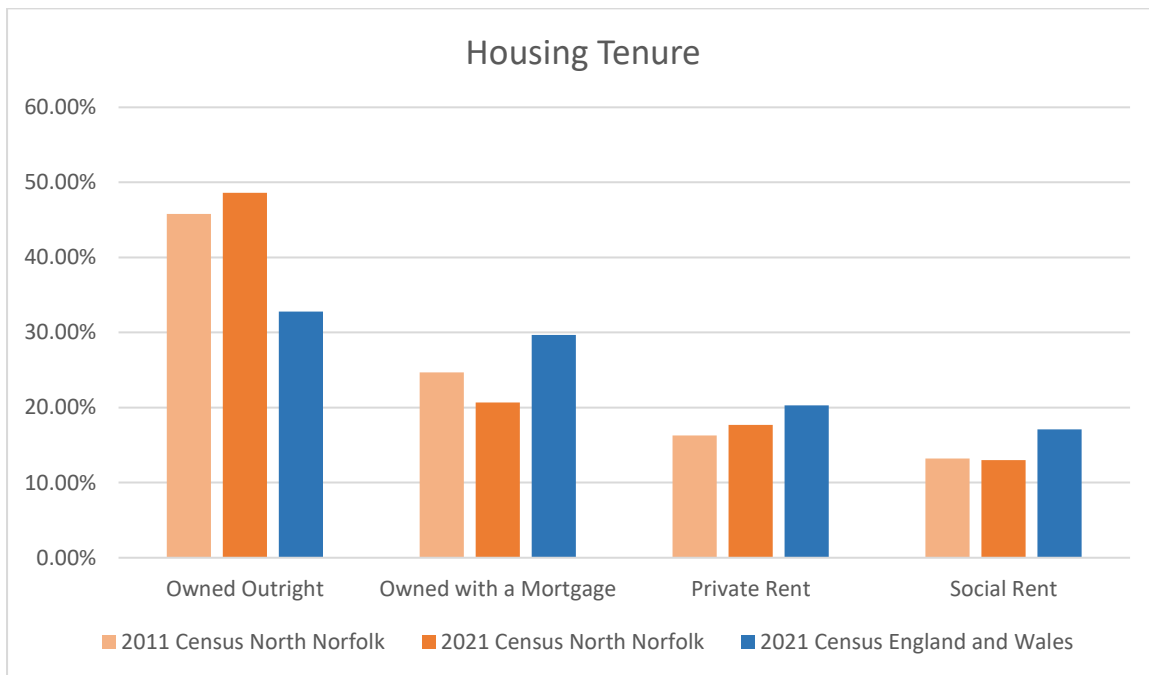
Households and Tenure

Between the censuses of 2011 and 2021 the number of households in North Norfolk increased from 46,046 to 48,400 an increase of 5.1%. This is greater than the increase for England and Wales of 3.4% but less than the increase for the East of England of 6.2%.

In terms of tenure, in 2021 North Norfolk has a high percentage of owner occupation at 69.3%, which is slightly lower than the 70.5% in 2011. However the percentage of owner occupiers who own outright (without a mortgage) has risen from 45.8% to 48.6%. This is the one of the highest percentage of outright owned homes for districts in England and Wales.

The number of households renting in private rented sector has increased from 16.3% in 2011 to 17.7% in 2021. By contrast the number of households with social (housing association) tenancies has fallen slightly from 13.2% to 13.0%.

The census measures households that are normally resident on the day of the census. This means that the large number of holiday and second homes in the district do not form part of the household statistics.

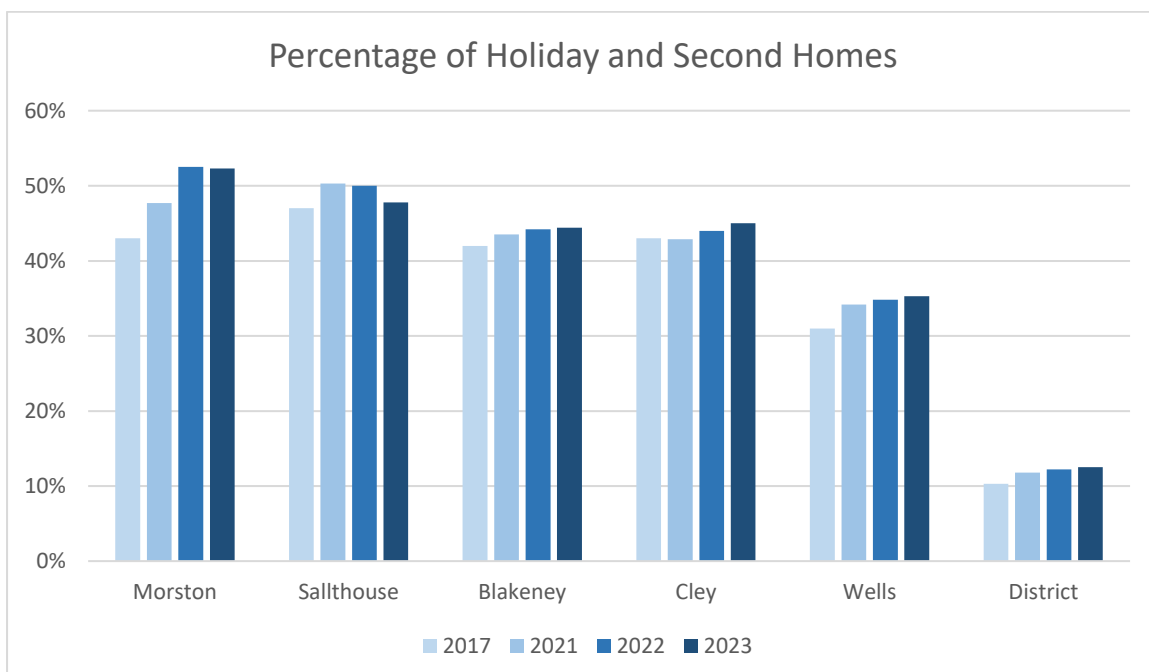


Holiday and Second Homes

The table shows the percentage of holiday and second homes for 2017 and the recent years 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Morston, Salthouse, Blakeney and Cley have the highest percentages of holiday and second homes. However, as these are all quite small settlements the percentage change from year to year can due to a small change in the number of holiday and second homes.

Wells is a larger settlement (1,803 homes in 2023). Here there has been a steady growth in the percentage of holiday and second homes.



There has also been a steady growth in the number of holiday and second homes across the district as a whole. In 2023 there are 31 parishes/towns which have 20%+ holiday and second homes.

House Prices, Rents and Income

Income

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) reports on employee income.

The district has a lot of part-time workers and the table illustrates the effect this has on employee earnings. The large number of part-time workers reduce the mean and median incomes for all employees.

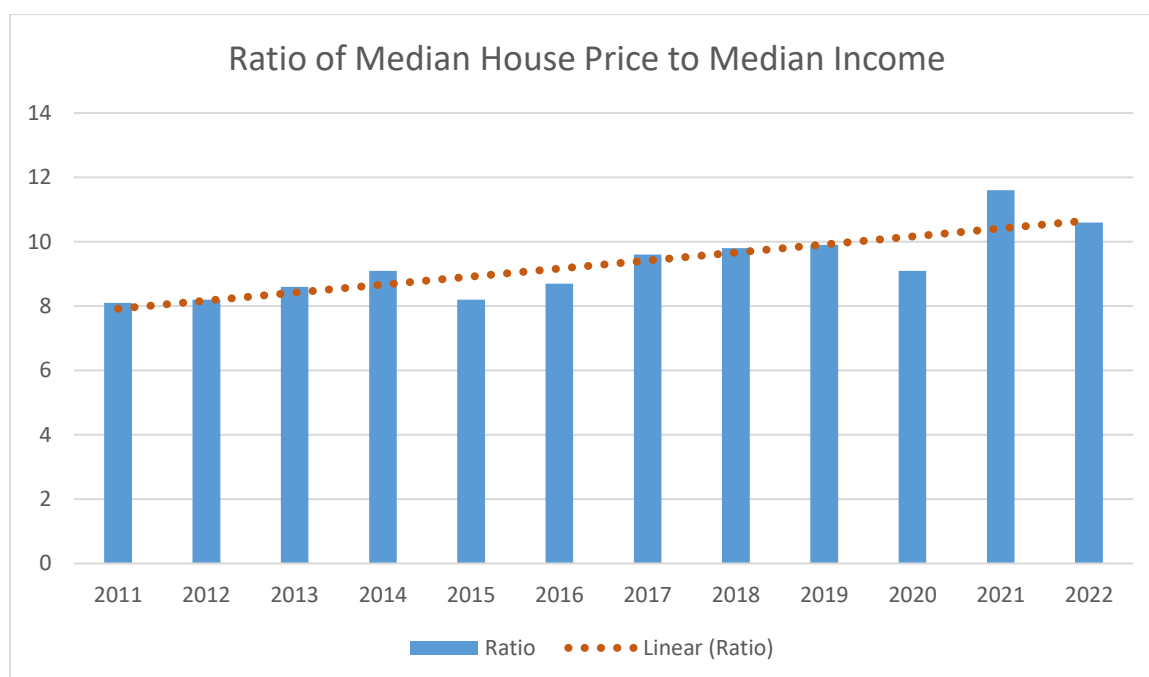
	Mean	Median
All employee earnings	£25,505	£23,864
Full-time employee earnings	£32,113	£28,759

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earning 2022 – Office for National Statistics

North Norfolk has a lot of retired people due to the high proportion of the local population that are age 65+. Pensioner income is not part of the ASHE survey.

House Prices

Along with other local authority areas North Norfolk incomes are not rising as fast as house prices. In 2022 the median house price of £300,000 was 10.6 times the median income.



Rent

In June 2020 a review of properties for rent found 82 properties available for rent of which 15 were within the local housing allowance (LHA) rate.

A similar exercise in August 2023 found 68 properties for rent of which only two were within the LHA rate. Average rents have risen faster than the LHA rates and faster than incomes with increases – depending on property size – ranging from 25.8% to 38.5%.

Properties Available to Rent (June 2020)				
Bedroom Size	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed
Average Rent £ pcm	£558.42	£646.79	£848.24	£1,370.71
Number available to rent	19	39	17	7
Number within LHA	3	12	0	0

Properties Available to Rent (August 2023)				
Bedroom Size	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed
Average Rent £ pcm	£702.50	£865.20	£1,174.94	£1,849.66
Increase in Rent from June 2020	25.8%	33.8%	38.5%	34.9%
Number available to rent	12	25	16	15
Number within LHA	2	0	0	0

Affordable Housing Delivery

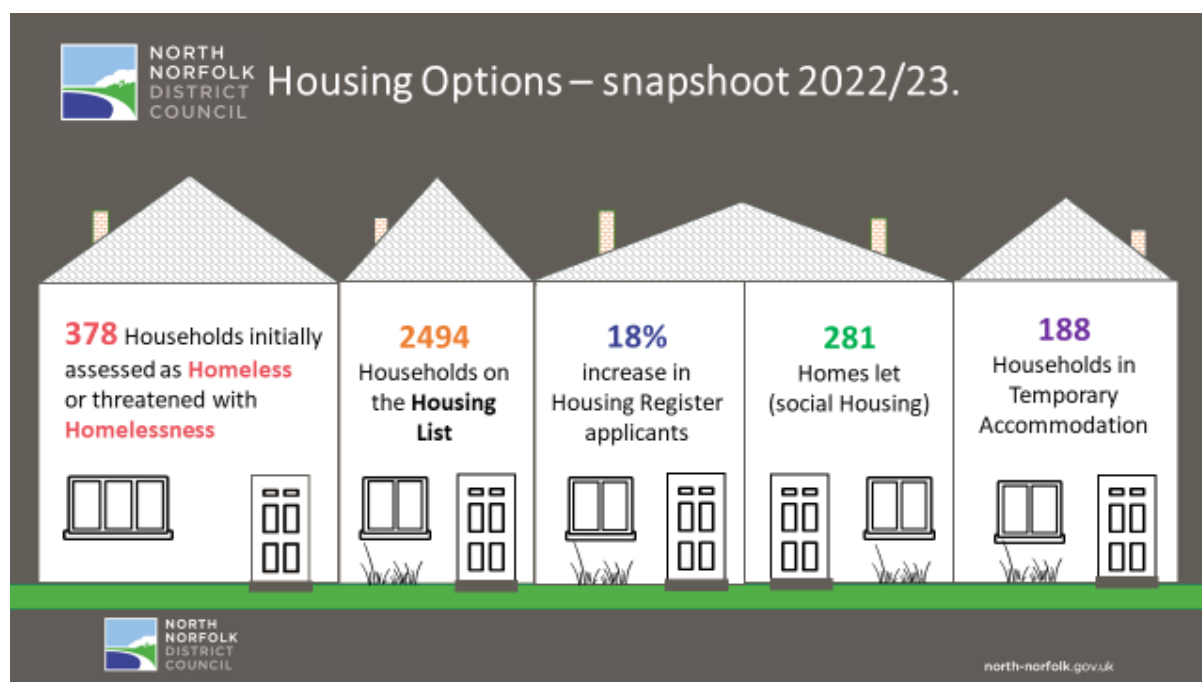
The district has a target of 100 new affordable homes each year. We have achieved this target most years with average delivery in the nine years to 2022/23 of 87 homes. Unfortunately right to buy sales and voluntary sales by Flagship have reduced the existing supply of affordable homes so that the net addition to the affordable stock in the nine years to 2023 is only 261 homes, an average of 29 net additional homes each year.

Year	New Affordable Homes	Right to Buy Sales	Voluntary Sales	Net Change in Affordable Homes
2014/15	74	20	40	14
2015/16	65	30	44	-9
2016/17	83	24	38	21
2017/18	90	23	56	11
2018/19	107	16	45	46
2019/20	79	6	45	28
2020/21	108	22	24	62
2021/22	160	16	44	100
2022/23	13	7	18	-12

2014/2023	779	164	354	261
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Housing Need and Homelessness

The following snapshot was prepared as part of a review of the operation of the Your Choice Your Home Partnership.



There were 557 households on the housing register in at 31st March 2023. These are the households in the greatest housing need. By contrast housing associations let only 281 homes in the year to 31st March.

This lack of affordable housing is having a negative impact on homelessness. In 2019/20 the Council provided temporary accommodation for 135 households by 2022/23 this had risen to 188.

Housing Stock Condition

A lot of the housing in North Norfolk is in poor condition.

Tenure	Homes in Disrepair	Households in Fuel Poverty	Homes with EPC of F or G
Owner Occupied	1,481	3,097	9,572
Private Rented	473	2,048	2,510
Social Rented	113	610	678
Overall	2,067	5,755	12,760

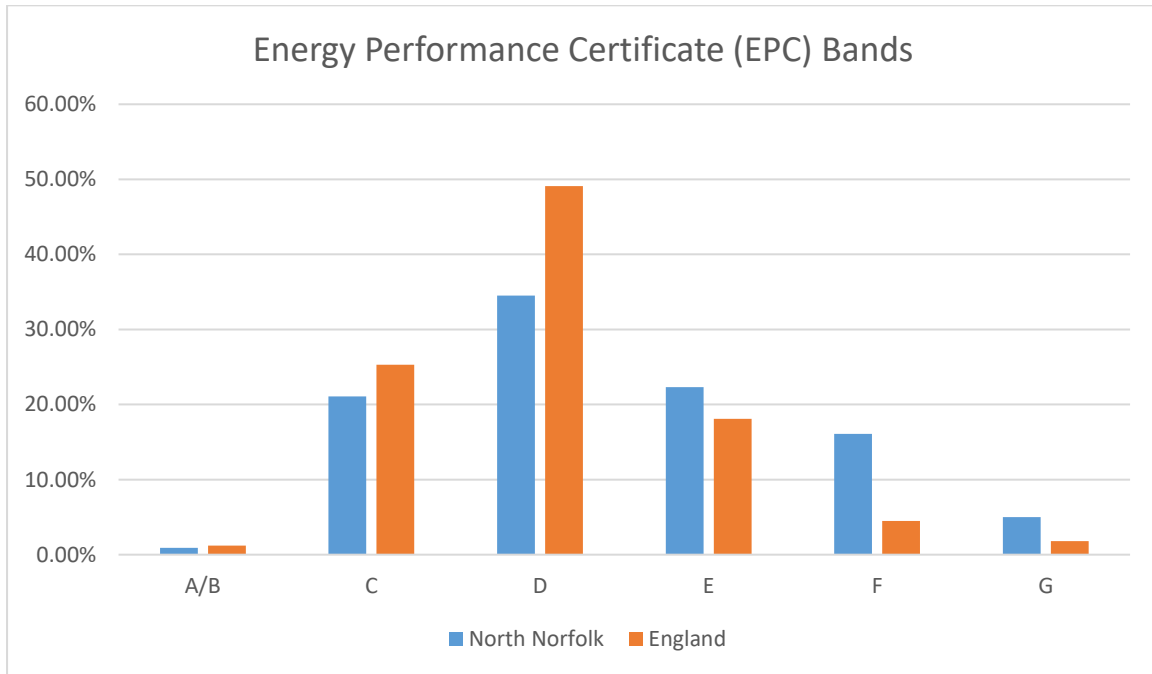
The information in the table comes from the report prepared for the Council by the Building Research Establishment in 2020 (and the legacy database).

Homes in disrepair relate to homes with disrepair to a major structural element such as a wall or roof.

There are 12,760 homes with an EPC of E or F. Of these 2,510 are rented and do not meet the legal minimum energy efficiency standards of an EPC E.

For rented homes households in fuel poverty are close to the number of homes with EPC F and G. In the privately owned sector only about 1/3rd of households in properties with an EPC of F or G live in fuel poverty. This suggests many home owners are able to afford to heat energy inefficient homes.

The table shows how North Norfolk compares with the rest of England for energy performance. North Norfolk is over-represented in the low bands E – F and under-represented in the high bands A – D.



New Allocations Scheme 2024	
Executive Summary	<p>NNDC is responsible for assessing and addressing housing need in the District. The Council’s Allocation Schemes sets out the rules, criteria and procedures that determine how we allocate affordable homes to households in North Norfolk.</p> <p>The current Allocations scheme has broadly been in place for over 14 years and now requires review to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that there is a consistent and fair approach for our Registered Provider (RP) partners to letting homes to meet the greatest housing needs.</p> <p>Following consultation with partner RPs and feedback from customers, a proposed new Allocations Scheme has been produced.</p> <p>The proposed new Allocations Scheme will require statutory consultation before any changes could be implemented</p>
Options considered	The Allocations Scheme is a statutory policy of the Council which must be relevant and effective, not providing an up to date Allocations Scheme in line with current legislation is not an option
Consultation(s)	RP partners Customers of “Your Choice Your Home” Staff across housing / housing related teams
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support the proposed allocations scheme summarised in this report and attached as Appendix A – Agree that NNDC undertake statutory consultation with key stakeholders – Agree that, following consultation, a further report be bought back to Cabinet for consideration ahead of formal adoption of the Allocation Scheme
Reasons for recommendations	To ensure the Council has an effective Allocations Scheme in place – a statutory policy of the Council
Background papers	None

Wards affected	Districtwide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples’ Services
Contact Officer	Nicky Debbage, Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager, nicky.debbage@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:

Corporate Plan:	Meeting our Housing Need.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	An effective Allocations Scheme will help the council tackle housing need and potentially reduce the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless households the Council has a duty to accommodate
Council Policies & Strategies	NNDC Housing Strategy 2021-2025 Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020- 2024

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	NA
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	NA

1. **Purpose of the report**
This report summarises the proposed new Allocations Scheme, with the full policy attached as Appendix A to this report.
2. **Introduction & Background**
 - 2.1 North Norfolk District Council is the statutory housing authority and responsible for understanding and tackling housing need in the District. To do this the Council holds a common waiting list for applicants for affordable homes in the District. The Council is also responsible for the Allocations Scheme, which sets out the rules, criteria and procedures that determine how we allocate affordable homes to households in North Norfolk. We last reviewed our scheme in 2018, since then the scheme has been updated to reflect changes in the law, and minor changes as allowed by the scheme. To ensure that people have homes that meet their needs, that we give priority to those in greatest need, and make the application process easier; we are now undertaking a review of our current Allocations Scheme.
 - 2.2 The current Housing Allocation Scheme has broadly been in place for over 14 years and has been designed to be used by NNDC and the Registered Providers (RP) with housing in North Norfolk. The scheme involves a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system. This is referred to as “Your Choice Your Home”. CBL allows registered, eligible households to bid for properties of their choice, with success based on assessed priority and date. N.B. most homes are allocated to the bidder with the highest priority/oldest date. However, for allocations of homes on Rural Exception Sites the criteria are different and homes will be allocated to those who bid with the strongest local connection.
 - 2.3 The major challenge with our allocations policy is that demand for affordable housing far exceeds available supply (there are c.2,500 on the housing list

and around 250 homes available per year). Therefore, a review of the housing allocation scheme seeks to meet the following aims:

- Ensure people in the greatest housing need have the greatest opportunity to access suitable housing that best meets their needs
- To prevent and relieve homelessness and reduce placement in temporary accommodation
- Make effective use of available housing stock
- To meet legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act 1996 Homelessness Act 2002 Localism Act 2011 and Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- To help contribute to the development of sustainable communities;
- Make the housing process accessible, transparent, fair and easy to use
- Provide information about the availability of homes to enable applicants to make realistic choices about their housing options
- Be more efficient and user friendly for applicants, the council, housing associations and other partner organisations

- 2.4 Whilst the Council is responsible for the current allocations policy, its effectiveness relies on partner RPs working with us. An RP could choose to hold their own waiting list and allocate their homes according to their own allocations policy. Currently all the main RPs choose to work with the Council and use our housing list and allocations policy to let their homes. The only exception to this are the smaller, community led organisations who let homes using their own allocations policies (e.g. Homes for Wells who prioritise key workers). In addition, all participating RPs have the ability to allocate up to 20% of their lets to their own tenants who want/need to move home.
- 2.5 Therefore it is key that any review of our allocations scheme is carried out in partnership with our RPs. Therefore, the review has been overseen by a Working Group consisting of the main RP partners (Victory / Flagship, Broadland, Orbit, Hastoe).
- 2.6 In addition, customer feedback was also sought using a survey open to all customers of Your Choice Your Home. In total 545 people completed the survey, approximately 30% of people on the register. This has given us valuable insights into how well customer's feel the current allocations process works. The full results of the survey are attached as Appendix B. Customers were positive about the scheme – saying it is fair, transparent and easy to use and liked the chance to choose which accommodation/area they wanted. However, the things customers did not like were the lack of properties available and that they were unable to get their needs met, the length of time applicants are waiting and that the criteria for assessing housing need is not clear and does not recognise personal circumstances and need.
- 2.7 Whilst partners' and customers' views are important in shaping the new Allocations Scheme, in reality much of the allocation of homes is governed by legislation, which identifies groups that must be given reasonable preference or additional preference. The key legislation is set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part VI as amended by the Homeless Act (2002), the Localism Act 2011, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Other legislation is also relevant, some of which (e.g. that relating to members of the Armed Forces or those suffering domestic abuse) has changed since we last agreed our Allocations Scheme and needs to be reflected in any new policy.

3. Context for Review of the Allocations Scheme

- 3.1 The key facts on housing need and supply of affordable housing (based on housing allocations for 2022/23) are
- The Allocations Scheme covers c. 6,500 affordable homes (rented & shared ownership) across eight RPs, 78% of these homes are Victory Homes
 - There were (as at 1/4/23) 2,494 households on our housing list and 282 homes were available in 2022/23
 - 378 Households in 2022/23 were initially assessed as Homeless or threatened with Homelessness, and over the year 188 were placed in Temporary Accommodation
 - 557 households on the list are in the most urgent need, an 18% increase from the previous year
 - The list is split relatively evenly between single people/couples and families, although families with children are the largest group on the Housing Register (those applicants in the highest need)
 - 46% of the homes available in 2022/23 were 1-bed, there were no 4-bed or more homes available
- 3.2 The key issues identified that the allocations review needs to consider are:
- An overall shortage of affordable housing including the increase in housing demand through both homelessness and those wishing to access more affordable accommodation due to loss of private rented tenancies
 - Policy on Choice – whilst the Council is committed to enabling people to play an active role in choosing where they wish to live, the housing pressures faced within North Norfolk will limit the degree of choice that we are able to offer along with the legal responsibility the Council has to ensure that those in greatest housing need are given priority for affordable housing
- 3.3. Some changes have already been tested to try to deal with the overwhelming level of need for affordable homes. During the pandemic emergency powers were used. Initially, to support the government's 'Everyone In' initiative and ensure those in the most unsuitable accommodation were housed, all properties were withdrawn from being advertised through Your Choice Your Home and instead allocated directly. Later, it was agreed with partners, to use a phased return to choice based lettings, so one in every three lets was allocated directly to those in TA or otherwise likely to go into TA.
- 3.4 This approach worked to reduce the number of households in the least suitable TA. However, by February 2023 we faced a similar problem with the numbers in TA increasing again. A further 6-month pilot was agreed with RP partners to try to speed up rehousing for homeless households. This pilot involved awarding a Priority Card to all clients accepted as having a main housing duty (i.e. homeless) – increasing the number of Priority Card cases from a typical level of three or four up to 60+. This meant that all homes were advertised through Your Choice Your Home, but those bidding who were awarded a Priority Card were very likely to be successful. The outcome of this pilot was that, whilst numbers of households in TA remained high, the numbers being placed there did reduce and the time households stayed in TA before being rehoused reduced (from an average stay of 65 nights for the

period January to May 2022, down to an average of 47 nights for the same period in 2023).

- 3.5 The allocations review Working Group considered the impact of the pilots set out above, and whether Choice Based Letting was still the appropriate model for letting scarce affordable housing, given that in reality very few applicants have any choice and the high levels of homelessness in the District. The Working Group agreed to pilot a blended approach to allocations – with some homes let through choice based letting and some homes let through nominations by NNDC. This approach (set out in more detail in section 4. below) has been piloted since September 2023.

4. **Proposed New Allocations Scheme**

The proposed new Allocations Scheme is attached as Appendix A to this report, Below we have summarised the key aspects of the new scheme:

4.1 **Overall Model**

Three overall models for allocating homes were considered:

- **Retain existing model** - the majority of homes advertised and let through Choice Based Letting, RPs retain their (up to) 20% transfer quota, a small number of Priority Cards and direct lets are used
- **Direct Nomination** - this would be returning to a system where NNDC maintain the Housing list and match applicants to the available properties and then nominate those applicants to the RP
- **Blended System** – some homes are let through CBL / some matched and nominated by NNDC

- 4.2 Choice based lettings has many positive aspects; it is a more transparent approach to allocating homes where customers can see how many people are bidding and the likelihood of them getting a property. All available properties are advertised and customers are able to choose whether to bid, rather than being allocated a home that they may not have chosen. However, CBL may also raise unrealistic expectations – i.e. there is no real choice for the vast majority of applicants. It may also mean those in the highest need do not bid on a home that would meet their needs, but 'hold out' for a better option (that probably does not exist). For the RPs, CBL can also mean delays in lettings whilst dealing with applicants who have placed bids on multiple properties or who refuse a property in the belief they will be offered an alternative, more attractive, property.

- 4.3 There are equally pros and cons to a system where applicants and homes are matched by NNDC. This approach can speed up the letting process and ensure those in the greatest need are offered a home. Matching, and removing an element of choice, may also mean making better use of existing homes. However, customer choice is removed and it is a less transparent system. There is also the risk that applicants will be allocated a home they do not want and this could lead to poor tenancy sustainment.

- 4.4 Ideally the Council would let homes in a way that maximises customer choice. However, given the acute shortage of homes and sustained levels of homeless presentations, it is recommended that the new Allocations Scheme

uses a Blended System. It is recommended this is as per the current pilot, which involves:

- 1 in every 5 lets will be used to move existing tenants (the RPs transfer quota)
- 2 in every 5 lets will be let from nominations by NNDC
- 2 in every 5 will go through CBL

However, the policy is written in a way which means that the Council and RP partners can agree to change these proportions. For example, if acute housing need subsidises the model could go back to all (outside of 20% RP transfer quota) homes let using CBL.

4.5 Currently NNDC will match and nominate homeless clients to available homes to try to reduce the need for TA and households' stay in TA. Victory will use their 20% transfer quota to make management moves and make better use of their stock (for example helping those who are under-occupying to downsize and potentially freeing up more family homes). The remaining vacancies will be advertised through Your Choice Your Home.

4.6 **New bandings system**

Currently we have three separate registers within the housing list – the Housing Register (those in the highest needs – Priority Card, Band 1 or Band 2, and including high need existing social housing tenants), Housing Options (those in lower need), Transfer (those in lower need who are existing social housing tenants). This is confusing and the proposed Allocation Scheme seeks to move to one register or list, with five bands (A to E). The banding aims to prioritise housing need, where those assessed as being in the highest need are in Band A. Those in Band E have lower needs but would be eligible for specific housing, for example housing with care or Local lettings homes on exception sites.

4.7 The banding criteria seeks to be more responsive to individual needs and allows the Council to be more flexible, whilst continuing to be transparent about the way social housing is allocated in North Norfolk. It also introduces eligibility for people who are under occupying social housing and want to downsize, this is in order to free up family sized accommodation. The new banding is explained further in section 10. of the Allocations Scheme in Appendix A with a short summary set out below:

4.8 **Band A** – includes households who are owed a main housing duty (i.e. homeless), those who cannot be discharged from hospital as they have no suitable housing, those with a severe medical condition and detrimental effects from current accommodation, members of the armed forces with an urgent housing need, those fleeing domestic abuse and in a refuge or other temporary accommodation.

Band B – includes applicants threatened with homelessness and owed a Homeless Prevention Duty, those who are overcrowded according to the Government's bedroom standard, those with an urgent medical condition that is seriously adversely affected by their current accommodation, those needing to move to give/receive essential care/support, those under-occupying who want to downsize.

Band C – includes homeless/threatened with homelessness households who do not have priority need, those in lower level overcrowding situation, households with (or expecting) children sharing with others, households with a non-urgent medical need to move.

Band D – includes homeless/threatened with homelessness households who have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection to North Norfolk, households without children who are sharing with others.

Band E – as set out above households with limited need but who are seeking specific housing such as extra care or local lettings homes.

4.9 **Eligibility to join the housing register**

Need - The new scheme seeks to ensure that allocations are made to applicants with an identified housing need. All households currently on the Housing Options or Transfer register (those in lower need) have little prospect of being re-housed. All applicants will be invited to complete a new application in case there has been any change in circumstances which might improve their banding. Those assessed as having no housing needs will not be allowed to join the register.

4.10 **Local Connection** – the new scheme will remove eligibility for the Housing Register to those who do not have a local connection to North Norfolk. A local connection will be through continuous residency in North Norfolk for the last 3 years, or lived in the district for at least 3 out of the last 5 years, employment in North Norfolk for a minimum of 16 hours per week, or Immediate family members (parent, adult sibling or adult child) who has lived in the area for a minimum of five years continuously. There will be a number of statutory exemptions to this (for example those fleeing domestic or armed forces personnel, however, this change will potentially reduce the number of people eligible to join the list.

4.11 **Financial resources** – the scheme will amend the current savings and income threshold to ensure that only applicants who do not have the resources to resolve their own housing situation are permitted to join the Housing Register. The income threshold is proposed as where a household's gross taxable income is more than £60,000 per annum. The permitted savings threshold will be in line with the capital sums for Universal Credit purposes, which is currently £16,000. Additionally, applicants that own or part own a freehold or leasehold property will be unable to join the housing register, although there will be the ability to allow discretion where exceptional circumstances apply.

4.12 **Bedroom eligibility** – the Allocations Scheme will follow the Government's Bedroom Standard, meaning a bedroom for each of the following: a couple, a single person aged 21 or over, two children under 10 regardless of sex, two adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex. This is a relatively ungenerous standard but reflects the shortage of family homes.

4.13 **Local Letting Policy**

Whilst the majority of homes will be allocated according to need, some homes have different local letting arrangements. Some of these are bespoke and relate to the owning organisation of the homes, but most are homes on rural exception schemes which are let to those with the strongest local connection. The current local allocations agreement involves seven bands of local connection, with A being the strongest and G the weakest. The current local lettings allocations agreement can be confusing and often results in contention. As the current agreement looks through all local connection cases first (need is considered to prioritise between applicants within the same local

connection band) it may result in homes being let to households with a weak local connection and limited housing need. The new scheme proposes a much simpler system, with just two bands of local connection. Homes would be let by local connection band first, then highest needs banding, then longest time spent on the housing register.

- 4.14 Band 1 local connection would include: anyone who is living in the parish or adjoining parishes and has lived there for at least five years, or has been employed there for at least five years, or lived there for five out of the last ten years, or has immediate family member who has lived there for at least five years. Band 2 local connection would be very similar but the time required would be two years. In the unlikely situation there was no applicants with a Band 1 or 2 local connection the home will be allocated in line with the normal Allocations Scheme, i.e. to the applicant in the highest need.
- 4.15 There are many other elements to the Allocations Scheme included in Appendix A and the whole policy has been re-written to make it easier to understand.

5. Allocations review – Further work and Next Steps

- 5.1 The Allocation Scheme is a statutory document and formal consultation is required as the proposals represent significant changes to the allocation scheme. Section 168 and 166A of the Housing Act 1996 require local authorities to bring any major changes to allocations policy to the attention of those likely to be affected by it, and to the attention of registered providers so as they have the opportunity to comment.
- 5.2 Whilst, formally there is only a requirement to consult with Registered Providers who have social housing units in the North Norfolk District, The Code of Guidance issued by the Government recommends that the consultation process should involve local communities more broadly, including those likely to be affected by the proposals. The proposed contributors to consultation would include:
- Registered Providers of Social Housing in North Norfolk, including community led housing organisations (most of whom would not be directly impacted),
 - Local residents likely to be affected by any changes to policy, including those currently on the housing register,
 - Key partners and voluntary organisation's likely to be affected by the policy including internal council directorates, town and parish councils and Norfolk County Council.
- 5.4 Consultation information will also be available on the council's website and through social media, giving any other interested parties the opportunity to have their say. Proposed areas of focus for the review and consultation will include the areas highlighted earlier in the report, namely:
- Overall approach – moving from fully choice-based lettings to blended approach.
 - Changes to the way in which people qualify – Local Connection and Housing need
 - The new banding scheme
 - Other categories of change – including financial threshold, bedroom eligibility,

- Refusals and Suspension from the register
- Local Lettings
- What it means for applicants currently on the register.

5.5 Whilst it is difficult to accurately set out a project plan for the next stages of development of a new allocations policy (as we do not know the level of change that may be required to the proposed policy as a result of statutory consultation) a broad project plan is set out below. The plan includes a members' briefing to take place ahead of statutory consultation, to ensure members are in a position to answer queries and support constituents. A further members' briefing will be undertaken ahead of the new policy going live, again to ensure members understand the new policy and are able to explain implications to constituents. It is also proposed that the draft policy, following statutory consultation and incorporating changes arising from that, should be considered by Overview & Scrutiny.

Action	Deadline
Consultation questions and materials assembled	May 2024
Members Briefing	May 2024
Housing Options Staff Briefing	May 2024
Key Staff Briefing	May 2024
Press release Issued to announce the start of the consultation	June 2024
Social Media Post	June 2024
On-line Survey goes Live / Create link on North Norfolk District Council Website and Your Choice your Home website	June 2024
Email to Your Choice Your Home Partners	June 2024
Email / text message to Your Choice Your Home Applicants	June 2024
Email Marketing to support wider promotion with external stakeholders	June 2024
Consultation responses analysed and considered	August 2024
Partner Engagement	September 2024
Housing Options Staff Engagement	September 2024
Members Briefing	September 2024
Final Scheme drafted and presented to Overview and Scrutiny	October 2024
Final scheme presented to Cabinet for approval	November 2024
Communication of Policy Change	November – December
Old System temporary Suspended	January 2025
New Policy goes live	01 April 2025

5.6 Implementation of agreed changes to the Allocations Scheme will require IT changes. It is difficult to accurately assess the level of change required until final recommendations are agreed, but we have already identified that a new on-line application form will be required in addition to reflecting the changes summarised in this report. Some of the costs of the changes will be recharged to Your Choice Your Home partner RPs, who pay an annual fee to the council for administering the housing list and Allocations Scheme. Your Choice Your Home IT software is provided through Locata Housing Services. As part of the Allocations scheme review process we will be working with Locata Housing Services to update the on-line application form along with changes to the back office functions once consultation process has been completed. We estimated that the new Allocation Scheme will go live by 1 April 25.

6 Corporate Priorities

An effective Allocations Scheme which ensures the right homes go the right applicants will help the council deliver its key corporate priority – Meeting our Housing Need.

7 Financial and Resource Implications

The outcome of review of the Council's Allocation Scheme will have an impact on access to homes and implications for the use of TA for homeless households.

The review of the Allocations Scheme can be delivered within existing resources. However, later stages of the review (i.e. IT changes associated with any agreed changes, etc.) will have resource implications. These are not known at this stage and will, if necessary be subject to a further report.

8. Legal Implications

As set out in the report, the Allocations Scheme is a statutory policy and many aspects of policy are governed by legislation. The proposals in the new Allocations Scheme adhere to the relevant legislation. Eastlaw's views will be sought as part of statutory consultation to ensure this.

9. Risks

By working in partnership with our partner RPs we have ensured that the proposed Allocations Scheme is acceptable to them and they remain in partnership, using our housing list and Allocations Scheme for letting their homes.

Modelling of the impact of proposed changes has been undertaken, together with an initial equalities impact screening to ensure there are no unforeseen consequences and no negative equalities implications of changes.

There is a reputational risk to the Council if communications on the review are not clear and if those affected by the review are dissatisfied with the process or the outcome. This is particularly key as all existing applicants will need to re-apply to join the housing list and some will no longer qualify.

10. Net ZeroTarget

No direct implications

11. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

An Equalities Impact screening has been completed on the proposed changes to the allocations scheme to ensure the council meets its legal obligations under the Equality Act. This is attached as Appendix C.

Appendix C shows that the housing register is made up of a range of different groups in need, the initial screening has assessed how the changes are likely to affect applicants with protected characteristics. Overall the Allocations Scheme has many provisions in place to meet the needs of particular households in the protected groups (disabled people; the elderly people with

support needs), and we have provisions to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances and where a negative impact may arise.

Following consultation, a further analysis and a full impact assessment will be brought forward with the final Allocations Scheme.

12. Community Safety issues

No direct implications

13. Conclusion and Recommendations

NNDC is responsible for assessing and addressing housing need in the District. The Council's Allocation Schemes sets out the rules, criteria and procedures that determine how we allocate affordable homes to households in North Norfolk.

The current Allocations scheme has broadly been in place for over 14 years and now requires review to ensure that it is fit for purpose and ensures that there is a consistent and fair approach for our Registered Provider (RP) partners to letting homes to meet the greatest housing needs.

Following consultation with partner RPs and feedback from customers, a proposed new Allocations Scheme has been produced.

The proposed new Allocations Scheme will require statutory consultation before any changes could be implemented

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Support the proposed allocations scheme summarised in this report and attached as Appendix A
- Agree that NNDC undertake statutory consultation with key stakeholders
- Agree that, following consultation, a further report be brought back to Cabinet for consideration ahead of formal adoption of the Allocation Scheme

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HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME

This document sets out how North Norfolk District Council, in partnership with Registered Providers with properties in the district, will allocate their properties through the Your Choice Your Home Allocations Scheme

Effective Date: XXXXX 2024

Draft

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1. Introduction

All local housing authorities are required by law to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures when allocating social housing.

The Scheme sets out:

- Eligibility and qualification criteria to join the Scheme.
- The extent of choice an Applicant will be offered when an allocation is being made.
- Any reasonable or additional or preference for an allocation an Applicant might be entitled to.
- How priority between any applicant will be determined when an allocation is being made.
- and the arrangements for nominating an Applicant for some homes owned by registered providers who own and/or manage social rented housing in the district.
- How to request a review of a decision.

North Norfolk District Council transferred its housing stock in 2006. We work in partnership with a number of Registered Providers of Social Housing (Housing Associations) across the North Norfolk District who own and manage social rented housing. A list of these Registered Providers can be found at Appendix X

Your Choice Your Homes (“the Housing Register”) is the single register for access to most rented social housing in North Norfolk.

With the level of demand for social housing exceeding supply, the Housing Register exists to enable all households who are in need of re-housing to be included on one register. The scheme seeks to offer choice, while giving reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need.

By joining the Housing Register, those in housing need can be considered for vacancies, which become available in properties owned and managed by any of the Your Choice Your Home partner Landlords. The aim is to make the task of applying for social housing as simple as possible, requiring only one form to be completed for all social housing opportunities.

On a day-to-day basis, partners advertise their vacant properties on the Your Choice Your Home website and applicants, who would like to live in those properties, register their bids on the website at www.yourchoicemyhome.org.uk Properties are then allocated in accordance with the procedures and priorities set out in the housing allocations scheme.

As well as operating a housing allocation scheme, North Norfolk District Council also provides a housing options service which works to prevent homelessness and provides housing applicants with advice on a range of alternative housing options including:

- Options to remain in the current home.
- Renting in the private rented sector
- Low-cost home ownership

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this scheme include:

- To provide applicants with sufficient information to enable them to make informed choices about the housing options available.
- To allocate social housing fairly and transparently, according to the applicant's assessed priority,
- To meet the council's statutory duties with regards to homeless households,
- To provide choice for applicants as far as possible, whilst acknowledging that housing in North Norfolk is in short supply and help manage expectations about the availability of housing stock.
- To support all Your Choice Your Home partners in making the best use of their housing stock. Ensuring that larger homes, specialist housing, and homes adapted for people with disabilities, are made available to those who need them most.
- To support Your Choice Your Home partners in managing their homes effectively, by ensuring properties can be let quickly and that tenants are given the best chances of maintaining their tenancies in the long term.
- To ensure and promote equality of opportunity in accessing social housing via the scheme, both to local people in housing need and to other categories of people that do not satisfy a local connection to North Norfolk including those that have served in the armed forces, care leavers, or those fleeing domestic abuse.

3. The Legal Framework

The Council's housing allocations scheme sits within a tight legal framework which is summarised in this section. The legislative framework applies to North Norfolk District Council directly and requires Registered Providers to 'cooperate to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's scheme'.

The primary legislation governing the allocation of social housing is Part 6 Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Any reference to legislative sections contained within this scheme are sections contained within the 1996 Housing Act. This legislation requires councils to make all allocations and nominations in accordance with a published housing allocation scheme which determines priorities between applicants for housing and sets out the procedure to be followed when allocating housing.

- Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to frame their housing allocation schemes to give "reasonable preference" to certain categories of people namely:
- People who are homeless as defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996
- People who are owed a particular statutory duty by any local housing authority under certain provisions of homelessness legislation.
- People occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability.
- People who need to move to a particular locality within the district to avoid hardship to themselves or others.

In addition to the primary legislation, North Norfolk District Council's housing allocation scheme takes full account of the associated statutory codes of guidance and statutory instruments. In

developing the scheme, the Council has also had regard to its own Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027.

The housing allocation scheme has been developed to be compatible with other relevant legislation, regulations and guidance including, but not restricted to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Localism Act 2011
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

A summary of this housing allocation scheme is available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy. It can be downloaded free of charge from <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/>

4. Scope of the Scheme

4.1 Operation of the Housing Register

The Housing Register is operated and maintained by the council on behalf of the Your Choice Your Home Partnership.

4.2 Nomination's agreements

The council has nominations agreements with the Your Choice Your Home Landlords that govern the nominations to its housing stock in the North Norfolk District

Many of the North Norfolk Registered Providers will have their own lettings policies which are separate to this Allocations Scheme and may offer transfers to its own tenants within its own stock as set out in the Nominations Agreements with the Council.

4.3 Allocations covered by this scheme.

The housing allocation scheme sets out the arrangements for allocating social housing in North Norfolk by the council and applies to:

- New applicants
- Existing social rented housing tenants of a North Norfolk landlord who have an identified housing need to transfer.

4.4 Allocations not covered by this scheme.

The following are examples of allocations not covered by this scheme:

- Succession of tenancy
- Assignment of a tenancy through mutual exchange

- Assignment of a tenancy in pursuance of a relevant court order
- Progression from an introductory to secure tenancy
- Sole to joint tenancy changes and vice versa
- Temporary decants in order to complete repairs.
- Licences, agreements, non-secure, or assured shorthold tenancies granted to homeless households in relation to the Council's homelessness duties under Part 7 of the Housing 1996 Act.

5. Statement on choice

The Your Choice Your Home partnership is committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need in the district. The Housing Allocations system allows applicants to make a choice about the housing which will best meet their needs from the options that are available whilst still meeting the Council's statutory duties to those in greatest housing need.

We will consider preference where possible and practical. However, the amount of choice that the Council is able to offer is limited by the fact that the demand for social housing in North Norfolk far outstrips supply, and the legal responsibilities owed to some groups of applicants in housing need. The choice available to applicants will also be affected by the priority given to applicants under the scheme, the type of property the applicant is eligible for, and the availability of suitable properties.

This is achieved by advertising social and affordable rented housing vacancies, other than direct offers, across North Norfolk and inviting applicants to state which property they would prefer to live in, by registering a 'bid' for the property.

6. Housing options – other than our housing register

The number of households on our Housing Register who need a more suitable home is much greater than the number of homes that become available each year.

Households can wait many years on our Housing Register before we can offer them a home. This is especially the case if you need a larger family home, or an accessible home suitable for disabilities or mobility difficulties.

Some households may never be offered a home through our Housing Register. Therefore, it is important to think about the other options and choices you might have to move to a new home, for example:

- Renting a home in the private rented sector
- Making changes or improvements to your current home – for example, if a family member is struggling because of their health conditions, you may be given equipment or adaptations that will help them.
- If you are a housing association tenant, completing a mutual exchange.
- Low-cost home ownership, such as shared ownership

7. Joining the Housing Register

7.1 Who can apply to join the Housing Register?

Anyone who is aged 18 or over can apply to join the Housing Register as long as they and the members of their household are:

1. Eligible for an allocation of accommodation (see section X)
2. A qualifying person (as defined in section X)

7.2 Young people aged 16 or 17.

By law, a landlord cannot grant a tenancy to a person under the age of 18.

Acceptance onto the housing register to a person aged 16 or 17 may be considered when:

- North Norfolk District Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty to the applicant and the applicant is ready for independent living,
- A young person is a care leaver, who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has a duty of care accepted under the Childrens Act 1989, and is ready for independent living.

A tenancy will not be granted; however, this can be held in trust until they reach the age of 18 by a trustee. A trustee will be required to sign a tenancy on the applicant's behalf, be deemed as an appropriate person and have the financial resources to afford the costs of the home.

It is at the discretion of the individual Registered Provider to accept applicants under the age of 18 for a tenancy, regardless of having a trustee.

7.3 Applications from councillors, members of staff and their relatives

Any application for housing or re-housing that is received from elected Members, Council employees, or their close relatives must be disclosed at the time of application.

Elected members, Council staff and their relatives are treated as any other applicant and will not gain any advantage or any preferential treatment in their application nor shall they be disadvantaged. Their application will be assessed in line with the Allocation Policy.

8. Eligibility and Qualification

Any person can approach the Council for advice and assistance regarding housing however, due to the high demand for social and affordable rented housing in North Norfolk, the Council does not maintain an 'open' housing register.

To join the North Norfolk District Council Allocation, scheme an applicant must be both 'eligible' and a 'qualifying person'. When considering applications, the Local Authority will establish if an applicant is eligible for an allocation of accommodation and if they qualify for an allocation of a property. Only if these two criteria are met (subject to certain exceptions) can an applicant join the Your Choice Your Home Allocation Scheme.

8.1 Eligibility for an allocation of social rented housing

Eligibility for an allocation of social rented housing will be made in accordance with housing act 1996, part six, section 160ZA and any associated legislation. Eligibility criteria will be revised in accordance with any subsequent regulations and orders that might be made by the UK Government.

Usually a person is eligible, or has the right, to join our Housing Register and be rehoused to social housing if:

They are a British or Irish citizen.

- They have indefinite leave to remain.
- They have settled status under the EU settlement scheme.
- They have the 'right of abode' as a Commonwealth citizen.
- They have refugee status or humanitarian protection.
- They have a visa that allows you recourse to public fund (for example are able to claim Universal Credit)

For a joint application, all applicants have to qualify and meet the conditions on eligibility. If an applicant is accepted on to the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, their housing application will be cancelled, and the applicant notified.

8.2 Applicants who are not eligible for an allocation of social rented housing.

Some people are not eligible to join the housing register and be rehoused to social housing if:

- They are subject to immigration control.
- They are a person from abroad excluded by regulations made by the Secretary of State
- They are not habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland
- They were granted limited leave ('pre settled status') under the EU settlement scheme where their only other right to reside is a non-qualifying right (i.e., as a jobseeker, is within his/her first three months or as a Zambrano carer
- They are required to leave the UK by the Home Office.

It is not practical to define precisely all the circumstances in which the restrictions apply. Anyone unsure of their status should seek detailed advice from the Housing Options Team.

8.3 Qualifying persons

North Norfolk is an area where the demand for social housing far exceeds the supply. For this reason, not everyone can join the Housing Register, even if they are 'eligible' to do so (see X). Only applicants who meet the following criteria will qualify to join the housing register.

8.3.1 Local Connection to North Norfolk

A local connection to North Norfolk will be established by virtue of any permanent member of the household meeting any of the criteria set out in the table below:

Residency

Current residency in North Norfolk continuously for **3** years; or has lived in the district for at least 3 out of the last 5 years.

- Applicants must be currently resident in North Norfolk at the point of application and at the point of nomination. In addition, their 5-year address history must detail a past residence in North Norfolk totalling at least 3 years.
- This includes those people who currently live in an institution, hospital or are serving a custodial sentence outside of the area but were resident in the area for at least three out of the last five years prior to entering that institution, hospital or custody.
- Households placed into accommodation as a discharge of any homeless duty under Part VII of the Housing Act by a local authority outside of North Norfolk will not qualify to join Your Choice Your Home until all homeless duties have expired (i.e. 3 years if a full homeless duty was discharged through the private rented sector) and they have established an additional 2 years residency. This means such households will require 5 years residency before being accepted to join.

For the purposes of determining a local connection through residency the following living arrangements will not be considered:

- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan, motor caravan, or houseboat which is not placed on a residential site; or
- Occupation of a holiday letting which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation for the purposes of a holiday letting.

The above list is not exhaustive, and North Norfolk retains discretion to determine whether any individual applicants can establish a local connection or not based on each applicant's individual circumstances.

Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll, information held on any local authority or third-party database and will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination.

Employment

Employment in North Norfolk for a minimum of 16 hours per week.

- The main or joint applicant must be working regularly at the point of application and at the point of any nomination. For the purposes of establishing this local connection, regularly means 16 hours per week or more, and either have a permanent contract and be able to demonstrate they have worked for at least 12 months and there is no reason to believe this arrangement is due to cease.
- Applicants who are self-employed, or their profession requires them from time to time to work outside the area, will need to demonstrate that their employment has mainly been based in North Norfolk for a minimum of 12 months prior to application and at the point of any nomination.

- Applicants on leave due to maternity or sickness who remain employed will qualify for this criterion if there is no reason to believe their employment is due to cease.

Immediate family members currently resident in North Norfolk

Immediate family members include parent, adult sibling or adult child, who has lived in the area for a minimum of five years continuously prior to acceptance onto the housing register.

Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll or information held on any local authority database. Relationship may be verified by Birth/adoption Certificates or information held on any local authority database.

8.3.2 Despite not having a local connection with the council's district, an applicant is a qualifying person in any of the following circumstances.

Applicants owed a homeless duty by North Norfolk District Council

Applicants owed a homeless duty as specified in the reasonable preference categories outlined in S166A(3)(a) and (b) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended):

- S190(2) – Priority Need but Intentionally Homeless
- S193(2) – Main Duty
- S195(2) – Threatened with homelessness, and eligible.
- S192(3) – Power to secure for non-priority and not intentionally homeless.
- S189B – Relief Duty

Victims of domestic abuse

Applicants who are victims of domestic abuse or threats of domestic abuse, or escaping domestic abuse or harm, will be exempt from local connection requirements, as will those who have sought a place of safety in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation in the Local Authority area.

Social tenants right to move

Applicant who are social tenants in England who are employed, or who have been offered permanent employment in North Norfolk.

The Council must be satisfied the tenant has a need to move (as opposed to a wish to move) and that failure to meet that need would result in hardship. Factors that would be taken into account when establishing if there is a need to move, would include:

- The distance and/or travel time between work and home
- The availability of transport
- The nature of work and whether similar opportunities were available more locally.
- Any medical conditions or childcare affected if they couldn't move.
- The length of the employment contract
- If failure to move would lessen opportunities to improve their employment circumstances, e.g., promotion.

Armed Forces personnel

Certain members of the Armed Forces community are exempt from any residency / local connection requirements, by virtue of regulations made under section 160ZA (8) which prevent local authorities from applying a local connection test to disqualify such applicants. These are:

- A. Those who are currently serving in the Regular Armed Forces or who were serving in the Regular Forces at any time in the **5 years** preceding their application for an allocation of social housing.
- B. Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.
- C. Serving or former members of the Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.
- D. Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.

The above definition of Armed Forces personnel also applies to the Priority Banding criteria called 'Armed Forces' detailed in section **XX**. Verification will be required from the Armed Forces

Other special circumstances

In special circumstances, the Council will accept people onto the register who cannot demonstrate a local connection as defined above. These circumstances include:

- Applicants who cannot live in the area in which they have a local connection because of harassment, violence or abuse or the need to move elsewhere for reasons of rehabilitation or personal safety. This includes applicants who are high risk victim-survivors of Domestic Abuse or arrangement under the National Witness Mobility Scheme.
- Those needing to move in order to provide or receive essential care and support in North Norfolk
- Applicants who were resident in the area for two years or more before moving to supported housing / care placements out of area to prevent homelessness.
- Applicants who do not have a clear local connection anywhere.

Local Connection to a Section 106 / Village exception site

Where an Applicant has no housing need but establishes a local connection within a local lettings policy in relation to a Section 106 or village exception site (as defined in relevant legal agreements).

verification of an applicant satisfying this criterion will be required at point of application and at point of nomination. Applicants accepted as qualifying due to this criterion will only qualify to bid on properties within the village development to which they satisfy a local connection.

Preference will be given to applicants who meets the local connection criteria to the rural exception site development, who also falls within a reasonable preference category. If there are no

exception site applicants who also fall within a reasonable preference category, then preference will be given to other exception site applicants in Band E in accordance with their effective date.

8.4 Housing Need

Applicants who are; eligible to apply (See X), meet the qualifying local connection criteria (as detailed in X) and who upon assessment are found to have a housing need (as defined by the criteria laid out within each band of the scheme in section x) will be able to join the Housing Register. They will be awarded a place in one of the bands which most reflects their need, urgency and priority.

8.5 Applicants will not qualify to join the housing register if they:

The following are examples but not an exhaustive list of reasons as to why an applicant would not qualify for social housing, either at the point of application or at any time during their time on the housing register:

- The applicant has no local connection as detailed in X
- The applicant has no assessed housing need as detailed in X
- The applicant or a member of their household owns a freehold or long leasehold interest in a property as detailed in X
- The applicant or a member of their household has sufficient financial resources to secure a suitable property by way of purchase or rental in the private sector as detailed in X
- The applicant or a member of their household has unmanaged outstanding rent or service charge arrears as detailed in X
- The applicant or a member of their household has serious breaches of tenancy or has a history of unacceptable behaviour, which would make them unsuitable to be a tenant as detailed in X
- The applicant or a member of their household has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent or property of the Council or North Norfolk District Council Your Choice Your Home Partner.
- The Applicant has been successfully rehoused through Your Choice Your Home will not be eligible to apply again within 12 months of their tenancy start date unless their circumstances have considerably changed.

8.6 No local connection

An Applicant or a member of their household who do not have a do not meet the local connection criteria at the date of application.

8.7 No Assessed Housing Need

Applicant(s) who do not have an assessed housing need as defined under the banding (See section X) criteria for this Allocation Scheme, will not qualify to join the Housing Register.

8.8 Applicants who are homeowners

Applicants that own or part own a freehold or leasehold property in the UK or abroad will be unable to join the housing register. Discretion to this ruling will be applied where exceptional circumstances apply, these may include:

- Evidence supplied that the property is having a significant detrimental impact on the health of the applicant, it has been verified by a professional that the property cannot be adapted to meet their needs and they have limited financial resources to meet their own housing needs elsewhere.
- The current property is unaffordable, and the applicant does not have the financial resources to meet their rehousing needs. This will be assessed through an application on the grounds of homelessness.

If homeowners are accepted onto the housing register, they will need to evidence they are in the process of selling their home prior to any offer being made.

8.9 Applicants with Financial means

Social and affordable housing provided through Your Choice Your Home is for people who are considered to have insufficient resources to meet their own housing need by either renting privately or buying their own home.

Applicants who are considered to have sufficient financial resources to buy or rent suitable accommodation in North Norfolk will not qualify for the Housing Register.

An applicant is not a qualifying person if their family household's gross taxable income is more than £60,000 per annum. This is because the Council considers this to be a sufficient financial resource to buy a pay market rent in the district.

The capital, savings, and equity available to a household will also be assessed. If it is determined that a household can resolve their own housing need. A savings threshold of £16,000 (consistent with the UK government upper limit for savings set out in the common rules of the DWP Benefit and Pension Rates) will be counted towards income for applicants seeking general needs accommodation.

When considering gross household income, Income is derived regardless of source and will include income from earnings, savings and certain welfare benefits. However, the following type of income will be fully disregarded:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) or any other replacement benefit for the above
- War pension.
- Savings, investments of any children.
- Any lump sum received by a member of the armed forces as compensation for an injury or disability on active service.

8.10 Outstanding housing related debt

Applicants with outstanding housing related debt within the last 5 years, totalling more than the equivalent of 2 months or more of the rent or service charges liability will not qualify to Join the register.

Housing related debts apply to both the applicant and to any members of their household that are included in the application unless it was an act of omission in good faith and the applicant was unaware of the relevant facts. Housing related debt is defined as:

- Current and former rent arrears (owed to social or private landlords)

- Rechargeable repairs
- Court costs (against social or private tenancies)
- Temporary accommodation/Service Charges owed to the council.
- Homeless Prevention loans or similar, e.g., Rent in Advance loan.

There is not a financial figure attached to this as the amount will vary depending on the amount that the applicant was liable for. Applicants will not be considered for qualification until

- There is a payment plan in place to repay the debt owed and it can be demonstrated that regular payments are being made and the debt is reduced to 4 weeks rent arrears or less.
- It can be demonstrated that the debt has been repaid in full or that regular payments are ongoing at the point of offer
- A statutory homeless duty has been awarded.

8.10.1 Debt Relief Orders

Housing related debts included in a Debt Relief Order will remain as outstanding until 12 months from the date of issue, at which point the debts are formally written off by creditors and the debtor is discharged.

Households owed a statutory homeless duty will be exempt from the 12-month criteria.

8.11 Serious breaches of tenancy or unacceptable conduct within a tenancy

An Applicant or a member of their household who have been found to have breached any of the following tenancy conditions, within the past 5 years, regardless of tenure:

- Breach of tenancy agreement
- Nuisance or annoyance to neighbours including anti-social behaviour.
- Persistent / repeated breaches relating to property/garden condition.
- Purposely failing to report repairs.
- Failing to allow contractors to enter the property to carry out maintenance.
- Running a business from the property without permission from the landlord
- Subletting part or the whole of the property without permission
- Having an unspent conviction for using or allowing their property to be used for illegal or immoral purposes.
- Or any other scenario that would give grounds for possession under Housing Act 1985, section 84, Schedule 2, Part 1, Grounds 1-7 and section 84A.

8.12 Demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent or property of the Council or North Norfolk District Council Your Choice Your Home Partner

This includes having received any warning letters from the Council or any Your Choice Your Home partner, and/or criminal or civil action.

Unacceptable behaviour includes verbal and physical abuse, intimidation, violence and/or threats of violence by any form and harassment. Damage, defacing or graffiti upon any property is also included.

North Norfolk District Council does not operate a blanket policy in relation to the above, considerations, but will consider each case on its own merit.

Applicants are invited to provide evidence of a change of behaviour. This could include, for example, evidence of regular payments towards a previous housing debt; evidence from a support agency of undertaking training to develop the skills necessary to manage a tenancy or being ready to move on from supported housing.

8.13 Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant who would not ordinarily qualify for the Housing Register but who has an urgent housing need (defined by being awarded Bands A or B under this housing allocation scheme) may be allowed to join. The decision to allow a non-qualifying applicant to join the register, will be determined by the virtual panel. Other professionals, for example, those with social care expertise, may be invited to contribute to the panel and decision making where relevant

Where an Applicant has no housing need but establishes a local connection to a Section 106 or village exception site (as defined in relevant legal agreements) will be permitted to join the housing register but will only qualify to bid on properties where the rural exception development is and providing they satisfy the local connection to that site/development. (See section X)

Property ownership conditions, plus thresholds for Income and savings will not be applied to Applicants who are victims of domestic abuse or threats of domestic abuse or escaping domestic abuse or harm. This will be assessed through an application on the grounds of homelessness.

We acknowledge that a number of social housing properties in the district are for the over 55's, therefore discretion will be applied to this ruling for those applicants over the age of 55 that have expressed a desire for this type of housing, to allow them to access these schemes only.

9. Assessment of Housing Need

9.1 Reasonable preference

The Council is required by law to determine the relative priority that housing applicants are awarded. This is particularly important as the demand for social housing is greater than the availability of homes.

The law, as it applies to local housing authorities, requires that reasonable preference for housing must be given to those in the categories set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Applicants with reasonable preference must be given a reasonable head-start in terms of accessing housing over those who do not have reasonable preference. Reasonable preference does not mean that applicants will have an absolute priority over all other applicants.

The statutory reasonable preference categories in section 166A (3) (a) to I of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) are:

- a)** People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Act)
- b)** People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3)
- c)** People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- d)** People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability.

- e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

The Council includes other local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories. Local priorities can be included providing:

- That they do not dominate the housing allocation scheme, and
- Overall, the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not.

9.2 Additional preference

The Council can grant ‘additional preference’ to applicants where the Council is satisfied that applicants who have been assessed as having a reasonable preference also have other exceptional or urgent housing needs.

- Is currently serving in the regular armed forces and suffering from a serious injury illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their service.
- Formerly served in the regular armed forces
- Is a bereaved spouse or civil partner who has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to service in the regular armed forces?
- Is, or had been, serving in the reserve armed forces (this includes the Territorial Army) and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their service.

We can also choose to give additional preference to other particular descriptions of people who fall within the statutory reasonable preference groups and who have an urgent need to move.

10. The Banding Scheme

Anyone who applies to the Housing Register will be assessed and placed into a band in accordance with their housing priority, where the priority card is the highest and band E is the lowest.

10.1 Priority card - Emergency Need

Very few applicants will qualify for this level of priority. This is an emergency band and represents those with only the most critical and immediate need to move.

Criteria and additional details
To qualify for the Priority Band, an applicant must have an immediate, emergency or critical housing need. Qualification will be determined by the Virtual Review Group. Appendix X details the process for awarding a Priority Band and examples of when a Priority Band may be agreed. The Priority Band will last for three months. Extensions for further periods of six weeks may only be agreed by the Virtual Review Group if there have been no vacancies of suitable properties for which the applicant is eligible or the applicant has not been successful with their bids in the previous period.

10.2 Band A – Urgent Need

The Council will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following circumstances:

Criteria and additional details
<p>S193(2) Main Homeless Duty The applicant is homeless and owed a S193(2) Main Homeless Duty because they are assessed as being in a priority need, unintentionally homeless and establish a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>
<p>Hospital Discharge The Applicant or a member of the household cannot be discharged from hospital because they have no accommodation, or their current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to their health and the situation cannot be rectified to enable them to continue to live there, and they have been accepted by the Local Authority as being able to sustain their own independent accommodation</p>
<p>Severe Medical Need The applicant or a member of the household must have an urgent medical need and the condition is expected to be terminal or life threatening and re-housing is required due to the detrimental effects caused by present accommodation.</p> <p>It will only apply where the current property cannot be made suitable or adapted within 3 months. It is expected that this criterion applies to those few exceptional cases only specifically where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A household member is receiving palliative care.• A household member is unable to escape their current property in an emergency due to being permanently housebound. <p>Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their condition / quality of life.</p>
<p>Domestic Abuse The applicant is a Victim of domestic abuse, including those who have been provided temporary protection in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation, who are homeless or owed any homelessness duty and/or have been identified as high-risk.</p> <p>Domestic abuse defined as any incident or pattern of incidence of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.</p>
<p>Risk of harm</p>

The applicant or a member of the household is at serious risk of harm resulting from violence or threats of violence, or other abuse or serious trauma and needs to relocate to ensure their safety. This will be verified by the Police and/or other agencies as necessary.

This may include.

- Victims of racial harassment amounting to violence or threats of violence and are at significant harassment and the risk of harm.
- Victims of hate crime amounting to violence or threats of violence and are at significant threat and risk of harm due to their age disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at high risk of intimidation amounting to violence or significant harassment and risk of harm if they remained in their current homes (National Witness Mobility Scheme).

Any offer of accommodation from this criterion will have restrictions attached in terms of eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.

Young Person Leaving Care

The applicant is a child/young person between the ages of 16-25 who has been looked after by social services (for the purposes of s.22 of the Children Act 1989) and has left care or is likely to leave care within the next 6 months; and has had no settled accommodation since leaving care or has applied for an allocation within 6 months of leaving care.

Young People leaving care will be assessed to determine whether they have the skills to live independently. Childrens Social services will need to provide a letter to detailing how they believe that the child is ready for independent living and any future support that will be available to them. This letter will be required before an offer of accommodation can be made.

If the applicant is successful for an allocation prior to their 18th birthday, a nominated trustee will be required to sign a tenancy on the applicant's behalf and be deemed as an appropriate person and have the financial resources to afford the costs of the home.

Armed Forces

The applicant or a member of the household has a reasonable preference as a member of the armed forces and an urgent housing need. The definition of an urgent housing need for the purpose of this criteria is:

Serving and Former members of the Regular Armed or Reserve Forces, who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.

Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.

Property Condition - Category 1 Hazard

The applicant is a private sector or owner occupier and North Norfolk District Council has determined that their current accommodation poses a Category 1 Hazard (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, the problem cannot be rectified within a reasonable period of time i.e. six months and by continuing to live there poses a significant risk to health.

Demolition

The applicant needs to move because their home is about to be demolished or redeveloped. This only applies when the demolition or redevelopment is beyond the applicant's control.

Major Repairs

The applicant is a tenant of a social or affordable rented property living in North Norfolk who needs to move because their accommodation needs major renovation or extensive repairs. This does not include temporary decants.

Natural Disaster

The applicant's home is uninhabitable due to flood, fire or natural disaster through no fault of the applicant and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a reasonable period of time i.e., six months

Under Occupying Tenants with Medical Need

The applicant is under occupying social or affordable rented accommodation in North Norfolk, but also has an urgent medical need as defined within the criteria for Band B. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation

Releasing Adapted Property

An Applicant releasing an adapted social or affordable rented property in North Norfolk where the adaptations are no longer required by either the Applicant or a member of the household, and the Applicant is willing to move to non-adapted accommodation. The adapted property to be released will be fully wheelchair accessible and offers level access. This band will not apply where the adaptation does not offer a realistic solution to others. i.e., a level access shower in a first floor flat.

Releasing Large Property

The applicant is a social or affordable rented tenant under occupying a property in North Norfolk that offers four or more bedrooms and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

10.3 Band B – High Need

The Council will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional detail
<p>S195 Homeless Prevention Duty The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty. The applicant is believed to be in a priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establishes a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>
<p>S189B Relief Duty The applicant is homeless and owed a S189B Relief Duty. The applicant is believed to be in a priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establishes a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>
<p>Overcrowding The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded which is defined as requiring at least one additional bedroom based on the Government's bedroom standard. The bedroom standard (see section X) states that a separate bedroom shall be required for the following persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A single person (sole applicant)• A married or co-habiting couple• Two children aged under 10 years regardless of gender Two children of the same gender regardless of age (unless there is a 10-year age gap).
<p>Urgent Medical Need The applicant or a member of the household has a permanent medical condition or disability which is seriously adversely affected by their current accommodation. This band will apply in the following circumstances for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A household member requires ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) AND requires alternative bathing facilities to that in their current accommodation.• A household member is a permanent wheelchair user, and their current property is ground floor with suitable bathing facilities, however, it does not have suitable floor space, widened door frames or ramp access and the property cannot be made suitable or adapted.• A household member requires medical equipment supplied by a health authority/hospital and the current property/living conditions cannot be altered to make sufficient space (this does not include mobility scooter storage) <p>Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their conditions/quality of life.</p>

Essential Care and Support

The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Applicants must either be in receipt of Carers Allowance or have a carer who is in receipt of Carers Allowance or have had an assessment by social services or similar support agency, so it can be established that care and/or support is substantial / essential.

Move On

The applicant is ready to move on from supported housing including North Norfolk District Council Next Steps and Rough Sleepers accommodation.

The applicant must have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider/North Norfolk District Council Officer. This band will not apply to those applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to be able to accept and manage a tenancy and live in a reasonably independent way.

Under Occupying

The applicant is under occupying a social or affordable rented property in North Norfolk and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

Employment Hardship / Right to Move

The applicant or a member of the household needs to move in order to take up or continue permanent employment in North Norfolk for 16 hours a week or more, and to avoid hardship. Hardship as a result of employment includes commuting distance, the availability and affordability of transport and other factors such as medical conditions or childcare. A commute between home and work of 60 minutes each way is considered reasonable. The applicant's circumstances must be able to be improved to qualify under this criterion.

10.4 Band C

The Council will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional details
<p>S195 Homeless Prevention Duty</p> <p>The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty. The applicant is believed to have no priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establish a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>
<p>S189B Relief Duty</p> <p>The applicant is homeless and owed a S189B Relief Duty. The applicant is believed to have no priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances establish a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>
<p>No Priority Need</p> <p>The applicant has received a S184 decision finding them to be homeless but have no priority need as outlines in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996</p>

Low Level Overcrowding

The applicant's household has been assessed as having a low level of overcrowding defined as:

- Requiring an additional bedspace within a bedroom
- Having two children of the same gender sharing a bedroom and there is at least a 10-year age gap between the children.

For the purposes of assessing overcrowding, single parents are regarded as requiring 1. bedspace and can utilise a single bedroom.

Sharing with Others (with Dependents)

The applicant's household has at least one dependent child or a pregnant woman with a confirmed due date, sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed.

Non-Urgent Medical Need

- A household member requires either ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) OR requires alternative bathing facilities to that available in their current accommodation.
- A household member is currently receiving ongoing treatment from primary and secondary mental health services for a diagnosed mental health condition which is made worse by their current accommodation and would be resolved by moving to alternative accommodation.

Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their conditions/quality of life. See section X for more details regarding medical needs.

Ongoing Care and Support

The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive care and support that is ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation.

Ongoing care and/or support does not have to be substantial in that applicants may not be in receipt of qualifying care benefits or have social services involvement. It may include practical and/or emotional support that is essential to the physical or mental wellbeing of the person. receiving the care/support

10.5 Band D

The Council will place an application in band D if the applicant's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional details
<p>S195 Homeless Prevention Duty The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty but deemed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection to North Norfolk as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>

S189B Relief Duty

The applicant is homeless and owed a S195 Homeless Relief Duty but deemed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection to North Norfolk as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

Sharing with Others (without Dependents)

The applicant (or a couple) has no dependents and is sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed. This will also apply when applicants have experienced a relationship breakdown where a move would prevent the homelessness of any dependent children.

Intentionally Homeless

The applicant has received a S184 decision finding them to be homeless but intentionally so within the definition of the Housing Act 1996, Part 7 as amended 2002.

10.6 Band E

The Council will place an application in band E if the applicant's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional details
<p>Seeking Sheltered/Housing with Care</p> <p>The applicant and any other members of their household have housing need but are eligible to be considered for, and are seeking, sheltered, supported, Housing with care or assisted living accommodation. The applicant's current housing tenure will determine which property type they are eligible for.</p>
<p>Local Connection to a S106/Village Exception Site</p> <p>The applicant has no housing need but establishes a local connection to a S106 or village exception site whether the connection is to the specific village where the development is located, or a surrounding co-terminus village. Local connection to such sites will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination.</p>

10.7 Exceptional Circumstances

it is not possible for the banding scheme to adequately reflect every possible combination of housing needs.

Applications with exceptional circumstances, which are not met within the banding scheme, will be considered on a case-by-case basis to decide the appropriate degree of priority to be given.

10.8 Effective date

The 'effective date' is used to prioritise between applicants within the same band. The 'effective date' of an application is normally the date that a complete application is accepted onto Your Choice Your Home. If there is a change in circumstances after initial registration, then the application will be reassessed, and the applicant may:

Change in circumstances	Effective date
Gain greater priority and be placed in a higher priority band	The date at which the higher band applies will be used.
Be assessed as being in the same band.	The original effective date will be used.
Lose priority due to their circumstances and be placed in a lower priority band	The original effective date will be used.
Become ineligible or may no longer qualify for an allocation.	The application will be removed from the Housing Register. Applicant may reapply at a later date if circumstances change and new effective date will then apply.

11. Registration

11.1 How to apply

Applicants can apply for an allocation by completing a housing application form online at www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk. Should applicants require assistance in completing the form or require the form to be made available in other formats this can be requested by telephone or by prior arrangement at the Council offices. Following receipt of an application, applicants will be required to provide supporting documentation.

Once a fully completed application form has been received along with any required supporting documentation, the form will be assessed to determine if applicants are eligible and qualify for an allocation (see [section X](#)), followed by an assessment of their housing need (see [section X](#)), and a determination of property eligibility (see [section X](#)).

11.2 Information required to register

An application shall not be progressed until applicants provide the necessary information. If the information is not supplied within the specified timescales (typically X days) then the application shall usually be cancelled, and the applicants advised to reapply at a later stage when they are able to provide the necessary details in the required format.

In all circumstances, the council will require the main and joint applicant to upload proof of their:

- identity,
- current circumstances,
- children's details such as identity and child benefit entitlement,
- National insurance number,
- current address,
- eligibility,

There may also be other documents which are requested which must be provided prior to any offer of social housing.

11.3 Assistance for vulnerable applicants

North Norfolk District Council will freely help Applicants who are likely to have difficulty in making an application (e.g., due to mental or physical impairment, or because of any other special characteristic) to join the Scheme. This assistance will include (this list is not intended to be exhaustive)

- Completing any form that might exist.
- Explaining what evidence might be required for the Local Authority to determine any eligibility and qualification criterion that might be in force and help collect this evidence for assessment.
- Explaining what evidence might be required to determine the degree of priority for when allocations are made and help collect this evidence for assessment.
- Explain what evidence might be required to help determine the type of property that should be allocated and help collect this evidence for assessment.
- Express a preference of the location of the social rented housing they might be allocated.

11.4 Who can be included on an application?

The applicant should include on their housing application other persons who normally reside with them or who would reasonably be expected to reside with them as a member of their household. All household members who will be living in the new tenancy must be included on the application in order that qualification checks can be conducted.

Applicants and household members can only be on one Your Choice Your Home application.

The following can be included on an application if they normally live with the applicant(s) or could reasonably be expected to do so:

- Partner or spouse,
- Children dependent on the applicant / joint applicant
- Other adults and non-dependent children who are dependent on the applicant / joint applicant.

Other people will only be considered if there are demonstrable extenuating circumstances that require them to live with applicants; for example, to provide or receive ongoing and substantial care which can be evidenced.

Where the household includes people aged 18 years or over that are capable of living independently, the Council will assess the needs of the whole household and may refuse to allow them to be included on an application, for example if it is unable to meet the need through existing social housing in the North Norfolk

In all circumstances, the Council may decide whether a person is normally resident as a member of the applicant's family and whether they will be considered for rehousing as a member of the applicant's household. The Council will consider each applicant's individual circumstances when deciding whether to allow persons to be included on the application.

11.4.1 Dependent children

A dependent child is defined as being aged 0-15 years, or 16-18 years and attending or enrolled in full-time approved non-advanced education or training. The Council will usually expect that an applicant receives Child Benefit in respect of dependent children.

In determining whether a dependent child can be considered as part of the household where there is shared parental responsibility, the Council will consider whether there is a sufficient degree of permanence or regularity to constitute normal residence as a member of the family.

Factors that the Council will consider include, but are not limited to:

- Who has the main parental responsibility of the child / children?
- What is the child's main and principal home?
- What address is registered with GP/School/Nursery?
- Who predominantly cares for the child?
- What is the frequency and length of residence at the applicant's property?
- Does the child have other accommodation available to them which it is reasonable for them to occupy?
- Is there an order of the court pertaining to the child's residency?

11.4.2 Family members not resident in the UK

If applicants are applying to include family members who are not living in the UK, the application may be registered but applicants cannot be allocated together until the family has been reunited in the UK.

11.4.3 Children in care

Children in compulsory or voluntary care can be included on an application subject to written confirmation from social services that the children are to live on a permanent basis with the applicant(s).

Households currently undertaking fostering may be able to include foster children as part of their application. Written confirmation from social services of the fostering arrangement will be required and considered to inform the decision.

11.4.4 Provision / receipt of care

Applicants or applicant household members, who require a full-time residential carer which is evidenced by social services or a primary health care professional, may include the carer on their application.

People who provide substantial long-term care to another person which requires that person to live with an applicant in order to receive the care, may include that person on their application. Care needs which cannot be provided by visiting carers must be verified by social services. The care needs must be substantial, i.e., a need for personal care with basic daily activities (dressing, feeding, bathing, toileting), or an inability to live independently certified by a medical professional.

11.4.5 Split and non-traditional households

The Council will consider applications from households where the main and joint applicants do not currently reside at the same address, or applications from non-traditional households, e.g., friends sharing.

In reaching a decision whether to accept applications from non-traditional households, both applicants will need to meet the eligibility and qualifying criteria and the priority awarded to the application will be based on the housing circumstances of the applicant in the highest priority band.

11.4.6 Disability, mobility and medical needs

If an applicant or joint applicant, or other member of the household identified on the housing application have any of the following then it is the applicant's responsibility to provide any medical evidence that they would like to be considered in assessing their application:

- A permanent physical disability,
- A mobility problem,
- A medical condition, or,
- A mental health condition.

The Council may need to contact the applicant for further information regarding the condition to help the Council to assess and establish in which band to place the application and what type of property is suitable. In some circumstances the Council may need to seek independent medical advice to help inform this decision and specifically to explore:

- Whether the applicant's current home is having a detrimental impact on the health or mobility of anyone in the household, and the extent of the detrimental impact.
- What type of accommodation would suit the needs of the households or if a move is necessary?
- What adaptations the household may require. If, after the Council's enquiries it is established that the applicant requires specific adaptations to a property, the application will be amended to reflect this. Households that require specific adaptations will only be nominated to accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

It is recognised that applicant's circumstances are individual and that the medical banding criteria cannot specify every circumstance that might apply. Exceptional banding decisions pertaining to medical issues that sit outside of the normal banding criteria will be made by the Virtual panel.

11.5 Consent and Declaration.

All applicants will be required to sign a declaration, or to give informed consent, to confirm their understanding that:

- The information that they have provided is accurate.
- That they will notify the Council of any change in their circumstances.
- They consent to their personal information being provided to a Housing Association to which they have been nominated for accommodation under the allocations scheme.
- They consent to the Council making inquiries with any relevant person to assess their application.
- They consent to credit checking and to the use of referencing companies to confirm that the information they have given on the application form is correct.

11.6 Verification Checks

In order to assess and verify housing applications, the Council may make additional enquiries with current and former landlords and other relevant agencies. Council officers may also need to arrange a face-to-face meeting. Where this is necessary, a council officer will contact the applicant to arrange a convenient appointment. If, after a 28-day period, applicants have not provided information that has been requested, the Council will cancel the application.

Verification includes checks on an applicant's full circumstances including their eligibility, qualifying criteria, housing need, property eligibility.

12. How applications are processed

Applicants on the Housing Register will have their individual housing needs assessed and will be placed into the most appropriate band as defined in section X

12.1 Notification of your assessment

We aim to assess applications within 14 days, once all necessary enquiries have been made and the Your Choice Your Home application has been processed, applicants will have notified:

- If the applicant does not qualify to join the Your Choice Your Home, the reasons for this and their right to a review of the decision or.
- That we have accepted the application, and the applicant can start to place bids for properties advertised on Your Choice Your Home
- The applicant's unique housing reference and log in details
- The Your Choice Your Home band in which we have placed the application.
- The date on which the application was placed into the band – the effective date.

12.2 Change of circumstances

Applicants must inform the Council if the circumstances of any person included in the Your Choice Your Home application changes as this may affect their eligibility or qualification status, priority band or property eligibility.

Changes in circumstances include but are not limited to:

- A change in eligibility status
- A change in assets or savings including home ownership / beneficiary of a property.
- The accrual of new housing related debt
- New criminal convictions
- A change of address
- A change of contact details
- People leaving the household or new household members.
- A change in a household member's health or wellbeing

If the Council later discovers a change in circumstances that has not been disclosed to the Council, this may result in a housing application being cancelled, or an offer of accommodation being withdrawn.

12.3 Deliberately worsening circumstances

Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify for a higher priority band, the council may reduce priority or in some circumstances this may be considered as unacceptable behaviour, and the applicant may be disqualified from the scheme.

The applicant's band may be reduced by one band if they have:

- Abandoned or terminated previous accommodation without securing suitable alternative accommodation first.
- Sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without securing alternative accommodation first.
- Accepted a property owned by a Your Choice Your Home partner which the applicant now claims are unsuitable despite there being no change to their circumstances.
- Moved into accommodation which is unaffordable when being aware of the associated financial implications.
- Previously had their application cancelled for failing to bid.
- Been found to have deliberately disposed of assets or capital that would have enabled them to secure suitable accommodation.
- Ending of any homeless duty due to a deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate

12.4 False information

We will robustly investigate any circumstances that we believe to be fraudulent. It is an offence to obtain, or attempt to obtain, a tenancy by deception. S.171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to knowingly or recklessly provide or withhold information when applying for housing and subsequently if your circumstances should change.

If we discover that you or someone acting on your behalf has supplied false information or have failed to provide us with information that is relevant to your application in order to gain a priority or accommodation, we will immediately cancel your application.

If you have obtained accommodation through the Housing Register and it is discovered that you or someone acting on your behalf has supplied false information or failed to provide us with information that would have been relevant to your ability to secure that accommodation, we will work with your landlord to end your tenancy.

Anyone suspected of giving false information or withholding relevant information is also liable to be prosecuted and may be fined.

12.5 Renewal of housing applications

All applicants are required to renew their application annually. The applicant will be sent a reminder to confirm that they still wish to be registered and that their circumstances have not changed.

Should their circumstances have changed, the applicant should notify the Council of the change of circumstances.

The applicant will have 28 days to renew their application from the date the request is sent.

If an applicant has not responded after 28 days, the application will be cancelled and removed from the Housing Register. No further correspondence will be sent.

Any subsequent application to the Housing Register will be treated as a new application and will not be back dated to the date of the cancelled application,

12.6 Suspension of an Application

An application will be suspended if:

- An applicant has been asked for information to support an application and a reply has not been received within an agreed timescale.
- An applicant has changed address and not provided a change of circumstances form.
- An applicant has refused three properties and/or has failed to attend the viewing appointment. The applicant will be suspended from bidding for a period of 12 months.
- An applicant accepted onto the housing register on the grounds that the authority has accepted a homelessness duty has refused a final offer of accommodation. The applicant will be suspended from bidding until the housing register application has been re-assessed.
- An application will be suspended whilst a re-assessment of housing need takes place.
- An applicant has omitted to include information relevant to their application or information provided by the applicant has been found to be false or misleading. The application will be suspended from bidding for a period of 12 months.
- An applicant has not bid on a property for 12 months and there is no reasonable cause for them not bidding.

12.7 Cancellation of an Application.

An application will be cancelled if:

- The applicant has requested that their application be cancelled.
- The applicant has been housed as a result of a successful bid under the Your Choice Your Home or a direct let of a property.
- The applicant no longer qualifies for inclusion on the Housing Register.
- The applicant has been housed into the private rented sector under the Council's homelessness duties.
- The applicant fails to renew their housing application.
- The applicant has not provided the information requested to make an assessment on their application.
- The applicant has not responded to an offer of housing within an agreed timescale.
- The applicant has moved and not provided their new address.
- The applicant has given false or misleading information.
- The applicant has died.

Where an applicant, is considered to be potentially vulnerable, North Norfolk District Council will contact the applicant, or, if appropriate, an agency that they are working with, to check their circumstances before cancelling the application.

Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of the decision.

13. Allocations

North Norfolk District Council offers a blended approach to the allocation of Social Rented Accommodation, this means we let available homes in the following ways.

13.1 Choice based lettings.

The majority of available properties will be let through choice-based lettings where the property is advertised to allow applicants to bid on them.

Applicants are able to register a bid for properties that are deemed suitable for their needs. There are some circumstances in which this will not apply, and the Council will restrict access to bidding, make bids on behalf of an applicant, or make direct offers.

13.2 Direct lets

Not all properties that become available will be advertised and offered through the choice-based lettings system (CBL).

North Norfolk District Council will allocate up to X% by direct let. this would be where there are urgent operational or financial reasons to depart from the CBL system of lettings. To ensure transparency, the Council will report on properties that have been as allocated through direct matches.

Partner landlords retain the right to allocate 20% of their vacant properties outside of Housing Allocations.

13.3 Local Letting Provision

Sometime areas or property types are subject to local lettings arrangements; agreed with the Council at the time the property was built or subsequently once they are in management. These include:

Local Lettings Plans

Section 167(2E) of the 1996 Housing Act enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they have a priority need. Specific allocations may be considered when made to a particular estate or community. They are used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives and are usually developed where there is a wish to alter the balance of the community or ensure a balanced community.

Rural Letting Schemes

In areas which are officially defined as either villages or rural parish the rural lettings scheme may apply.

Section 106 Agreement

Other than developments on exception sites local lettings criteria will be determined having regard to the general housing needs of the district. Where a property has local area connection criteria attached to it through a local allocations plan or s.106 agreement, then these properties will be let in line with the criteria.

This may differ from the connection to the local area criteria contained within this allocations policy and this This criterion will be highlighted in the property advert.

13.4 Bedroom eligibility

The number of bedrooms an applicant can be considered for is decided by looking at the size and structure of the household.

In making its assessment and deciding what size of property an applicant is entitled to, the Council will use the Government's Bedroom Standard, this states that a bedroom is allocated for each of the following:

- A couple
- A single person aged 21 or over.
- Two children under 10 regardless of sex
- Two adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex.

An extra bedroom may be permissible for each of the following circumstances:

- A member of your household who requires overnight care from a non-resident carer or group of carers on a regular basis.
- An adult couple who are unable to share a room because of a disability or a disabled child who would be expected to share a bedroom but cannot share because of a disability.
- Approved foster carers between placements if they have fostered a child, or became a foster parent, within the last 12 months.
- Households with an adult child in the armed forces who is away from home.

When considering your entitlement under the Bedroom Allocation Criteria we will take into account situations where:

- You are adopting a child.
- You or a member of your household are expecting a child.
- A child in your household identifies as non-binary or trans-gender.

We will ask applicants to provide us with supporting information from relevant agencies to confirm this such as GP or Social Services.

In situations where a child's parents no longer reside with each other we will consider the primary carer to be the parent that is in receipt of child benefit. The primary carer's bedroom entitlement will take the child or children into account.

13.5 Property advert details

To help applicants choose the properties that would best suit their needs, properties advertised on Your Choice Your Home will have information on size, location and property features. The adverts will also include:

- At least one image of the front of the property
- Which partner landlord owns the property?
- Weekly rent and any other applicable charges
- If known, an estimated date that the property will be available to move in to
- The closing date for applicants to express an interest.

13.6 Targeted property adverts

When we advertise an available home on our choice-based lettings website, Your Choice Your Home, we might target or 'preference' the advert to a type of housing need and which households can apply. For example, some adverts may be targeted to state that preference will be given to people of a certain age, for example, if the property is categorised as over 55s or that preference will be given to those with a disability, for example, if the property is adapted or suitable for adaptations. This may mean when we shortlist, that someone from a lower band may be selected for an offer because they meet the criteria.

Applicants should check the information contained in the property adverts to see if they qualify to be considered for the property.

13.7 Advertising Cycle

Available properties are advertised through the allocations scheme. The advertising will be carried out when properties become available and for specific periods of time, known as advertising cycles.

13.8 Number of Bids

As property adverts run concurrently, live applicants are able to bid on multiple properties per week, however they will only be considered for properties which meet their needs and where applicants are successful on more than one property shortlist, the applicant must decide which property they wish to be considered for. In some situations, the council reserves the right to determine which property is offered to the applicant.

Applicants should only bid on properties after reading all the details in the advert. Bids on suitable properties which are later refused may result in your banding decreasing or your application cancelled (see section X) If applicants do not express an interest in a property or express an interest in a property that is not suitable or that is targeted to a specific group, will not be considered for the allocation of that property

13.8 Auto bidding

Where someone who is vulnerable or unable to bid for themselves and has no one to do it for them and would like their bidding to be done automatically we will allow them to register for auto bidding. The system is given instructions on the properties/areas that will match the applicants housing need and then it bids on their behalf.

Applicants who are owed a statutory homeless duty may also be subject to an Auto bid process whereby bids will be made automatically on their behalf.

Any successful bid will be classed as a formal offer of accommodation and the refusal sanctions set out in section X will apply.

13.9 Withdrawal of an advert or nomination.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which a housing association that has advertised a property or made an offer of a tenancy to an applicant needs to withdraw this property from Your Choice Your Home. This could be for the following reasons:

- An error has been made in the advertising criteria.
- The property has been advertised, but the existing tenant has rescinded their notice.
- There is a right of succession to the property.

- The property has been advertised but further inspections have established that the property needs major works which will take several months.
- The property has been advertised but needs to be withdrawn for an urgent case as a direct let.
- The Housing Association needs the property for an urgent management move.
- The nominee does not qualify under the Housing Association's own Housing Allocations Policy

13.10 Failure to Bid

Applicants are expected to place bids regularly. Applicants who are not making bids will be contacted to determine if this is due to them having difficulties. Particular attention will be paid to those in Band A and B, If bids are not placed with a twelve-month period and suitable properties have been advertised during this time, the Applicants will be contacted to assess the reason. Applicants who fail to respond may be removed from the Scheme or have their application reassessed and assigned a lower priority may be awarded.

Priority card applicants and applicants accepted as homeless, including those applicants living in temporary accommodation and North Norfolk District Council has a statutory duty to them under homelessness legislation, need to secure housing urgently. It is therefore expected that Applicants to be actively bidding on suitable advertised properties. If an Applicant is not bidding and their housing officer consider that there have been suitable properties advertised, bids may be placed on the applicant's behalf and any successful bid will be classed as a formal offer of accommodation and the refusal sanctions set out in section X will apply

14. Lettings

14.1 Shortlisting

When applicants bid on a property they will be placed on a shortlist. Any applicant who bids on a property where they do not satisfy the advertised criteria will not be included on the shortlist.

After the end of an advertising cycle a shortlist of applicants bidding for the property and meeting the property criteria will be produced. Applicants will be ranked in order of their priority band. Where more than one applicant in the same priority band appears on the shortlist, they will be ranked in date order as determined by their date in band.

Where there is more than one applicant in the same band with the same date in band, the applicant with the earliest registration date will appear higher on the shortlist. If there is more than one applicant with the same band, date in band and registration date an officer will make an allocation decision based on the best use of the housing stock and specific needs or circumstances of the applicants.

Prioritisation of shortlisted applicants will take into consideration any additional criteria stipulated by the registered provider for the occupation of the property, when a shortlist is completed the landlord of the available property may offer an accompanied viewing of the property to multiple applicants with the highest priority. This is to ensure that if the applicant who tops the shortlist decides not to take the tenancy, the property can be quickly offered to the next person on the shortlist.

After viewing the property, the applicant at the top of the shortlist will normally be given 24 hours to accept or refuse the offer. The time limit for responding to offers may differ between landlords. If the

applicant does not contact the landlord or the Housing Options Team within the timescale given, the landlord will take this as a refusal of the offer. If the offer is refused the next person on the shortlist will be offered the property. The landlord will work down the shortlist in order.

Applicants will not be contacted if their bid is not shortlisted.

14.2 Formal offer of accommodation

Prior to any formal offer of accommodation, Your Choice Your Home partners will also carry out checks to verify an applicant's circumstances. This will include an affordability assessment. Applicants that fail the verification checks and/or affordability assessments will not be offered the accommodation for which they have been nominated. An offer of accommodation must be deemed suitable. This will take into consideration:

- Household type and size
- Rent and service charges.
- Property type, size and condition
- Medical need
- Area in relation to employment and education
- Affordability checks

Once the applicant has confirmed their acceptance of the property the landlord will write to confirm the formal offer (often sent by email) of the tenancy.

Once the property is ready to let the landlord of the property will complete the tenancy sign up

14.3 Landlord rejection/withdrawal of offer

Social landlords have their own rules on suitability. This means that even if you are shortlisted the landlord for that home may say no, for example:

- Where there has been a change in the applicants' circumstances
- Where the successful applicant has rent arrears or other housing related debts that had previously not come to light
- Following verification, the applicant is not eligible for the property.
- Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria
- Where an offer of accommodation could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm

The landlord must notify the applicant/North Norfolk District Council of their reasons for rejecting the applicant for the property, If the council is satisfied that the reasons are acceptable in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme the decision will stand, and the applicant will be notified of the outcome. If we believe the registered provider has been unreasonable, we will ask them to review their decision.

Applicants will be required to pay rent in advance prior to moving into a property. This requirement is a condition of the tenancy agreement and includes applicants who are in receipt of full benefits. Applicants will be notified of this during the application process so they can take steps to achieve this.

The final decision on whether to offer a tenancy, rests with the Registered Provider, if you do not agree with the final decisions made by a registered provider you should request a review directly with the registered provider and in accordance with their policies.

14.4 Refusals

North Norfolk District Council understands that in some cases when an applicant goes through the bidding process and is offered a property the applicant may want to refuse this offer.

Applicants must only bid on properties for which they intend to accept based on the information provided. An applicant can withdraw a bid from a property during that bidding cycle if upon reflection and research they deem this property as unsuitable.

It is also important that applicants who have an urgent or critical housing need are adequately housed as quickly as possible to ensure their current housing need is met.

To ensure we can house people as soon as properties become available, the council will enforce criteria around how many refusals are allowed when a property is offered. We do recognise that there will be instances where a refusal is reasonable.

The information below outlines the number of refusals allowed:

- **Priority card**

Where an applicant (other than a person owed the main homelessness duty) has been awarded a priority card, and refuses a reasonable offer of accommodation, a Housing officer will review the reasons for the refusal and the applicant may lose their priority card, dependent on the reasons for the offer refusal.

- **Band A and B**

Any person that refuses two offers of accommodation that meets their expressed choices will be entitled to remain on the Housing Register but will have their priority reduced. Their degree of preference (banding) will continue to be determined by their housing need assessment, but their date of registration will be amended to be the date of refusal of the second offer, thus reducing their priority within the band.

If an applicant is homeless the refusal of a suitable offer of accommodation is highly likely to result in cessation of the homeless duty, the potential loss of any temporary accommodation, and a change to their entry under this Housing Allocation Scheme.

Any applicant who refused a final offer of accommodation has the right to request a review of the suitability of the offer of accommodation.

Applicants can still ask for a review even if the offer has been accepted. This means that if they lose their review (we believe the home is suitable) they will still have somewhere to live. If they win their review (we agree that the home is not suitable) they will keep their original priority and can continue to look for another home.

Please see section 15 for More information about the applicants right to review.

- **Band C and D**

Applicants who have been awarded a band C or D but have not made any bids for accommodation within a 12-month period since receiving this priority will be contracted and requested to provide confirmation of their current circumstances and their reasons for not making any applications for housing.

Applicants will not be considered for an allocation of accommodation until the necessary information has been received and assessed. Where it is considered appropriate to do so, the Council may consider cancelling the application.

14.5 Lettings Information

We acknowledge that due to high demand for certain types of properties in the district it is not possible to re-house every potential applicant through the scheme. North Norfolk District Council will publish information on accepted offers of accommodation from previous bidding cycles.

The following information will be published.

- Property address
- Property type
- The band of the successful bidder
- The date they were placed in that band
- The number of bids received

15. The Applicants Right to Review

The Council is committed to making the correct decisions on all applications. The Council will notify the applicant in writing of the decision made and give full details of how that the decision was made.

Under section 166A (9) of the Housing Act 1996 an applicant has a legal right to request a review of any of the following decisions reached by the Council on their housing application:

- A decision that an applicant is not eligible.
- A decision that an applicant is not a qualifying person to join the housing register.
- A decision regarding the band an applicant has been awarded.
- The effective date awarded of going into a band.
- A decision to remove an applicant from the housing register.
- Any decision about the facts of the case that has been used to assess their application.
- Where an applicant considers that a decision has been based on incorrect information.
- Appeal against suitability of accommodation as a final offer (accepted main homelessness duty only).

Requests for a review must be submitted in writing or e-mail, to the Council within 21 days of the date when the notification was received.

The applicant will receive a notification that the review has been received and the review should be concluded within 56 days. An appropriate senior officer within the Housing Options team will oversee the reviews and will make a 'review decision' which might agree with our original decision, might agree with the applicant that we made the wrong original decision, or might reach a new decision.

Review requests will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the policy has been incorrectly applied and taking into account any further information the applicant thinks is relevant.

16. Complaints

Complaints are separate to the circumstances where an applicant wishes to seek a review of a decision made on their application. A request for a review should be made under the review procedure set out above and not through the Council's complaints procedure.

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which their application for housing has been conducted and wishes to make a complaint, this should be made using the Council's complaints procedure.

A copy of the current complaints procedure is available on the North Norfolk District Council website and can be accessed here: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/7843/customer-complaints-and-compliments-procedure.pdf>

Where a complaint relates to how an applicant has been dealt with under this policy an applicant who remains dissatisfied after following the internal complaints process has the right to continue with their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman Service if they are unhappy with the response to their complaint.

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent service run by Central Government to make sure that Councils provide the required standard of service to their customers. The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the Council has done something, but they cannot question what has been done simply because someone did not agree with it. For further details contact: www.lgo.org.uk

17. GDPR and Freedom of Information

Any personal information that the council holds about applicants will be made available to applicants to view upon request. We will use the information provided by the applicant to enable us to assess applications. We may also use the information for issues of child protection, public protection and for preventing and detecting fraud and other criminal offences. This includes information we hold as paper and electronic records. If you would like to access your file, please contact the council.

A copy of our privacy notice which can be found here: (needs to be updated)

18. Equality, diversity and accessibility

We are committed to ensuring this policy is non-discriminatory and that all applicants are able to access the service, especially taking account of any vulnerability or other specific needs, and also the needs of different groups protected by the Equality Act 2010; the Human Rights Act 1998; the safeguarding and welfare of Children, Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, and the welfare of Adults, care act 2014.

To identify the needs of our applicants the application form contains specific questions relating to vulnerability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability and other relevant criteria. The information

obtained will be used to monitor the impact of the policy on minority and specific needs groups and to evidence the need for amendments, as may be required.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular section 149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty, we are required to give due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, when exercising a public function such as a Housing Allocations Scheme. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This policy complies with the [Council's Equality Policy which is located online at: XXX](#)

19. Force Majeure

The allocation scheme cannot cover every eventuality, we will not be liable for any delay in performing our obligations under this policy if the delay is caused by a Force Majeure (chance occurrence or unavoidable accident for example), provided that reasonable action and notification to our customers is taken by the council.

More fully, this means, circumstances beyond reasonable control of that party, including without limitation, strikes, lock outs, acts of God, cyber-attack, the act or omission of any governmental or other competent authority, war or national emergency.

20. Monitoring

This housing allocation scheme will be monitored and reviewed, when necessary (at least annually), to ensure that it continues to meet local needs, responds to changes in the local housing market, meets strategic objectives and remains legally compliant.

We may decide that changes are needed – for example, because it is not meeting the needs of our customers/applicants in the way we hoped it would, because of financial or other pressures the Council has to manage, or because of changes in legislation, regulations or guidance. If a small change to our Housing Allocation Scheme is needed, a senior officer in the Council can make this change in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for housing.

If a significant change is needed, the Council will engage with our members and will run a public consultation on those changes.

Appendices (under development)

Appendix 1

Registered Provider details to be include

Appendix 2

Virtual Review Group – Terms of Reference

Appendix 3

Bedroom Standard

Appendix 4 – Draft

Local Allocation Agreement

Band 1

Currently living in the parish or adjoining parishes for 5 consecutive years at the point of allocation or

- Has permanent employment of 16 hours or more in the parish or adjoining parishes for 5 consecutive years at the point of allocation or
- Has lived in the parish or adjoining parishes in the past for 5 consecutive years out of 10 years at the point of allocation or
- Has an immediate family member who has lived in the parish or adjoining parish for 5 consecutive years at the point of allocation.

Band 2

Currently living in the parish or adjoining parishes for 2 consecutive years at the point of allocation or

- Has permanent employment of 16 hours or more in the parish or adjoining parishes for 2 consecutive years at the point of allocation or
- Has lived in the parish or adjoining parishes in the past for 2 consecutive years out of 5 years at the point of allocation or
- Has an immediate family member who has lived in the parish or adjoining parishes for 2 consecutive years at the point of allocation.

Band 3

If there no applicants who fall within the Local Allocations Agreement , the property will allocated in line with the district wide Housing Allocations Scheme.

Feedback on Your Choice you Home

January 2024

Introduction

North Norfolk District Council does not own its own housing stock. We work with registered providers to maintain a housing register where people can access social housing in our area. The scheme enables the Council and its partners to work together to ensure we prioritise those in most need of affordable housing.

The council has a statutory duty to have a housing allocation policy under The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and has taken into account the code of guidance for local authorities published 2002, the Localism Act 2012, the North Norfolk District Council Homelessness Strategy and the Equality Act 2010.

We operate a Choice Based Letting Scheme, and the Housing Allocation Policy sets out a framework that describes how to register, the assessment process and property allocation process. The Council is currently reviewing how homes are allocated to ensure people have homes that meet their needs, prioritising those who need it most and making the application process easier. As part of our review of the Allocation Scheme, we asked people who have used the service, whether they are in housing or still on the waiting list, their thoughts on how the system works and what can be done to improve it.

Feedback

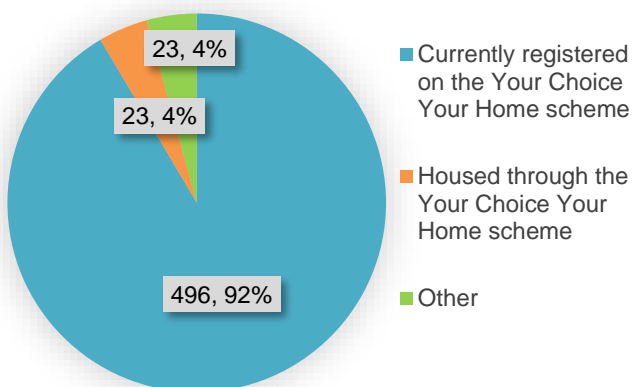
For a six-week period we asked eight questions about peoples experience of using Your Choice Your Home. The survey was publicised on the Council's website, promoted through the Autumn addition of our Outlook magazine, key partners were informed, and notifications were sent out by email to applicants registered on the scheme.

A total of **545** surveys were completed. This report contains an analysis of survey responses. A separate appendix report is available on request which details all comments made by respondents to the questions within the survey.

For each open question the text comments have been studied individually and coded depending on what issues/themes were raised. The coded comments are then reported on, based on the number of times those individual issues have been raised.

Q1. Which of the following best describes you?

The survey was anonymous so did not collect any personal or identifiable data but asked demographic questions to identify the relationship between the respondent and Your Choice Your Home, e.g., current applicant, someone who has been housed through the scheme, or something else.

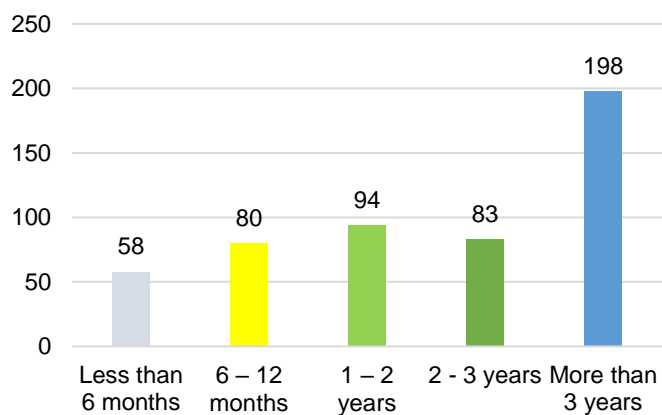


Answered: 542
Skipped: 3

As shown the vast majority (**92%**) identified themselves applicants currently registered on Your Choice Your Home.

Other respondents **4%** included friends or family members who are supporting applicants, carers helping applicants with mental health, applicants who are not sure if they are still on the Housing list, social housing tenants and people outside of the area wanting to join

Q2. How long have you been on the Your Choice Your Home scheme?

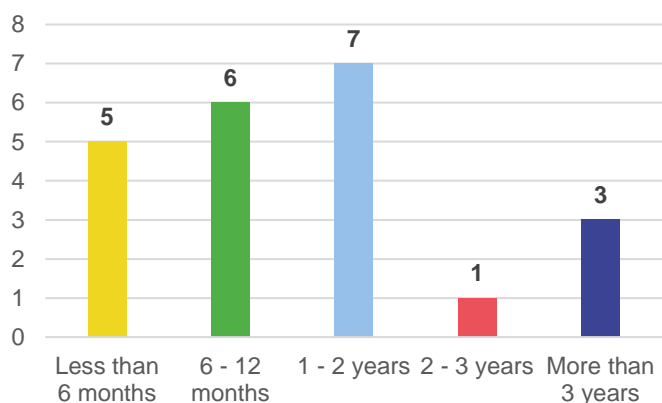


Answered: 513
 Skipped: 9
 Not Applicable (been housed): 23

This graph identifies how long someone has been an applicant on the scheme.

As shown, over **38%** of respondents have been on the scheme for more than 3 years and **34%** have been registered on the scheme for over 1 Year.

Q3. If you have been housed recently through the Your Choice Your Home scheme, how long were you on the scheme before being housed?

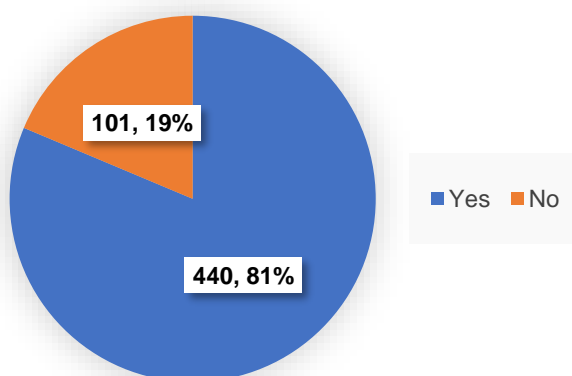


Answered: 23
 Not Applicable: (513)

The question was only relevant to the 23 people who responded saying have been housed recently through your Choice your home.

The Housing Register is not a waiting list, so the length of time someone will have to wait before being allocating a home will be dependent on individual circumstances and needs.

Q4. Are you actively bidding on properties?



Answered: 541
 Skipped: 4

84% of people responding confirmed that they are actively bidding on properties.

The 16% of applicants who said they were not actively bidding were asked to tell us why not.

Responses were varied but the most common reason was the lack of suitable (size and Location) properties available.

Other reasons included:

- Auto Bidding in Place
- Have lost hope.
- Medical issue
- I don't know how to use the system.
- Private Rented tenancy but want social housing.

Q5 to Q8 – Free text comments

The free text comments in Questions 5 to 8 open comments section of the consultation enabled respondents to provide further reflections on their views and experiences of the allocations process.

Free text comments have been grouped by identifying reoccurring themes in responses to help understand the sentiment behind respondents, many of these responses contained detailed explanations of people’s individual circumstances and we understand that there will be conflicting opinions.

The most frequently occurring themes (those with 10 or more comments) identified from the free text responses are shown below.

Q5. What do you like about the Your Choice Your Home scheme?

323 people were able to identify something that they liked about the scheme.

The most frequently occurring themes (those with 10 or more comments) identified from the free text responses are shown in the table below.

Theme	Responses	Summary
Accessibility	141	The scheme is, fair, transparent and easy and convenient to use. Auto Bid is available for applicants who need support.
Choice	89	Your get a chance to choose which accommodation/area you want to bid on.
System Functionality	26	The ability to see properties and bid online and receive email notifications when properties are available.
Chance	19	It provides hope of getting a home
Affordability	16	Rent is cheaper than private rented properties
Property Adverts	12	The information provided gives more detail about property, including rent and maps.

Q6. What do you dislike about the Your Choice Your Home scheme?

371 people were able to identify something they disliked about Your Choice Your Home. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people’s circumstances. Whilst outside of the scope of Your Choice Your Home, the acute shortage of housing was identified as the top frustration with **23%** of people highlighting the lack of suitable/available properties impacting their view of Your Choice Your Home negatively.

Overall, the negative comments related less to the scheme and more to how it was applied in practice, or based on a negative personal experience that someone has had. Issues raised included, frustrations about the application process, or criteria for assessing housing need. Reference was also made to priority being given to applicants in temporary accommodation jumping the queue which prevents band 1 applicants who have been waiting a long-time accessing housing.

Some people are wanting a more hands-on’ approach from staff with regards to support and advice available to them and others feel that the scheme did not go far enough to recognise medical/disability needs of the households or the social and psychological effects of Overcrowding.

A smaller number of people also disliked the process for transferring tenants and felt the scheme offered very little opportunity for tenants wishing to move to a more suitable home or ever being able to obtain a new build property.

Theme	Responses	Summary
Lack of Homes	84	Lack of properties available and applicants unable to get their needs met in terms of appropriate/suitable accommodation.
Waiting time	55	The length of time applicants are waiting for social housing and that waiting time does not appear to count.
Banding / Priority	47	Criteria for assessing housing need is not clear and does not recognise personal circumstances and need.
Property Adverts	30	Quality and lack of pictures/information on property adverts to assist applicants in bidding on suitable properties. Properties advertised at any time, means that you are constantly having to look rather than being on a weekly cycle that would provide routine for people to look and bid for suitable properties.
Communication/Feedback	28	Lack of communication/feedback regarding the scheme including eligibility, chances of being housed and outcomes after bidding has closed.
Property Eligibility	24	Property alerts that have a minimum age requirement, tenant only, or adapted are confusing and generate wasted bids.
Bidding Process	24	Lack of clarity regarding shortlisting and the perception that homes are being let direct or to people who have not been waiting as long or have lower needs.
Local People/Connection	15	Homes are being allocated to people without a connection to North Norfolk. A smaller number of feedback highlighted a different viewpoint with people frustrated at how hard it is to get back into North Norfolk without a connection or their connection has been lost.

Q7. How do you think the Your Choice Your Home scheme can be improved?

325 comments were received relating to how the scheme can be improved. These closely mirrored the themes identified in question 6 (what do you dislike about the Your Choice Your Home scheme?) and again the lack of availability of home being the biggest concern.

Some of the comments relating to our overall approach included the need to focus on an applicant's personal circumstances, that one size does not fit all, and the need to take mental health issues, and physical health into account when determining priority for allocating homes.

A significant number of comments related to the size of properties and how there could be better use of the housing stock to meet the requirements of people in need. This included looking at people who want to transfer to smaller properties, and letting people who need adaptations be considered for properties that could be adapted rather than having to wait for an adapted property to become available.

Some suggestions were around making the Policy easier to understand and interpret, and having better information up front so people know what their banding means and chances of being allocated a home.

Other comments related to making the reporting of change of circumstances easier and providing a better assessment when needs change around what this might mean to your chances of being housed.

Theme	Responses	Summary
More Homes	58	There is an urgent need to build more affordable homes.
Communication/Feedback	45	<p>We need to recognise the importance of regular communication throughout the allocations process and improve both general information and feedback on an individual basis.</p> <p>We should provide people with the opportunity to discuss their application personally and have a proper assessment so that we truly understand peoples needs.</p>
Banding/Priority	36	<p>Suggestions were mixed and related to who should be given priority and varied from housing emergency situations to waiting time and that people who are waiting the longest on the list.</p> <p>Other suggestion related to couples without children or working families who are just keeping their heads above water.</p> <p>Looking closer at overcrowding, medical conditions, the age of applicants and ensuring that property types are more suitably matched were all other themes where people thought the scheme could be improved.</p>
Property Adverts	28	<p>Include more information and pictures (including inside and garden) and make it clearer who can bid for the property.</p> <p>Other comments relating to property adverts were around improving notification alerts when properties go live.</p>
Individual Needs	23	Acknowledge personal circumstances. Whilst policies need to have rules people felt the system needed to be flexible enough to cater for individual circumstances.
Bidding Process	22	<p>Suggestions were around shortlisting and not letting several people know at the same time as gives false hope and ensuring that bidders meet the criteria of the property being advertised, e.g., the system not allowing you to bid that you are not eligible for or that you are unlikely to be able to afford.</p> <p>Other feedback suggested that more should be done to assess need and only target people whose need meets that property, scrap direct lettings and let everyone have the opportunity to bid, and changing to only advertising properties once a week.</p>
Local People/Connection	21	<p>There should be more opportunities for local people to get homes before people from outside the local area.</p> <p>Again, suggestions under this theme were mixed, with a smaller proportion of people saying that priority should go by people's needs whether they live in North Norfolk or not.</p>

Waiting time	18	Recognition that waiting time is taken into consideration with applicants feeling like they are being put to the back of the list as new applicants are getting housed first. Help manage expectations about how long it could take.
Fairness & Transparency	12	Being more transparent about who is getting the homes and being clearer on eligibility and chances.
Choice	12	Understanding where people want to live is important and we should not push areas they don't know or takes them away from their support networks. Policy of refusing a house, need to encourage people not bid on properties they are not wanting but also be more flexible in accepting a refusal from applicant because it does not meet their needs. Other Suggestions included extending outside of North Norfolk and some also mentioned the lack of choice in Landlords.
Property eligibility	11	Tighten up allocations for homes that would be suitable for disabled people regardless of whether they have yet been adapted. Give more opportunity to transfer tenants to get a new build home. Look at under occupation as over time families have moved out and offer a more friendly system for notifications – e.g., don't send people details of properties they will not be eligible to bid on.

Q8. Do you have any comments to make on the on the scheme as a whole?

The survey's final question was also an open question, asking for any additional comments that people may wish to contribute. There were 241 responses to this question covering a wide range of themes.

Most of the common themes have already been highlighted in previous questions and again, responses reflected less to the scheme and more to how it is applied in practice, or a personal experience, with some people being very positive about the scheme and their experience and others expressing dissatisfaction at the lack of homes, lack of communication, homes going to people outside of the area, the waiting time and the lack of clarity around medical conditions (including supporting GP letters, medical reports not being recognised) and consideration for certain households, e.g working families, single households and over 60s.

Other themes identified related to Housing Staff (both positive and negative), the Council as a whole, domestic abuse victim-survivor priority, registered provider policies and procedures, e.g. selling stock, empty homes etc Nationally Policy, e.g., bedroom eligibility, and the time it take to get a housing needs assessment.

The Council would like to thank everyone that took the time to feedback their views. This feedback will be instrumental in guiding our next steps We will use the survey results to help us make changes and to shape the way we provide our services

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Equality Impact Screening



Title:	Housing Allocation Scheme		Status of the policy	Draft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state below)
Directorate:	People Services		Service Area:	Housing Options
Person responsible for the assessment			Date assessment completed	

1. What are the aims and objectives and purposes of the policy

This is a review and update of the existing Housing Allocations Scheme for the period 2023 -2028.

North Norfolk District Council, like all other authorities are required to have a mechanism to assess housing need, advertise available social housing and allocate properties to households in need.

This is done through a partnership with registered providers with housing stock in North Norfolk via our Housing Allocations Scheme.

The allocation scheme is a legislative requirement. Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 sets out that local authorities must have a mechanism for the allocation of social housing within its district. It also sets out that there are certain groups who must be given preference under any scheme.

The Authority has an existing scheme, however this was last reviewed in 2016, and since then there has been several legislative changes. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the Council has in place a policy that sets out how it will prioritise households and the procedures it will follow when allocating social housing, and to update the scheme to reflect the changes in legislation and deliver a scheme that is fit for purpose.

2. Does the policy support other objectives of the council?

Yes, within the Corporate Plan 2023 -2027, meeting our local housing need is one of the priorities.

3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy, and in what way?

Those households in the district who live here and who have a qualifying housing need to join the register – also provision for those who may not have a local connection to North Norfolk, but also do not have a local connection anywhere, such as homeless applicants or for those who are fleeing domestic abuse.

4. What outcomes are anticipated from the policy being in place

The desired outcome of the policy is to ensure that social housing is offered to those households who have a local connection to the district and a qualifying housing need. It also ensures that this is done in an open and transparent way that accords with our statutory and regulatory duties and makes best use of the housing stock in the district

5. What data have you gathered for this assessment? How have you analysed this data?

Source and Age of Data

The evidence that has been used to support our understanding of the impact of any changes is based on:

- Profiling information that is routinely gathered for people who apply to join the Housing Register and are allocated social housing in the district including mandatory statistical returns such as H-clc,
- Profiling information that is routinely gathered for people who approach the Council for assistance to prevent or relieve homelessness
- Government publications about the characteristics of those households most in need of affordable housing, including those to whom a reasonable preference must be given to join the waiting list and/or are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- The Housing Allocations Scheme Lettings Report 2022/23
- The Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021/22
- 2021 CENSUS Data
- Case Law

An analysis of the equalities impact has been undertaken based on the detailed data available from the housing register and other sources. In relation to some groups, there is no or limited data available or the numbers are too small to identify any significant impact.

7. Who are the main stakeholders of this policy?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NNDC Employees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the Wider Community	<input type="checkbox"/> Members
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioned Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners	<input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders	

Additional Comments:

The scheme affects residents, registered providers of housing, community groups, statutory agencies and organizations with an interest in social housing in the district.

8. Are there any concerns that the policy could have a negative impact with Protected Characteristics?

The following table identifies any potential impact the proposed changes could have on people with a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010). Where a negative impact has been recognised or where we have data that suggests they might be impacted we have highlighted the provisions within the proposed scheme which will help mitigate the impact.

Age: Young People

Potential Impacts:	<p>Young People -Care Leavers</p> <p>The statutory eligibility criteria includes age. People aged between 16 and 18 are not legally able to hold a tenancy in their own name</p> <p>This scheme states an Age qualification for applicants to be placed on the Council's Housing Register. This is applicants must be 18 years of age or over</p>
Mitigations	<p>Exception within the scheme allows for 16- and 17-year-olds to join the register, are actively working with Children Services and have a guardian to hold a hold a tenancy in trust for them if they were to be offered a home.</p>

Age: Older People

Potential Impacts:	<p>Those aged 65 or over make up % on the housing register.</p> <p>We are making a new proposal to award priority for downsizing, which means those who are in a larger home, who are under occupying will be eligible to apply to join the</p>
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	<p>housing register to move to a smaller home to allow the freeing up of larger homes for families on the housing register, thus making the best use of the existing stock.</p> <p>On-line applications have been the normal method for applicants to make their housing applications which may disadvantage some older people who do not use or are unfamiliar with digital technology.</p> <p>People with Financial means that are seeking housing with care/Housing for over 55s will be allowed access to this register but will be restricted to what properties that they can bid on.</p>
Mitigations	<p>A smaller property helps to counteract fuel poverty and restricted mobility, more prevalent as people get older. Releasing family sized homes in turn reduces the time that families typically with young children in urgent need of rehousing have to remain living in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>Support available within the Housing Options team to help with digital access. In addition to help address potential digital exclusion an application can also be taken over the phone. There is also an option for the council to set up 'auto-bids' for those unable to manage online bidding for themselves</p> <p>People will be eligible to join the register if they can demonstrate a local connection and the need to move into the district to give or receive care.</p>
Disability	
Potential impacts	Some people with a disability may find using the system difficult to use, and housing options available to them limited.
Mitigations:	<p>Under s166A for the Housing Act those with a medical need (including grounds relating to a disability such as mobility and requiring household adaptations) are given a statutory reasonable preference to join the register, their banding will be based on the severity or urgency of the need and medical need and ongoing care and support needs is reflected in bandings A- C .</p> <p>Targeted adverts – Where a property has had adaptations, priority can be given to those who need adapted accommodation.</p> <p>People who are occupying an adapted property and the adaptations are no longer required will have priority on the housing register. This could potentially release some more accessible homes.</p> <p>Increasing priority for under-occupying households, older households are more likely to be impacted by this change and are more likely to include disabled people. The policy will offer appropriate rehousing options that will aim to improve the living situation for disabled under-occupiers.</p> <p>The scheme recognises people who are moving on from Supported accommodation (including North Norfolk District Council rough sleepers' accommodation) This will support vulnerable adults who may have complex needs such as mental health disability or a chronic condition) when they are ready for independent living.</p> <p>The scheme includes an exemption to the local connection criteria for disabled and injured armed forces personnel and veterans of the armed forces to reflect current statutory guidance. This includes divorced and separated household members and to allow access to the register to all who were in service.</p> <p>Support available within the Housing Options team to help with digital access. In addition to help address potential digital exclusion an application can also be taken over the</p>

	<p>phone. There is also an option for the council to set up 'auto-bids' for those unable to manage online bidding for themselves</p> <p>The new scheme has also been designed to be easier to understand, providing clarity. As is currently the case, officers can provide advice and assistance for people who may have difficulty understanding the scheme.</p>
Sex	
Potential impacts:	<p>Females make up an estimated 64% of the housing register. This is generally due to women being the main carer and are more likely as a result to come under one of the reasonable preference categories for a statutory housing need.</p> <p>Women are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse including financial Abuse.</p> <p>Women with dependent children make up the largest cohort of households in temporary accommodation.</p>
Mitigations:	<p>There is explicit inclusion of priority for victims of domestic abuse reflecting the current broader definition of abuse under the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act. This will improve opportunities for women who are statistically more likely to be affected by domestic abuse.</p> <p>To mitigate the risk that the local residence qualifying criteria may disadvantage those needing to move due to domestic abuse into another area, the scheme includes an exemption to the local connection criteria for those "at high risk of domestic abuse that is likely to continue or be carried out and cannot reside safely in any other local authority area where they have a local connection criterion.</p>
Gender reassignment	
Potential impacts	There is limited data to evaluate the impact of the Scheme on people with this defined characteristic.
Mitigations:	<p>Wording has been updated to recognise the fact that gender is not binary and the language within the scheme has been neutralised.</p> <p>The assessment of bedroom need under the new scheme now also allows for consideration of cases in which a child may have an established gender identity different to that which was assigned at birth.</p> <p>National research suggests that Trans people may be particularly at risk of housing crisis and homelessness arising from transphobic reactions and harassment by family, neighbours and members of their local community – whilst we have no evidence in North Norfolk to support this, our allocations scheme includes the provision to support people who are at risk of harm, including hate crime towards anyone with a protected characteristic.</p>
Sexual orientation	
Potential impacts	There is little data available as the disclosure of sexual orientation when applying for housing is optional.
Mitigations:	<p>Housing Options will always seek to ensure that services are able to meet individuals' needs with a consistent approach in line with good practice and relevant legislation.</p> <p>Provision has been made in new allocations scheme that recognises a more neutral approach in wording.</p>
Pregnancy / Maternity	

Potential impacts:	<p>Women with dependent children make up the largest cohort of households in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Pregnant women are more likely to have become homeless due to being excluded from a family home, or homeless due to domestic abuse, or homeless due to being unable to continue to afford the rent on a private rented property</p>
Mitigations:	<p>Unborn children will be recognised as part of the household from six months into the pregnancy. Applicants or their partners who are pregnant and the due date is within 12 weeks, and it is the first child are entitled to apply for properties with one additional bedroom.</p> <p>Homeless Households are given a high priority for housing under the Policy and therefore, pregnant women as a group are likely to be advantaged and not disadvantaged by the Policy</p>

Race

Potential impacts	<p>There may be issues for people for whom English is not their first language in understanding the Allocation scheme</p> <p>There are proposed changes to the residency criteria which may impact in terms of this protected characteristic.</p> <p>From case law there are cases that refugees and travellers fall within this protected characteristic group and that residency requirements can indirectly discriminate against these groups, as by virtue of their circumstances they are less likely to be able to satisfy a residency requirement.</p>
Mitigations	<p>Support is included for people who need additional services or support to full take part in the scheme e.g. language.</p> <p>Exemptions and consideration of exceptional circumstances for applicants who do not meet the residency requirements have been included in the scheme. the residency criteria can be waived if there is an application from someone who may not by virtue of their situation have a local connection criterion anywhere, and to anyone who we might owe a reasonable preference to under legislation.</p>

Religion or Belief

Potential impacts:	<p>There are no changes to the scheme which are anticipated to have any impact on Religion but we recognise that there is only generalised information for the housing information as the disclosure of a person's religion is optional when applying to join the housing register.</p>
Mitigations:	<p>The scheme offers a religion/faith neutral approach to making decision on the allocation of housing as this may not be known. The Policy will be carried out with an emphasis on equality of treatment.</p>

Marriage & civil partnership

Potential impacts:	<p>There are no changes to the scheme which are anticipated to have any impact on Marriage and civil partnerships.</p>
Mitigations:	<p>Minor change redefining who would reasonably be considered part of a household includes blended families though marriage /civil partnerships.</p>

9. Could the negative impact you have identified in questions lead to the potential for adverse impact if the policy is implemented?

Overall, it is felt that the impact of this revised Allocations policy will be positive for North Norfolk residents, including those with protected characteristics. However, it is recognised that the proposed changes can affect equalities groups in different ways and is based on identifying those most in housing need, it is expected that people from more disadvantage groups will be on the housing register.

Once the new policy is adopted, there will be a transition period where applicants will need to re-register on a new application form by a certain date.

This means all existing applications will be closed and there is a high chance that due to the changes in the overall eligibility rules there will be a high number of applicants who would no longer qualify to be on the housing register or qualify for rehousing. The applicants most impacted will be those who are on the Housing Options Register and Transfer Register and those who do not have a local connection.

For some applicants on the housing register, they may still be eligible to be on the but not all will receive the same level of overall priority.

Providing applicants do this and still qualify, they will retain their original qualifying date.

10. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group?

In all cases, a justification for the proposed policy has been provided and certain mitigations and exceptions have been included. However, we recognise that the scheme will not meet the needs or the expectations of everyone and throughout the proposals we have included the opportunity to consider exceptional circumstances and all applicants have the right to appeal against our decisions.

11. Describe the arrangements for reporting and publishing this assessment.

A wider impact assessment will be completed following statutory consultation.
The impact of the changes will be monitored through existing quarterly performance. As part of the change process we are also aiming to make it easier to access information about Allocations in more user-friendly formats making the data more transparent and enabling better insights for both service users and staff.
A further impact analysis will be undertaken 12 months after the approval and implementation of the new policy to understand the effects.

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Cabbell Park – further information	
Executive Summary	<p>Cabbell Park is situated on Mill Road in Cromer and was previously the home of Cromer Town Football Club.</p> <p>Ownership of Cabbell Park was taken on by NNDC in 2015, with a section at the front of the site sold to make way for a new medical practice. The capital sum from this sale (approx. £360k) is held for the purpose of providing/improving football facilities in the town.</p> <p>Cromer Youth Football Club (CYFC) have for many years been seeking a home for their club. Since the late 80s they have been playing matches at various satellite sites across the district, including Fearn's Field, Northrepps, Southrepps, Bodham, East Runton and more.</p> <p>A project is currently underway to build a 3G football facility on the adjacent Academy/Sports Centre site, for which the youth football club are a partner club.</p> <p>It is proposed that Cabbell Park could become the home of CYFC. This report provides further information regarding potential costs for such a project</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The necessary improvements are made, and additional facilities added, to Cabbell Park to enable CYFC to lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations.. 2. Do not follow option one and investigate further options for the site.
Consultation(s)	<p>This proposal has been loosely discussed with CYFC, Norfolk FA, NNDC Estates Team, The Local Member and senior officers prior to the report being brought forward.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That cabinet instruct officers to deliver this project as outlined in this report, providing the necessary improvements and provision of additional facilities to Cabbell Park to enable Cromer Youth Football Club to lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations.</p>
Reasons for recommendations	<p>This is the first time in 30 years that a tangible option exists to provide a home for CYFC, a solution which will also maximise the use of Cabbell Park. A permanent home in Cromer for the club would enable them to grow and secure football in the town for a number of years to come. Football clubs for many are the heart of the community and this is an opportunity to bring this back to the town.</p>
Background papers	<p>NA</p>

Wards affected	Cromer Town & Suffield Park
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Liz Withington
Contact Officer	Colin Brown, Leisure and Locality Services Manager

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Developing our Communities
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	The proposal as a whole could generate a small amount of additional income
Council Policies & Strategies	Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	Is the item exempt, if so, state why.
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Provide the dates of any previous decisions relating to this

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. Earlier in 2024 a report was brought to cabinet outlining a proposal for potential future use of Cabbell Park Football Ground in Cromer

1.2. This report seeks to provide the extra information requested as a result of the first report.

2. Introduction & Background *(content from previous report in italics)*

2.1 *Cabbell Park is situated on Mill Road in Cromer and was previously the home of Cromer Town Football Club.*

2.2 *Ownership of Cabbell Park was taken on by NNDC in 2015, with a section at the front of the site sold to make way for a new medical practice. The capital sum from this sale (approx. £360k) is held for the purpose of providing/improving football facilities in the town.*

2.3 *The rest of the site remained as a football facility with priority access afforded to Cromer Town FC, with other clubs able to hire the pitch on an ad-hoc basis.*

2.4 *Eventually, with Cromer Town FC struggling to run the club the pitch was returned to pay and play status in its entirety and bookings for this are currently handled by the Council's Leisure operator Everyone Active as part of the operation of Cromer Sports Centre.*

- 2.5 *Costs for the maintenance of this site sit with the Council as per the dual use agreement.*
- 2.6 *Since 2020 the car parking area situated alongside the football pitch has been leased to the NHS, originally for workers who were building on the hospital site and then subsequently as an overflow for hospital workers*
- 2.7 *An extension to this agreement has now been formalised allowing the NHS access to the car park from 6am-6pm Monday to Friday*
- 2.8 *Cromer Youth Football Club (CYFC) have for many years been seeking a home for their club. Since the late 80s they have been playing matches at various satellite sites across the district, including Fearn's Field, Northrepps, Southrepps, Bodham, East Runton and more.*
- 2.9 *There is a perception within the club that the Council has not done enough to help the club to find a home. However there has not been land available to provide a home.*
- 2.10 *The club are able to train within the town through the use of the All Weather Pitch situated at the Sports Centre. However, these facilities are reaching the end of their life.*
- 2.11 *A project is currently underway to install a 3G football pitch (which would be the first in North Norfolk) on the sports centre site in place of the current All Weather Pitch. The youth club would be a partner club in this project meaning that they would receive preferential booking and hire fees.*

3. Proposals and Options

- 3.1. *A covenant exists on Cabbell Park requiring it to continue to be used for sport and recreation.*
- 3.2. *It is proposed that Cabbell Park could become the home of CYFC with the capital sum remaining used to build a basic clubhouse with kitchen and toilets and to ensure that the pitch and floodlights are in good condition.*
- 3.3. *With the introduction of the 3G pitch, and the additional grass pitches available to hire on the Academy site, the club would be able to run all their activity from here – training, matches and all subsidiary activities required to keep the club going. Something they have been seeking for over 30 years.*
- 3.4. *This proposal is supported by Norfolk FA who we are working alongside as part of the 3G pitch project.*
- 3.5. *The proposal would see the Cabbell Park site leased to the club, so they have full control of the management of the pitch and associated facilities.*
- 3.6. *The club would continue to hire the 3G pitch and extra grass pitches (on the Academy Site) as they do currently when required.*
- 3.7. *The NHS can continue to lease the car park area without affecting the potential club operations*

3.8. Officers were instructed following the previous paper to source further information regarding this project proposal and to provide a further update to include the potential scope of works and indicative costings

Options:

1. The necessary improvements are made, and additional facilities added, to Cabbell Park to enable CYFC to lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations. The car parking area would be leased to the NHS from 6am-6pm Monday to Friday.
2. Do not follow option one and investigate further options for the site.

4. Corporate Priorities

1.1 *This proposal would support the Developing our Communities priority, in particular the following areas:*

- *Working with partners to promote healthy lifestyles and address the health inequalities faced by our communities.*
- *Creating active environments for all ages and abilities*
- *Championing North Norfolk as a place where residents and visitors can enjoy inclusive cultural opportunities and healthy leisure and sports activities*
- *Working with partners to support and develop participatory and community sports and cultural events*
- *Developing further the leisure facilities provided across the District*

5. Financial and Resource Implications

5.1. It is proposed that the capital sum held from the sale of land at the eastern end of the site to enable the building of a new medical centre should be used to complete the works required to deliver the proposed outcomes.

5.2. Discussions have been held (without prejudice) with Norfolk FA and CYFC about the proposal to gauge if it is an option that the club would like to consider and what the appropriate and necessary facilities should be.

5.3. The club have indicated their support of the idea assuming the proposal is achievable and the following indicative costs have been sourced to cover the identified necessary works and facilities:

Clubhouse (incl. kitchen, changing, social area & toilets):	£160,000
Electrical:	£20,000
UKPN:	£2,000
Plumbing/heating:	£20,000
Sewer Connection:	£20,000
Floodlight Works:	£10,000
Pathway:	£5,000
Total:	£237,000

5.4. A capital receipt is held of circa £360,000 from the sale of land to Med-Centres

- 5.5. The Council will generate an income from leasing the car park area to the NHS and the football facility to CYFC (both amounts TBC), and would make a saving on grounds maintenance for the site of around £3k.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The S151 Officer (or member of the Finance team on their behalf) will complete this section.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The transfer of this site to NNDC in 2015 did generate some legal challenges and difficulties. Therefore it would be prudent to re-visit the legal considerations surrounding the covenant ahead of pursuing the proposal.
- 6.2 This proposal was mentioned in the press in recent weeks which drew communication concerning the Trust Deed for the site and whether this was 'within the spirit of the deed'. It is understood that this has now been looked into further and the proposal does not contravene the trust deed in any way.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.

7. Risks

- 7.1. *There is a risk that the 3G pitch application on the adjacent Academy site does not get approved, which would mean that the overall concept of providing a 'home' for CYFC would be diminished somewhat. A 3G in this location has been identified as a strategic priority and funding set aside for it, therefore it would only likely be rejected based on issues with planning or similar. With a pitch and infrastructure already in place this risk is even further reduced.*
- 7.2. *Not pursuing this proposal could also provide some reputational risk to the Council. CYFC have felt that the Council has not previously done enough for football in the town, particularly the youth football, and therefore not carrying this forward could cause further reputational damage.*

8. Net ZeroTarget

- 8.1. *Construction of a new facility on this site would be carried out with the Net-Zero Targets in mind ensuring that it includes all possible energy efficient technology and systems available.*
- 8.2. *It is possible to argue also that by providing the Youth Football Club with a home the Council would be helping to reduce the Club's carbon footprint by*

decreasing travel to the satellite sites in surrounding villages which are currently being used.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

10. Community Safety issues

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 11.1 CYFC have long sought a home within the town, having not had a facility of their own for over 30 years. The club currently run 20 teams catering for over 250 players aged 4-18, and have ambitions to grow even further.
- 11.2 The development of the club is dependent on quality facilities and a home to call their own. With the 3G pitch project in progress an opportunity exists to create a home for CYFC by providing clubhouse facilities and grass pitch provision on Cabbell Park Football Ground. A combination of the facilities on the adjacent sites would provide everything the club requires.
- 11.3 This is the first time in 30 years that a tangible option exists to provide a home for CYFC, a solution which will also maximise the use of Cabbell Park.
- 11.4 We are now in a position where we believe the project can be delivered within budget (the sum of the capital receipt) and the club have indicated their support for the project.

Recommendation:

- 1. That cabinet instruct officers to deliver this project as outlined in this report, providing the necessary improvements and provision of additional facilities to Cabbell Park to enable Cromer Youth Football Club to lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations.**

Rocket House Building, Cromer – Building repair investigation findings	
Executive Summary	<p>The Rocket House building is a multi-let property with community facilities on Cromer East Promenade that requires substantial repairs, maintenance and energy improvement works to ensure a sustainable future for the building.</p> <p>Following the previous report to Cabinet on 4th September 2023, detailing options available, a visit to the property and technical briefing was made available for members.</p> <p>To gain further clarity over the damp issues, at the 8th January 2024 Cabinet meeting it was agreed to commission further additional investigation into the fabric of the building to identify the cause of damp, establish remedial options and budget costings. This investigation has since been completed and officers seek approval to use the existing capital budget and move forward with repairing the building.</p>
Options considered	Options have been previously considered in the 4 th September 2023 Cabinet report. All options in that report remain open following the investigations into the building condition.
Consultation(s)	Local Members
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <p>1.1 Delegate to and the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, the existing allocated capital budget to action remedial works as soon feasibly possible to the property, as outlined in the Intrusive Inspection and Damp Investigation Report, subject to the vacation of the tenant (RNLI).</p> <p>1.2 Delegate to and the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake energy improvement works to the property in order to increase the energy performance rating to the required standard for leasing.</p> <p>1.3 Delegates authority to the Asset Strategy Manager to commence negotiation of terms for a new lease, with the existing RNLI tenant, with a further report back to Cabinet in accordance with governance procedures.</p>
Reasons for recommendations	To address the ongoing issues with damp in the building and increase the energy performance of the building for leasing.
Background papers	Cabinet reports September 2023 and January 2024

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Wards affected	Cromer Town and Suffield Park
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr L Shires, Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr A Varley, Cllr L Withington
Contact Officer	Renata Garfoot, Asset Strategy Manager Renata.garfoot@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Our greener future Developing our communities Investing in our local economy and infrastructure A strong responsible and accountable Council
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	A capital budget of £1,000,000 has previously been allocated as part of the annual budget setting process to address the maintenance issues of this asset.
Council Policies & Strategies	Asset Management Plan 2018 - 22

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Cabinet -

2. Purpose of the report

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to:
- 2.2 Provide an update to Cabinet that now that the detailed investigations have been undertaken into the fabric of the building to identify the cause of damp ingress at the Rocket House Building,
- 2.3 Seek authority to utilise the existing allocated capital budget to action remedial works as soon feasibly possible to the property, subject to the vacation of the tenant (RNLI).
- 2.4 Seek authority to utilise any remaining capital budget to improve the energy performance of the building in order to relet it.
- 2.5 Seek authority to commence negotiation of terms for a new lease with the existing RNLI tenant.

3. Introduction & Background

- 3.1 The Rocket House Building, Cromer is a mixed-use property with museum, café, public toilets, and lift, which is situated on the East promenade. The building which was constructed in 2005/6 is partially built into the cliff.
- 2.2 The building is occupied by The RNLI Museum and Rocket House Café both under leases. The Council provides public conveniences and a public lift that enables visitor's easier access to the prom which would otherwise be accessed via steep ramps. Under the terms of these leases the Council as the Landlord, has a repairing obligation.
- 3.2 There are a number of repair and maintenance issues at the building as outlined in the 4th September 2023 Cabinet report.
- 3.3 During November 2023 a visit to the property and technical briefing for Members was undertaken to provide greater clarity of the condition issues.
- 3.4 At the 8th January 2024 Cabinet meeting, it was resolved that Officers would commission detailed investigations into the damp issues to establish remedial options and budget costings.

4. Proposals and Options

- 4.1 These investigation works were carried out during February and March 2024 and determine that there is a defect with the building to the ground floor accommodation which is causing the damp issues to the building. An independent report detailing this, with budget costs and indicative programme was prepared. The programme can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.2 The works to address the damp have been budgeted to cost in the region of £828,695 plus VAT, where conducted within the timeframe detailed, which will include replacement of the public conveniences, floor coverings and external alteration to the render to the building which are required as part of the remediation. The repair work is expected to last approximately 32 weeks.
- 4.3 In order for the works to be undertaken the RNLI, including its artefacts and lifeboat will need to vacate the building. Since the last report to Cabinet, the RNLI have served notice to terminate the current lease and vacate during July 2024.
- 4.4 Alongside this, works are required to improve the energy performance of the building in order for the building to meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard of rating E to be relet. It is proposed to use any remaining capital budget to do these improvement works.
- 4.5 The RNLI may be interested in a new lease in the building once the works are completed. At the time of writing the report, no heads of terms for a new lease have been agreed. If terms cannot be agreed, the vacant area could be marketed to let which would create revenue income for the council.
- 4.6 Whilst the works are being carried out on the building, officers will seek to keep disruption to the café and its visitors as little as possible.
- 4.7 Works to replace the public lift are currently excluded and further budget will be required, if this is to be replaced.

- 4.8 It is proposed to undertake an independent survey of the surrounding cliff adjoining the building and any budget to address the findings of that survey may also be required.

5. Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 Council's Corporate Plan priorities that relate to this building are:
- 5.2 Our Greener Future - Continuing to invest in the Council's property portfolio to reduce carbon impact. Continuing our programme of investment in coastal and resort infrastructure and amenities, building on the progress made in recent years.
- 5.3 A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council - Investing in projects and assets which deliver financial returns and/or contribute to our wider objectives around Net Zero, business and jobs, community facilities and infrastructure.
- 5.4 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy includes the Capital Programme. There is a capital budget of a £1.0m included in the capital programme for this project as part the 2023/24 budget setting process to carry out the necessary repair works to the Rocket House building.

6. Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.1 Due to the condition of the property, it is both financially and officer resource intensive when dealing with repair issues.
- 6.2 The Council operates service charge for the building, and it annually contributes financial budget towards the repairs and maintenance.
- 6.3 There is a capital budget of £1m allocated in capital programme to carry out the necessary repair works, which is expected to meet the £828,695 budget cost. Officers will seek best value through procurement and the reuse materials (where possible), which will also support the Councils net zero priorities by ensuring this building has a robust remedial solution and seeking to minimise its carbon footprint.
- 6.4 Whilst a contingency budget has also been factored into the budget cost, there is a risk that project costs increase following procurement of the remedial works, due to construction cost inflation, project scope creep or if unknown repairs are identified once the project has started.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The property is subject to various legal agreements and Eastlaw have been providing advice.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

Whilst all options set out in the Cabinet report of September 2023 remain available for consideration, in January 2024, Members did resolve to commission detailed investigations of the asset to determine the issues and cost of remedial options. This is now available. If Members wish to proceed with remedial works, the cost of doing so detailed in the report, has been arrived at in relation to a planned timeframe based on the departure of the RNLI in July 2024. Costs may rise if this timeframe changes. In the event that negotiations into a further lease or other occupation right are entered into, advice should be sought from the Council's legal team.

8. Risks

- 8.1 The existing RNLI tenant has served notice to vacate and whilst officers will seek to negotiate viable new lease terms for the Council there is a risk that appropriate terms are not agreed. In this instance the Council could market the building to let and seek an alternative tenant.
- 8.2 Due to the location of the building on the sea front, it is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions and storm surges. There is a risk that the building is substantially affected by such in the future.

9. Net Zero Target

- 9.1 Works to support the Council's Net Zero priorities and to meet current energy performance legislation form part of the proposed repairs.

10. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 10.1 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. Community Safety issues

- 11.1 There are no community safety issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 12.1 Following the previous reports to Cabinet 4th September 2023 and 8th January 2024 officers have obtained an independent damp investigation report.
- 12.2 The report provides the council with greater clarity over damp issues at the property, remedial proposals, indicative timeline and budget costings that are within the capital sum of £1m previously allocated.
- 12.3 With this information, Officers seek approval from Cabinet to:
- 12.4 Delegate to the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, the existing allocated capital budget to action remedial works as soon feasibly possible to the property, as outlined in the Intrusive Inspection and Damp Investigation Report, subject to the vacation of the tenant (RNLI).

- 12.5 Delegate to the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake energy improvement works to the property in order to increase the energy performance rating to the required standard for leasing.
- 12.6 Delegates authority to the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), to commence negotiation of terms for a new lease, with the existing RNLi tenant, with a further report back to Cabinet in accordance with governance procedures.

Traditional Procurement

Programme	Duration	2024						2025									
		Mar	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Issue of DCP Investigation Report	-		◆														
Council review and approval to proceed	8 weeks		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Technical Design (RIBA St. 4)	12 weeks			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Tender Process	8 weeks						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lead-In & Contract	4 weeks								■	■	■	■					
RNLI Packing up Rocket House	6 weeks					■	■	■	■	■	■						
Vacancy of building	-																◆
Construction	32 weeks											■	■	■	■	■	■
Occupation	-																◆

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Daniel Connal Partnership
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Sheringham Enabling Land	
Executive Summary	An area of land (“the enabling land”) adjacent to the Reef Leisure Centre had been marketed with offers received and with Cabinet supporting one particular option on 2 March 2020. The proposed purchaser has obtained planning consent for a 37 room apart-hotel. It is now requested there be an extension to the legal agreement to provide time to satisfy the relevant purchase condition in the agreement.
Options considered	Alternative options have been considered and can be found in exempt appendix B and C.
Consultation(s)	PFH for Finance and Assets
Recommendations	It is recommended that Cabinet resolve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To grant a 4 month extension to the legal agreement to enable the purchaser sufficient time to satisfy the remaining offer condition. • To monitor the progress of the party to ensure they satisfy the remaining offer condition, to be delegated to the Asset Strategy Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets. • To explore the previous offers submitted for this site, in parallel to the extension.
Reasons for recommendations	To ensure the sound management of the Council’s land holding and assets.
Background papers	Cabinet paper Sheringham Enabling Land 2 nd March 2020

Wards affected	Sheringham
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr, L Shires
Contact Officer	Renata Garfoot. Asset Strategy Manager. Renata.Garfoot@North-Norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Investing in our local economy and infrastructure A strong responsible and accountable Council
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	The proposal generates a capital receipt as outlined in the exempt appendix.
Council Policies & Strategies	Asset Management Plan 2018 - 2022

Corporate Governance:

Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	By Virtue of Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Part of the appendix contains commercially sensitive information and are exempt
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Cabinet paper Sheringham Enabling Land 2 nd March 2020

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Cabinet on the sale of the enabling land at Sheringham and to request a short extension to the legal agreement with the developer.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 The development of the Reef Leisure Centre at Weybourne Road, Sheringham resulted in an area of surplus land of approximately 1 acre adjacent to the new leisure facility. See appendix A Site Plan.
- 2.2 Having marketed the land for sale for over 2 years, a number of offers were received, including for a care facility, leisure complex with hotel/camping, local development company for a hotel development and a national hotel operator with a lease back proposal that did not support the Councils aspirations to generate a capital receipt to support the funding of the Reef development.
- 2.3 A report to Cabinet was presented on 2nd March 2020 regarding the various interest received to acquire the site alongside an options appraisal identifying possible alternative uses. At this meeting Cabinet agreed to approve the disposal of land as outlined in option 1. A copy of the options considered in that report can be found in the exempt appendix B.
- 2.4 Since this time legal contractual arrangements have been put in place with the proposed purchaser and planning application was submitted in July 2022 and consent was granted September 2023 for a 37-suite apartment hotel. A further application was submitted for removal or variation of conditions following planning consent, which was approved January 2024.

3. Proposals and Options

- 3.1 The purchaser has requested an extension to the legal agreement to allow them sufficient time to satisfy the remaining purchase condition and further information regarding this can be found in the exempt appendix C

4. Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The proposed sale aligns with the Corporate Plan priority; A strong, responsible and accountable Council as it will generate a capital receipt for the Council as outlined in the exempt appendix C and also the priority; Investing in our local economy and infrastructure which seeks to continuing to promote North Norfolk's diverse tourism and visitor offer.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1 The proposed sale will generate a capital receipt for the Council as outlined in the exempt appendix C.
- 5.2

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The S151 Officer (or member of the Finance team on their behalf) will complete this section.

The sale of the site will generate a capital receipt which will reduce the need to borrow so much for the Reef Leisure Centre. This will result in a revenue saving for the Council in reduced borrowing interest and the minimum revenue provision. This cannot be quantified until we know how much we will receive as a capital receipt.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Legal agreements are in place regarding the proposed sale of the site.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.

Following consideration of options for disposal of the land, and a subsequent planning application, there remains an outstanding purchase condition for which an extension has been requested. Members can consider whether they are minded to grant this extension.

7. Risks

- 7.1 Typical risks apply regarding the disposal of the land and further risks are outlined in the exempt appendix.

8. Net ZeroTarget

- 8.1 An Energy Statement was submitted as part of the planning application which details how design proposals could implement energy efficiencies and strategies to minimise energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions. It considers a Fabric First approach, energy efficient heating and LED lighting. The planning consent also requires a 10% on site renewable energy provision.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

9.1 There are no equality, diversity or inclusion impacts from this proposal.

10. Community Safety issues

10.1 Community Safety issues are considered as part of the planning consultation process and feedback given from Norfolk Constabulary regarding design features that could help improve security for the building and the immediate area.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

11.1 Alternative options to extending the legal agreement can be found in Appendix C.

11.2 It is recommended that the Council:

11.3 Grants a 4-month extension to the legal agreement to enable the purchaser sufficient time to satisfy the remaining offer condition.

11.4 Monitors the progress of the party to ensure they satisfy the remaining offer condition, to be delegated to the Manager of Assets and Estates, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets.

11.5 Explore the previous offers submitted for this site, in parallel to the extension.



Appendix A

Scale = 1:1200 TJC

13/11/2019

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