

Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Please contact: Democratic Services

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Tuesday, 7 October 2025

A meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the **Council Chamber - Council Offices** on **Wednesday, 15 October 2025** at **9.30 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 notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting and arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. 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 516108, Email: democraticservices@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 must 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 Committee members will be given priority to speak during the debate of agenda items

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Cllr S Penfold, Cllr P Bailey, Cllr J Boyle, Cllr C Cushing, Cllr A Fletcher, Cllr M Hankins, Cllr P Heinrich, Cllr V Holliday, Cllr N Housden, Cllr M Gray, Cllr C Rouse and Cllr K Bayes

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. SUBSTITUTES

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

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

4. MINUTES

1 - 14

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17th September 2025.

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. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

15 - 20

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.

7. PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To consider any petitions received from members of the public.

8. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

To consider any requests made by non-executive Members of the Council, submitted to the Democratic Services Manager with seven clear working days' notice, to include an item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

To consider any responses of the Council or the Cabinet to the Committee's reports or recommendations:

10. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

21 - 136

Pre-scrutiny of the Homelessness Review

11. NW HAZ UPDATE

137 - 158

To update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative and learning from this, to establish a set of evaluation criteria, including baselines,

that can then be used for similar projects in other towns in North Norfolk.

12. MOBILE PHONE CONNECTIVITY 159 - 172

To receive, and consider, data collated from survey on mobile phone coverage across Norfolk and discuss how the Committee can best add value to the topic.

13. BUDGET SETTING 2026/2027 173 - 178

To receive a written update on the budget setting and to consider how the Committee wants to feed into this process for 2026/2027 – including pre-scrutiny of key reports such as the MTFS.

14. O&S ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2025 179 - 190

To recommend to Full Council the Committee's Annual report summarising its key achievements and highlighting any issues over the previous two years.

WORK PROGRAMMES

15. THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 191 - 196

To note the upcoming Cabinet Work Programme.

16. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE 197 - 206

To receive an update from the Scrutiny Officer on progress made with topics on its agreed work programme, training updates and to receive any further information which Members may have requested at a previous meeting.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution, if necessary:

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

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 17 September 2025 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am

Committee	Cllr P Bailey	Cllr J Boyle (Vice-Chair)
Members Present:	Cllr K Bayes	Cllr C Cushing
	Cllr A Fletcher	Cllr M Gray
	Cllr M Hankins	Cllr P Heinrich
	Cllr V Holliday (Chair)	Cllr N Housden
		Cllr C Rouse

Members also attending:

Cllr W Fredericks (PH for Housing and People's Services)
Cllr A Brown (PH for Planning and Enforcement)
Cllr L Shires (PH for Finance, Estates and Property Services)

Officers in Attendance:

Democratic Services & Governance Manager (DSGM), Assistant Director Finance & Assets (ADFA), Chief Executive (CE), Director for Resources (DFR), Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO), Democratic Services Governance Officer (DSGO), Director of Service Delivery (DSD), Assistant Director Environment and Leisure Service (ADELS), Leisure and Locality Services Manager (LLSM), Countryside Services Team Leader (CSTL).

Also in attendance:

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr S Penfold.

43 SUBSTITUTES

None.

44 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

None received.

45 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th July were approved as a correct record, subject the following amendment:

The additional recommendation (n) be reworded to align with the minutes from Full Council and to take out the reference to Pg.41.5.6(a)

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

47 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received

48 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee heard from, Amanda Swann, speaker for the petition group looking to restore access to the path known locally as 'God's Path' in Pretty Corner Woods, Sheringham.

Cllr Rouse asked the Countryside team how much it would cost to re-open the path. The LLSM said he would not be able to put a cost on that at that time. The ADELS wished to point out that the path, a 'desire line', was not a waymarked trail and nor would the Countryside Team recognise it as a path within Pretty Corner. They explained the path cut the corner off one of the waymarked trails. If they were to open that path it would mean a change to how they managed that block of woodland trees and there was an existing path already around it.

Cllr Heinrich felt aerial photos, from the Ordnance Survey, clearly showed the official paths but the path known locally as God's Path was less visible and whilst acknowledging that the path was clearly well used the Committee would need more detail as to why it could not be re-opened. LLSM explained that the standard approach to managing sites was to use the waymarked trails as they were known to be safe and accessible. Woodland blocks were reserved for nature and regeneration. The Pretty Corner site was a County Wildlife Site, meaning it had been identified as rich in wildlife and sought to support locally threatened wildlife species and habitats. The Council was obligated to protect that and develop the wildlife habitats that existed there. As part of the County Council Nature Recovery Strategy, Pretty Corner had been identified as being of particular importance for Biodiversity. The block was due to be thinned, under a Felling License issued by Forestry England, to allow for natural regeneration which wouldn't occur if people or dogs were walking through it. This approach was supported by partners, and the site had been awarded Green Flag status receiving the highest possible score. Local ecologists and the Wildlife Trust also supported the management of the site, highlighting that when desire lines go through blocks of trees it caused detrimental damage, including soil compaction and damage to tree root systems. The Countryside team firmly believed what they were doing was the right thing. There were approximately 8km of waymarked trails at Pretty Corner where people could walk and enjoy nature.

Cllr Boyle asked how much further someone would have to walk if they were to take the waymarked path. The LLSM did not have an exact distance to hand but said not much. He admitted as you went around the corner of the waymarked trail it went downhill and could be a little more challenging and as with all woodland sites it was undulating and could be difficult to access by its very nature. Cllr Boyle wished to confirm her understanding that some of those trees where the 'God's Path' cut through were very mature and that is why they were being felled. CSTL explained some were reaching maturity so thinning would be the next step. In answer to an additional question by Cllr Boyle, the CSTL, explained Health and Safety (H&S) was of paramount concern as there were trees within that block that were deteriorating and to make an area safe for people the Countryside team would have had to have felled more trees than otherwise necessary. Surveying would need to be increased around the site if any new path were to be created, further reducing the area of natural habitat. That is not what the Countryside team were trying to achieve in

managing a County Wildlife Site or with their felling licence.

Cllr Housden asked how many trees would need to be felled, if the path stayed, in comparison to what needed to be thinned within that block for the management of natural regeneration. The CSTL explained a felling licence was for volume rather than the number of trees. The management of thinning trees was different to having to fell trees for H&S. Cllr Housden argued therefore that H&S took precedence over habitat. The CSTL explained it was a balance across those areas. The ADELS explained that the felling licence allowed you to thin trees based on percentage of trees within that block but if a new path was created, they would have had to fell trees based on the H&S risk so may have ended up felling trees that could have provided deadwood and food for insects. The ADELS said they managed all their sites on 3 principles, one of which was H&S, which had to be paramount, they had to manage that risk as a Council with regular tree surveys. They also managed those woodland sites with habitat and public access in mind. Cllr Housden wished to confirm therefore the path could not be reopened due to H&S grounds and existing programme of tree felling, with wildlife also a given concern. The ADELS confirmed it was.

Cllr Hankins asked if the path had been in use for a considerable amount of time. The LLSM did not believe so. He felt that it was only really used since the Covid lockdown and only as recently as the start of 2025 did the Countryside team notice that people were creating this desire line and using it more often. In response to Cllr Hankins asking what, and who, initiated the change in closing the path, the LLSM explained the Countryside Rangers noticed the path was being used so installed some low-level dead hedging to encourage people not to use that area. Unfortunately, it continued to get walked through so the Countryside team increased the level of dead hedging to make it more obvious there was no access to the woodland block.

Cllr Boyle wished to confirm that thinning the trees would still have had to be carried out within that block regardless of whether the 'God's path' was to be opened. The CSTL explained it would, but you would have to consider that if the path was opened you would need to fell more trees than were otherwise necessary than if just thinning. They found people were exploring that whole block when gaining access through the self-titled God's Path, many trees where habitat and wildlife were known to live would be affected, such as bats which are protected by law and known to live in some of the dead wood. With high winds becoming a more frequent extreme weather occurrence, any trees surveyed that were vulnerable to falling over any new path would have to be felled as well. Wild birds were also protected by law so there would be an increased harm to them.

Cllr Rouse did not feel it would be worthwhile to open the path given the obvious disruption to the ecological system and wildlife and with the H&S implications involved for what was a very minimal shortcut.

The Chair asked about accessibility and was the feature of gradient a factor for people using God's Path instead of the waymarked trails. The ADELS said they believed God's Path was still on a significant gradient, with uneven terrain equal to the waymarked trail, so did not believe the path in question made the site more accessible in any way.

Cllr Shires thanked the Countryside team for the work they do and compared the issue to one they had in the woods in North Walsham and the fine balance required between people enjoying the woods peacefully and ensuring nature prevailed there.

It took some time then for residents to realise the Council was trying to protect the wildlife and not trying to stop people from enjoying the beauty of the woodland. Cllr Shires affirmed it was her belief the designated paths were there for a reason, to allow us to enjoy the woodland but not to stray and if the Council was to create new trails where would that end and where would that leave the natural habitat that the Countryside team were trying to protect. The ADELS confirmed those existing trails had been there for a long time and were historic trails and formed part of the Green Flag application. Each year they considered opening new trails, and it was part of that application to consider whether the site was accessible. The Countryside team agreed that their concern would be where would that stop and what would stop someone else from opening their own path. Having a woodland where people could roam free was a completely different type of woodland management and not one the Countryside team subscribed to at that time.

In response to the Chair's question, the CSTL explained you had two types of felling, felling for H&S risk and felling for thinning but within the Forestry Commission you can additionally fell for regeneration. All tree work, governed by Forestry England, that was carried out in the woods was analysed and checked.

The ADELS explained to the Committee, in response to the Chair's query, they had attended two meetings, one being the Sheringham Town Council Environment Committee in March to discuss with the group their concerns and they had also met individually to discuss. The Countryside team had a corporate complaint in from an individual on the matter and would now respond to that accordingly. The Chair believed the complaint was around separate issues associated with the path and not specifically about its re-opening.

The Chair felt that there was enough divergence within the Committee that it would be a good idea to be kept updated. The ADELS explained the Countryside team would not be changing their decision. She reiterated they had openly discussed the matter and the reasons behind it and their opinion, after consulting with stakeholders, would not be changing on the matter.

Cllr Bailey suggested that once the Corporate Complaint had been responded to the Committee could be kept informed so they could review at that point.

ACTION Countryside Team to provide an update to the O&S Committee once the existing formal complaint has been responded to.

49 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

There were no matters for consideration referred to the Committee by a member.

50 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – REVIEW OF POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

The Chair invited the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Sarah Taylor, to speak about the Police and Crime Plan for Norfolk and answer any questions.

The PCC responded to questions the Committee had sent in advance (attached as Minutes Appendix A). In response to a query from Cllr Boyle, the PCC outlined the priorities as set out in the Police and Crime Plan and said District priorities were set in the District priority meeting, held every quarter. The last meeting focussed on

ways to target Anti-Social Behaviour across market towns in North Norfolk. The PCC explained that many of the questions posed to her were operational which was not her area of expertise.

In a follow up question by Cllr Boyle in relation to funding and redundancies the PCC said the Police had been experiencing cuts year on year for the past 14 years, so to some extent it was business as usual. The Police, the PCC believed, had responded extremely well to those cuts, maintaining that public safety would not be compromised which the PCC took as being very reassuring. That meant in terms of high risk, high harm crimes the Police were actively keeping us safe. However the Police simply didn't have the capacity or resource to deal with the low harm, low risk crime that people see on a day-to-day basis. Norfolk and Suffolk had a shared space for funding that had been set up over 10 years ago to achieve cash savings and efficiencies. Norfolk had already realised a lot of efficiencies that other areas were only looking to achieve now, so going forward, the targets set by Government were not possible as they had already been reached. A new Policing Minister was now in post and the PCC would look to take that point forward with them.

Cllr Boyle asked how Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) would affect the role of the Police. The PCC believed it wouldn't significantly impact the Police. The Police would still be there and operate independently, and their role would not change. The effectiveness of partnership working with such things as victim support and community safety had the potential to be significantly disrupted by Devolution and LGR. The PCC warned the Committee that they needed to be aware of the scope of that disruption. The PCC function would be incorporated into the Mayoral function from April 2027. No additional funding or resourcing to facilitate that transition had been provided by the Home Office or central Government. The PCC office had to absorb an extra £200k of work additional to the business-as-usual function. As a result, the PCC office did not have any intentions they could consider beyond the short-term. The PCC asked local Members to engage with the problem as those partners with whom the Police worked, would disappear (the District Council, the County Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) etc), and to work with community groups to bridge that gap and increase community resilience.

In response to a question by Cllr Boyle about new recruits, the PCC was very confident that the numbers of people eager in joining the Police force was extremely good. Those new recruits were from an enormous, diverse, range of backgrounds. In follow-up Cllr Boyle queried the challenges in policing a rural area such as North Norfolk. The PCC explained they were the same as with any rural area, the travel times it took to get to incidents were a challenge, as were the costs involved, with such work as firearms licence administration meaning the costs to visit each licence holder were substantially more in a rural area like Norfolk due to the travel times involved. North Norfolk had a long stretch of coastline where needs changed seasonally, and this could present a challenge. PCC assured the Committee the Constabulary were very used to covering those challenges. Blue light response times in Norfolk were good and they were looking to improve still further.

Cllr Fletcher asked what was being done in regards speeding and inappropriate driving in our towns and villages. The PCC said she could see that how road safety was handled in Norfolk was different to other areas. The overwhelming amount of her correspondence and interactions with the public were in relation to road safety. She felt there was a gap between public demands and reasonable expectations and past priorities. She had become really engaged in the problem and into the best practice of policing our roads more safely. The Police should, and do, enforce speeding but in doing so speed limits must be set appropriately. She would have

liked more political engagement and a more preventative, consistent, approach to speed limit setting by Norfolk County Council (NCC). The PCC warned that the size of the task was phenomenal due to the largescale of the road network across Norfolk. The PCC acknowledged the many Speed Watch volunteers across local community groups who often get verbally abused whilst trying to keep their streets safe. Those Speed Watch teams issued thousands of letters to speeding drivers every year and they did make a significant impact. The PCC was frustrated that the devices Parishes used to measure vehicle speed, were not getting the data they needed to implement change. The PCC would like to see a more highly useable data set being generated from that equipment. As that equipment sits on roads they are classed as assets of NCC and therefore NCC would have to approve those changes, and the PCC urged Members who sat as a Member for NCC to advocate that change or to at least advocate for change for their local parishioners.

The Chair asked what strategies were being used to reduce drink and drug driving and how effective were those strategies. The PCC explained the Constabulary had started a new reporting tool, for members of the public to report anonymously when they knew of, or had witnessed, someone driving under the influence of drink or drugs; the tool would be live by Christmas 2025. The PCC was happy to share this new reporting tool with the Committee. Norfolk Police and partners also supported the National campaigns to get better roadside testing for drug driving which was, sadly, on the increase.

The PCC responded to the Chair's query around the number of beat police officers. The Government had a National Policing Guarantee which was in the first round of funding with hopefully funding available every year. That money could only be spent to deploying officers into the local neighbourhood. Norfolk had a small Constabulary, so funding is relatively small, so it had resulted in an additional 31 new officers that year. There would be a gap between seeing the funding allocated to then seeing Officers on the ground and the Chief Constable would decide where those officers would need to be stationed. The PCC and Chief Constable did speak frequently about neighbourhood policing as are fully aware it was an important issue for the public.

The Chair asked what the Police's role was in reducing domestic violence. The PCC said that was a very substantial piece of work for Police and their partners. With LGR and devolution and any potential disruption it was critical people are safeguarded, and a working group were looking into how they could ensure this service provision continued during the period of change. The PCC did not want Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) to fall away, as it was funded through the PCC office and various District Councils, as this would add a significant burden to the Police. A Task and Finish group had been put in place to see how those contracts could be safeguarded during that period of Government reform. There were peripheral concerns around continuity of funding, and this was not something the PCC could solve on her own and asked Members to engage. Police relied on Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), NIDAS, the NHS and partnership working. The number of people affected by Domestic Abuse (DA) in Norfolk was substantial, the scale of the challenge for the Police and its partners in the area was very significant and PCC did not want LGR to diminish all the hard work that had gone into supporting victims so called on NNDC to provide any support they could going forward.

Cllr Cushing asked what resources and numbers of Norfolk police were deployed to preventing and investigating online crime. The PCC explained that it was difficult to give exact figures on specific resourcing, or how services were deployed in tackling

high level crime. It was smaller in Norfolk than across other forces nationally and this was something the PCC would like to have seen change. She had talked to the Chief Constable (CC) during her term about online, and offline, crime. It was not in the PCCs or CCs power to be able to go out and recruit more officers to specifically deal with such crime as obviously financial resources were depleted. For cyber offending there were 4 members of expert staff solely dedicated to the area with an additional 35 investigating staff, or generalists, which would include multi-skilled people within the Constabulary available to be called upon to investigate when needed. That gave the CC more flexibility on how to deploy their staff which the PCC believed gave the Police more balance which was to our benefit. PCC had some sympathy for those who would prefer the Police had specific teams set up to deal with specific areas of business but believed it was a misconception that if a specific team wasn't set up the work wasn't being done.

The PCC asked the Committee to consider Norfolk Safeguarding Children Online Team (SCOLT) who dealt with the threat of online child exploitation. They were dedicated in keeping children safe. The team did phenomenal work, with the digital requirement being massive with potential of thousands of files needed to be stored securely. The costs and resourcing were significant all amongst budgeting constraints.

The PCC wished to highlight the significant emotional burden of trauma for those answering calls and those first on the scene and the stress put on officers and staff in many number of roles which, understandably, resulted in those people needing to take a period off sick. There was a need for better support and resource of those officers and staff. This was a human cost, not just a financial or a resource issue.

The regional response to crimes, like cyber, was very good with the resource they had but the Police still had more to do.

Cllr Housden asked about the speeding issue, and speed limits in his parishes, and said when he challenged Highways their standard answer was that it had always been like that, and he asked should the PCC and her fellow Commissioners not be lobbying Government on that point. The PCC agreed speeding was a massive issue and there was a significant amount of work being done nationally. That was being done in a politically balanced way, and that there was a common joining up of perspectives. Cllr Cushing asked if there were other methods that could be used to counter speeding. The PCC said there were differences between Highway Authorities, and many referred to speed limits as in accordance with National Guidance but there was no reason therefore, that Norfolk could not do something differently. It was within the powers of Members of those Authorities to change how they considered speed limits as it was only guidance and not standards. The current model in Norfolk did not facilitate road safety.

Cllr Brown asked the PCC if she would support a change of policy, similar to that originally trialled in Wales when they set 20mph limits across their villages. The PCC agreed that everyone had a right to enable their need to travel without fear of dying or sustaining serious injury. Difference in speed did make a difference and was the primary thing that could be done to make accidents more survivable, but it was not everything. Norfolk was an area that had a rising number of fatalities from road traffic accidents and that was not what the PCC wanted to see. Requests for 20mph zones were likely to succeed if submitted at local level via the Highways Agency (HA) rather than by national Government as the HA knew how that road was used. Speed limits should have been appropriately set to reflect local context, and the views of residents should be taken into account. Any new policy should enable that to

happen. The PCC would not support any type of blanket coverage, as in the trial in Wales, but could learn the lessons from that and she would have supported any policy that brought about positive change.

The PCC was happy to respond to any further questions or requests for info via her office.

The Chair thanked the PCC for her insight into her role and state of policing in Norfolk and agreed Council could possibly look to ensure partnership working continued. As far as the Committee remit would allow, in terms of advocacy for changing the speed limit policy on mass, Scrutiny was not necessarily the correct forum, but this session provided food for thought.

51 REPORT PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27 DELIVERY AGAINST ACTION PLAN 2024-25 AND ACTION PLAN 2025-26 – TO END OF QUARTER 1 – 30 JUNE 2025

Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and People's Services, introduced the report to the Committee.

Cllr Fletcher asked why household waste collection was rated green and not amber when there appeared to be issues in financing the strategy. The Chief Executive (CE) explained legislation required the Council to introduce green domestic food waste collections from April 2026. The Council had ordered the refuse freighters that would fulfil those collections and were moving forward, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the true and actual cost, for the introduction of domestic collections.

The CE assured the Committee the issue would be reported through Cabinet moving forward. Cllr Ringer, the Portfolio Holder for Waste Services, was working with Officers and explained that Cllr Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, and the DR and S151 Officer would be monitoring for any shortfalls in funding the scheme that the Council needed to make up beyond the 'New Burdens' funding that the Government had awarded to the Council.

Cllr Fletcher asked for assurances the scheme would be introduced on schedule. The CE said that approximately 160 Councils were having to introduce food waste collections at the same time so there was pressure on the supply chain of food caddies and the refuse freighters but orders for those had been made. The scheduling of those domestic collections and when they would start would depend on when the Council had been given notice those orders were to be delivered.

Cllr Housden asked about energy infrastructure as his local parish had been experiencing frequent power cuts and wondered if the Council was addressing the issue. The CE was not aware of the incidents but the Council did work with partners to continue to highlight the deficiencies within the UK Power Networks infrastructure within the District. The Council and partners did have an energy plan for the District, and with Anglian Water with regards to water resilience, moving forward. Cllr Fredericks asked Cllr Housden if he could email her the details as she was meeting with some of the energy companies that week.

The CE responded to a question from Cllr Cushing in relation to an Organisational Development Plan that was due in June 2024, but the Committee was no closer to seeing that and he wondered what success would look like and when would that plan be available to view. The CE explained work was undertaken in terms of recommendations from the Corporate Peer Review, LGR then came into effect so

amended the draft document and he believed this would be presented to the Committee in November as the People Strategy and Learning Development (Workforce) Strategy.

Cllr Cushing also asked about the Rural Position Statement which should have been completed by August 2025 and wondered had this been done and why it was rated amber. The CE said following the English Devolution White Paper being published in December 2024 that outlined LGR the Council had to look at Organisational Capacity, both at an Officer and Member level, therefore the Corporate Plan had reduced its actions down from 46 to 30 for the year 2025/26. Some base line data had been collected in terms of rural community services across the District but that position was changing frequently. The Council was working closely with Banking Hubs. Blakeney had lost its doctor's surgery and the District had lost a number of post offices and village shops. The position was dynamic and, in some respects, gathering pace. The Council had tried to reflect those issues in their proposal for LGR but have not moved that forward to an actual strategy for North Norfolk. The CE explained they would most likely move that base line data into any emerging unitary authority as sanctioned by Government in due course.

Cllr Hankins wondered what the Committee would do with the data that had been collected in regards to mobile connectivity going forward, especially in regard to health and business. The Chair did explain this would be looked at as part of the Work Programme later in the meeting; however the Chair did question that it was listed as an action for 24/25 to develop a deeper insight into mobile and fast internet coverage but could not see that carried forward for 25/26. The CE confirmed that data had been gathered and Members' experiences and beyond had fed into that piece of work in terms of mobile and digital infrastructure but that it had not yet been developed into a Strategy or Action Plan.

Cllr Fredericks responded to a question by Cllr Bayes who felt that Action No.33 had a very vague outcome detailed by the Officer as it did not cover the action or objectives. Cllr Fredericks explained they may need a written response to that question. The Council had engaged with a taskforce with the East of England Energy Group, colleges and training providers and that would all come together and feed into that piece of work. The Economic Growth Manager and Cllr J. Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth would need to answer the query more fully and she would get them to do that report as soon as possible.

Cllr Cushing highlighted the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Plan and wished to know what had slipped and what the outcome of that would be. The CE referred to previous answer in relation to the Workforce Strategy that was outstanding.

The Chair asked the CE if the Actions could have some consistency in how they are numbered to allow the Committee to follow them more easily across both years. The CE said they couldn't do that easily as they reduced from 46 to 30 Actions and they had to be transparent and show the significant organisational capacity pressures that LGR had put onto the Council. The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Cabinet had to make difficult decisions to decide what Actions they would keep for 25/26, whilst still maintaining a business-as-usual model.

Cllr Fredericks asked Cllr Brown for an update on the new Local Plan in response to a query by Cllr Boyle. Cllr Brown said they were concluding the last part of the public consultation, and those responses would be analysed and reported to the inspector. The inspector would then look at the modifications those responses fed into and hopefully be satisfied with the Council's updated expert reports with the hope being

the Council could adopt the local plan by the end of 2025.

Cllr Cushing referred to item 24 regarding the development of pipeline project proposals for serviced employment land but wondered if the Council had a deadline. The CE agreed to take that away and provide a written response to the Committee as there were ongoing discussions with Cabinet on this matter.

In response to a query from Cllr Boyle regarding health, wellbeing and financial inclusivity initiatives. Cllr Fredericks said it was a moving target as the ICB were going through a huge restructure as was the NHS. The Council prided itself on having the Health and Wellbeing Partnership which brought those organisations together and discussed those topics and lobbied for them. The Council was in discussions with the North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board and its partners.

The Chair highlighted the capacity issues with LGR; in 24/25 there were the 31 actions that had been updated or cancelled due to changed circumstances and queried if they were sufficiently recorded within the Corporate Risk Register where there was an inherent risk of 12 and residual and target risks of 8 for Corporate Risk 41. The CE explained that the Corporate Plan was a statement of the Administration's programme of work which was translated into a plan with the staff and financial resources the Council had at the time. When advising the Administration in 2023, it was agreed the Corporate Plan, and its actions would be shared over the 4 years but with an annual delivery plan to reflect changing positions. A number of the objectives were not in control of the Authority. The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) was reviewed quarterly by CLT and the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee and even though it was important to be mindful of those issues, as with the LGR process, the CRR was there to inform but it was also a living document that could change at any time. Cllr Fredericks added that the Council's main priority was to serve the public and keep the Council financially stable.

Cllr Boyle wished to recognise the Empty Homes Team for being highly commended for best use of media award. She noted also they had been having software issues for managing empty homes. Cllr Fredericks reassured the Committee that it was only for the most complex of cases where there had been a problem, and those were being dealt with by hand but, as a result, they were just taking a little longer.

The Committee AGREED they had seen the report and made comments.

52 BUDGET MONITORING P4 2025/26

Cllr Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates and Property Services introduced the report. She explained this was Period 4 and the first monitoring since the budget was set in February. Last year the Finance Team had made a change in the way they monitored the budget, so it now included a projection to year end. Outturn this time last year forecast a deficit of £1.3m. Because of the subsequent focus in the organisation, as reported in July the Council had £600k to put in general reserves. The Budget in February 2025 created a new reserve of £515K to support with the Council's Homelessness budget. Cllr Shires explained they were projecting a small surplus of £138k at year end.

Cllr Cushing questioned what confidence the Committee could have that the forecast was accurate given past estimates and the variance of 22% last year. Cllr Shires was currently very confident. With food waste collections coming in, it was inevitable

that would bring some changes along the way but if everything remained stable then she was as confident as she could be on the figures provided. Cllr Shires reiterated the Council could only control what was within its powers in house and external pressures and influences could have an impact that was not anticipated. Cllr Cushing agreed some variance was natural but would not expect a variance running into millions as per the previous year. Cllr Shires said when the budget was set in 2024/25, the Finance Team had changed how they monitored that budget process and that had always been openly communicated. There had been a collective push from Officers to save money and as the year progressed they could see that improvement due to having an early warning system in place. This was also about considering where the Council would be in the future financially and not just about setting the budget for the current year. Cllr Shires was already meeting with the ADFa and had been for some time in looking at the budget for 2026/27.

The Chair had a query on the use of £500k in reserves that Environmental Health anticipated using and wondered what that spend was on. Cllr Shires explained that was a cost they had decided would be funded by the budget so not a new change but something they were expecting to spend from reserves. Cllr Shires agreed to provide an exact reason in writing. The Chair also wondered with regards to dog waste and litter bins if that was the total savings listed on Pg.87 and Cllr Shires explained that with the small increase in the charge for emptying those bins that was the income the Council was predicting to make from that.

In relation to general funds and how much council tax came from 2nd homes, Cllr Bayes asked if there was a breakdown of those figures. Cllr Shires referred the Committee to Pg.86 and the Second Home Premium reserve which was where the share NNDC took from the premium charges could be seen. That was then put into reserves for supporting homelessness.

Cllr Fletcher asked to what the Extended Responsibility Producer referred and Cllr Shires replied that she believed it was for food waste collections. Cllr Fletcher also referred to the removal of the Youth Council Budget and the £9k saving, saying that he felt the Council should be encouraging interest in local Government in our younger community and not potentially curbing it. Cllr Shires said the creation of the Youth Council was one of her proposals and the vision of what that would be didn't really work for younger people who were very busy in education and carving out their future lives. Asking them to come to meetings did not appeal despite the incredible efforts of Officer Denny in trying to find a format that excited younger people. Cllr Varley had reached out to schools to see if it was possible to work out a different model for that project going forward. So, the money had been reduced as not all required at this time for such things as travel, but the Council was still pursuing that alternative and being steered by young people in what excited them and had continuity as the turnover of those young people naturally moved on.

RESOLVED to make the following recommendations to Full Council:

- a) **Note the contents of the report and the current forecast year end position.**
- b) **Approval is requested from Full Council to decrease the 2025/26 capital budget for the Mundesley Coastal Defence scheme to £1,139,806 to reflect the apportionment of £250k from external contributions to the Cromer Scheme.**
- c) **Approval is requested from Full Council to increase the 2025/26 capital budget for the Cromer Coastal Defences scheme to £1,096,067 to**

reflect the apportionment of £250k from external contributions from the Mundesley Scheme.

- d) Note the contents of the Q1 Treasury Management update report, appendix F.

53 NHOSC QUARTERLY REPORT

Cllr Boyle summarised the July meeting where the Norfolk Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) had looked at changes that were going on around the abolition of NHS England over the course of the next 2 years and the 50% cut in the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the subsequent reorganisation process. The NHOSC did write to the Secretary of State for Health over the disbanding of HealthWatch; they had been given a year's grace to Cllr Boyle's understanding, but the NHOSC Committee had felt very compelled to write due to all the excellent work of HealthWatch.

The Chair asked how big ICB Norfolk was compared to other partner organisations. Cllr Boyle suspected it could be that if Norfolk and Suffolk were joined together, it would be very big indeed. Despite the uncertainty ICB Norfolk were determined to make as many plans as they could to hand the service on in a good way.

The Chair asked the Committee to consider sending their own letter to the Secretary of State for Health over the abolition of HealthWatch and to say it would be very detrimental to the health care system of Norfolk. The Chair also asked the Committee if they had a view that the proposed joining of the Norfolk and Suffolk ICB would also be detrimental given that the standard of the healthcare system in Norfolk was under strain.

Cllr Fletcher noted a real concern in the reduction of staff by 50% and the effect on staff wellbeing. Cllr Boyle said they were keen to express that cuts were on the admin side of the ICBs and not what the ICB do, so what they would be producing would remain the same but half the number of people organising it. Cllr Fletcher felt there was a question there in regards the organisation's efficiency if they were experiencing cuts that deeply.

Cllr Boyle was happy to compose a letter to the ICB outlining the Committee's concerns. Cllr Bayes was in agreement that as a Committee they should be asking the ICB to reconsider their decision over HealthWatch as it was important as a Council we recognised the good work they did and the impact it would have.

1. The Committee noted the report and **AGREED** to write, as a Committee to the Secretary of State for Health to express the detrimental effect the closure of HealthWatch would be for Norfolk and to ask them to reconsider their decision, liaising with NHOSC in doing so.

54 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

Noted

55 THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

No comments

56 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

The Committee looked at the scoping document in reference to the Mobile Connectivity issue and the Chair asked for suggestions on how they would like to look into this subject further. The DSGM explained the scoping document was a way of staying focused on what the Committee wished to look at in more detail.

Cllr Hankins welcomed the fact mobile connectivity was brought to the fore and felt there was a need to prioritise, when talking to providers, on two principal requirements, in terms of health and business. For example, where defibrillators were unable to connect online or where some business have very poor mobile broadband.

Cllr Cushing questioned how to identify if those so called not-spots existed and how this could be demonstrated. Cllr Housden felt that was tricky, as online you could get maps from the providers of their coverage areas and where there were not-spots. If you talked to those providers, you would find that many joined together to improve the network. Also, some of those 3G masts had been taken down so it was difficult to know where to start. Cllr Housden suggested undertaking a scoping document just for the Committee to look at to really define what it is the committee wanted from the providers.

The Chair said Cllr Toye had done some work in collating data on the issue but questioned whether that would be enough for the Committee to focus on. Therefore, the Chair suggested that the Committee could wait to see what the data showed before scoping out the full review. Cllr Housden agreed as a base was needed as a starting point. He agreed that the Committee should call in some of those providers to respond to questions, as the signal in North Norfolk was appalling.

Cllr Gray felt that without proper data the Committee was in danger of asking providers to attend a meeting with no proper questions to ask, adding that it needed to be the right request to get the providers to commit. Cllr Gray believed Norfolk County Council ran a similar data gathering exercise and suggested that it would be worth checking what they had discovered, to then be considered alongside the report from Cllr Toye before the Committee pushed forward.

Cllr Hankins felt the Committee needed to ask providers the hard question, which was identifying where the signal was bad and asking them what they were going to do about it. Cllr Heinrich said much of this would depend on what network you were on, he felt a range of data was needed to identify which providers were guilty of the biggest not-spots and not just a broad map of where signals were weak. Also, greater clarity was needed on when 5G would be rolled out.

Cllr Shires noted how the Committee's work programme was extremely busy and asked if it would be useful if she and the ADFA sent the Committee some information on what they were doing as a written report rather than taking time up in the meeting itself to help the Committee determine how they would want to feed into the budget setting process. The DSGM thought that would be a very good idea and the data that had been gathered on mobile connectivity was scheduled for the October O&S Committee meeting. The Democratic Services team would feedback to the Officer bringing that report what the Committee wished to focus on and then the Committee could run the scoping exercise again perhaps in a pre-agenda session to decide how the Committee wanted to home in on those specific aspects. They would

also ask, at Cllr Housden's request, to see if the data collated by NCC could be included in that report.

Cllr Fredericks asked the Committee to consider what, as a Council, could be achieved with the Mobile Connectivity item and could maybe suggest that it was something the local town and parishes could raise within their local communities. The best the Council could do was to present the figures that it and NCC had collected. Members could help advocate but could not influence those private companies.

Cllr Bayes wished to feedback that the scoping document was a very good idea at keeping the Committee focused on what was possible to achieve.

57 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting ended at 12.43 pm.

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

	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 — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. ‘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.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (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.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (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

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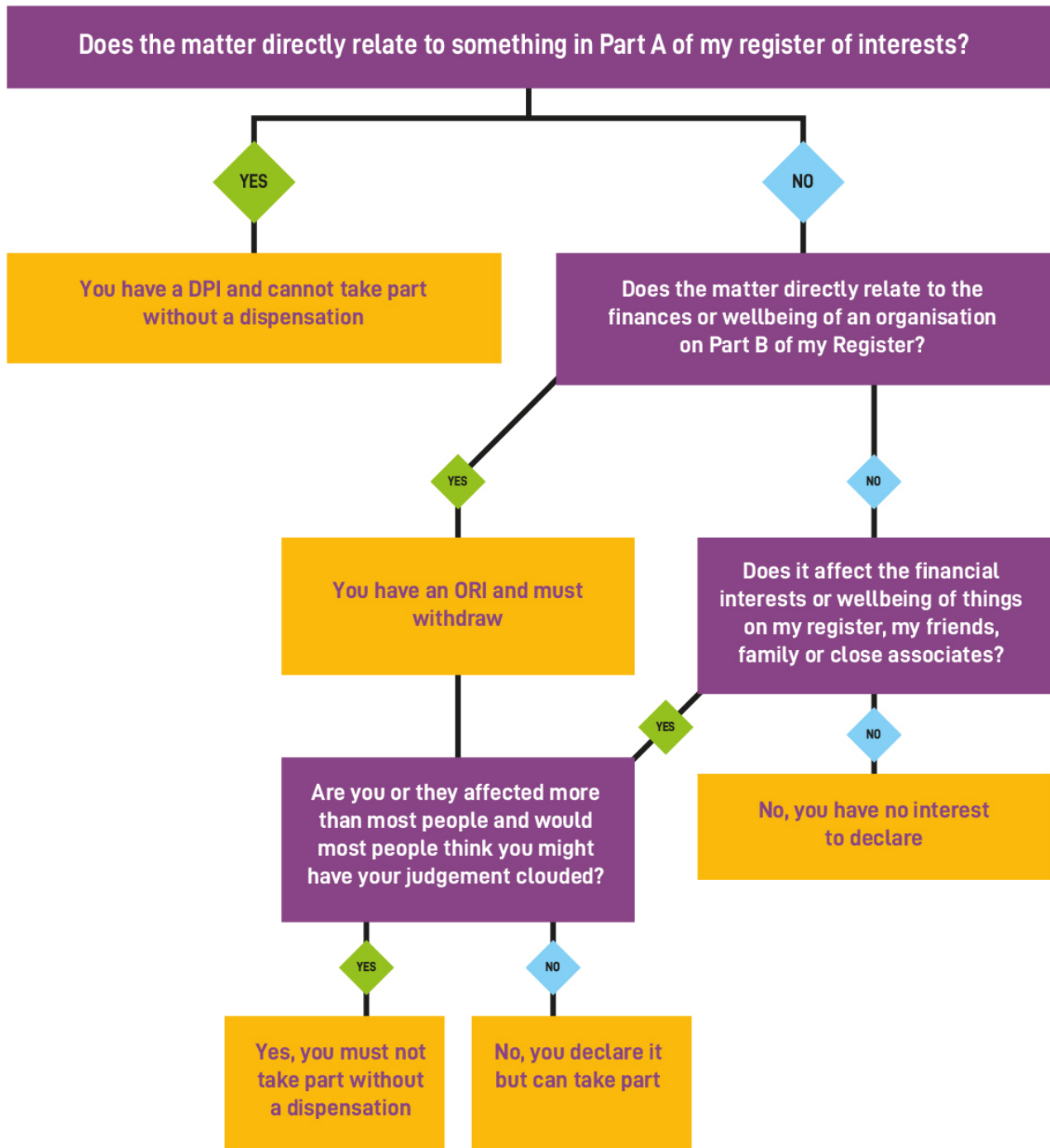
* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* '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

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
 - (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)



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review 2025	
Executive Summary	This report sets out the findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review, which is a key stage in the development of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
Options considered	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review stage draws together intelligence on the demands, activities and resources associated with homelessness and rough sleeping. The Review has identified areas for further consideration. A range of options will be considered as part of the development of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
Consultation(s)	A wide range of stakeholders have been consulted in drawing together the Review – as set out in the main document – including partners, customers, and staff.
Recommendations	That Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the report and provide feedback on the findings in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review.
Reasons for recommendations	To provide an opportunity for Overview & Scrutiny Committee to comment on the Review findings ahead of the development of the full strategy.
Background papers	Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Review – report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee 16 th July 2025 Homelessness Task & Finish Group – report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 th September 2024 Officer Update to the Homelessness Task and Finish Group Recommendations – 12 th February 2025.

Wards affected	District-wide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples' Services
Contact Officers	Karen Hill, Assistant Director People Services, karen.hill@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Meeting our Housing Need.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Effectively tackling homelessness should reduce the need for, and therefore 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 Sleeping Strategy 2019- 2024
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Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	NA
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review, which is a key stage in the development of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 There is a legal requirement for the Council to undertake a review of homelessness in the district and develop a strategy at least every 5 years. The approach to this is set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities. The Council's current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy covers the period 2019 to 2024, although we continue to deliver the actions in that strategy. The government is due to publish a National Homelessness Strategy (which was expected this summer) which we had hoped would be in place to provide national context to the development North Norfolk's strategy.
- 2.2 In line with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 (as amended February 2024), the review covers:
- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the district
 - the activities which are carried out towards the prevention and relief of homelessness
 - the resources available to the council, the social services authority, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities
- 2.3 The review seeks to identify useful practice, gaps, challenges and opportunities within the district. However, the review does not make any recommendations as to how to address the issues raised. The review will inform the production of the Council's next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.
- 2.4 The review is a comprehensive piece of work, and the Review document contains much detail. Some of the key points from the main sections in the Review are set out below.
- 2.5 **Analysis of homelessness data:**

- Initial / triaged approaches have risen in recent years and are forecast to exceed 1,200 in 2025/26
- The number of households assessed as owed a duty in 2024/25 was 384, with 143 owed a prevention duty and 226 owed a relief duty
- The main reasons for homelessness have been constant, with loss of privately rented accommodation being the main reason, followed by family or friends no longer willing/able to accommodate. In 2022/23 domestic abuse overtook non-violent relationship breakdown as the third main cause
- The main reason for loss of private rented tenancies (Assured Shorthold Tenancy) was landlords wishing to sell (or re-let) the property – 80%
- In 2023/24 there were 151 households accepted as Homeless in priority need and unintentionally homeless. The majority of these households (84%) go on to accept a social housing tenancy
- 51% of homeless households are aged 25-45 years, with virtually no young (16-17 years) and relatively few older (65+) households
- Under half of all applicants have any form of support need, with the most common support need being a history of mental health problems
- The numbers of rough sleepers and those with a history of rough sleeping remains low

2.6 **Key Challenges and opportunities** – the landscape in which the council tackles homelessness is always changing with new challenges and some opportunities. A PESTLE analysis is included in the Review document (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental).

2.7 This PESTLE, together with analysis of the homelessness data, leads to conclusion that the number of households approaching the Council will continue to increase. Due to the limited opportunity to prevent homelessness across the three main reasons for homelessness it is expected that the number of households being assessed as having a main housing duty will continue to exceed the opportunity to discharge these main duties and this will result in more households requiring temporary accommodation and requiring this accommodation for longer.

2.8 **Activities – prevention, relief, and accommodating**

- The Council itself has many teams involved in tackling homelessness – in addition to the Housing Options Team this includes Community Outreach, Financial Inclusion, Social Prescribing and Benefits
- Additionally, there are other organisations who provide support and advice to prevent or relieve homelessness - although not as many as operate in other districts
- 175 households were placed in temporary accommodation in 2024/25, which was 48% higher than the number placed in 2019/20, but 8% lower than the number placed in the peak year 2022/23
- The Council is only able to recover a small proportion, £98.08 per week of the Housing Benefit paid out on nightly paid accommodation whereas the actual cost varies from £329 for a single room and £762 for a family accommodation with a degree of self-containment, leaving the Council to pick up the shortfall
- The Council has invested in a portfolio of in-house self-contained properties for TA - by the end of this year we have 27 properties (plus five move-on homes for ex rough sleepers)

- There is a limited range of supported housing in the district. There is a good supply and geographical spread of supported housing for young people, but a shortage of other provision.
- There are 6,415 housing association homes in the district. General need affordable rented homes are the most likely to be used to discharge main housing duties for those accepted as homeless; these account for 77% of the affordable housing stock in the district.
- 286 affordable homes were let in 2024/25 – 46% of these were 2-beds.
- In 2019/20 only 4% of all social housing lets went to households who were threatened with or accepted as homeless, in 2024/25 the figure was 56% (N.B. total lets include RP's transfer quota, local lets properties and age restricted properties – all less likely to be for homeless households)
- An average of 74 new affordable homes have been built each year over the last 6-years. 34% of the delivery has been for general need rented homes
- An average of 42 affordable homes a year have been lost through voluntary sales or Right to Buy
- The forecast for medium to longer term delivery of new homes is good, with 1,137 expected in the next 6 years but there is a shortfall in the short-medium term
- There is a declining supply of private rented homes nationally, which we expect to be the case locally. Very few lets are available within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels – local monitoring shows only 2 so far in 2025
- Community and voluntary groups play a crucial role in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness by providing essential resources, social support, warm space/food and a pathway to re-integration into the community.
- There are several processes and systems that provide independent and objective feedback on the work undertaken by the Council to tackle homelessness. The Council is open to the opportunity to learn and improve and encourages challenge
- The last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019 – 2024) included five priority areas. The Action Plan was updated in 2022 and new actions identified across all priority areas. The majority of these actions have been completed, integrated into business as usual or are in progress.

2.9 **Resources** – many of the activities set out in the Activities section in the Review document include an outline the resources available to tackle homelessness – including both in-house staff but also partner organisations. Much of the funding for the in-house homelessness service comes from annually allocated grants. Most Council staff delivering homelessness prevention and relief are funded via these grants and, as a result, are on fixed term contracts. The short-term nature of the funding hampers long term planning and commissioning or development of a system with a longer-term strategic view. External / grant funding support to the homeless service was £366k in 2019/20 and had risen to £840k in 2024/25.

2.10 **Next Steps** - The Review document is a very comprehensive assessment of homelessness in the district. From this assessment, it is clear that there are no major gaps or failings in the current service provision, and there are no 'silver bullets' available to prevent or relieve homelessness. However, the

review does identify several areas for further consideration and inclusion in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. These include:

- Better understanding of homelessness approaches (that do not result in prevention or relief duty) to help identify how best to manage these approaches to ensure that upstream prevention opportunities are maximised
- Consider developing expertise/specialisms in service delivery to reflect the three main reasons for homelessness (accessing the private rented sector, family mediation and relationship breakdown/domestic abuse) in order to maximise prevention opportunities.
- Consider developing services for the three main demographic groups who are owed homelessness duties – families with children, single people with complex health needs (physical and mental) and single people with no support needs (relief).
- Consider how rough sleeping resources can be used to develop services covering prevention, relief and recovery for single people with complex health needs (physical and mental) and single people with no support needs (relief) – to help prevent rough sleeping.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of community outreach in the prevention, relief and recovery of homelessness.
- Consider how to most effectively deal with housing related approaches and maximise opportunities for prevention whilst ensuring the Housing Options Team can focus on relief and management of homelessness. This would allow for triage of cases and referral to appropriate services including Financial Inclusion, Social Prescribing or Community Outreach.
- Continue to invest in the provision of self-contained temporary accommodation to reduce the use of nightly paid accommodation. Consider an annual capital programme for the purchase of additional council temporary accommodation units until the number of affordable housing lets is sufficient to adequately manage the demand from homelessness with an acceptable level of use of nightly paid accommodation.
- Ahead of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 work with supported housing providers to maximise outcomes delivered through the supported housing schemes. Continue to seek opportunities to increase the supply of supported housing for single people
- Develop a SMART and manageable action plan, limit the number of actions in each year and review the action plan annually
- Over the next strategy period develop more formal arrangements with partners and include specific actions for partners to deliver in the annual action plan.
- Consider how the risk of losing staff on fixed term contracts essential to delivering the Council's statutory duties and maintaining service delivery can be mitigated, especially in light of Local Government Re-organisation.

2.11 The Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group identified a number of specific actions from their evidence gathering into homelessness. The officers' response to the Task Group's findings set out how many of these actions are being addressed, and how others would be considered as part of the development of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Now the

comprehensive review of homelessness has been completed, and areas of priority for the Strategy identified, we can revisit the O&S recommendations and pick these up where appropriate.

- 2.12 The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is due to be presented to Cabinet (3 November) and to Overview and Scrutiny (12 November) ahead of formal adoption at Full Council (17 December)

3. Corporate Priorities

- 3.1 Effectively preventing and tackling homelessness – the most acute form of housing need – is fundamental to delivery of the Council's key corporate priority "Meeting our Housing Need".

4. Comments from the S151 Officer

Actions to address homelessness and rough sleeping will need to be considered in light of the Council's budget and financial position

5. Comments from the Monitoring Officer

Legal advice may need to be provided for any specific actions identified in the Strategy.

6. Risks

At this stage the Review sets out the position with homelessness and rough sleeping in the district. However, the risks associated with not effectively tackling homelessness are significant – financial, reputational, legal. A risk assessment will be required for any significant actions arising from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

7. Net Zero Target

No specific implications

8. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

No specific implications

9. Community Safety issues

No specific implications

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the report and provide feedback on the findings within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review.

North Norfolk District Council

Homelessness Review

September 2025 Draft

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The resources available for the prevention and relief of homelessness

- The Council
 - Housing Options Team resource - 1 April 2019 – December 2021
 - Housing Options Team resource - December 2021 – May 2026

Next steps and timetable

Glossary

Introduction

Why are we doing this?

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years. Before publishing the strategy, housing authorities have the power to carry out a review of homelessness services in their district. North Norfolk District Council published its last strategy in December 2019. It aims to publish its next strategy document before the end of 2025.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2027 – Putting North Norfolk and its Communities First – A Council placing the environment and our communities at the heart of everything we do, particularly our rural villages, businesses, those affected by the housing crisis and the challenges facing our unique environment. Meeting our Housing Need is one of five priorities sitting alongside Our Greener Future; Developing our communities; Investing in our Local Economy and Infrastructure; and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council.

In terms of homelessness: approaches to the Council's Housing Options Team have doubled since the last strategy was published.

Homelessness is a problem that the Council seeks to resolve in partnership, because no agency possesses the skills and resources to resolve homelessness on its own due to its complex and interconnected nature.

What does the review cover?

In line with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 (as amended February 2024), the review covers:

Area One

- The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the district

Area Two

- The activities which are carried out towards the prevention and relief of homelessness

Area Three

- The resources available to the Council, the social services authority, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities

The review seeks to identify useful practice, gaps, challenges and opportunities within the district. However, the review does not make any recommendations as to how to address the issues raised. The review will inform the production of the Council's next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

How was the review carried out?

The review consisted of the following:

- *Data analysis:* The Council analysed data gathered from the services it directly provides including statistical returns for Statutory Homeless Cases and Rough Sleeping

Statutory homelessness data is collected by all Local Authorities in England with responsibilities under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA). This data is often referred to as H-CLIC data which stands for Homelessness Case Level Information Collection. Local Authorities collect detailed, case-level information on all homelessness applications, regardless of the outcome, to monitor and improve services under the HRA.

We use this along with our own data to monitor changes in the of households approaching us as potentially homeless, as well as to identify trends in homelessness and homelessness outcomes over time. We also use it to compare the situation in the North Norfolk with other regions and areas of England. The annual H-CLIC data for 2019/20 through to 2023/24 was used to examine trends in statutory homelessness over the lifetime of the strategy. Data for 204/25 is not yet available through so we have also in places provided high level data for 2024/25. To assess rough sleeping we have examined the MHCLG's data on rough sleeping collected through annual snapshots and monthly data gathered via the data-led framework.

- Data analysis: partners. The Council obtained data gathered by others operating or commissioning services in the district where possible.
- Market trends and publicly available information
- Questionnaires to partners and stakeholders and an online survey for residents.
- Group sessions with officers working within People Services (including Housing Options, Benefits, Early Help and Prevention and Housing Adaptations) and the Housing Strategy Team.
- Insights gained from work undertaken throughout recent years including DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation) Process; Allocations Policy Review and consultation (Your Home, Your Choice partners, applicants and residents), Shelter Systems Thinking including service user feedback and mystery shopping, Homeless Link Trauma Informed Care research programme, the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Homelessness, the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, the East of England Local Government Association review of Temporary Accommodation and Internal Audit Housing and Homelessness.

What do we mean by homelessness and rough Sleeping?

The legal explanation of homelessness set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996¹⁰ states, in summary, that a person is homeless if they have no accommodation available for his occupation, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, which they are entitled to occupy.

The Act goes on to say, in summary, that a person is also homeless if they are unable to gain entry to accommodation they are entitled to occupy or if it is unreasonable for them to continue to occupy that accommodation. This could be because the accommodation is unfit to occupy or is unsafe, for example because of the threat of violence or domestic abuse.

A person is threatened with homelessness, according to the Act, if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days.

In order for the Council to owe a legal duty, a person also needs to be eligible for homelessness assistance. This depends on immigration and residence status. There are different rules for British and Irish nationals and people from abroad¹¹.

Rough sleeping has a narrower definition. According to the government¹² rough sleepers are defined for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates as:

- people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)
- people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes').

For the purposes of collection of data and publication of statistics, homelessness and rough sleeping are treated separately. Rough sleeping has been the focus of much of the government's efforts and funding in recent years, with a still existing commitment to 'End Rough Sleeping for Good' set out in the national rough sleeping strategy published in 2022¹

About North Norfolk

North Norfolk District Council marked its 50th anniversary in 2024 and will probably have been subsumed into a larger unitary council which will be in its infancy when we are due to update this strategy in 2030.

The Local Government Association Peer review in 2023 found a Council which performs well, cares for and is delivering for its residents. Officers and elected members have a clear understanding of the needs, wants and challenges in the district and are passionate about delivering for their communities.

Our communities

The North Norfolk District Council area is a largely rural, covering 360 square miles and includes 43-mile coastline and one third of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape. These factors lead to it having one of the highest percentages of second and holiday homes in the UK and being attractive to retirees resulting in the oldest age profile in the UK. The district has 120 town and parishes and 31 of these had more than 20% of their dwellings used as holiday homes or second homes in 2023, with 2 parishes (Morston and Salhouse) having 50% or more, 2 parishes (Blakeney and Cley-next-the Sea) having more than 40% and 1 (Wells-next-the-Sea) having more than 30%.

The main settlements in the district are its seven towns: North Walsham (population 12,634), Cromer (population 7,683), Fakenham (population 7,617), Sheringham (population 7,367), Holt (population 3,810), Stalham (population 3,276) and Wells-next-the-Sea (population 2,165), along with Hoveton (population 1,759) and a further two large villages; Briston/Melton Constable, and Mundesley. These settlements are distributed evenly across the district and accommodate around half of the population whilst the remaining population live in the large number of smaller villages, hamlets and scattered dwellings which are dispersed throughout a large rural area. Overall, the district is one of the most rural in lowland England.

The west of the district - remains very rural and is poorly served by public transport. Much of this area is designated as National Landscape with numerous designated Conservation Areas. House prices are notably higher than other parts of North Norfolk and in the coastal area a higher percentage of the homes are in use as second homes. The main centre is Fakenham a historic market town which acts as a local centre for employment, retail, health and higher education meeting the needs of the town and a large rural hinterland.

Wells-next-the Sea is an attractive town and important tourist destination and acts as a local service centre. Its remote location and high house prices create problems for local people needing affordable housing including essential key workers. The town and surrounding area are within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape.

The central part of the district - served by Cromer, Holt and Sheringham has a strong tourist and retirement character. These three towns are physically closely related and are considered functionally linked in relation to access to services and employment. Both Sheringham and Cromer benefit from main line railway stations providing services to Norwich and beyond.

Cromer is an attractive Victorian resort town and acts as a local centre for retail, local government and health services hosting the District Council offices and main hospital (Minor Injuries only).

Holt is a small Georgian town with specialist shops, galleries and an independent boarding school.

Sheringham is an attractive resort town and acts as a local centre for retail and leisure services.

The east of the district - forms part of the Norwich travel to work area with pockets of social deprivation. The coastal area suffers from potential blight associated with the risks of coastal erosion and tidal flooding.

North Walsham, a historic market town is the largest settlement in the district with many Listed Buildings. The town provides a wide range of public services, retail facilities, employment opportunities and good levels of accessibility and public transport (train and bus services). The town sits in an attractive landscape but is relatively unconstrained in terms of landscape and ecological designations relative to other parts of the district.

Hoveton and Wroxham sit astride the River Bure and together are the main 'gateway' to the Norfolk Broads. Although Hoveton is a village, rather than a town, its size, particularly taken with Wroxham (in Broadland District), means that it acts as a local retail and service centre.

Stalham is a small market town lying on the northern edge of the Norfolk Broads and has the largest boat hire business on the Broads. The town and surrounding area have high levels of commuting into the Norwich and Great Yarmouth areas, due to the limited employment opportunities available locally.

Demographics

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 over 6% and the population of the East of England grew by over 8%. However, the number of households in North Norfolk increased from 46,046 to 48,400 an increase of 5% compared to an increase for England and Wales of 3% and the East of England of 6%.

The current population is estimated to be around 105,000 with a predicted population of 112,078 by 2036 (ONS 2016).

In 2021 33% of the North Norfolk population was aged 65 and over, the highest proportion for any district in England and Wales, by comparison the proportion aged 65 and over in England and Wales was 19%. In contrast North Norfolk has lower proportions of younger ages, only 13% of the population is aged under 15 compared to 17% in England and Wales.

The population is predicted to age further so that by the end of 2036 around 40% of the district population will be over 65 with a diminishing proportion of the total population remaining economically active.

Retirement has been a major cause of the net inward migration which has fuelled population growth in the area over the last thirty years or so (although deaths have exceeded births in the area during this period). This attractiveness to retired “incomers” is an economic resource that supports a range of local services, businesses and rural communities, but also raises challenges for housing, health care and provision of services.

Economics

The economy of North Norfolk remains narrowly based with a relatively high dependence upon employment in the agriculture, retail, public services and tourism sectors. The local economy is particularly characterised by the fact that most employees (84%) work in small businesses. Whilst there has been a change in the business base of the manufacturing sector with business closures/rationalisations in the food processing and engineering sectors in recent years, there has been a growth in employment in the manufacture of plastic and timber products and marine engineering/boatbuilding, which continue to perform strongly.

Today, significant numbers of employees in the district are engaged in the provision of education, health and social care, public administration, retail and tourism. In recent years the tourism sector has enjoyed growth through investment in quality accommodation and attractions, and a move to year-round operations capturing short breaks and specialist markets, in addition to the traditional summer holiday.

Whilst most of North Norfolk’s towns have small industrial estates, the main concentration of manufacturing employment is in Fakenham and North Walsham. Cromer, Mundesley, Sheringham and Wells-next-the-Sea are traditional destination resorts, and Hoveton acts as an important centre for Broads-based tourism.

While North Walsham historically had a strong level of self-containment in terms of local businesses and employment opportunities, over the past twenty years, several of the towns largest employers have scaled back their workforce or closed. Increasing numbers of local people travel out of the town for work. This has meant that the town has become increasingly dormitory in its function and this, together with changing consumer trends more generally, has had an impact on the strength and vibrancy of the historic town centre, compounded by a withdrawal of several high street banks and retailers from the town. The town centre has been improved in recent years with over £3m of investment via the Historic England Heritage Action Zone scheme.

A short distance from North Walsham there are two important strategic employment sites – the Bacton Energy Hub and Scottow Enterprise Park (former RAF Coltishall airbase), which have significant growth potential in the future to accommodate new businesses and employment – particularly in new and emerging energy sectors (hydrogen production, carbon capture and local electricity generation).

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) – Office for National Statistics reports on employee earnings. The average earnings for those in full time employment in 2022 was £32,113 with a median of £28,759 however this drops to £25,505 and £23,864 respectively when all employees are included. In 2022 the median house price in north Norfolk was £300,000 which is over 10 times the median income resulting in home ownership being unaffordable for many.

Connectivity

North Norfolk's peripheral location is reflected in the fact that it has no trunk roads or motorways. Only the A140 (Cromer to Norwich), the A148 (Cromer to King's Lynn - via Holt and Fakenham but also serving Sheringham) and the A1065 (Fakenham to Mildenhall) are regarded as part of the national 'primary route network'. Other important routes are the A1067 (Fakenham to Norwich), the A149 (Cromer to Great Yarmouth – via North Walsham and Stalham) and the A1151 (linking the A149 at Smallburgh to Norwich via Hoveton).

The only public rail service is the 'Bittern Line', operated by Greater Anglia, linking Sheringham, Cromer, North Walsham and Hoveton with Norwich.

Most of North Norfolk's villages are served only by very limited public bus services. The 'Coasthopper' bus service runs from Hunstanton to Cromer and Mundesley, providing a popular regular service for locals and visitors along the coast. Related to the modest level of public transport services across the area is the finding from the 2011 Census that 84% of households in North Norfolk owned at least one car or van and 37% owned two or more vehicles. The Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) has improved access to and from the east of the district and provides a more direct link to the A11.

The nearby urban area and major economic, social and cultural centre of Norwich (Norwich Urban Area population of 213,166) is situated some 22 miles to the south of Cromer and exerts a significant influence over parts of the district. The towns of Kings Lynn situated 20 miles to the west of Fakenham and Great Yarmouth situated 16 miles to the south-east of Stalham are the other principal neighbouring settlements, but their impact on the district is far more limited.

Environment

The risk of flooding in North Norfolk is not widespread and comes predominantly from a combination of tidal and fluvial sources. Tidal and coastal flooding are the most significant, as the district is bounded to the north and east by the North Sea and many of its watercourses are tidally influenced. Flooding can also occur due to fluvial risks associated with rivers. Collectively several growth settlements are at risk from localised fluvial flooding including parts of Fakenham, Wells-next –the- Sea, Hoveton, Mundesley, Horning, Sea Palling and Potter Heigham.

Flood risk is also due to surface water runoff and groundwater sources, due to rock strata and springs, culverts, and potentially, the overloading of drainage and sewer infrastructure. Heavy rain and areas of low-lying land and poorly maintained culverts can exacerbate flood events.

The North Norfolk coast features soft, erodible cliffs, making it one of the fastest eroding coastlines in Europe. The traditional 'hold the line' approach to sea defences is becoming unaffordable and unsustainable in many areas, leading to a proposed shift towards 'managed realignment'.

Climate change, is predicted to result in sea level rise, increased coastal erosion and result in more increased short-duration, high intensity rainfall which will have the potential to compound flood events and risk, threatening communities and infrastructure.

New developments are subject to nutrient neutrality requirements to manage phosphate and nitrate pollution from agricultural and urban sources to protect biodiversity.

Housing

The district has a challenging housing market. It has an ageing population and attracts many incoming retirees, meaning it has the highest percentage of homes owned outright in the country (increasing from 45.8% to 48.6% between 2011 and 2021) – helping to fuel rising house prices. The district is rural and coastal and a popular holiday destination, resulting in high levels of second homes (Council Tax records April 2025 show 5,980 Second Homes, over 10% of all Council Tax homes). There are also significant numbers of properties used as holiday lets (Business rates data shows 2,335 holiday lets as at April 2025).

These combined housing market forces result in a very limited pool of 'normal' properties available to meet the needs of local households. This is further exacerbated by a relatively low wage economy in North Norfolk, meaning an affordability index of 10.26 (ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings) and putting homes beyond the reach of many local households.

The percentage of properties in owner occupation slightly decreased from 70.5% in 2011 to 69.3% in 2021, the number of privately rented properties increased slightly from 16.3% to 17.7% whilst the number of properties which were socially rented remained broadly the same at 13%. In such a challenging market for local homebuyers the Private Rented Sector (PRS) should play an important part in the housing landscape in the district. However, the sector appears to be shrinking rapidly, rather than growing to fill the gap left for those who cannot afford to buy. Unfortunately, good quality data on the size of the PRS is not readily available between the Census but all the information available shows a decline in PRS homes in the district.

Only 0.6% of the districts private sector housing stock achieves an energy performance rating banding of category A or B, 16% category C, 35% category D, 24% category E, 17% category F and 6% category G. In total 76.2% of North Norfolk's private sector properties can be classed in bandings C-E, in comparison to 93.5% of those across England. The number of private rented dwellings in North Norfolk with an energy performance rating of band of E, F and G is estimated to be 43%, which is significantly above the 24.4% average for England.

DRAFT

National Homelessness Context

Over the lifetime of the previous strategy external factors have presented the Country and the Homelessness sector with significant challenges with impacts felt by all Public Services and the Public. These factors include the Covid Pandemic, global conflict, global supply chain issues,

the cost-of-living crisis and consistently stretched Health and Social Care services. These issues combined with an already existing lack of social housing, and increasingly unaffordable open market and private rented sectors have contributed to a significant increase in those suffering housing insecurity today.

Covid

In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government implemented the 'Everyone In' policy. This policy equipped local authorities with the mandate and resources to provide temporary accommodation for all rough sleepers to keep them safe during the pandemic. Around 37,000 rough sleepers in England were housed in temporary accommodation. The policy enabled housing teams to help even the hardest-to-reach and street-attached rough sleepers.

Housing affordability and availability

There is a growing lack of affordable housing in the UK. Recent global factors, such as the cost-of-living crisis, rising energy bills, and inflation rising at unprecedented levels, have made it much more challenging for residents to pay essential housing bills.

Global Conflict

Conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine have also impacted on both National and Local Homelessness services. Refugees from all three conflicts have been awarded special status to reside in Britain and have become the responsibility of Local Authorities to house on their arrival.

Brexit

The impact of Brexit also means that there is a new sub-group of European nationals who no longer have the right to work in the UK. If they are homeless or sleeping rough, they no longer qualify for public funding and their housing options through local authorities are highly limited.

Nutrient Neutrality

In 2022, Natural England - the body which advises the government on environmental matters - said several rivers in the country, including the Wensum and the Broads, were in "an unfavourable condition" and warned that extra wastewater from new housing developments could make things worse. North Norfolk (along with other Norfolk local authorities) were advised plans for new homes could only be approved if appropriate mitigation strategies were in place.

Global Supply Chain Issues and Financial Uncertainty

One of the key tools in relieving homelessness is the provision of new housing. The increased costs involved in global trade since 2020 have been particularly significant for the building industry. The impacts of the increased costs of materials and import delays caused by the pandemic and Britain leaving the European Union have pushed the costs of building new homes to a record high. Inflation has also had an

impact as both Registered Providers and Private Developers face an increased cost of borrowing leading to a more risk averse approach to large scale housing projects.

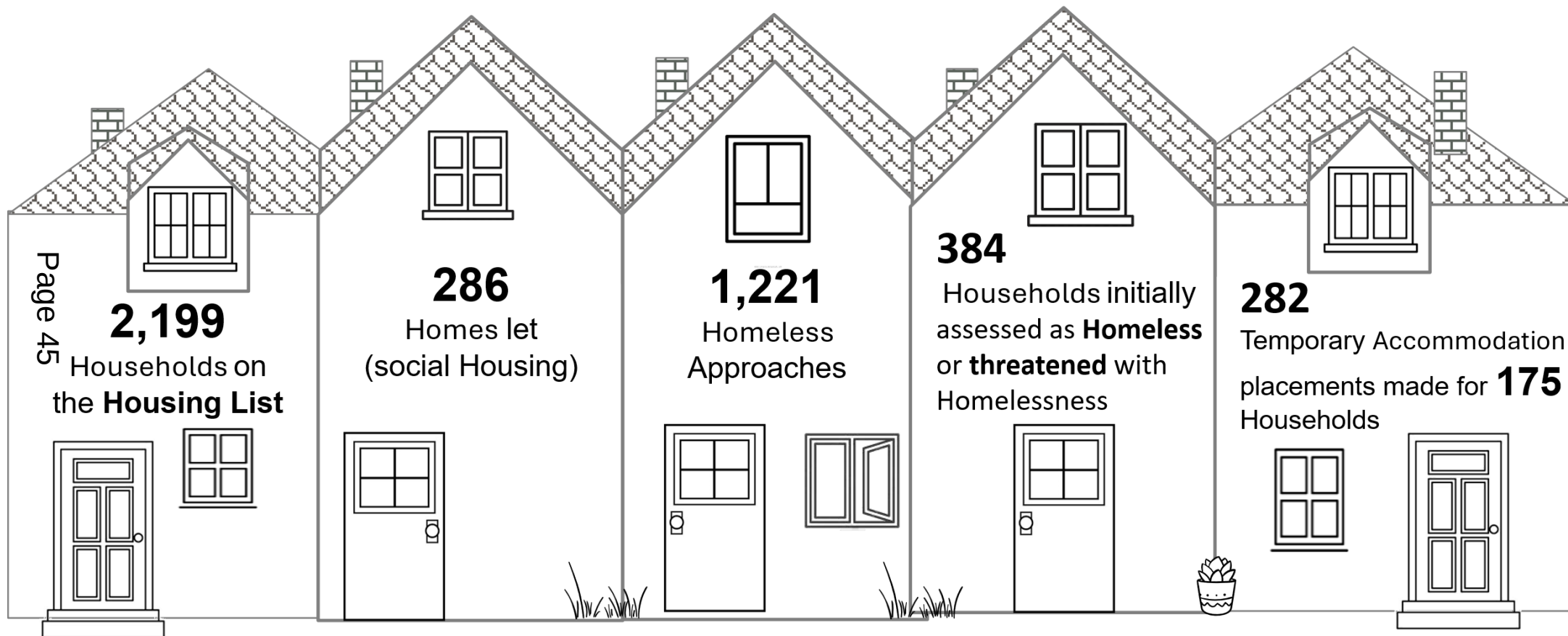
Legislation

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018 changed the way that homelessness services are delivered by local authorities. There have also been further changes to legislation, such as the Domestic Abuse Act, which placed further duties on local authorities to provide temporary accommodation to all who are homeless because of domestic abuse.

Area 1

The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the district

2024/25 Year in Numbers



The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the district

Volume of approaches

Households initially access the Housing Options Team via a Triage system. The Housing Officer will determine whether there is significant information (Reason to believe a household is homeless or is facing homelessness) on first approach or whether the household just requires general advice and assistance.

Total Approaches

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Triage	1,018	724	759	1,004	1,112	1221
Increase/decrease on previous year		-28%	+5%	+32%	+11%	+10%

Source: NNDC Homeless Case Monitoring.

The number of approaches for assistance has fluctuated over the period with reductions from the 2019/20 level in 2020/21 and 2021/22 which are likely to be due to Government measures introduced during the pandemic, numbers returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022/23 and have steadily risen since which is likely to be due to lifting of Government measures and the so called 'cost of living' crisis. There has been a 20% increase between 2019/20 and 2024/25 in households approaching the Council.

To date in 2025/26 there have been 622 (as at end of September) approaches which means that the total approaches continue to rise and for 2025/26 is likely to exceed 1300

Where a household is not at risk of homelessness, appropriate advice will be given, and the case will be closed. Where it is determined that a duty is not owed, but the household could potentially be at risk in the future the case will remain open and early intervention support will be provided to try and resolve the housing issue before reaching crisis.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Advice/Early Intervention	589	437	426	614	712	834
Increase/decrease on previous year		-26%	-3%	+44%	+16%	+17%

Source: NNDC Homeless Case Monitoring.

Early Intervention

Early Intervention

Since 2001 the local authority has started to identify customers from the housing register that could be at risk of presenting to the authority as homeless, this is called Early Intervention. This is being encouraged through existing policies and programmes from government as it has been identified that to work with customers at a much earlier stage could prevent them from triggering a prevention or relief duty. This is a measure that has been difficult to capture as not all outcomes are able to be captured, for example those that withdrew from the process, and this could be that they had received the advice they were looking for and didn't require the support of the local authority. There has been some success, which is good as this is one less applicant presenting to the authority. This type of early identification is difficult and finding preventive solution is more difficult due to the slowly reducing private rented sector and landlords leaving the market.

Early Intervention Outcomes

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Secured alternative accommodation for 6+ months	1	26	20	27
Sustained Existing Accom			2	11
Supported accommodation secured			1	4
At risk of Homeless - Prevention Duty Owed		13	27	14
Homeless - Relief Duty Owed		3	5	5
Contact lost	3	54	37	33
Withdrew application / applicant deceased		21	13	15
Refused to cooperate		3	2	2
No longer eligible		2	1	
Issues resolved using info and advice given		22	28	16
Referrals made to other service/agencies		4	3	
Case still open under Early Intervention				2
Total	4	148	139	129

Area for further consideration: There is no requirement to provide further data to Government on the approaches that do not result in a duty (prevention, relief or main duty). Better understanding of homeless approaches (that do not result in prevention or relief duties) to help identify how best to manage these approaches to ensure that upstream prevention opportunities are maximised.

Statutory Homelessness Assessments

If it is determined that household is homeless or is facing homelessness, a full homelessness assessment will be undertaken to identify whether the applicant is owed either a Prevention or Relief duty or is not at risk of homelessness within 56 days

Prevention duty: Local authorities may deliver their prevention duty through any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. The duty lasts for up to 56 days but may be extended if the local authority is continuing with efforts to prevent homelessness.

Relief duty: The relief duty is owed to households that are already homeless on approaching a local authority and so require help to secure settled accommodation. The duty lasts 56 days and can only be extended by a local authority if the household is not owed the main homelessness duty.

Case Acceptance

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Households assessed	429	287	333	390	400	387
Households assessed as owed a duty	413	279	331	389	396	384
Of which						
Households owed a prevention duty	211 (49%)	91 (32%)	153 (46%)	178 (45%)	166 (42%)	146 (38%)
Households owed a relief duty	202 (47%)	188 (65%)	178 (53%)	211 (54%)	230 58%)	238 (61%)
Not threatened with homelessness within 56 days - no duty owed	16 (4%)	8 (3%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	4 (1%)	3 (1%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns and NNDC case level data.

The number of households assessed as being owed a homeless duty has varied over the strategy period and has reduced from 429 in 2019/20 to 396 in 2023/24. For 20224/25 (384) we have continued to see an overall reduction in the total number of households but have continued to see an increase from 2021 onwards of households being owed the a relief duty indicating that households are leaving it till crisis point (when actually homeless) to contact us.

Duty to refer

From 2018 certain named public bodies have a duty to refer users of their service who they have reason to believe are homeless or threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days, to a local authority of the service user's choice. The aim of the Duty is to ensure that the housing needs of service users are considered when they encounter other public authorities and recognises the role these have in preventing homelessness by making timely referrals. Over the strategy period the Council has received the following because of the Duty to Refer.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Adult Secure Estate (prison)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Youth Secure Estate	0	3	0	0	0	3
National Probation Service	9	1	7	10	4	31
Community Rehabilitation Company	0	2	0	0	0	2
Hospital A&E, Urgent Treatment Centres or in-patient care	5	0	0	1	0	6
Mental Health in-patient care	0	4	1	1	0	6
Jobcentre Plus	1	0	0	1	0	2
Adult Social Services	1	1	2	0	0	4
Children's Social Services	0	0	1	3	1	5
Nil Recourse Team	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	16	11	12	16	5	60

Source: NNDC case level data.

The Council encourages referrals from all agencies through the Early Help Hub managed through the Early Help and Prevention Team which sits alongside Housing Options within the People Services grouping.

Reason for approaches

Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a homelessness duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Family or friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	95 (23%)	73 (26%)	63 (20%)	82 (21%)	102 (26%)	95 (24%)
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold	114 (28%)	41 (15%)	104 (31%)	132 (34%)	109 (28%)	101 (26%)
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold	7 (2%)	10 (4%)	10 (3%)	18 (5%)	22 (5%)	12 (3%)
End of social rented tenancy	33 (8%)	10 (4%)	21 (6%)	14 (4%)	11 (3%)	4 (1%)
Eviction (supported housing)	7 (2%)	14 (5%)	12 (4%)	11 (3%)	7 (2%)	6 (1.5%)
Left institution with no accommodation available	7 (2%)	10 (4%)	7 (2%)	10 (3%)	6 (2%)	10 (3%)
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	59 (14%)	41 (15%)	51 (15%)	40 (10%)	45 (11%)	53 (14%)
Domestic abuse	32 (8%)	30 (11%)	51 (15%)	57 (15%)	62 (16%)	69 (18%)
Other violence or harassment	4 (1%)	7 (3%)	4 (1%)	5 (1%)	8 (2%)	0 (0%)
Home no longer suitable - disability / ill health	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (0.5%)
Other reason	55 (13%)	43 (15%)	8 (2%)	20 (5%)	23 (6%)	31 (9%)
Total	413	279	331	389	396	384

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns and NNDC case level data.

The main reasons for loss of last settled home for households owed a homelessness duty has been constant over the strategy period with loss of privately rented accommodation being the main reason except for 2020/21 when the Government intervened during the pandemic and placed an interim ban on housing evictions, from March 2020 to 31 May 2021. In 2022/23 domestic abuse overtook non-violent relationship breakdown as the third main reason for homelessness for those owed a homelessness duty. The main causes also mirror the picture across both the East of England and England as a whole.

Main reasons for loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Difficulty in budgeting	10 (9%)	2 (5%)	4 (4%)	4 (3%)	2 (2%)
Increase in rent	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0
Reduction in employment income	2 (2%)	2 (5%)	1 (1%)	5 (4%)	4 (4%)
Changes in benefit entitlement	1 (1%)		1 (1%)		2 (2%)
Change in personal circumstances	8 (7%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	8 (6%)	7 (6%)
Breach of tenancy (non-rent)	2 (2%)	1 (2%)		1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property	71 (62%)	31 (76%)	86 (84%)	104 (79%)	88 (80%)
Disrepair complaint	2 (2%)	0	0	0	1 (1%)
Illegal eviction	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	0
Tenant abandoned property	4 (3%)	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0
Other reasons / not known	13 (11%)	3 (7%)	7 (7%)	7 (5%)	5 (4%)
Total	114	41	102	132	109

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns.

The main reason for loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy across the strategy period has been the landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property. This has increased to 80% of cases in 2023/24 from a low of 62% in 2019/20. This demonstrates that there is little scope for prevention activity where this is the main reason for homelessness. The Council has developed a Financial Inclusion service which can support those with difficulty in budgeting and where there is a change in the household's financial situation resulting from an increase in rent, reduction in employment income or change in benefit entitlement.

Timing and outcome of approaches

Outcome at the end of a Prevention Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	114 (62%)	53 (51%)	64 (52%)	67 (36%)	58 (36%)
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	62 (27%)	36 (34%)	42 (34%)	80 (44%)	75 (46%)
Contact lost	12 (5%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (3%)	6 (4%)
56 days elapsed and no further action	6 (3%)	5 (5%)	11 (9%)	18 (10%)	12 (7%)
Withdrew application/applicant deceased	6 (3%)	7 (7%)	4 (3%)	10 (5%)	10 (6%)
No longer eligible	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	4 (2%)	1 (1%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns.

The percentage of households securing accommodation for six months plus at the end of a prevention duty has reduced from a high of 62% in 2019/20 to a low of 36% in 2023/24 whilst the number of households who are homeless has increased from a low of 27% to a high of 46%.

Accommodation outcomes for successful Prevention Duty cases

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Moved to alternative accommodation	95 (67%)	38 (72%)	46 (72%)	37 (55%)	41 (71%)
Stayed in existing accommodation	46 (33%)	15 (28%)	18 (28%)	30 (45%)	17 (29%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns.

The percentage of households moving to alternative accommodation and staying in existing accommodation has remained consistent except for 2022/23 which was an outlier although there was still a higher percentage moving into alternative accommodation than staying in existing accommodation.

Breakdown of Prevention Activity where accommodation was secured as the outcome

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Accommodation secured by the Council	29 (21%)	20 (38%)	17 (27%)	17 (25%)	7 (12)%
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	19(13%)	3 (6%)	3 (5%)	0%	6 (10%)
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	3 (2%)	5 (9%)	12 (22%)	13 (19%)	19 (33%)
Support to prevent eviction/repossession (negotiation/mediation/advocacy)	7 (5%)	12 (22%)	7 (11%)	11 (16%)	2 (3%)
Support to secure return to family or friend (negotiation/mediation)	27 (19%)	2 (4%)	5 (8%)	0%	4 (7%)
Secured Supported Housing	8 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	5 (7%)	3 (5%)
Discretionary Housing Payment to reduce shortfall in rent	32 (23%)	6 (11%)	11 (17%)	13 (19%)	2 (3%)
*Other financial payments (e.g. to reduce arrears)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	(2) 3%	0%
Advice and information provided	6 (4%)	2 (2%)	3 (5%)	(6) 0%	3 (5%)
**Other	7 (5%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	9%	12 (21%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns.

The information above suggests that there have been changes in the prevention offer or that some prevention activities has proved more successful than others. In 2023/24 there was a significant reduction in the prevention duty ending where the accommodation was secured by the Council, this is possibly due to a reduction in available accommodation options. The percentage of cases where the prevention duty ended where the household was helped to secure accommodation found by the applicant with a financial payment in 2023/24 is similar to that in 2019/20 but was significantly lower in the intervening years whereas the percentage of cases ending where help was given but without a financial payment increased from 2% in 2019/20 to its highest of 33% in 2023/24 reflecting the budgets made available for financial support but which indicates that financial assistance might not be needed in a large number of cases.

The percentage of cases where support to prevent eviction or repossession and support to secure the return to family or friend resulting in the end of a prevention duty significantly reduced between 2019/20 and 2023/24 from 19% to 7%. This could reflect either a reduction in this form of prevention activity or less success in this area of prevention activity. The percentage of cases securing supported accommodation and providing advice and information have remained constant. Other reasons for prevention have increased from 5% in 2019/20 to 21% in 2023/24 and reflect other activities which have been introduced since the original monitoring framework was first introduced and include debt advice, resolved benefit problems, sanctuary or other security measures to home, housing related support to sustain accommodation or not known.

Outcome at the end of a Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	92 (37%)	82 (33%)	57 (29%)	46 (16%)	43 (14%)
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	122 (49%)	129 (52%)	111 (56%)	192 (67%)	205 (66%)
Contact lost	12 (5%)	8 (3%)	12 (6%)	21 (7%)	19 (6%)
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	16 (6%)	20 (8%)	17 (9%)	20 (7%)	37 (12%)
No longer eligible	<1%	4 (2%)	3 (2%)	1 (<1%)	1 <1%
Refused final accommodation offer	0%	0%	0%	1 (<1%)	2 <1%
Intentionally homeless from accommodation	<1%	2 (1%)	0%	1 (<1%)	0%
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	0%	3 (1%)	0%

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns.

The percentage of cases where securing accommodation for six months plus resulting in the end of a relief duty reduced significantly from 37% in 2019/20 to 14% in 2023/24 with the percentage steadily reducing in the intervening years. The percentage of cases where the household was homeless at the end of the relief duty has steadily increased from a low of 49% in 2019/20 to 67% in 2022/23 and then a slight reduction to 66% in 2023/24 which is indicative in a reduction in housing options particularly in the affordable housing sector. All other outcomes have remained consistent other than the percentage withdrawing their application which has risen from 6% in 2019/20 to 12% in 2023/24.

Breakdown of relief activity where accommodation was secured as the outcome

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Accommodation secured by the Council	24 (26%)	30 (37%)	19 (33%)	14 (30%)	8 (19%)
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	17 (18%)	10 (12%)	4 (7%)	6 (13%)	4 (12%)
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	12 (13%)	7 (9%)	11 (19%)	12 (26%)	10 (23%)
Secured Supported Housing	20 (22%)	10 (12%)	7 (12%)	9 (20%)	12 (28%)
Advice and information provided	1 (1%)	0%	1 (2%)	0%	0%
Other	18 (20%)	25 (31%)	15 (26%)	5 (11%)	8 (19%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

The percentage of cases where the relief duty was ended through the securing of accommodation by the Council has reduced from 26% in 2019/20 to 19% in 2023/24 despite the percentages in the intervening years being higher than the 2019/20 level. The percentage of cases helped to secure accommodation found by the applicant with a financial payment has reduced from 18% in 2019/20 to 12% in 2023/24 whilst

the percentage helped to secure accommodation without a financial payment has increased from 13% to 23%. The percentage securing supported housing has increased from 22% in 2019/20 to 28% in 2023/24 although in 2020/21 and 2021/22 the percentage was only 12% which is possibly due to lower turnover in supported housing during the pandemic period.

Other reasons for relief activity where accommodation was secured as the outcome of a Relief Duty case was 11% at its lowest in 2022/23 but was 31% at its highest in 2020/21

Accommodation outcomes where accommodation was secured as the outcome of a Relief Duty case

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Social housing	50 (54%)	53 (65%)	(31) 54%	27 (59%)	27 (63%)
Private renting	35 (38%)	23 (28%)	(16) 28%	17 (37%)	16 (37%)
Other	7 (8%)	6 (7%)	(10) 18%	2 (4%)	0%

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

The percentage of relief cases ending where accommodation was secured in the social housing sector has increased from 54% in 2019/20 to 63% in 2023/24 whilst accommodation secure in the private rented sector has remained constant with reductions to 28% in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Other forms of accommodation outcomes, include tied accommodation and reconnection with family.

Main Duty decisions

Where homelessness cannot be prevented or relieved, we will go on to make a main duty decision. This will include determining if the applicant has a priority need for accommodation, such as dependent children, pregnancy or an issue that makes them vulnerable within the meaning of the Act, such as mental or physical health issues, fleeing abuse or leaving care. We also need to determine whether they have become homeless intentionally where they have either done something or not done something that had resulted in their homelessness.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Homeless in priority need and unintentionally homeless	73 (60%)	78 (61%)	79 (72%)	145 (75%)	145 (70%)
Homeless in priority need and intentionally homeless	11 (9%)	6 (4%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)
Homeless and no priority need	36 (30%)	41 (32%)	29 (26%)	43 (22%)	56 (27%)
Not homeless	1 (<1%)	5 (4%)	0%	2 (1%)	2 (1%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

The proportion of decisions in each main duty decision category has broadly remained consistent with spikes of intentional homelessness decisions in 2019/20 and not homeless decisions in 2020/21. The proportion of those accepted as having a main duty to accommodate has ranged from a low of 60% in 2019/20 to a high of 75% in 2022/23 and non-priority need decisions have ranged from a low of 22% in 2022/23 to a high of 30% in 2019/20.

Those who are assessed as not being in priority need, or intentionally homeless will not be owed an ongoing duty by the Council.

Priority need of households owed a main duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Household includes dependent children	36 (49%)	38 (49%)	21 (27%)	51 (35%)	53 (37%)
Household includes a pregnant woman	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	1 (<1%)	4 (3%)
Vulnerable with children	9 (11%)	4 (5%)	15 (19%)	12 (8%)	12 (8%)
Young applicant	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	2 (3%)	2 (1%)	0%
Old age	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)
Mental health problems	15 (21%)	13 (17%)	10 (13%)	27 (19%)	25 (17%)
Physical disability / ill health	7 (10%)	6 (8%)	9 (11%)	26 (18%)	25 (17%)
Domestic abuse	3 (4%)	6 (8%)	11 (14%)	14 (10%)	17 (12%)
Homeless because of emergency	0%	0%	0%	5 (3%)	3 (2%)
Other	1 (1%)	4 (5%)	4 (6%)	4 (3%)	3 (2%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

The percentage of households with a priority need due to children in the household has reduced from a high of 62% in 2019/20 to a low of 44% in 2022/23 and 48% in 2023/24. For households without children the main reason for priority need is mental health problems, physical disability/ill health and domestic abuse. The percentage of households in priority need as a result of mental health problems and physical disability/ill health were the same in 2023/24 at 17%, with the percentage of households in priority need as a result of mental health problems reducing from a high of 21% in 2019/20 and the percentage of households in priority need as a result of physical disability/ill health increasing from a low of 8% in 2020/21. The percentage of households in priority need because of domestic abuse has increased from a low of 4% in

2019/20 to 12% in 2023/24 with a high of 14% in 2021/22. The percentage of households in priority need due to age alone either young or old remains low as does the number of households including a pregnant woman and those homeless in an emergency.

Outcomes for households where a main duty is ended

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing accepted	43 (80%)	76 (87%)	44 (80%)	101 (78%)	127 (84%)
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing refused	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	1 (<1%)	3 (2%)
Private rented sector offer - accepted	2 (4%)	2 (2%)	1 (2%)	4 (3%)	5 (3%)
Voluntarily left TA	0%	0%	5 (9%)	6 (5%)	2 (1%)
Refused suitable TA, withdrew or lost contact	7 (13%)	5 (6%)	1 (2%)	11 (9%)	7 (5%)
Became intentionally homeless from TA	1 (2%)	3 (3%)	3 (5%)	7 (5%)	6 (4%)
Ceased to be eligible	0%	0%	0%	0%	1 (<1%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

In most cases the main duty to homeless households is ended through the acceptance of an offer of social housing. Over the strategy period the percentage of households where the acceptance of social housing has ended a main duty has fluctuated from its lowest of 78% in 2022/23 to its highest of 87% in 2020/21. The percentage of cases where the main duty was ended through acceptance of accommodation in the private rented sector was only 4% at its highest in 2019/20. The percentages refusing an offer of social housing which resulted in the main duty being discharged and those ceasing to be eligible are low. Although low the percentage becoming intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation has risen from 2% in 2019/20 to 5% in 2022/23 and reducing slightly to 4% in 2023/24. The percentages of households voluntarily leaving temporary accommodation has fluctuated from 0% in 2019/20 to 9% in 2022/23 reducing to 1% in 2023/24 whilst the percentage refusing suitable temporary accommodation, withdrawing their application or for whom the Council has lost contact has reduced from a high in 2019/20 of 13% to 5% in 2023/24 with fluctuations in between.

Demographics of approaches

The composition of households owed a Prevention Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Single – Male	51 (24%)	25 (27%)	45 (29%)	45 (25%)	36 (22%)
Single – Female	43 (20%)	21 (23%)	24 (16%)	40 (22%)	33 (20%)
Single – Other	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0
Couple/Other	35 (17%)	11 (12%)	21 (14%)	21 (12%)	24 (14%)
Households with Dependent Children	82 (39%)	33 (36%)	63 (41%)	72 (40%)	72 (43%)
Total	211	91	153	178	166

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

Most households owed a prevention duty are single people and the percentages have remained constant over the strategy period at around 45%. Most single households owed a prevention duty are male although the percentages have fluctuated between 22% in 2023/24 and 29% in 2021/22 whilst the percentage of females has fluctuated from 16% in 2021/22 and 22% in 2022/23. The percentage of couple and other households has fluctuated from 17% in 2019/20 to 12% in 2020/21 and 2022/23. The percentage of households with dependent children has increased from 39% in 2019/20 to 43% in 2023/24.

The composition of households owed a Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Single – Male	114 (56%)	100 (53%)	75 (42%)	107 (51%)	111 (48%)
Single – Female	27 (13%)	44 (23%)	52 (29%)	42 (20%)	50 (22%)
Single – Other	2 (1%)	0	2 (1%)	1	0
Couple/Other	6 (3%)	9 (5%)	9 (5%)	12 (6%)	14 (6%)
Households with Dependent Children	53 (26%)	35 (19%)	40 (22%)	49 (23%)	55 (24%)
Total	202	188	178	211	230

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

Whilst most households owed a relief duty are still single people and the numbers are generally constant over the strategy period the percentage is significantly higher and there was an increase from an average of 71 to 76% in 2020/21. The percentage of male households has fluctuated from a low in 2021/22 of 42% to a high of 56% in 2019/20 whilst the percentage of female households has fluctuated from a low of 13% in 2019/20 to a high of 29% in 2021/22. The percentage of couple and other households has increased from 3% in 2019/20 to 6% in 2023/24. The percentage of households with dependent children has fluctuated from a low of 19% in 2020/21 to a high of 26% in 2019/20.

The age of the main applicant owed a Prevention or a Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
16 – 17 years	0	1	0	0	0
18 – 24 years	84 (20%)	61 (22%)	56 (17%)	65 (17 %)	57 (14%)
25 – 34 years	116 (28%)	73 (26%)	91 (27%)	99 (25%)	126 (31%)
35 – 44 years	67 (16%)	39 (14%)	52 (16%)	78 (20%)	79 (20%)
45 - 54 years	75 (18%)	46 (16%)	54 (16%)	58 (15%)	54 (14%)
55 – 64 years	38 (10%)	32 (11%)	38 (11%)	38 (10%)	47 (12%)
65 – 74 years	26 (6%)	24 (9%)	27 (8%)	33 (8%)	20 (5%)
75+ years	7 (2%)	3 (1%)	13 (4%)	18 (5%)	13 (3%)
Total	413	279	331	389	396

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

There is not significant variation in the age of the main applicant owed a prevention or a relief duty over the strategy period. There has only been one household owed a prevention or a relief duty aged 16-17 years which suggests that Children's Services is meeting its statutory responsibilities to children. The percentage of cases where the main applicant is 18-24 has reduced from a high of 22% in 2020/21 to 14% in 2023/24. The highest percentage is where the main applicant is 25-34 years at 31% in 2023/24 which is to be expected as this is the main age group where young people are becoming independent and forming households and where income levels and savings levels are lower meaning that exposure to the risk of homelessness is greater. The percentage of households where the main applicant is 35-44 years has increased to 20% in 2023/24 whilst where the main applicant is 45-54 years has reduced to 14%. The percentage of households where the main applicant is 55-64 years has increased to 12% in 2023/24 whilst those aged 65-74 years has reduced to 5% and those 75 plus has reduced to 3%.

Nationality of main applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
UK	408 (99%)	271 (97%)	322 (97%)	368 (95%)	374 (94%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

The percentage of main applicant owed a prevention or relief duty who are UK nationals is decreasing slowly from a very high level.

Ethnicity of main applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
White	406 (98%)	271 (97%)	325 (98%)	373 (96%)	385 (97%)

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	4	0	0	3	1
Asian/Asian British	1	0	0	3	1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	0	4	3	5	4
Other ethnic groups	1	0	0	2	1
Not known	1	4	3	3	4

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

The percentage of main applicant owed a prevention or relief duty who are White is decreasing slowly from a very high level.

Sexual identification of main applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Heterosexual	n/a	249 (89%)	309 (93%)	357 (92%)	375 (95%)
Homosexual (lesbian/gay)	n/a	3 (1%)	7 (2%)	6 (2%)	11 (3%)
Bisexual	n/a	0	0	0	0
Other	n/a	11 (4%)	5 (2%)	8 (2%)	2 (<1%)
Prefer not to say	n/a	16 (6%)	9 (3%)	18	16
Not known	n/a	0	1	0	2

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

Employment status of main applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Registered unemployed	42 (10%)	61 (22%)	51 (15%)	85 (22%)	99 (25%)

Not working due to long term illness or disability	102 (25%)	81 (29%)	73 (22%)	55 (14%)	74 (19%)
Full time work	60 (15%)	27 (10%)	42 (13%)	59 (15%)	60 (15%)
Part time work	59 (14%)	25 (9%)	54 (16%)	35 (9%)	37 (9%)
Not seeking work/at home	75 (18%)	34 (12%)	37 (11%)	42 (11%)	33 (8%)
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	33 (8%)	16 (6%)	13 (4%)	8 (2%)	15 (4%)
Retired	20 (5%)	22 (8%)	31 (9%)	39 (10%)	22 (6%)
Student/training	2 (<1%)	0	0	2 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
Registered employed off work	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26 (7%)
Working irregular hours	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	22 (6%)
Other	13 (3%)	6 (2%)	27 (8%)	56 (14%)	5 (1%)
Not known	7 (2%)	7 (3%)	3 (1%)	8 (2%)	1 (<1%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns

In 2023/24 grouping together all of the in-work categories 145 (37%) of main applicants were in work (possibly higher if some of the other and not known were working).

In the earlier years of the strategy period most of the main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty were not working due to long term illness or disability with 25% in 2019/20, 29% in 2020/21 and 22% in 2021/22. Registered unemployed became the employment status of most main applicants in 2022/23 at 22% and 2023/24 at 25%. Up to 15% of main applicants have been in full time work in 2019/20 and 2022/23 and 2023/24 whilst up to 16% have been in part-time work in 2021/22. In 2019/20 18% of main applicants were not seeking work or at home.

Support needs

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Households with any support need	45%	50%	44%	47%	42%	42%
History of mental health problems	124 (30%)	92 (33%)	85 (26%)	96 (25%)	94 (24%)	65 (18%)
Physical ill health or disability	65 (16%)	49 (18%)	56 (17%)	65 (17%)	60 (15%)	51 (14%)
Learning disability	30 (7%)	16 (6%)	21 (6%)	21 (5%)	18 (5%)	16 (4%)
Old age	4	5	8	17	7	7 (2%)
Young person aged 16-17	3	1	0	2	0	5 (1%)
Young person aged 18-25 requiring support	13	17	11	20	7	0
Young parent requiring support	4	4	3	4	2	2 (1%)
Care leaver aged 18-20	4	6	2	5	1	1 (1%)
Care leaver aged 21 - 24	2	2	1	1	0	1 (1%)
At risk of/has experienced domestic abuse	29 (7%)	23 (8%)	43 (13%)	45 (12%)	47 (12%)	50 (14%)
At risk of/experienced non-domestic abuse	10	15	16	18	20	0
At risk/experienced sexual abuse/exploitation	1	9	10	10	14	7 (2%)
Victim of modern slavery	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1 (1%)
Former asylum seeker	0	0	0	0	1	0
Served in HM Forces	3	1	1	3	2	2 (1%)
Alcohol dependency	20 (5%)	13 (5%)	14 (4%)	14 (4%)	20 (5%)	14 (4%)
Drug dependency	13 (3%)	15 (5%)	11 (4%)	17 (4 %)	14 (4%)	10 (3%)
Offending history	35 (8%)	35 (13%)	23 (7 %)	30 (8%)	21 (5%)	20 (5%)
History of repeat homelessness	35 (8%)	26 (9%)	29 (9%)	34 (9%)	25 (6%)	12 (3%)
History of rough sleeping	25 (6%)	24 (9%)	14 (4%)	26 (7%)	21 (5%)	6 (2%)
Access to education, employment or training	5	6	7	2	5	4 (1%)
Difficulties budgeting	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	17	19 (5%)

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) HLIC Statutory Returns and NNDC case level data.

Note: not all support needs are included in the table and households may have more than one support need meaning totals will not sum to 100%

The percentage of households with at least one support need has fluctuated from 42% in 2023/24 to 50% in 2020/21. The support need featuring the most throughout the strategy period is mental health problems although the percentage of applicants with mental health needs had reduced significantly from 33% in 2020/21 to 18% in 2024/25. Physical ill health or disability is the second highest support need which has reduced from a high of 18% in 2020/21 to 14% in 2024/25. Alcohol dependency and drug dependency have been constant at between 4 and

5% and 3 and 5% respectively. Offending history has reduced from a high of 13% in 2020/21 to 5% whilst history of rough sleeping has reduced from a high of 9% in 2020 to 2%. Risk of domestic abuse has increased from 7% in 2019/20 to 14%.

In 2024/25 there were a total of 397 support needs across 165 households, 62 households had one support need, 46 households had two support needs, and 57 households had three or more support needs.

Area for further consideration: Consider developing expertise/specialisms in service delivery to reflect the three main reasons for homelessness (accessing the private rented sector, family mediation and relationship breakdown/domestic abuse) in order to maximise prevention opportunities.

Area for further consideration: Consider developing services for the three main demographic groups who are owed homelessness duties – families with children, single people with complex health needs (physical and mental) and single people with no support needs (relief).

Rough sleeping

The Government has developed an annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot and Data-Led Framework to provide insights into rough sleeping trends and guide policy and resource allocation. The Rough Sleeping Snapshot is a point-in-time estimate taken each autumn, using street counts or evidence-based estimates to provide a standardized view of rough sleeping for a specific night, allowing for national comparisons.

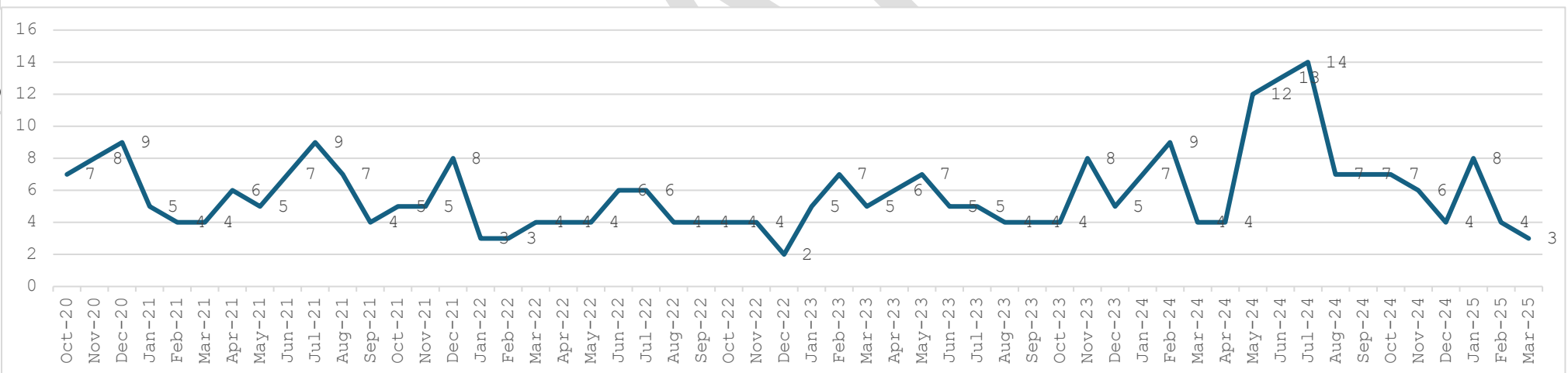
Rough Sleeping Annual Snapshot

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
7	3	3	1	4

The Rough Sleeping Annual Snapshot in North Norfolk recorded a high of seven rough sleepers in 2020 and a low of one in 2023.

Data-Led Framework: Rough Sleepers throughout the Month

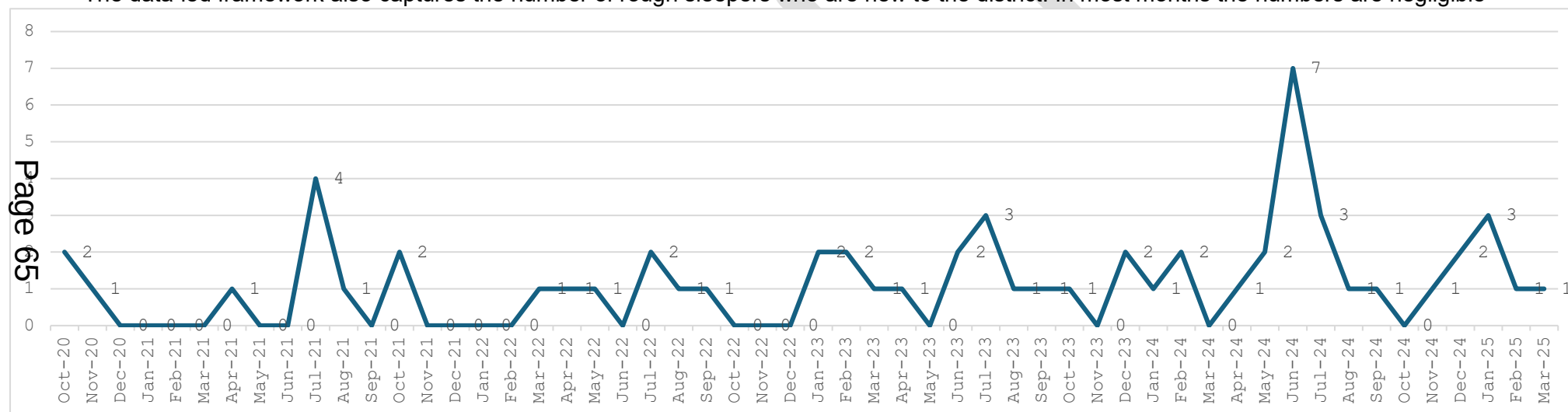
The data-led framework captures the number of people sleeping rough over the course each month.



The number of rough sleepers captured under the data-led framework shows clear peaks mainly in the summer months which could be linked to inward migration of rough sleepers with much of the district being a tourist destination or temperatures making rough sleeping more 'attractive' than months where the weather is more inclement. There are also some peaks in the winter months which could coincide with severe winter and the instigation of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). The average number of rough sleepers ranged from 4.5 per month in 2022/23 and 7.3 per month in 2024/25.

People Sleeping Rough in the District for the first time.

The data-led framework also captures the number of rough sleepers who are new to the district. In most months the numbers are negligible



increasing from an average of 0.5 per month in 2020/21 to 1.9 per month in 2024/25. There are noticeable spikes of four in July 2021 and seven in July 2024.

We are aware of two rough sleepers who are deemed to be 'entrenched' and who have refused offers of support and assistance including offers of accommodation to break the cycle of rough sleeping. The Council's Pathways, Prevention and Sustainment Officers funded from the government 'Rough Sleeper Initiative' grant funding make regular enquiries to check on the welfare of these individuals.

Area for further consideration Consider how rough sleeping resources can be used to develop services covering prevention, relief and recovery for single people with complex health needs (physical and mental) and single people with no support needs (relief) – to help prevent

rough sleeping. This will be dependent on future government grant funding resources for homelessness and rough sleeping and whether ring fencing is applied to how these funds can be used.

Challenges and Opportunities

Political	Challenges	Opportunities
	Local pressure to maintain investment in homelessness services if grant funding is no longer ringfenced.	Following a change in government – potential for incorporation of funding into Local Government settlements or three to five-year funding programmes giving greater certainty and continuity for service delivery/commissioning and considering giving staff on fixed term contracts more security aiding retention.
	Competing priorities for local investment in housing – e.g. temporary accommodation and social housing that will support the discharge of main duty to those who are homeless against social housing for older people, exceptions housing for local people and low- cost home-ownership options	Following a change in Government a new national strategy for homelessness and rough sleeping
	Local Housing allowance Rates raised in April 2024 but again subject to a freeze eroding any positive impact over time	Government investment in social housing supported by increases in housing delivery targets and locally supported by the emerging Local Plan which will guide development decisions to 2036. New Government Social and Affordable Housing Programme - £39bn over 10 years with higher grant rates and focus on social rented homes.
	Welfare Reform will have a negative impact on vulnerable households who are at a greater risk of homelessness	Increased Council Tax for owners of second homes in addition to empty homes. The aim of the policy is to bring homes back into permanent residential use. If enough homes are brought back into use it has the potential to reduce house prices previously inflated due to lower demand. Otherwise, some of the increased income can be used to mitigate the impact of second homes in the housing market through investment in temporary accommodation and social housing.

	Local Government Reorganisation – resulting in the creation of one, two or three unitary councils in Norfolk bringing uncertainty both in the pre and post creation phases with the potential to destabilise services supporting homelessness and homelessness prevention and those accepted as homeless being expected to look to a wider geographical area for both temporary and permanent housing and the breakdown of social support networks.	Devolution – the creation of a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined Authority with responsibility for economic prosperity
	Future of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and removal of support for those coming to North Norfolk under the scheme particularly those remaining in hosted arrangements. This could result in an increase in the number of homelessness presentations along with additional competition for accommodation in the private rented sector.	Local Government Reorganisation – resulting in the creation of one, two or three unitary councils in Norfolk potentially opening more opportunities for those who are homeless/threatened with homelessness including a potential for any efficiencies to be re-invested in services for our most vulnerable residents. In all three of the proposed models North Norfolk District Council would be subsumed into a larger unitary council with access to local authority Housing Revenue Account stock holding (traditional council housing) or Local Authority owned Housing Companies which potentially increases access to opportunities and providers to develop new affordable housing in the current North Norfolk District Council area. In addition, partnership working particularly with VCSE organisations within other district areas could be extended providing additional opportunities for the residents of North Norfolk.
	National asylum seeker dispersal and refugee resettlement policies and programmes may increase competition for accommodation in the sectors which are used for discharge of duty for homeless households and preventing and relieving homelessness.	Government investment in wider prevention supporting our more vulnerable residents
		Destigmatising homelessness through education and empowerment of customers to challenge policy decisions.
E	Challenges	Opportunities

Pressure on Government funding	Lower mortgage rates potentially making housing more affordable
Cost of living and accumulated debt resulting in more households being vulnerable to the threat of homelessness and not being able to find their own solution. In addition, existing social housing tenants are less likely to be socially and economically mobile resulting in lower turnover of social housing stock and fewer opportunities for threatened with homelessness/becoming homeless.	Freebridge Housing a locally based housing association has acquired the social housing stock formerly owned by Clarion Housing. Although the stock numbers are low Clarion Housing did not have development aspirations in the North Norfolk District Council area whilst Freebridge does.
Recession – typically results in those who are more vulnerable to homelessness becoming homeless	
Social housing providers disposing of stock in poorer condition resulting in a net reduction of stock as there is a delay in reinvesting in new development.	
Social housing providers lacking capital funds to invest in the development of new social housing and ability to purchase properties for social housing delivered through section 106 agreements. Inability to attract social housing providers with capital to the area due to the costs of building and this not being fully reflected in grant rates/ relative attractiveness of developing elsewhere.	
Development of a Council owned housing company not being viable potentially leaving the Council with an inability to deliver affordable housing in the absence of willing partners.	
Destabilising of the supported housing schemes in the district due to the withdrawal of some revenue funding from Norfolk County Council and costs not being eligible for Housing Benefit (September 2025) and further potential for additional or the remaining funding to be removed in future exercises to balance budgets or review of priorities.	

	Competing demands for accommodation increases the opportunities for private landlords and potentially puts at-risk long-term renting arrangements making more households vulnerable to homelessness.	
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Social	Challenges	Opportunities
	Staff recruitment and retention	Co-production of services with those with lived experience
	Increasing proportions of adults with mental health needs – increasing demand on services	Practice of trauma informed care and the importance of recovery
	Increasing reliance on state and charitable support including food banks	

Technical	Challenges	Opportunities
	Slow to embrace technological advances to enhance service provision	Improved data collection, analysis and sharing and ability to risk stratify to target service provision
	Over reliance on technology and remote provision in service delivery	

Legal

Challenges

Renters Rights Bill – whilst the Bill aims to give greater rights to renters it may contribute towards landlords exiting the market or targeting different customers

Continued impact Right to Buy.

The Supported Housing Act – aims through regulation and licencing to improve the sector and tackle expensive and poor-quality provision. It is possible that some supported housing providers might exit the sector in the face of increased regulation or might be declined a licence which will mean that their residents will not get their housing costs covered through Housing Benefit resulting in scheme closure and residents being made homeless as a result.

Opportunities

Renters Rights Bill – the bill offers an opportunity to work collaboratively and proactively with PRS landlords for the mutual benefit of landlords and tenants although this may not support work focused on homelessness prevention, relief and management.

The Supported Housing Act – aims through regulation and licencing to improve the sector and tackle expensive and poor-quality provision. This provides an opportunity to improve standards for those in supported housing. Short term supported housing can assist in the prevention and relief of homelessness for those to whom a main duty is not owed. It is hoped that this might in return result in a review of the funding and commissioning arrangements for the sector to address some of the shortcomings.

Environmental	Challenges	Opportunities
	Climate Change – the local risk of flooding and other extreme weather events increases the risk of homelessness directly (homelessness in an emergency) and indirectly through increasing development costs and reducing suitable sites – this is particularly an issue in north Norfolk due to coastal erosion and tidal surges in addition to inland flooding. It is predicted that over 1,000 homes will be lost to erosion in North Norfolk over the next 100 years.	Coastwise - part of the Environment Agency's Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme is an innovative programme working with communities to explore practical actions for replacing property at immediate risk of coastal erosion. The Coastwise Team will work with Housing and Planning to explore how planning policies can be used to replace dwellings at risk as part of larger developments including affordable housing.
	Planning restrictions – much of the district is covered by National Landscapes designation limits development but which also makes the area more desirable driving up demand for housing.	
	Nutrient Neutrality has significantly impacted on development and affordable housing as a result which can be seen in the affordable housing figures. New development is an essential part of the equation in managing homelessness to mitigate sales and disposals in the affordable housing stock and supplement lettings from turnover in the affordable housing stock. Mitigation for nutrient neutrality has meant that some development can go ahead but it still delays the development process and adds significant cost which affects viability and often results in fewer units of affordable housing being delivered especially on s106 market developments.	
	Biodiversity net gain and other environmental requirements add cost to the provision of affordable housing and as a result numbers delivered tend to be reduced.	

Likely future levels of Homelessness

Whilst we collect a vast amount of data on homelessness, much of this relates solely to people who are known to services because they have made an application to us for assistance. As a result, much of the information on the numbers of households that are homeless, is likely to be an underestimation of the true scale of the issue as it does not capture the 'hidden homeless' and is indicative of the amount of help available to people rather than a measure of demand for future services.

Homelessness in Great Britain is forecast to continue to increase over the coming decade. Research has identified some immediate pressures, such as the cost-of-living crisis and general housing shortages, which are likely to lead to further increases in homelessness and destitution across the country. Those risks, although projected at a national level, will also have an impact locally, as vulnerable people within North Norfolk continue to face the barriers presented by having low household incomes and the difficulties of accessing affordable and secure accommodation in the district

Given the evidence presented throughout this review and considering the identified challenges and opportunities it is expected that the number of households approaching the Council will continue to increase and is predicted to exceed 1130 in 2025/26. Due to the limited opportunity to prevent homelessness across the three main reasons for homelessness it is expected that the number of households being assessed as having a main housing duty will continue to exceed the opportunity to discharge these main duties and this will result in more households requiring temporary accommodation and requiring this accommodation for longer. The costs to the Council of providing temporary accommodation will continue to rise as competition for temporary accommodation increases and as competition for properties at the lower end of the market increases.

The Council has a very ambitious development pipeline, but this is skewed towards medium- and longer-term delivery and is only likely to keep pace with increases in homelessness and provide opportunities to house those in the greatest levels of need which in turn 'incentivises' households to apply as homeless. The opportunity for social mobility is limited due to competition and affordability at the lower end of the housing market, resulting in low turnover in the affordable housing stock and the affordable housing stock is being depleted due to voluntary landlord disposals with little opportunity to use receipts to replenish this stock.

Area Two

The activities which are carried out towards the prevention and relief of homelessness

The activities which are carried out towards the prevention and relief of homelessness

We have tried to capture details of all the services we are aware of operating in some capacity in the wider 'homelessness' system. Some services operate across all stages (prevention, relief and recovery) and to avoid duplication we have included the services where they are considered to best fit.

Prevention

Service	Detail
North Norfolk District Council Housing Options Service Home Housing Options Service	The Council helps prevent homelessness as part of its statutory housing options service. Applicants are supported to complete a personal Housing Plan, setting out what they can do and what we will do to help them from becoming homeless. Where households don't yet meet the 56 day trigger, applicants will be supported by our early intervention officers who provided tailored advice and information. For Domestic Abuse Survivors, we operate a sanctuary scheme (target hardening) which allows security measures to the home if the survivor wishes to remain in the property and it is safe.
North Norfolk District Council Community Outreach Home Community Outreach	Officers in the Council's Community Outreach Team support residents who are threatened with homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness including taking referrals from the Housing Options Team. This arrangement has been in place since 1 April 2025 and is funded from the Council's Homelessness Prevention Grant. These officers are funded to 31 May 2026.
North Norfolk Help Hub Home Help Hub	The Help Hub is aimed at professionals looking to address their customers' needs "before their difficulties become unmanageable". "The Help Hub is for low level emerging needs that can be met through early intervention" such as advice, guidance and practical support. The Help Hub has been in place over the previous Homelessness Strategy period but was refocused in 2024 and a Community Hub established to provide peer support to community-based groups.
North Norfolk Early Help and Prevention Financial Inclusion and Social Prescribing Home Financial inclusion	The Early Help and Prevention Team delivers Financial Inclusion and Social Prescribing including a Link Worker Service on behalf of one of the local Primary Care Networks. These were previously delivered separately (Financial Inclusion was part of the Benefits Service) but were brought together in April 2025. The Social Prescribing service has been operating since pre-2019, and the Financial Inclusion Service was set up in 2022/23. The resource for both services has fluctuated over this time but has generally increased and the service has developed including now having a greater focus on homelessness prevention. In 2022/23 the Financial Inclusion Service was funded with Homelessness Prevention Grant but has since been funded from mainstream funding.
Homes for Ukraine Community Support	The Council has provided a homelessness prevention and sustainment service to households fleeing the Ukraine war, matching applicants with host families. The Council receives funding from Norfolk County Council to offset costs in delivering the Homes for Ukraine programme.

Service	Detail
	The Homes for Ukraine funding is also used to offset some additional costs to reflect the support provided by the Housing Options Team in the delivery of the programme.
North Norfolk District Council Benefits (Discretionary Housing Payments) Home Discretionary Housing Payments	The Benefits Team and Housing Options Team jointly assess claims for Discretionary Housing Payments. Where the criteria are not met consideration is given for other forms of financial assistance including Discretionary Hardship Grant funding and Household Support Fund. The DWP allocation for Discretionary Housing Payment reduces year on year and the budget is utilised in full. The allocation for 2025/26 is £103,037.
Norfolk Citizens Advice Debt Counselling Service operating from North Norfolk District Council offices	The Council commissioned the Norfolk CA to deliver a debt counselling service for two days per week from October 2023 for two years. The service was funded initially using income received by the Benefits Team and the Council's Information, Advice and Guidance (Commissioning) Budget and is now fully funded from this budget. The Information Advice and Guidance (Commissioning) Budget was significantly reduced in 2023/24 as part of the Council wide reductions required to deliver a balanced budget and as a result the grant previously given to the Norfolk CA to deliver its generic advice offer was withdrawn.

North Norfolk District Council Community Outreach

The Council has employed a Team of Community Connectors since 2022 initially delivering generic community development and engagement activity to support in the rebuild of community resilience following the pandemic. In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the Team has delivered health and wellbeing work programmes including supporting residents in the prevention of frailty and high intensity users of services. In 2025/26 the role of the Team changed and four of the now Community Outreach Officers has been directed to community-based homelessness outreach and prevention.

The initial weeks (April and May 2025) were spent in training and familiarisation with the new service delivery remit and connecting with community groups and stakeholders to raise awareness of the change in role. In June the officers started to take on referrals from the Housing Options Team, community groups and self- referrals. Work has commenced on developing systems to capture the work of the four officers and initial analysis shows that the Team received 41 referrals in July and 49 in August. The cases being taken on by the Team are varied and multifaceted and earlier indications are that this additional capacity could make a significant contribution to homelessness prevention, relief and recovery. The Community Outreach Officers have the time, the skills and the community contacts to be able to engage with households in a way that the Housing Options Officers could not.

Area for further consideration: Evaluate the effectiveness of community outreach in the prevention, relief and recovery of homelessness. Prevention outcomes can be difficult to evaluate and so consideration needs to be given to the feedback from service users and stakeholders and case studies.

North Norfolk Help Hub

The Help Hub is seen as key to the further integration of services for our more vulnerable residents. The Financial Inclusion Service and Social Prescribing Service have come together to reduce duplication and improve service delivery through common processes for triage and prioritisation. Many of the issues of those approaching the Housing Options Team can be resolved through the Help Hub without the need for the involvement of the Housing Options Team which would free up capacity in the Housing Options Team to focus on relief of homelessness and assessment of statutory duties which currently have less focus due to the level of customer demand.

The Help Hub is better placed to consider how the needs of our more vulnerable residents can be supported through a range of universal, specialist and targeted support.

Area for further consideration: Consider how to most effectively deal with housing related approaches and maximise opportunities for prevention whilst ensuring the Housing Options Team can focus on relief and management of homelessness. This would allow for triage of cases and referral to appropriate services including Financial Inclusion, Social Prescribing or Community Outreach.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

Discretionary Housing Payments provide financial support to help with rent or housing costs and are available to those on Housing Benefit or in receipt of the housing element of Universal Credit. They can be used for a rent shortfall, rent deposits and rent in advance. The DWP allocates each Council an amount of money to administer, and this amount reduces each year. The payments provide a cushion for the impact of changes in the wider welfare system.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
DHP spend	£143,990.85	£149,684.89	£135,559.48	£108,842.00	£102,600.00	£103,801.66
Number of awards	248	227	197	185	169	169

As at July 2025, 100 applications had been received for DHP and of these 60 were for tenants in the PRS. 38 of the applications were approved of which 29 were for tenants in the PRS including four lump sum payments. Of these 25 awards were made to working age claimants and four to pension age claimants, 16 were single person households, 11 family households and two were couple households. Ten of the payments were awarded based on the impact of LHA reforms, 16 for other (non-welfare reforms) and two a combination of reforms and one for room restrictions.

The DHP claims refused were due to the following; eleven there was no shortfall of rent, three were not applications for rent costs, five had no Housing Benefit or Universal Credit in payment and so were outside the scope of the scheme, three had insufficient information, two had excess income, two were deemed to be able to afford the rent, one was not found to be living at the property for which the claim was made and four for other reasons.

Norfolk Citizens Advice Debt Counselling service

In the five months up to the end of August 2025 the service had 68 referrals with 48 (71%) actively engaging whilst 13 did not attend their appointment, three re-arrange and four cancelled. The main debt issues are energy debt, personal loans and Council Tax (over 48% of those referred to the service had Council Tax arrears).

Output summary

Clients referred	48
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Average number of debts	4.25
Average debt per person	£11,585
Total debt identified in period	£463,396
Total debt written off, reduced or restructured	£156,858
New benefits identified	£12,446
Issues identified	282
Activities undertaken	728

58% of those referred were female and 42% male and 42% of those referred had a long-term health condition with 5% being disabled.

Client profile by age

20 -24	25-29	30 -34	35 -39	40 -44	45 – 49	50 – 54	55 – 59	60 - 64	65 - 69	70 – 74	75 - 79
7%	10%	12%	12%	8%	8%	10%	15%	12%	3%	2%	2%

The service was funded initially to 1 October 2025 with funding since being extended to 31 March 2026. The service can support those referred with Debt Relief Orders which is something that Council officers cannot do as we are not registered with the Financial Services Authority.

Relief

Service	Detail
North Norfolk District Council Housing Options Service	As well as preventing homelessness, the Council supports households who have an immediate housing need, providing emergency accommodation for eligible households and signposting/referring to partners where there is no duty owed. Housing officers predominantly deliver the relief elements of the homelessness legislation.
Out of Hours service Home Homeless tonight?	The Council commissions an external provider to triage homeless households outside office hours. The provider liaises with a nominated duty officer from the Housing Options Team, who decides whether to accommodate the household, in line with legislation.
North Norfolk District Council Sanctuary Scheme Home Sanctuary Scheme	A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing additional security – ‘installing a sanctuary’ – to the victims’ property or perimeter. Norfolk County Council has provided funding to the Council to fund a 0.5 full time equivalent post to undertake the Sanctuary assessments since December 2022, this funding is available to 31 March 2026.
North Norfolk District Council Accommodation and Support Team	The Accommodation and Support Team provides an assertive outreach service to verify and support people sleeping rough. The service responds to referrals from Streetlink and partner agencies to ensure that people sleeping rough are supported into accommodation as quickly and safely as possible. Two Pathways, Prevention and Sustainment Officers are funded from the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant.
District Direct Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust » Getting home with District Direct	District Direct provides a service to people leaving hospital who are either homeless or who require an adaptation to their properties. The local hospital makes homelessness referrals to the Council via the Duty to Refer scheme. South Norfolk and Broadland Council deliver this service for the central Place and receive funding from the Integrated Care Board through the Better Care Fund.
Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)	SWEP is a provision of shelter for people particularly when the temperature feels like zero although can also be activated in times of prolonged heat. The provision is activated under harm reduction approach to prevent serious harm to those that would otherwise have nowhere else to go.
Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AfEO)	The Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme (AfEO) launched in July 2021 supports ex-offenders to access the private rental sector (PRS) and sustain this accommodation for a 12-month period. The scheme has been operating in North Norfolk since 2022.
Partnership arrangement with HMP Norwich	Prison leavers without stable accommodation are almost 50 per cent more likely to reoffend. The Housing Options Team has been working closely with the HM Prison and Probation service including

Service	Detail
	undertaking pre-prison release housing assessments within 56 days of release to assess and offer appropriate help to those being released.
Norfolk County Council, Children's Services Housing Support	A revised offer covering Help, Care and Protection through a newly formed team delivering Housing Support from September 2025. A patch-based model aligned with the three Children's Services Teams including the one covering the North Norfolk District Council area – North, East and Broadland. Supporting families with children, pregnant women and their partners, young people aged 16-17, 18–25-year-old care leavers and unaccompanied asylum seekers and asylum seekers/refugees aged 18-25. A team of six practitioners across the three Teams offering a mix of planned intensive interventions to improve housing safety and security for named individuals and cases where they act as advisors to case-holding professionals.

It is not possible to end homelessness entirely, there will always be homelessness that occurs with little or no notice in particular homelessness where a relationship breakdown results in someone having to leave accommodation to which they have no legal right to remain or where it is not safe or feasible for them to remain. Two of the main reasons for homelessness approaches to the Council are being asked to leave by family or friends and relationship breakdown. Relationship breakdown is split into non-violent relationship breakdown and domestic abuse, and these have featured in the three main reasons for homelessness with domestic abuse numbers now higher than non-violent relationship breakdown.

Out of hours service

The numbers of calls received to the Council's out of hours number demonstrate the potential level of homelessness which is likely to occur and is less likely to be prevented. Homelessness resulting from being asked to leave by family or friends is usually a symptom of wider issues including a lack of affordable housing options. Proactively working with those at risk of homelessness can in some cases prevent or delay homelessness and, in some cases, mediation can reconcile relationships enabling return and relief of homelessness.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2019/20	6	10	2	1	3	2	1	4	5	3	5	5	47
2020/21	11	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	9	3	4	3	55
2021/22	6	10	2	4	4	8	6	7	10	4	8	6	75
2022/23	6	9	4	5	12	5	3	7	10	6	14	3	84
2023/24	6	9	4	4	7	6	8	12	17	8	6	11	98
2024/25	12	13	5	12	2	1	6	8	2	5	3	6	75
	47	55	21	30	32	26	26	41	53	29	40	34	434

North Norfolk District Council Sanctuary Scheme

A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing additional security – ‘installing a sanctuary’ – to the victims’ property or perimeter. Norfolk County Council has provided funding to the Council to fund a 0.5 full time equivalent post to undertake the Sanctuary assessments since December 2022, this funding is available to 31 March 2026.

	2023/24	2024/25
NIDAS	3	8
Self-referral	2	3
NNDC	6	1
Other		1
Total referrals	11	13
Resulting in measures installed	8	4

We are starting to see an increase of referrals and year to date (April to September) we have received 20 referrals of which 15 have resulted in security measures installed.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

Extreme cold can cause serious health problems and death for those who are exposed overnight or for long periods of time. Historically, SWEP used to be triggered only when temperatures were forecast at 0°C or below for three days. Best practice now takes a broader approach: considering forecasts near zero, rain, snow, wind chill, “feels like” temperature, and icy conditions. There are benefits to opening provision for temperatures that are above freezing as this can be just as harmful, and for maintaining this provision over longer periods.

SWEP also recognises that during extreme heat, people experiencing homelessness are at a heightened risk of developing heat-related illnesses due their inability to keep cool (owing to a lack of shelter) and reduced access to showers and drinking water. Needs are likely to be more urgent during daylight hours, so a different approach to SWEP may be needed.

Over the past five years SWEP has been activated during the winter months over 22 occasions, providing opportunities to engage with rough sleepers who may be more likely to accept support.

Once an individual has been accommodated under SWEP, we will seek to engage utilising a personalised approach to find solutions to the barriers faced and identify move on options or refer onto services more appropriate to the support needed.

Accommodation

First stage accommodation

Service	Detail
Temporary accommodation owned and managed by North Norfolk District Council	The Council owns and manages 23 units of self-contained temporary accommodation with the purchase of a further unit due to complete shortly and funding for the purchase of 2 further units having been agreed. The homes are street properties purchased from the market and range from 1 - 4 beds. The homes are kept in good condition and are located across the district, with most located in the main towns where facilities and transport links are available
Temporary accommodation leased and managed by North Norfolk District Council	The Council leases a 4-bedroom property from Flagship Housing Group for use as temporary accommodation on a three-year lease to October 2025. The lease is currently being renewed for a further three-year period. The rent charged to occupants placed covers the lease costs of the property.
Temporary accommodation owned and managed by Flagship Housing Group	Flagship Housing Group owns a scheme of five bedsit units in Stalham to which the Council nominates homeless households as temporary accommodation.
Nightly Paid Privately Managed Temporary Accommodation	Where there is no other option available and where it is necessary to accommodate a homeless individual/household, the Council pays for nightly-paid accommodation. Where possible (and safe), the Council aims to provide accommodation that is local, with self-contained cooking/washing facilities.

Temporary Accommodation Placements

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Nightly paid shared facilities	69	193	101	181	164	157
Nightly paid Self-contained	88	66	68	71	103	88
Registered provider stock	12	19	11	24	16	9
Council owned TA	4	13	15	22	23	28
Other privately rented	4				2	0
Other Council	2					
Total	179	291	201	298	308	282

Some of these placements especially nightly paid shared facilities are likely to be very short term and, in some cases, only for one night. Families with children will be placed in accommodation which is self-contained wherever possible but if they are placed into nightly paid accommodation with shared facilities they will be moved into self-contained accommodation within six weeks in line with statutory requirements. Where suitable, the Council aims to use accommodation within North Norfolk to reduce disruption to households and their community links to the district, however there is a very limited supply of self-contained temporary accommodation in the area and as a result we have to make placements outside of the district.

Most households will have more than one accommodation placement, and some households might be placed more than once over the course of a year especially if they leave a temporary accommodation placement and reapply as homelessness later.

Composition of households placed into temporary accommodation

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Single person	62 (53%)	118 (70%)	81(59%)	103 (54%)	95 (51%)	101 (58%)
couple	10 (8%)	5 (3%)	7 (5%)	11 (6%)	7 (4%)	10 (6%)
Non cohabiting couple				2 (1%)	2 (1%)	
Family with dependent children	46 (39%)	43 (26%)	46 (34%)	69 (37%)	80 (43%)	60 (34%)
Family with non-dependent children		2 (1%)	3 (2%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)
total	118	168	137	189	188	175

The number of households placed into temporary accommodation in 2024/25 was 48% higher than the number placed in 2019/20. The number of households placed into temporary accommodation in 2024/25 is 8% lower than the number placed in 2022/23 which is the highest number placed over the strategy period.

As the number of households with dependent children being placed in temporary accommodation has increased so has the number of children. Larger families face significant waits due to the lack of larger family accommodation.

The following table shows a snapshot of children living in temporary accommodation at the end of each financial year.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Dependent children in TA	77	78	82	118	151	

Source: NNDC Case Management Information - Children in temporary accommodation

The Council has invested in the purchase of properties for use as temporary accommodation and as at the end of 2024/25 had 28 properties in use. Households accepted as main duty homeless will stay in temporary accommodation until the Council can discharge this duty with an offer of suitable alternative housing, for some this may take weeks, months and even years where there is a short supply of the type of accommodation required, especially larger properties with four or more bedrooms.

In addition to the human cost of placing households and especially children in Temporary accommodation there is also a financial cost to the Council. The Council is only able to recover a small proportion, £98.08 per week of the Housing Benefit paid out on nightly paid accommodation whereas the actual cost varies from £329 for a single room and £762 for a family accommodation with a degree of self-containment, leaving the Council to pick up the shortfall of £231-664 pr household per week. The Council's expenditure on temporary accommodation is detailed below.

Temporary Accommodation Expenditure

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Nightly paid costs	£396,000	£597,000	£538,000	£1,110,000	£1,310,000	£1,018,024
In house TA costs	£7,900	£26,662	£133,071	£271,502	£154,660	£151,918
Client contributions	-£33,390	-£55,534	-£82,177	-£127,189	-£179,503	-£216,504
Housing Benefit (All TA Expenditure)	-£383,000	-£672,000	-£548,000	-£993,000	-£1,195,000	-£1,141,000
Shortfall on reimbursed subsidy from DWP (All TA)	£227,000	£443,000	£369,000	£714,000	£861,000	£776,000
Net Cost	£214,510	£339,128	£409,894	£975,313	£951,157	£588,438

Council owned Temporary accommodation

The Council has been investing in the purchase of self-contained temporary accommodation since March 2017 and currently has 24 properties in use as temporary accommodation.

Purchase	Location	Size and type	Date purchased	Source of funding
	Pre strategy purchases			

1	Holt	2BB	March 2017	
2	Sculthorpe	2BH	June 2018	
3	Sculthorpe	3BH	June 2018	
	2019/20			
4	North Walsham	2BB	March 2020	
	2020/21			
5	Hempton	1BH	April 2020	
6	North Walsham	2BF	June 2020	
7	North Walsham	2BH	August 2020	
	2021/22			
8	Ludham	2BB	June 2021	DFG BCF – social care priority – TA for disabled household
9	Holt	4BH	November 2021	Community Housing Fund and Homelessness reserve
10	Hoveton	3BH	December 2021	Community Housing Fund and Homelessness reserve
11	North Walsham	3BB	December 2021	DFG BCF – social care priority – TA for disabled household
	2022/23			
12	Sheringham	2BH	September 2022	
	2023/24			
13	Mundesley	2BF	June 2023	
14	Cromer	4BH	July 2023	Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)
15	North Walsham	3BH	December 2023	Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) and LAHF
16	North Walsham	4BH	December 2023	HPG and LAHF
17	North Walsham	3BH	March 2024	HPG and LAHF
18	Stalham	3BH	March 2024	HPG and LAHF
	2024/25			
19	North Walsham	3BH	August 2024	LAHF
20	North Walsham	3BH	October 2024	LAHF
	2025/26			
21	Cromer	2BH	April 2025	LAHF
22	Holt	2BH	April 2025	LAHF
23	Fakenham	4BH	July 2025	LAHF
24	North Walsham	1BH	August 2025	LAHF

The Council is currently seeking three further properties for purchase in 2025/26 which will bring the total number of properties to 27

The spread of the properties purchased has been determined largely by affordability which has resulted in 14 (58%) of the purchases being in the East of the district, whilst six (25%) are in the Central part of the district and four (17%) are in the West of the district.

Ten of the properties have two bedrooms (42%), whilst 8 (33%) have three bedrooms, four (16%) have four bedrooms and two (8%) have one bedroom.

The Council has spent £4,383,087 on the purchase of the first 20 properties. A further £119,188 has been spent on bringing the properties up to the lettable standard. £2,308,729 of funding has been received towards the cost of purchasing these properties resulting in a net cost to the Council of £2,100,945. The estimated current value of these properties is £4,769,750.

Analysis of the performance and value for money of the Council's portfolio of homes used for temporary and other homelessness accommodation have been undertaken in 2024 and 2025. In summary the analysis shows that, if all costs (including internal recharges) are included our housing portfolio does not break even. However, if some internal recharges are not attributed to our own accommodation (for staff who would need to manage homeless households regardless of whether they were accommodated in our, or other types of, accommodation) our accommodation portfolio does make a return. Compared to nightly paid accommodation, our own portfolio delivers significant savings as well as a considerable improvement to the lives of those accommodated. The performance our portfolio has improved greatly, and in 2024/25 alone saved us in excess of £400k compared to use of nightly paid inferior accommodation.

In 2024 the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) was engaged to undertake an independent analysis of the performance and value for money of our temporary accommodation portfolio. The report concluded that, particularly when compared to nightly paid alternatives, "The Councils owned accommodation is currently providing excellent value for money". Some improvements to the management of our portfolio were identified in EELGA's report as a result of which a Temporary Accommodation Steering group was set up with officers from Finance, Property Services, Estates, Strategic Housing and Housing Options which has helped to improve processes for the management of the portfolio.

Area for further consideration: Continue to invest in the provision of self-contained temporary accommodation to reduce the use of nightly paid accommodation. In the absence of other funding opportunities consider an invest to save business case directly linked to using the funding currently used for nightly paid accommodation. Undertake further analysis to understand what level of nightly paid accommodation use cannot be avoided (including those presenting as homeless in an emergency and accommodation of those where a direct placement into self-contained temporary accommodation might not be appropriate).

Area for further consideration: Consider an annual capital bid for the purchase of additional temporary accommodation units until the number of affordable housing lets is sufficient to adequately manage the demand from homelessness with an acceptable level of use of nightly paid accommodation.

Second stage accommodation

Service	Detail
Homelessness Sanctuary Supported Living	Sanctuary a national housing provider with a supported housing scheme in Cromer with 25 units of accommodation available on a direct access basis for single homeless people needing support (non-complex) for up to two years. The funding provided by Norfolk County Council has been reduced from 1 September 2025. Revised rents, service charges and intensive housing management claims have been submitted to the Council's Benefits Service and agreed. Sanctuary has advised that there is a shortfall in funding and as a result they will be looking to reduce the level of support provided to residents.
The Benjamin Foundation Housing with 24/7 Support	The Benjamin Foundation provides support to young people at risk on a direct access basis for up to two years with nine units in North Walsham (Winston Court) and eleven units in Fakenham (Steven Newing House) The funding provided by Norfolk County Council has been reduced from 1 September 2025. Revised rents, service charges and intensive housing management claims have been submitted to the Council's Benefits Service and agreed.
EMPANDA	Empanda provides support to young people at risk for up to two years with 26 units across Cromer, Sheringham and Stalham The funding provided by Norfolk County Council has been reduced from 1 September 2025. Revised rents, service charges and intensive housing management claims have been submitted to the Council's Benefits Service and agreed.
NSAP/RSAP accommodation owned and managed by North Norfolk District Council	The Council received grant funding under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeper Accommodation programme to purchase five properties. The properties are offered to those who are rough sleeping/at risk of rough sleeping on a Housing First principle and are given a two-year licence.
Society of St Vincent de Paul	One property for a household requiring intensive support. Offering crisis and transitional accommodation to homeless people. They also support families leaving temporary accommodation by providing household necessities including carpets, white goods and furniture.
Leeway Domestic Abuse Helpline and Support Services	Leeway operates nine safe houses (refuges) across Norfolk for female victim-survivors of domestic abuse. Leeway is part of a national networks of refuge provision accessed by the National Domestic Abuse Helpline.

Supported housing schemes

	Empanda	Benjamin Foundation Winston Court	Benjamin Foundation Steven Newing House	Sanctuary
Number of units	26	9	11	25
Utilisation	89-98%	95-100%	81-98%	87-93%
Throughput	104-112%	100-111%	82-118%	100-112%
Left during the year	17	4	9	11
Of which accommodated >2 years	4 (24%)		3 (33%)	3 (27%)
Of which accommodated 1-2 years	3 (18%)	2(50%)	3 (33%)	
Of which accommodated <1 year	10 (59%)	2 (50%)	3 (33%)	8 (73%)
Of which went on to stay with friends	1 (6%)	1(25%)		
Of which went on to stay with family	7 (41%)	1 (25%)	1 (11%)	
Of which moved into Supported Housing	6 (35%)		4 (44%)	
Of which moved into privately renting	3 (18%)		3 (33%)	2 (18%)
Registered Provider – general needs				4 (36%)
Custody				1 (9%)
Not known		1 (25%)	1 (11%)	3 (27%)
Of which were evicted	5 (30%)	1 (25%)	1 (11%)	1 (27%)
Of which abandoned	1 (6%)	2 (50%)		
Residents in the scheme as at 31/03/2025	22	8	8	22
Of which accommodated > 2years	6 (27%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	7 (32%)
Of which accommodated 1-2 years	9 (41%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	6 (27%)
Of which accommodated <1 year	7 (32%)	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	9 (41%)

NB

Empanda - further breakdown of the 17 leaving across the three schemes

Cromer - 4 of which 2 were evictions (50%) – 1 went on to stay with friends, 1 to stay with family, 2 to supported housing

Sheringham - 3 of which 1 was an eviction (33%) and 1 was an abandonment (33%) – 2 went on to stay with family and 1 to privately rent

Stalham - 10 of which 1 was an eviction (10%) – 4 went on to stay with family, 4 to supported housing and 2 to privately rent

Supported housing is an important resource in the prevention and relief of homelessness. Most of the schemes in the district detailed are funded through rents and service charges and intensive housing management which are covered by Housing Benefit. Most schemes also receive funding from Norfolk County Council for the support provided and this is a legacy from the Supporting People programme. The removal of the ring fencing of funding provided under Supporting People has left supported housing schemes vulnerable to cuts to County Council budgets and the funding provided by Norfolk County Council for those schemes funded was reduced from 1 September 2025. Revised rents, service charges and intensive housing management claims were submitted to the Council's Benefits Service and agreed. The services remain vulnerable to future possible reductions in the County Council budgets although it is understood that there are no current proposals to reduce funding for 2026/27.

There is a good supply and geographical spread of supported housing for young people in the district – 46 units delivered by two providers over five locations. The Council was proactive in developing this provision. It is considered that this provision has reduced the incidence of homelessness for young people up to the age of 25 and has provided relief for those who have become homeless. Children's Services refer directly into these schemes, and this can be seen from the low numbers approaching the Council in the younger age groups. This provision is essential due to the lack of Houses and Multiple Occupation and shared house opportunities in the private rented sector.

Sanctuary Housing manage a 26-unit scheme of supported housing for single people with low level needs in Cromer over two properties. The scheme is identified as providing direct access, but the vetting process means that this is not how the scheme operates. This scheme has had two previous providers reflecting the difficulties in managing this type of scheme and the funding margins. There are some concerns over the viability of the scheme as it currently stands.

The information provided above suggested that there is potential to increase the effectiveness of supported housing. Utilisation levels could be improved with only one of the providers achieving utilisation of 95-100%. All the schemes provide support for up to two years, yet a high proportion of the residents remain after the two-year period and are leaving after the two-year period. Only a small percentage of the moves out of the schemes are into accommodation providing greater security and a high proportion of the moves are not planned or are evictions or abandonments.

The number of approaches to the Council by single homeless households both assessed as having a prevention duty and a relief duty suggests that this level of provision is inadequate. There is a need for more provision as well as a greater geographical coverage of provision and a broader range of provision catering for direct access and households who have medium and high needs in addition to greater provision for those with lower needs.

Increasing the provision of supported housing has several difficulties including site identification and the availability of capital and revenue funding.

In February 2025 the government consulted on its proposals for implementing measures in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. It is proposing to introduce a locally led licensing regime for supported housing (at the scheme level) across England, along with new National Supported Housing Standards for the support provided and changes to Housing Benefit Regulations to ensure that supported housing is good quality and delivers value for money. We are waiting for the government's response to the consultation. It is hoped that the new regime will give Council's greater control over supported housing schemes in the district to drive up quality and standards.

Area for further consideration: In advance of the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 work with supported housing providers to maximise outcomes delivered through the supported housing schemes in the district including increasing utilisation, restricting occupation to two years and reducing evictions and abandonments.

Area for further consideration: Continue to seek opportunities to increase the supply of supported housing for single people to give greater geographical coverage and a broader range of provision catering for direct access and households who have medium and high needs in addition to greater provision for those with lower needs.

Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP)

The Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) was a Government initiative launched in 2020 to provide longer-term housing solutions for people who had been moved into emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those with a history of rough sleeping to prevent a return to rough sleeping. The programme offered capital and revenue funding to local authorities to deliver move-on units and the necessary support services to help these individuals secure stable housing. The Council secured £140,000 of funding towards the purchase of four, one-bedroom properties, two of which are in North Walsham, one in Fakenham and one in Melton Constable. The total cost of the four properties was £448,553. £44,752 was made available from the DFG BCF allocation (purchasing a property for social care purposes) with the Council directly funding £263,801. The estimated value of the properties is currently £530,000.

The NSAP properties are used to accommodate rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping on a Housing First basis on a licence agreement for a period of up to two years. Two hours of support per week is provided by the Council's Pathway, Prevention and Sustainment Officers to prepare those housed for independent living and to assist in securing accommodation when they are ready to move on or at the end of the two-year period.

Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

The Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) was a Government initiative, active during 2021-2024, that provided longer-term accommodation and support services to help rough sleepers transition to independent living and prevent a return to sleeping on the streets. The programme funded the acquisition and refurbishment of properties to serve as move-on accommodation with tenancies of up to two years providing a pathway to settled housing. The Council secured £35,000 funding towards the cost of converting a Council owned building to a one-bedroom property in Sheringham. The refurbishment costs were £86,002 with a net cost to the Council of £50,643. The estimated value of the property is currently £115,000.

Long term accommodation

Service	Detail
Social/affordable housing Your Choice Your Home - Home	Homeless applicants (and those in second-stage accommodation) can apply for social and affordable housing through the Your Choice Your Home scheme. Applicants are banded in accordance with their level of housing need and in line with the Council's allocation policy.
Affordable Housing - Homes for Wells	Homes for Wells has 30 homes which they let using their own allocations policy and prioritise working households in Wells and adjoining parishes
Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society BNHS	Blakeney NHS has 39 homes which they let using their own allocations policy and prioritise those born or living in Blakeney and adjoining parishes
Holt and Neighbourhood Housing Society Holt and Neighbourhood Housing Society Ltd - History	Holt NHS has 45 homes which they let using their own allocations policy and prioritise those with a connection to Holt
Home - Sheringham Stable Door	Stable Door has nine homes which they let using their own allocations policy or accept nominations from the Council, they prioritise those with a connection to Sheringham
Private Rented Sector	Homeless applicants (and those in second-stage accommodation) can receive assistance to access the private rented sector. The Council can provide financial assistance towards rent deposits and rent guarantees.
Benjamin Foundation Housing Transition Team - Rent Deposit and Tenancy Transition Scheme	The Rent Deposit Scheme helps young people age 18-25 who have previously faced homelessness and are now ready to live independently to gain access to the private rented or social housing sector. The Tenancy Transition Service provides young people with the practical, one-to-one support they need to source, secure and sustain a tenancy. The two schemes work hand in hand and are delivered by two part time Tenancy Transition Officers funded by EveryYouth Home EY

Affordable housing stock in North Norfolk District Council area

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom +	Total
General Need Affordable Rent	703	2289	1896	97	4985 (77%)
General Need Shared Ownership	12	179	93	2	286 (4%)
Local Letting Affordable Rent	53	220	72	11	356 (6%)
Local Letting Shared Ownership	0	36	22	0	58 (1%)
Housing for Older People (age restricted 55+)	373	119	2	0	494 (8%)
Sheltered Housing Affordable Rent	95	3	0	0	98 (2%)
Sheltered Housing Shared Ownership	0	2	0	0	2
Extra Care Affordable Rent	97	3	0	0	100 (2%)
Extra Care Shared Ownership	0	36	0	0	36 (1%)
Total	1333	2887	2085	110	6415

As discussed later general need affordable rent are the properties that are most likely to be used to discharge main housing duties for those accepted as homeless and these account for 77% of the affordable housing stock in the district. Although there is an aging population in the district, older people are under-represented in those who are becoming homeless and so the properties which have age designations are less likely to be used in the discharge of main housing duties, 728 (11%) of the affordable housing stock is age designated.

There are a small number of five, six, seven and eight bed properties in the general needs stock. These properties very rarely become available, and it would not be sensible for a household to have hope that they could be allocated a property larger than four bedrooms. The maximum size of property included in any affordable housing mix for a new development would be four bedrooms, if a property larger than this were to be included it could be seen that we are seeking to meet the needs of an individual family however due to the lead in time for development the needs of households might change or other households in greater need might surface. It is not considered cost effective and viable to develop properties larger than four bedrooms. This might mean that the Council cannot discharge a main housing duty for a larger household meaning that such households will remain temporary accommodation for long periods of time which is acceptable providing that the accommodation is suitable (the bar for suitability of temporary accommodation is lower than for a permanent offer of housing).

Your Choice Your Home – Housing Register	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Housing Register - no of households	530	561	471	557	507	485
Housing Options Register – no of households	1881	1949	1755	1562	1564	1386
Transfer Register - no of households	443	396	334	375	384	328
Total	2854	2906	2560	2494	2454	2199

The numbers on the Housing Register are not necessarily a true reflection of housing need and will be influenced by several factors including how the register is administered including the requirement to re-register, the policy in place and any restrictions on eligibility and the policies in place in other councils particularly neighbouring councils. The numbers have reduced by 23% between 2019/20 and 2024/25 with higher reductions in the numbers on the Housing Options and Transfer Registers than the Housing Register which has reduced by only 8%. The numbers on the registers however are far above the capacity to house with only 286 lettings in 2024/25 this compares to 369 households being assessed as being owed a homelessness duty. A significant number of households assessed as owed a homelessness duty are likely to be included in the 485 households on the Housing Register. The Housing Register includes those in the highest level of need and so there are at least a further 116 households in a high level of housing need.

Your Choice Your Home Lets

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Housing Register lets	n/a	220 (84%)	261 (87%)	267 (92%)	232 (90%)	247 (86%)
Housing Options Register lets	n/a	32 (12%)	24 (8%)	13 (4%)	16 (6%)	15 (5%)
Transfer Register lets	n/a	10 (4%)	14 (5%)	11 (4%)	11 (4%)	24 (8%)
Total	283	262	299	291	259	286

The following table details the number of homes let that went to households that were either homeless or at risk of homelessness

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Threatened with Homelessness	0	8	29	34	15	51
Accepted Homeless	12	74	52	99	133	109
Total	12 (4%)	82 (31%)	81 (27%)	133 (46%)	148 (57%)	160 (56%)

New households are joining the Your Choice Your Home scheme every day and even though over 80% of the lettings are made to those on the Housing Register with an average of 245 properties being let per year this has little impact on the numbers on the list at any one time.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1 bed lets	111 (39%)	119 (45%)	147 (49%)	134 (46%)	126 (49%)	114 (40%)
2 bed lets	133 (47%)	108 (41%)	121 (40%)	130 (45%)	111 (43%)	131 (46%)
3 bed lets	37 (13%)	33 (13%)	25 (8%)	27 (9%)	21 (8%)	40 (14%)
4 bed lets	2 (<1%)	2 (<1%)	6 (2%)	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Total	283	262	299	291	259	286

Lettings result from turnover in the existing affordable housing stock, transfers of tenants from one property to another with the resulting property becoming available to let and additions to the affordable housing stock mainly through new development. The size and type of property available for letting will vary from time to time but overall, the proportion of lets by size has remained constant.

Housing Register by bedroom need (snapshot 31 August 2025)

	Housing Register	Housing Options Register	Transfer Register	Total
1 bedroom	210	874	160	1244
2 bedroom	103	319	89	511
3 bedroom	70	81	41	192
4 bedroom	90	104	42	236
5 bedroom plus	15	15	7	37
Total	488	1393	339	220

As a result of increasing levels of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation, the Council by agreement with the partners to the Your Choice Your Home scheme piloted measures to directly allocate properties to those accepted as main duty homeless. This approach was formalised in a new Allocations Scheme agreed by the Council in December 2024 following consultation with partners, applicants, residents and other stakeholders. The Allocations Scheme is being implemented in stages due to the need for system reconfiguration and is expected to be fully implemented from April 2026 when we will start to see the full effect of the changes made.

Affordable Housing Delivery 2019 – 2025

Affordable housing delivery by scheme type

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	total
Section 106 market delivery	42	11	48	5	15	3	124 (28%)
Exception scheme	28	26	0	0	0	29	83 (19%)
Other direct delivery	9	71	112	8	20	17	237 (53%)
Total	79 (18%)	108 (24%)	160 (36%)	13 (3%)	35 (8%)	49 (11%)	444

Affordable housing delivery has been variable over the six-year period with a low of 13 in 2022/23 and a high of 160 in 2021/22 and an average of 74. The low point coincided with restrictions on development due to the requirement for Nutrient Neutrality affecting development in much of the district. Mitigation measures against nutrient neutrality have enabled some development to progress and delivery over 2022/23 to 2024/25 has started to recover albeit still lower than the 79 delivered in 2019/20.

Affordable housing delivery by tenure and allocation type

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	total
General need - rent	31 (39%)	40 (37%)	34 (21%)	13 (100%)	30 (86%)	3 (6%)	151 (34%)
General need – shared ownership	20 (25%)	42 (39%)	71 (44%)	0	5 (14%)	3 (6%)	141 (32%)
Local Letting - rent	18 (23%)	16 (15%)	0	0	0	39 (18%)	73 (16%)
Local Letting - shared ownership	10 (13%)	10 (9%)	0	0	0	4 (8%)	24 (5%)
Housing with Care - rent	0	0	30 (19%)	0	0	0	30 (7%)
Housing with Care - shared ownership	0	0	25 (16%)	0	0	0	25 (6%)
	79 (18%)	108 (24%)	160 (36%)	13 (3%)	35 (8%)	49 (11%)	444

Over the six-year period 34% of the delivery has been for general need rent with general need shared ownership only just lower at 32%. Those accepted as having a main duty under the homelessness legislation are most likely to be housed in general need housing for rent, they are unlikely to be able to purchase a share in a home under the shared ownership schemes, are less likely to have a strong local connection to be successful in being allocated a property under local lettings criteria and are unlikely to qualify for specialist housing with care provision. New affordable housing delivery is important to supplement general needs housing becoming available in the existing affordable housing stock to balance the Council's rehousing duty and reduce the need for temporary housing for those accepted as having a main duty under the homelessness legislation.

A steady supply of new affordable housing allows for the rehousing of those who are homeless/at risk of homelessness and who are not owed a main homelessness duty and for those who have a housing need and find it difficult to meet their own housing needs in the wider housing market.

The Your Choice Your Home scheme allows for the participating housing providers to allocate up to 20% of their vacancies to tenants wishing to transfer. The Council liaises with the housing providers to determine which properties can be used for this quota ensuring a fair allocation across all the housing types and sizes and uses and ensuring that the Council has a fair proportion of the properties that are most useful in enabling it to discharge its main housing duties to those accepted as homeless. In practice only Victory Homes has made use of this quota.

The transfer of a tenant does not reduce the overall opportunity to allocate to properties unless the landlord then voluntarily disposes of the property once vacated. Tenant transfers particularly if there is a chain of moves will delay the ability to house a household from the Housing Register. Tenant transfers however can be useful to make best use of stock and increase the availability of more useable stock types for high need groups e.g. the allocation of Housing with Care to tenants could result in a general needs rented property becoming available to discharge a duty to a homeless household.

Affordable housing (all types) delivery by bedroom size

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
1 bedroom	31 (39%)	31 (29%)	50 (31%)	4 (31%)	16 (46%)	3 (6%)	135 (30%)
2 bedrooms	29 (37%)	48 (44%)	96 (60%)	5 (38%)	10 (29%)	29 (59%)	217 (49%)
3 bedrooms	18 (23%)	27 (25%)	10 (6%)	4 (31%)	8 (23%)	15 (31%)	82 (18%)
4 bedrooms	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	4 (3%)	0	1 (3%)	2 (4%)	10 (2%)
Total	79 (18%)	108 (24%)	160 (36%)	13 (3%)	35 (8%)	49 (11%)	444

The affordable housing delivered over the six-year period 2019/2025 has been predominantly two-bedroom properties at 49%, followed by one-bedroom properties at 30%, three-bedroom properties at 18% and four-bedroom properties at 2%. These figures do vary and in 2023/24 46% of the affordable housing delivery was one-bedroom properties however in 2024/25 only 6% of properties were one-bedroom. The mix for affordable housing development is informed by demand for housing on the housing register but the mix can vary for several reasons. The 55 housing with care properties delivered in 2021/22 will have been predominantly one-bedroom properties. The size of properties becoming available will impact on the Council's ability to discharge its main housing duties accepted under the homelessness legislation and move on those placed in temporary accommodation.

General needs rented delivery by bedroom size

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
1 bedroom	19 (61%)	21 (53%)	19 (56%)	4 (31%)	16 (53%)	0	79 (52%)
2 bedrooms	10 (32%)	16 (40%)	9 (26%)	5 (38%)	7 (23%)	0	47 (31%)
3 bedrooms	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	3 (9%)	4 (31%)	6 (20%)	3 (100%)	18 (12%)
4 bedrooms	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	3 (9%)	0	1 (3%)	0	7 (5%)
total	31	40	34	13	30	3	151

Net gain – Affordable housing delivery minus Right to Buy and voluntary landlord sales

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
New affordable homes	+79	+108	+160	+13	+35	+49	+444
Right to Buy sales	-6	-22	-16	-7	-5	-7	-63
Voluntary landlord sales	-45	-24	-44	-18	-29	-30	-190
Net change affordable homes	+28	+62	+100	-12	+1	+12	+191

Tenants in affordable housing can purchase their properties through the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire. The number of properties lost to the affordable housing sector through Right to Buy fluctuates from year to year in line with general economic trends with 63 Right to Buy sales over the six-year period, an average of 11 properties per year and a high of 22 in 2020/21. Properties are also lost to the sector through voluntary landlord disposals. Victory Homes part of Flagship Housing Group has had an active disposal programme over the six-year period with 190 sales, an average of 32 properties per year and a high of 45 in 2019/20. The joint impact of Right to Buy and voluntary landlord sales has meant that a gain of 444 new affordable homes has been reduced to a net gain of 191 over the six-year period with a net loss of 12 in 2022/23.

Flagship Housing Group merged with Bromford Homes in February 2025 and fewer decisions regarding the management of the Victory Homes properties are being made at a local level and any influence the Council has is being eroded overtime. There is concern that the Registered Provider has a more ambitious disposal programme for the stock in the North Norfolk District Council area. To the end of August 2025 14 properties have been disposed of with a further 13 having sales agreed and a further two on the market for sale. This means that the number of voluntary landlord sales in 2025/26 is likely to be higher than 2024/25 and that the net gain for 2025/26 will be less than forty properties.

Assessed Need

The housing requirement in the emerging Local Plan is for a minimum of 8,900 new homes over the plan period 2024-2040. As part of this total a minimum of **2,000** affordable dwellings should be provided (125 p.a.).

Future delivery and pipeline

Affordable housing developments that are expected to be built over the next 6 years.

Stage	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total
Delivered	39						39
Expected delivery	40	59	105	12			216
Expected planning application			8			270	278
Full planning permission granted				21	53		74
Likely to come forward			41	52	50		143
Outline planning consent granted		54			53	160	267
Part delivered		39					39
Planning application being considered			51	30			81
Total	79	152	205	115	156	430	1137

The pipeline of affordable housing delivery over the current year and subsequent five years has the potential to deliver 1137 additional homes which is an average of 190 homes per annum which is above the minimum requirement of 125 new affordable homes per annum. Assuming that all of these homes are delivered and no additional homes are added to the pipeline and the Right to Buy sales and voluntary landlord sales continue at the same rate as the past six years there will be a net gain of 884 homes or an average of 147 homes per year.

Affordable housing pipeline by tenure and allocation type

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total
General need - rent	4 (5%)	81 (53%)	33 (16%)	28 (24%)	120 (77%)	344 (80%)	610 (54%)
General need – shared ownership	2 (3%)	59 (39%)	20 (10%)	12 (10%)	36 (23%)	86 (20%)	215 (19%)
Local Letting - rent	67 (85%)	12 (8%)	77 (38%)	59 (51%)			215 (19%)
Local Letting - shared ownership	6 (8%)		14 (7%)	16 (14%)			36 (3%)
Housing with Care - rent			61 (30%)				61(5%)
Housing with Care - shared ownership							0
Total	79 (7%)	152 (13%)	205 (18%)	115 (10%)	156 (14%)	430 (39%)	1,137

The proportion of general needs rented housing varies significantly over the six years from a low of 5% in the current year to 80% in 2030/31.

The Housing Strategy Development and Action Planning process has explored how the Council can further support those involved in the delivery of affordable housing to remove barriers and streamline processes to encourage more opportunities to come forward and ultimately deliver more affordable housing.

Privately renting in the North Norfolk District Council area

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) determines the maximum financial support available for renters in the private rented sector. The rates were last increased to the 30th percentile of local market rates in April 2024. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) uses LHA rates to calculate the maximum housing support for claimants of either the housing element of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. LHA rates are set within Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). There are three Broad Market Rental areas covering the North Norfolk District Council area and the rates for the five property types are set out below. These rates were not increased in 2025/26 despite the Secretary of State committing to reviewing the level of LHA rates annually.

The Local Housing Allowance rates for the North Norfolk District Council area

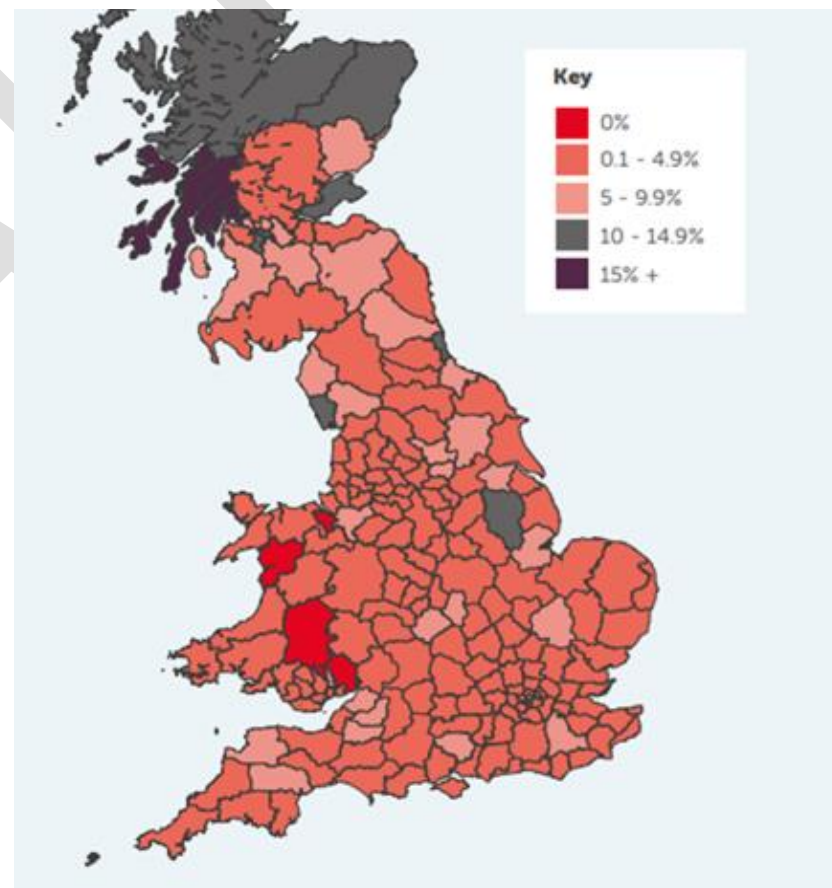
	Central Norfolk and Norwich		King's Lynn		Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth	
Shared accommodation rate	£90.56	£393.50	£92.02	£399.85	£86.61	£376.34
One bedroom rate	£135.78	£590.00	£126.17	£548.24	£101.51	£441.09
Two-bedroom rate	£159.95	£695.02	£149.59	£650.00	£132.33	£575.01
Three-bedroom rate	£184.11	£800.00	£178.36	£775.02	£144.99	£630.02
Four-bedroom rate	£264.66	£1,150.01	£241.64	£1,049.98	£189.86	£824.99

Crisis partnered with Zoopla to review the private rented listings across Great Britain to assess the proportion of properties affordable to households that receive LHA, and shortfalls between the cost of rents and LHA rates. LHA should cover the cost of the bottom 30% of rents in an area, but despite an uprating of LHA in April 2024, private rent listings in the following 6 months (April – October 2024) were well outside affordable levels for households receiving LHA. These findings were published in the Crisis report 'Now I have my flat, my health is much more stable' How affordable private rents can help tackle health inequalities and homelessness [crisis-he-policy-report-now-i-have-my-flat-my-health-is-much-more-stable-april-2025.pdf](#).

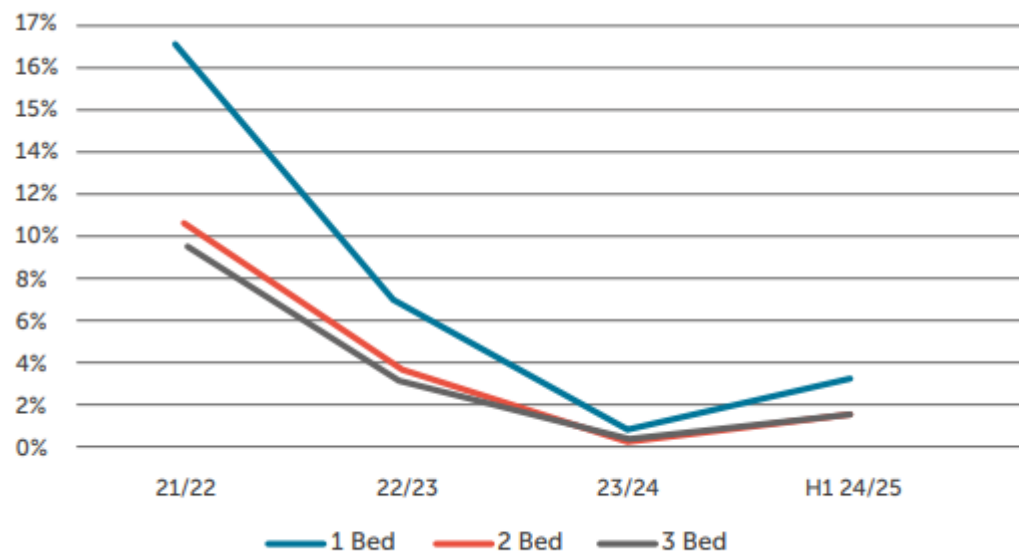
Key findings:

- Below 2.7% of listings across Great Britain were affordable based on LHA rates.
- In England 2.5% of listings were affordable
- The average monthly shortfall between LHA and the bottom 30% of rents across England was £350 for 1-bed, £335 for 2-beds and £508 for 3-beds

The findings are illustrated in the heat map opposite.



The graph below illustrates how the proportion of properties within the LHA has reduced in recent years as rents have increased whilst the Local Housing Allowance level have been frozen and the uptick demonstrates the impact the uprating of the LHA in April 2024 has had.



The chart below shows the percentage of properties in the three BRMA that are below the LHA level.

Broad Rental Market Area	%below LHA (1 - 3 bed)
Central Norfolk and Norwich	1.5%
King's Lynn	4.5%
Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth	0.4%

Local monitoring of the private rental market

A snapshot of private rented homes advertised for let is analysed each month. In 2024 there was an average of 77 homes advertised per month in the district. Analysis shows that only ten properties were within LHA rates and that the larger the property the greater the difference between the rent and the LHA rate. In the first six months of 2025 there has been a larger number of properties advertised. Only two of the properties were below LHA rates and the gap between the rent and LHA rates has widened for three and four bed plus properties.

2024 (Jan – Dec)	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed
Sample size per month	10	29	24	14
LHA	£588	£693	£798	£1,147
Average rent	£722	£974	£1,276	£2,088
Difference	£134	£280	£478	£941
% above LHA	23%	40%	60%	82%
Number within LHA	6	2	0	2

2025 (Jan – Jun)	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+-bed
Sample size per month	11	33	24	19
LHA	£588	£693	£798	£1,147
Average rent	£722	£909	£1,328	£2,186
Difference	£134	£216	£530	£1,039
% above LHA	23%	31%	66%	91%
Number within LHA	2	0	0	0

NB some properties might be included more than once if the period they are advertised for spans more than one month.

Analysis of Housing Benefit claims in payment – July 2025

Migration of working age Housing Benefit claimants to Universal Credit is almost complete in the district and we do not have access to data which shows Universal Credit claims for Housing Costs at a district level. Analysis of Housing Benefit claims in payment shows that there were

579 claims of which 52 are working age and 527 pension age. Of these 308 were in receipt of a passported benefit and 9 were in work. 232 were in receipt of a Disability Benefit and 26 had a Carer in the household. There were 468 unique landlords, and most landlords only have one property.

Most claimants occupy smaller properties. Data is incomplete in system reporting, so not all claims show a 'number of bedrooms entitled to', of the 506 claims that do, 305 would appear to have more bedrooms than they need, whilst 9 appear to have less bedrooms than required and 192 have the right number of rooms for their need.

Number of bedrooms	Number of cases
1 bedroom	226
2 bedrooms	241
3 bedrooms	77
4 bedrooms	3
5 bedrooms	1

The rents on the properties vary significantly. 424 claimants are impacted by the Local Housing Allowance cap including 104 claimants have a restriction on their benefit since the removal of the spare room subsidy.

Number of bedrooms	Lowest rent	Highest rent	Average rent
1 bedroom	117 p/m	1450 p/m	561.43 p/m
2 bedrooms	314.06 p/m	1300 p/m	661.03 p/m
3 bedrooms	313.84 p/m	1800 p/m	684.84 p/m
4 bedrooms	550 p/m	1600 p/m	1133.33 p/m
5 bedrooms	700 p/m	700 p/m	700 p/m

There are 13 claims in payment for shared accommodation, and all are over the age of 66 with monthly rents ranging from £300 to £550 per month.

LIFT platform

The Council has invested in The LIFT platform, intelligent data analytics software that helps local authorities to maximise resident's income and reduce their costs. It combines the Policy in Practice benefits policy engine with administrative datasets to target welfare support services. We can use the platform to analyse, identify, engage and track financially vulnerable households. In July 2025 analysis showed.

Households in a cash shortfall	255
PRS tenants in a cash shortfall	100
PRS tenants in a cash shortfall with Council Tax arrears	28
PRS tenants in a cash shortfall impacted by LHA cap	66
PRS tenants in a cash shortfall impacted by the benefit cap	24

A shrinking Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Good quality data on the size of the PRS is not readily available but all the information available shows a decline in PRS homes in the district.

The regional body for PRS landlords, the Eastern Landlords Association report a decline in members for the first time since they were established. The Association says that many typical landlords, with individual homes or a small portfolio of homes, are exiting the sector completely citing the growing challenges (financial and legislative) as the reason for leaving.

The Council is supporting growing numbers of homeless households and "End of private rented tenancy" has remained the main reason for applicants approaching us at risk of being homeless. In 2024/25 the Council saw 1,125 approaches for homelessness, of which 398 were assessed as threatened with homelessness and owed a duty of prevention or relief, the main cause of homelessness given was end of PRS with 132 cases, and further monitoring of these cases showed 60 were directly due to landlords selling the property.

The PRS in North Norfolk is diverse. There are several country estates in the district each having a portfolio of rented housing and there are also property companies with portfolios of private rented homes (though no single company owns more than 100 homes). However, most landlords operate on a small scale with a few or just one rental property. In some parts of the country institutional investors are developing new housing for private rent but this is yet to happen in the district. The nature of the PRS here makes the district more susceptible to some of the recent changes to the PRS.

Since 2010, there have been several policy changes affecting private landlords and potentially reducing the viability of letting homes. These include tax changes for Buy-to-Let landlords, changes to the Stamp Duty Land Tax, and tightening lending criteria on Buy-to-Let mortgages. Additionally recent significant rises in mortgage interest rates have had a major impact. The introduction of the Renters Rights Bill is considered a threat by many landlords (key measures include removing the 'no-fault' right of landlords to end a tenancy, requiring rented homes to meet

'decent homes' standards, limiting rent inflation to one annual increase, requiring all rented homes to meet stricter Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) requirements).

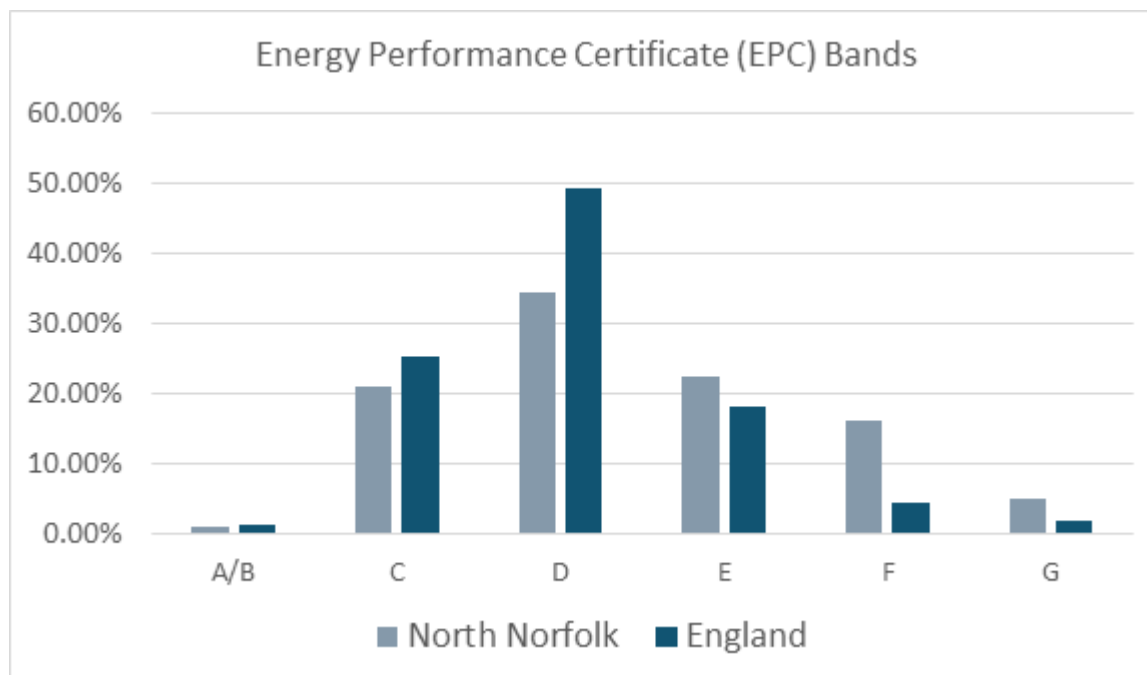
The Council commissioned a Housing Stock Condition Survey in 2020 which identified 2,510 homes in the PRS with an EPC of F or G. Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) have been required since 2018. These standards require properties to be at EPC E or above in order to be let unless a valid exemption applies. Valid MEES exemptions must be registered on the PRS Exemptions Register including.

- High-cost exemption
- Seven-year payback exemption
- All improvements made exemption
- Wall insulation exemption
- Consent exemption
- Devaluation exemption
- New landlord exemption
- Listed Building exemption

Each of the exemptions have specific criteria and evidence requirements and most last five years except the New Landlord exemption which lasts for six months.

The Government planned to raise these minimum standards further with a target of D by 2025 and C by 2030 although the implementation timetable for these higher standards was paused and is currently under review.

We do not have data on the number of privately rented properties in the district in each of the EPC bands to understand the impact of any further changes to MEES. The Housing Stock Condition report did however provide data showing that North Norfolk has a higher proportion of properties in bands E, F and G than the rest of England and a lower proportion in bands A, B, C and D.



The shrinking PRS market means that the homes available are in increasing demand, which in turn is leading to increasing rents and decreasing affordability for local households as seen from the local monitoring detailed above. This picture is not uncommon across the country – and has been highlighted in a number of studies (for example [Is the private rented sector shrinking? | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) and [Total Property's private rented sector survey 2024 - Total Property's private rented sector survey 2024](#)). However, we believe that the problem is aggravated in North Norfolk due to the unique housing market here and the potential exit route many landlords may have - in switching long term rented homes to holiday lets or selling to buyers as second homes.

The Council implemented measures recently introduced to help mitigate the impact of Second homes and from April 2025 has doubled Council Tax on Second Homes. Our records show that this has yet to have an impact on the total number of Second Homes which has once again increased. The council is watching with interest the development of government plans to manage holiday lets, including mandatory registration and the introduction of planning powers.

The Council has written to the Housing Minister highlighting the issues within the local PRS and welcoming changes aiming to improve conditions and security in the sector but outlines its concern around the potential unintended consequences including landlords leaving the

sector. The Council would be keen to see measures to encourage PRS landlords to stay in the sector and help stem the decline or even to grow the sector.

DRAFT

Recovery

Service	Detail
CGL - Change, Grow, Live Norfolk Alcohol and Drug Behaviour Change Service	CGL provides support to help people with problematic drug or alcohol use break free from harmful patterns of behaviour and feel healthier and happier. Services include medical treatment, 1:1 and group support, as well as harm-reduction services such as needle exchanges and advice.
Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Service - Together for Mental Wellbeing	The Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Service (NIHCSS) provides tailored tenancy sustainment support to people engaged in structured treatment with CGL.

Cross Pathway Services

Service	Detail
Shelter services in Norwich - Shelter England	Shelter provides a local advice and advocacy service to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, as well as providing emergency county court assistance to people facing possession claims.
Home - NIDAS	NIDAS stands for Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service and is a domestic abuse support service for those assessed to be at high or medium risk of harm. They also provide dedicated support for Children and Young People, recovery programmes, coordinated multi-agency support, court support, a Domestic Abuse Champion network, and training for professionals across Norfolk. The service is commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Key generalist services

Service	Detail
Norfolk Citizens Advice	Norfolk Citizens Advice offers free, confidential and impartial advice to anyone in the county. There are offices in Fakenham, Holt and North Walsham and outreach at Cromer and Stalham Foodbanks (funded by the Trussell Trust). The Information Advice and Guidance (Commissioning) Budget was significantly reduced in 2023/24 as part of the Council wide reductions required to deliver a balanced budget and as a result the grant previously given to the Norfolk CA to deliver its generic advice offer was withdrawn.
Salvation Army Homepage	The Salvation Army is a worldwide Christian Church that offers services that are diverse and responsive to the realities of life in the communities they serve. The Salvation Army has a presence in Fakenham, Holt, North Walsham and Sheringham. They can provide access to showers, laundry, clothing, hot meals and food parcels.
Age UK Norfolk Age UK Norfolk Our Services	Age UK Norfolk supports older people in Norfolk to enjoy the opportunities and meet the challenges of later life
North Norfolk Foodbank	The North Norfolk Foodbank is run in partnership with local churches, schools and community groups. There are seven distribution centres in the North Norfolk District Council area at Cromer, Holt, North Walsham, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the Sea.
Merchants Place, Cromer	A non-profit making company generating money from room hire and business service provision which is invested back into the centre to provide services for the community. Hosting drop-in sessions for Norfolk Community Law Service and a community fridge and larder.

Community and voluntary groups play a crucial role in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness by providing essential resources, social support, warm space/food and a pathway to re-integration into the community. These services often act as a first point of contact, offering advice, practical help, and a sense of belonging, which can be vital in preventing further hardship and promoting well-being.

Continus Improvement and Communication

Service	Detail
Internal Audit	The Housing Options Service was audited in 2023/24 with the final report produced in April 2024 with the overall assessment being reasonable.
Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish – Homelessness (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 20/09/2024 09:30	The Overview Task and Finish Group looking at Homelessness reported its findings in September 2024. The group met eleven times to gather evidence from a number of internal and external witnesses to help the group formulate their recommendations. The report including 24 recommendations. Officers updated the group on the progress against the recommendations in February 2025 (https://modgov.north-norfolk.gov.uk/documents/g2173/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Feb-2025%2009.30%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20Committee) and attended the groups meeting in July ((Public Pack)Agenda Document for Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 16/07/2025 09:30 to provide an update on the Homelessness Review and Strategy development process. This review will be presented to the groups meeting in October prior to the development of the strategy and action plan and the group considering the strategy and action plan in November.
Corporate Peer Review LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report	The Council was assessed by a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Team in September 2024. As part of the review housing was
East of England LGA Temporary Accommodation Report	The East of England local Government Association carried out an independent review of the current management and arrangements in place for council owned Temporary Accommodation
Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation Home Council awarded accreditation for domestic abuse support	North Norfolk District Council were awarded an accredited status by Standing Together, a domestic abuse support charity in October 2024.
Shelter Systems Thinking	A Systems Change in Homelessness Services programme from April to October 2024. The programme was delivered by Shelter and funded by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.
Trauma Informed Care (TIC) National Learning and Research Programme	The Council applied to take part in this programme in July 2024 which looks at build a national evidence base for TIC implementation and share learning across organisations, particularly in the homelessness sector.
PositiviTea Home PositiviTea	PositiviTea events provide an opportunity for people to find out about the support provided by local community groups and statutory organisations in a relaxed, non-judgemental place.

Poppyland Radio Community Connectors Poppyland Radio	Community Radio features a show presented by NNDC Health and Communities Team Leader and provides a platform for people to find out about voluntary and statutory support across North Norfolk. This allows us to reach people who may not have engaged with us.
North Norfolk District Council Communications	Positive promotion of the services delivered to vulnerable residents through Outlook, Facebook, U Tube e.g. Outsiders Exhibition

Continuous Improvement and Communication

There are several processes and systems that provide independent and objective feedback on the work of the Council more generally as well as specifically commenting on the work undertaken by the Council in the discharge of its homelessness duties. The Council is open to the opportunity to learn and improve and encourages challenge. Some of these systems and processes are embedded in local government including internal audit and Overview and Scrutiny whilst others are good practice and expected including peer challenge whilst others are voluntary including the DAHA Accreditation, Shelter Systems Thinking and Homeless Link Trauma Informed Care research programme.

The opportunity to promote the work of the Council in supporting its more vulnerable residents is paramount to building trust and encouraging residents to see the Council as a place to go when they need help. Preventing homelessness is more effective when households seek help at the earliest possible opportunity and PositiviTea and Poppyland Radio are means of connecting with residents and communities. Positive promotion and meaningful and targeted communication has been supported by the Council's Communications Team.

Internal audit

The Housing Options Service was audited in 2023/24 with the final report produced in April 2024 with the overall assessment being reasonable.

The audit identified the following findings:

- Personal housing plans were not consistently updated to show actions being taken to alleviate homelessness
- Instances were identified where formal letters to end homelessness duty had not been sent to the customer
- there was a backlog of arrears from former temporary accommodation tenants, due to historical resourcing issues but a new process has been implemented to ensure that new debts are actioned promptly alongside clearing the backlog. This new system was put in place at the end of the audit fieldwork, so it was not fully tested. The backlog dating back to 2020 was taken into account in the overall assurance opinion
- effective governance structures, such as strategies, policies and standard processes were in place to ensure effective delivery of the service

Good practice was identified including:

- trialling of two pilot schemes for amending social housing allocation, in response to increased pressures on homelessness services and temporary accommodation
- the team has Officers who support people placed in temporary accommodation and help them to develop skills needed for managing a long-term tenancy

Corporate Peer Challenge

The Council was assessed by a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Team in September 2024. The following are extracts from the Peer Report.

The dedication of NNDC's housing team to overcome the challenges of providing additional homes in North Norfolk was also clear to peers. They showed determination in delivering affordable homes, exception sites and temporary accommodation working particularly well with Broadland Housing Association. Facing the challenges of having one of the highest percentages of second and holiday homes in the UK, with a local housing market also driven by strong demand for people retiring to the area, the team have done well to maximise delivery. The difficulties associated with nutrient neutrality have had a significant impact on this, but a pipeline of projects is ready to be delivered with registered providers, assisted by the new enabling officer, when issues have been overcome.

Peers saw examples of collaborative working within and across services. This was especially evident in People Services, which had transformed the way it worked over the past two years. Breaking down barriers between teams, looking for joint solutions to complex problems, sharing resources across teams and spending time as a directorate to get to know each other. Officers in other services talked of "silos" and insular working practices - they were also very envious of the "away day". The organisation has much to learn from this model and if collective ownership and delivery of the council's priorities is to be front and centre, other services will need to adapt and change accordingly.

Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse. The Council works with DAHA to implement best practice as a housing provider/service, to ensure we are delivering a safe and effective response to domestic abuse.

The Senior Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Regional Lead said "The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) are delighted to announce that North Norfolk District Council are the first local authority who do not hold housing stock in the East to achieve DAHA accreditation making them a beacon of good practice nationally in responding to survivors of domestic abuse who approach the Housing Options Team for support and advice.

Above all, it was clear that staff were compassionate, determined, and unwavering in their support and professional curiosity which enabled them to detect domestic abuse even where this was not the presenting issue for the survivor and therefore enable a holistic approach to be taken."

North Norfolk District Council's application and accreditation to DAHA was funded by Norfolk County Council.

The Council meets with the Standing Together DAHA Lead on a quarterly basis to review different parts of the accreditation. Since achieving accreditation, the Lead has observed an operational meeting of monthly case reviews and is due to observe the DA Champions meeting in September.

Shelter Systems Thinking

The Housing Options Team voluntarily participated in the Systems Change in Homelessness Services programme from April to October 2024. The programme was delivered by Shelter and funded by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government although the Team decided to pay for some additional services as part of the programme. The aim of the programme was to support organisations to understand the systems that they operate within, identify the root causes of issues and build stronger relationships with stakeholders to find solutions together. The programme included:

- desktop research of data and procedures
- observation of staff
- consultation with staff, customers, internal and external partners
- mystery shopping and file assessment (funded by the Council)
- systems thinking workshops with attendance from a range of stakeholders

A summary report drew upon the insights gathered and provided recommendations for improvement against five key themes:

- Consistency in service delivery
- Workflow integration
- Partnership working
- Culture – person centred approach, behaviours and attitudes
- Prevention and proactive work

The conclusion was that the Housing Options service is built on strong foundations and demonstrates robust working relationships and a commitment to person centred practices, key to supporting customers. To further enhance service delivery, the authority can focus on inclusivity and empowering staff to work proactively.

There were many positive examples of work across observations. Mystery shopping and the file assessment. Overall, Team members are empathetic and understanding the importance of tailored and prompt advice. By ensuring consistency across the Team the authority will be able to deliver even higher quality services that meet the needs of their customers.

Effective communication, both internally within the team and externally with partners, is crucial to improving partnership working. Addressing communications delays and building upon the already collaborative culture will have a direct impact on customer experience and outcomes.

Addressing these areas of improvement will allow the Council to ensure the efficacy and consistency of its efforts to combat homelessness. By building on current good practices and addressing the identified gaps, the Council can further enhance its support for individuals experiencing homelessness and foster long-term positive change.

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) National Learning and Research Programme

In the summer of 2024, Homeless Link invited organisations to express an interest in taking part in a national learning, research and development programme for organisations who wish to begin, or further develop their implementation of, trauma informed approaches to contribute to the evidence base for homelessness services, commissioners and policy makers. The Housing Options Team expressed its interest in July 2024. Participating organisations are contributing to the delivery cost of the programme and the generation of the evidence and production of resources for the whole sector. In return organisations are supported to develop their practice, learn from others and understand the impact that implementing TIC has for them.

The programme commenced in April 2025 and will run for approximately 18 months.

The first stage of the programme was to co-produce an impact measurement tool and undertake a baseline survey from which to measure progress. The Council has recently received its baseline survey results.

The baseline survey included an organisational self-assessment, a service user survey, service user monitoring data, staff survey and staff monitoring data.

Self-assessment survey

In the self-assessment survey, the Housing Options Team shared its perception of its current position on a number of areas (marking itself out of 5). The areas in which they felt they were already making strong progress included consulting those with lived experience on the development of services (5) and extent to which an ethos of empowering people who access services to make decisions about their futures is embedded within the organisation (5). For most other areas the Team assessed themselves as scoring either a 2 or a 3.

Service User Survey

71 usable survey responses were submitted (those completing at least some of the survey questions) – however, most questions were completed by 65-67 people. The demographic breakdown for those answering these questions was:

Age: 3% were 18-24, 20% were 25-34, 18% were 35-44, 17% were 45-54, 20% were 55-64, and 20% were 65+. 2% preferred not to answer.

Gender: 48% were male and 51% were female. 1% preferred not to answer. All answering respondents identified with their gender assigned at birth.

Ethnicity: 89% were white/white British, 2% were Asian/Asian British and 3% from another ethnic group. 6% preferred not to answer.

There were a variety of views on the Team's delivery according to the principles of trauma informed care which were tested in the survey. Findings for key measures include the following percentages of service users who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with statements related to trauma informed care.

- **Safety** - 72% feel safe attending or interacting with the service
- **Trust** - 62% trust the staff who work here
- **Welcoming environment** - 59% feel the environment is welcoming and comfortable
- **Views are valued** - 54% feel that their views are valued
- **Choice** - 46% feel able to make choices about the support they receive

Staff survey

12 (75% response rate) usable survey responses were submitted (those completing at least some of the survey questions) – note for the majority of questions 11 people submitted an answer.

Findings for key measures include the following percentages of staff members who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with statements related to core components of trauma informed care.

- **Safety** - 100% feel safe at work
- **Trust** - 92% feel they can trust management
- **Support** – 92% feel well supported by management
- **Views are valued** - 67% feel that their views are valued
- **Transparency** - 50% feel that decisions are made in a transparent way

Other findings from the staff survey included the following. 9% felt that reflection opportunities were provided to them. 91% of respondents stated that they had attended training on trauma informed care – of these, 10% felt their practices had changed a lot, and 70% said they had changed a bit. Regarding trauma informed care, 91% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they understood what it is, and 73% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel confident in applying its principles.

Staff monitoring data

The Team provided data on staff retention and sickness rates for a range of time periods for the year April 2024 – March 2025.

Staff retention rate for the period April 2024 – March 2025: 100%

NB – This is an unusually high level for a local authority

Staff sickness rate for the period April 2024 – March 2025: 1.6%

DRAFT

Implementation of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan 2019-2024

The 2019-2024 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was completed before the Covid Pandemic which had such a profound and unforeseen effect on housing and homelessness issues. The main priorities set out in that strategy are still relevant, and in most cases the issues more acute.

The Strategy identifies 5 key priorities which focussed on concentrating our efforts and resources on delivering services which focused on early intervention and the prevention of homelessness, backed up by high quality joined up support to get people back on their feet when things do go wrong.

A review of progress against the actions shows that of the 42 actions 38% were completed. However, 31% of actions were identified as business as usual. A further nine (21%) are identified as being in progress.

	Completed	BAU	In progress	Delayed	Not started	Total
 Early Intervention and Prevention	2	5	4			11
 Increase Access to Good Quality Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector	2	1	2	1	2	8
 Working with local partners to provide solutions which prevent homelessness	7	1				8
 Reduce the incidence of Rough Sleeping in the District	4	2	2		1	9
 Reduce the use of temporary accommodation for households accepted as homeless						

1	4	1			6
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Area for further consideration: Develop a SMART and manageable action plan, limit the number of actions in each year and review the action plan annually as part of the service planning and budget setting cycle and review in line of Government grant allocations.

All actions in the Action Plan are related to activity undertaken by the Council due to the lack of involvement and ownership from other partners.

Area for further consideration: Over the next strategy period develop more formal arrangements with partners and include specific actions for partners to deliver in the annual action plan.

Area 3

Resources available to deliver homelessness service

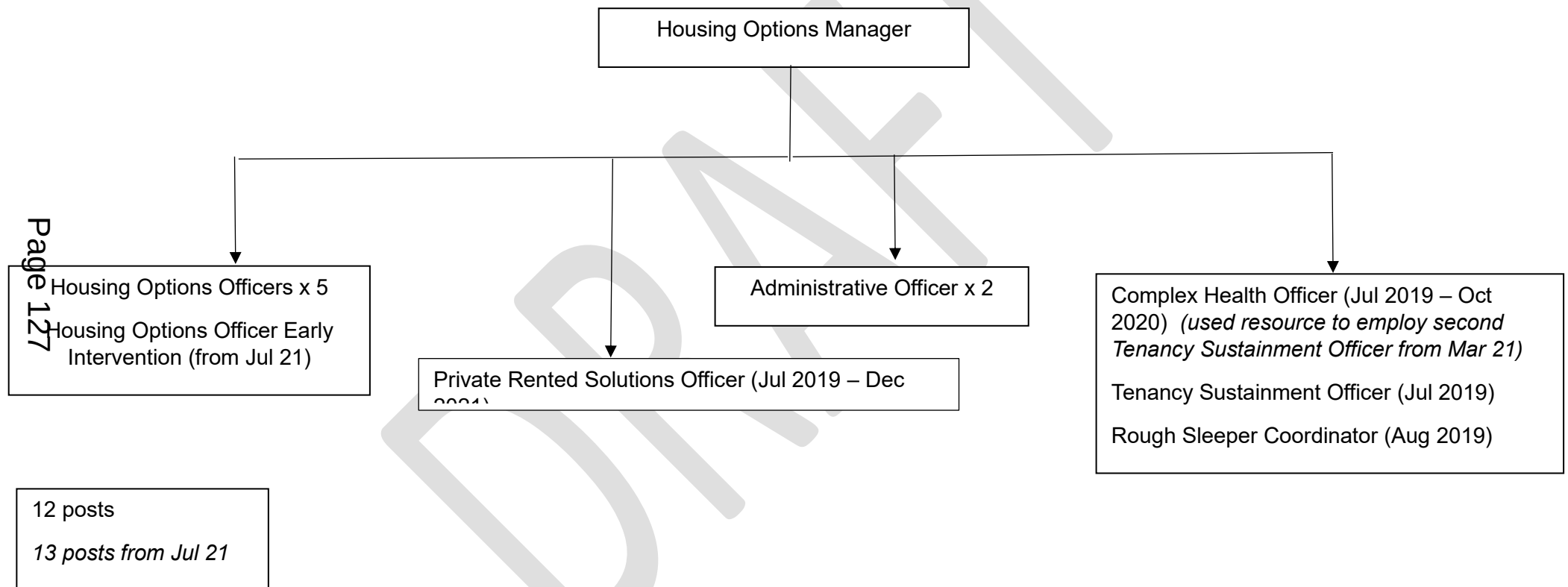
Resources available to deliver homelessness service

In addition to the resource provided by the Council in the fulfilment of its statutory duties relating to homelessness the Council receives various grants from Government to reflect the additional burdens flowing from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and other legislative and regulatory burdens. Most staff delivering homelessness prevention and relief are funded via these grants and as a result are on fixed term contracts. These grants are generally allocated on a single year basis although there have been some longer-term allocations. The short-term nature of the funding doesn't allow for long term planning and commissioning or development of a system with a longer-term strategic view. The Government is currently developing a national homelessness strategy and will be reviewing the funding for homelessness and rough sleeping services alongside this and as part of the autumn budget. It is possible that some of the funding will be incorporated into the Council's wider funding settlement.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Flexible Homeless Support Grant	35,362.00						
Homelessness Prevention Grant		54,752.00	75,221.00	367,039.00	320,476.00	492,865.00	630,938.00
Homelessness Reduction Act	52,783.00						
Rough Sleeper Initiative	76,536.00	75,996.00	156,341.00	171,232.00	166,164.00	144,766.00	144,767.00
Rough Sleeping and Homeless Community	5,824.44	55,824.44					
AFEO							8,165.00
Rapid Rehousing Pathway	46,000.00						
Rough Sleeper Winter Pressures			11,400.00	2,274.28	2,320.00	28,745.71	
Tenant Satisfaction measures New Burdens						2,400.00	
Protect & vaccinate			9,048.31				
Local Control Outbreak		40,000.00					
DCLG Rough Sleeping						13,948.00	
DA Support Grant			2,138.00	32,164.00	33,912.00	34,552.00	35,018.00
DA Burdens				1,000.00	1,500.00		
NCC Sanctuary Target Hardening				6,435.32	19,305.94	21,776.00	21,776.00
Contribution from Homes for Ukraine				29,516.44	66,691.00	21,648.71	TBC
People Services reserve				27,861.38			TBC
Total	366,505.44	426,572.44	584,148.31	637,522.42	610,368.94	760,701.42	840,664.00

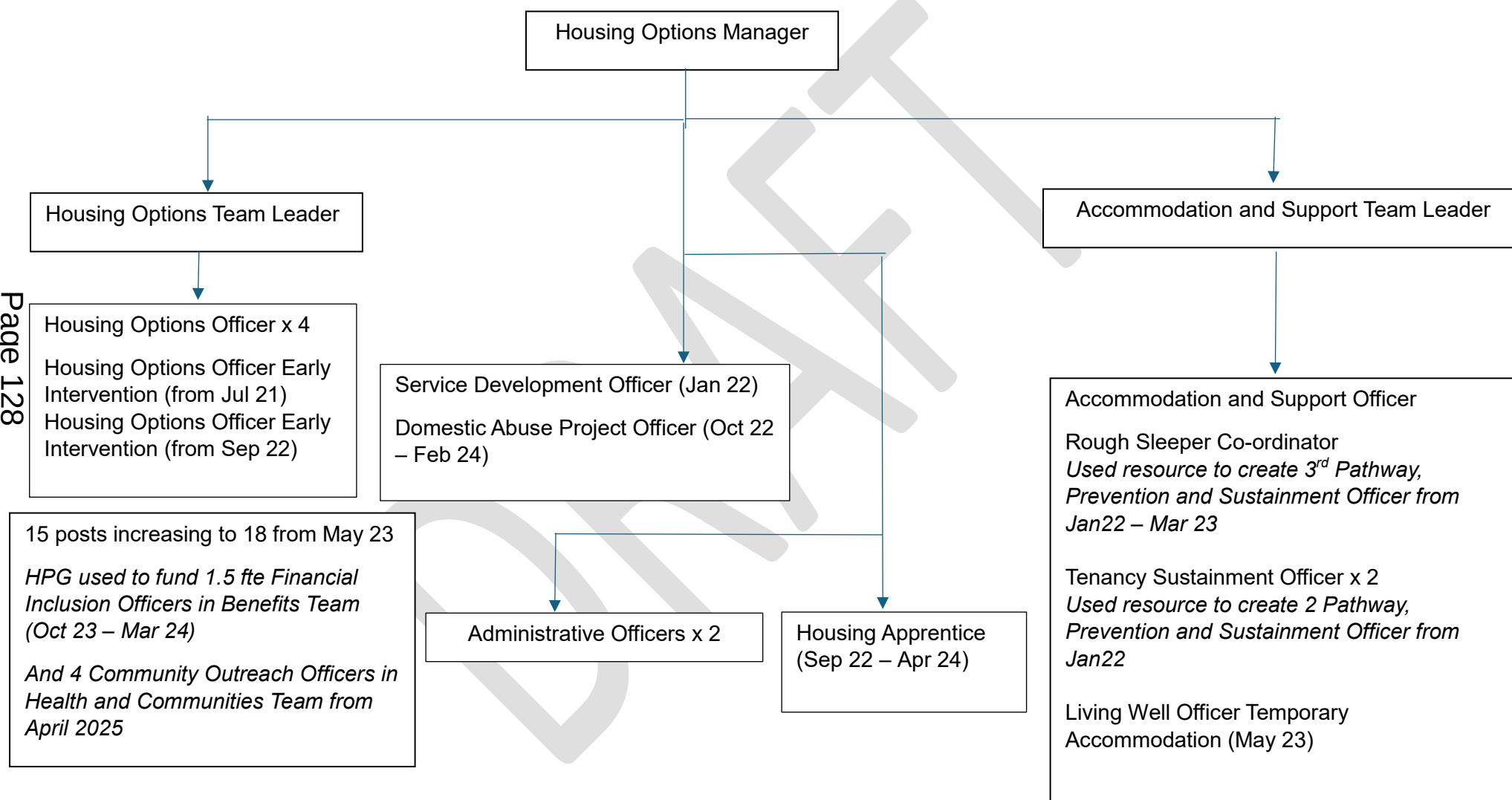
Housing Options Team resource - 1 April 2019 – December 2021

Team moved from Customer Services to People Services in February 2021



Housing Options Team resource - December 2021 – May 2026

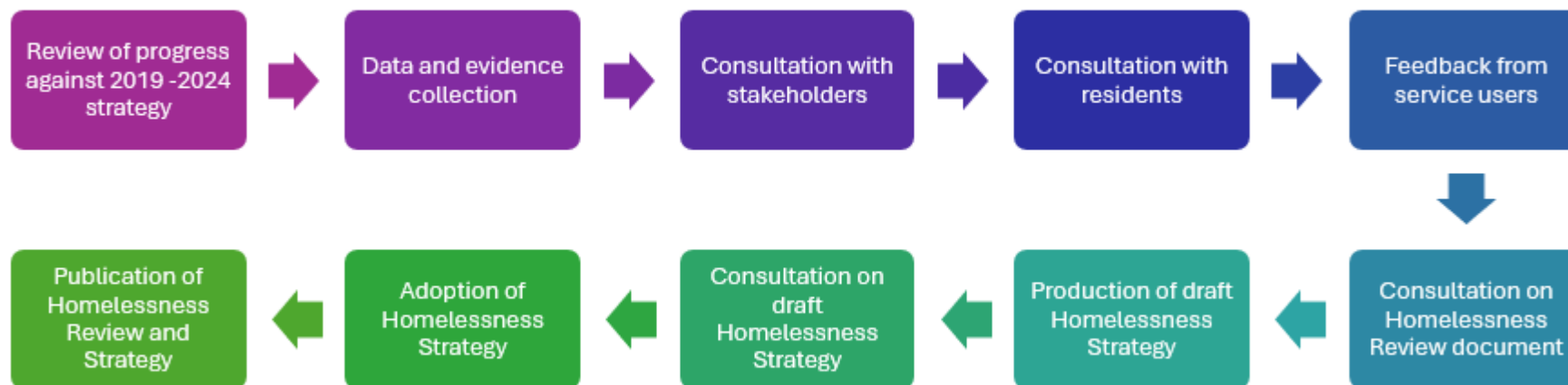
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The Housing Options team has somewhat expanded and shifted over the last five years. However 14 of the posts in the Housing Options Team and Community Outreach Team working on Homelessness prevention and management are in fixed term posts which run to 31 May 2026. Most of these posts have been renewed on several occasions and most of the officers enjoy the statutory rights enjoyed by permanent staff. The turnover of staff is relatively low, but the uncertainty of funding and fixed term contracts has been the reason for those that have left leaving. Local Government Reorganisation brings a further element of uncertainty which might give further reason for staff to consider leaving for permanent job roles elsewhere.

Area for further consideration: Consider how the risk of losing staff on fixed term contracts essential to delivering the Council's statutory duties and maintaining service delivery can be mitigated especially considering Local Government Re-organisation. If funding for homelessness prevention and temporary accommodation costs is included in the Council's settlement, consider whether the staff delivering these functions should be made permanent.

Next steps and timetable



- **Overview and Scrutiny - Homelessness Review (15 October)**
- **Cabinet – Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Actions Plan (3 November)**
- **Overview and Scrutiny - Housing Strategy and Actions Plan (12 November)**
- **Full Council (17 December)**

Glossary

Affordable Housing: Refers to housing which can be for either rent or sale, for those whose needs are not met by the market. It includes different tenures, including social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership, among others. It can be a new-build property or a private sector property that has been purchased for use as an affordable home.
Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life on Earth, encompassing all species of plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, as well as their genetic variations and the ecosystems (such as forests and oceans) they form
Coastal erosion refers to the natural process of the sea wearing away the land and removing soil, sand, or rock from coastlines which can destroy homes, businesses, and infrastructure such as roads and bridges, leading to significant financial losses and homelessness.
Community Outreach - reaching out to connect with and serve a local population by providing information, support, or services, often by meeting people where they are and providing advice and support.
Conservation Area is a legally defined place with special architectural or historic interest, which is desirable to preserve or enhance
Continuous Improvement ending homelessness requires many people to work together, system wide evaluation allows us to take an independent review of the way things are working and helps to identify opportunities to improve the way the service works to ensure it is delivering the best possible outcomes for those who need to make use of service.
Corporate Peer Challenge is a voluntary, sector-led improvement program for English councils, offered by the Local Government Association (LGA). It is a highly valued tool that provides strategic support, credible challenge, and assurance to local authorities, helping them drive continuous improvement.
Corporate Plan is our strategic document that outlines NNDCs long-term goals, objectives, and priorities, guiding resource allocation and decision-making to achieve future direction
Devolution means that decision making moves closer to the citizen and is more democratic way of working.
Disabled Facilities Grant: The statutory Disabled Facilities Grant regime provides the framework that enables the council to administer grants for aids and adaptations to help residents remain independent in their own home for longer.
Discretionary Housing Payments: Is money paid by Councils to residents if they are struggling to pay their full rent, or if they do not have enough money to afford a deposit or rent in advance on a property.

Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA) is the UK benchmark for how housing providers and local authorities should respond to domestic abuse in the UK
Ecological designations are official classifications for areas of significant value to nature, offering special protection for their unique wildlife, habitats, geology, or landforms.
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC): An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) gives a property an energy efficiency rating ranging from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient) and is valid for 10 years.
First stage accommodation refers to the initial, temporary housing provided to homeless individuals during an emergency, allowing them to stay in a safe place while a homelessness application is processed for longer-term solutions
General needs housing refers to standard, independent living accommodations without specific support services or adaptations for specialised groups
Growth settlements refers to settlements that are increasing in population, area, or economic activity, driven by factors like natural increase (births outpacing deaths), migration, and the availability of resources and jobs
Help Hub the North Norfolk Help Hub is a partnership of organisations that work together to offer practical support, advice, and guidance.
Hidden Homelessness refers to a situation where someone is considered homeless but does not fit the "stereotypical" image of rough sleeping, making them invisible to official statistics and support services
Hinterland refers to an area behind a coast, river, or large urban centre
Historic England Heritage Action Zone is a government-funded program to use England's historic environment as a catalyst for economic growth and improved quality of life.
Homelessness Reduction Act The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on housing authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants – not just those that have priority need
Homes for Ukraine allowed individuals and families in the UK to offer a spare room or a separate home to Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members fleeing the war. It is a visa sponsorship program where guests are hosted by a UK-based sponsor for a minimum of six months

Housing Benefit is means-tested benefit in the United Kingdom that helps people on a low income pay their rent. For most people, it has been replaced by Universal Credit.
Housing First is a recognised approach to addressing chronic homelessness that provides unconditional, permanent housing to people with complex needs, including mental health issues and addiction, as a first step to recovery
Housing Register or social housing list, is a list of people who qualify for and are waiting to be allocated a housing association property
Housing Revenue Account (HRA): The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is intended to record expenditure and income on running a council's own housing stock and closely related services or facilities, which are provided primarily for the benefit of the council's own tenants.
Internal Audit is an analysis of services intended to identify opportunities to add value and improve operations
Inward migration refers to people moving into a specific area, such as a region, or country, to live temporarily or permanently
Key generalist services - Services that are available for the wider population, but which are of particular benefit to homeless (or potentially homeless) households.
Local Government Association (LGA) is the national membership body for local authorities in England and Wales
Local Government Re-organisation – the government is currently in the process of a major programme of local government reorganisation (LGR) in England, which involves replacing two-tier councils with new unitary authorities. North Norfolk District Council has joined five other Norfolk district councils under the banner "Future Norfolk" to submit a proposal for three new unitary authorities for the county.
Local Housing Allowance is a system used to calculate the maximum amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit that private renters in the UK can receive to help pay for their accommodation
Longer Term housing refers to settled accommodation, such as a housing association home, or private rented property, which is provided by a local council for those who qualify as homeless or threatened with homelessness.
Low Income Family Tracker (lift) is an analytics platform for local authorities to help you link your data, maximise your residents' income and opportunities to identify households before they hit crisis
Main homelessness Duty is owed by a local authority to someone who is homeless, eligible, has a priority need and is not intentionally homeless.

Managed realignment is the process of deliberately creating a "setback" line of coastal defence to allow low-lying land to flood in a controlled way, creating new intertidal habitats like salt marshes and mudflats
Mayoral Combined Authority is a local government body in England formed by multiple councils that work together to share powers and responsibilities, typically in areas like transport and economic development
Modern Slavery is the severe exploitation of individuals through force, coercion, deception, or abuse of power for personal or commercial gain. It is a global human rights violation affecting millions of people, including in the UK
Mystery Shopping involves individuals, posing as someone seeking help to assess the quality, accessibility, and user experience of the service
National Landscape is a nationally important, protected area in the UK, formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
National Primary Route Network is a network of strategic routes in Great Britain, comprising motorways and A-roads designated as "primary routes" to connect primary destinations
Next Steps Accommodation Programme: Is a Government Funding Programme that seeks to safeguard people who have been taken safely from the streets and assist with a planned transition into more sustainable interim accommodation options until longer-term accommodation options have been put into place. The NSAP funding stream includes both capital and revenue funding to help with property costs and support for people entering into new tenancies.
Nutrient Neutrality is a planning policy that requires new housing developments to prevent an increase in nutrient pollution (mainly nitrogen and phosphorus) to protected habitat sites.
Overview and Scrutiny allows for members to review and challenge council decisions, services, and performance, and to represent residents' interests.
Prevention Duty refers to the legal responsibility of local authorities to help prevent homelessness
Priority Need refers to specific categories of people who must be given more help by local councils if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
Private Rented Sector (PRS): The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is a classification of housing in the UK. Private Rented accommodation is generally property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor.

Registered Providers: Are defined as independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies in England established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis.
Relief Duty is a 56-day legal obligation placed on local authorities (councils) to help eligible homeless people secure suitable accommodation.
Second home is a property that is substantially furnished, not occupied as a person's main residence, and typically used periodically by its owner, such as for holidays or weekends.
Second stage accommodation is a type of temporary housing provided for a certain period of time to households that are transitioning from a more temporary environment to more settled, independent living.
Settled accommodation refers to secure, long-term housing that provides a stable home, unlike temporary accommodation. It can relate to someone's last address or accommodation outcomes following a period of homelessness.
Severe Weather Emergency Protocol <i>is the response used by local authorities to provide emergency accommodation for people sleeping rough during severe weather.</i>
Social deprivation is defined as the experience of being part of disadvantaged social groups that face processes of social exclusion, resulting in poor health outcomes, disease, and disability, often linked to factors such as income, area, employment, and education.
Stakeholder is a company/organisation, individual or group with an interest or concern in the service being delivered, cohort of service users, performance, or success
Streetlink: Is a web based UK-wide homelessness service that connects people sleeping rough with vital local support services and charities by allowing members of the public to notify support services where someone is sleeping rough.
System Thinking is an approach to understanding how things are connected and how they interact within a whole, rather than looking at individual parts in isolation
Supported Housing - Accommodation for vulnerable young people and adults with complex needs who are at risk of homelessness
Temporary accommodation - provides short-term housing to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness until a longer term housing can be found,

Tidal flooding also known as coastal or high-tide flooding, is the temporary inundation of low-lying coastal areas from unusually high tides, with or without strong winds
Trauma Informed Care - is an organisational, system-wide approach that recognises the widespread impact of trauma and seeks to prevent re-traumatization by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, practices, and procedures.
Travel to work area - is a statistical geographical area where most residents work and most workers reside, representing a self-contained labour market.
Triage Is the initial assessment process where local councils or housing charities quickly evaluate a person's housing situation to determine their eligibility for help, prioritize their needs, and connect them to the appropriate housing advice, support, or accommodation services.
Trunk roads - a major, nationally significant highway that connects major cities, towns, and ports
Unitary government – is where a single, central government holds ultimate and supreme authority over all its administrative divisions and local units
Your Choice Your Home - is the Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) scheme for affordable housing in North Norfolk, It is run in partnership with North Norfolk District Council and local housing associations.

North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone Update & Town Centre Health Monitoring Framework	
Executive Summary	This report applies a methodology for monitoring the health and vitality of north Norfolk town centres. Within this framework it considers how North Walsham town centre has fared since the end of the North Walsham High Street Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme, which was delivered between the spring of 2020 through to April 2024. The programme entailed the delivery of a suite of projects, including improvements to the public realm and the restoration & repair of historic buildings.
Options considered	No other options considered
Consultation(s)	N/A
Recommendations	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee are recommended to: 1. Note the contents of the report recognising the contribution the HSHAZ programme made to the achievement of key Corporate Plan objectives. . 2. Provide any feedback in relation to the proposed framework for town centre health monitoring, which builds further on some of the positive work already undertaken to profile north Norfolk town centres.
Reasons for recommendations	It is important that the Council continues to help local town centres fulfil the role of service centres, meeting the needs of local residents and businesses. As such, seeking to implement a robust set of monitoring criteria will better place the Council in its development of future policy and provide a good evidence base to support the business case for future projects, interventions and potential funding bids.
Background papers	N/A

Wards affected	All Wards
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr John Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth
Contact Officer	Stuart Quick, Economic Growth Manager, stuart.quick@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The recommendations of this report align with the following objectives of the Corporate Plan: 'Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure' (<i>An environment for business to thrive in & Infrastructure to Support Growth</i>) – specifically the objective: <i>working with our Market and Resort Towns to reinforce their roles as local service centres, centres of employment, financial services and business activity, served by public transport</i> ; as well as 'Developing Our Communities' (<i>Increase accessibility and inclusion for all</i>).

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	North Norfolk Economic Strategy

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	17 July 2024 – North Walsham High Street Action Zone Programme: End of Project Report (see 1.1)

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report is intended to update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the North Walsham HSHAZ, following the Committee's recommendation of 17 July 2024 *"to update in 12 months' time on the impact of the initiative and learning from this, to establish a set of evaluation criteria, including baselines, that can then be used for similar projects in other towns in North Norfolk."*
- 1.2 The Committee considered an independently produced evaluation of the programme at the time which appraised the workstreams against a broad set of criteria. This report does not intend to repeat this exercise, but instead proposes an outline as to how the Council could consider adopting a more evidence-based approach to town centre health monitoring and, within this framework, consider how North Walsham has fared and how such a model could be applied to other town centres. Such an approach could improve how the Council responds to the needs of our town centres, red flagging any concerning issues and providing the evidence required to support potential funding bids for appropriate interventions.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 North Walsham was selected as a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) in 2019 following a successful bid to Historic England. Subsequent funding was also secured to widen the scope, with a total budget of around £3.8m. The town had experienced declining vitality, poor-quality public realm, negative perceptions and underused heritage assets. At the same time, it had a strong historic character, a long-standing market culture, and an engaged community – qualities that gave it significant potential for regeneration.
- 2.2 The programme's overall aim was to improve the town centre's vitality and attractiveness to shoppers, visitors and businesses by capitalising on its built heritage, with a complete programme of five interlinked workstreams with various budgets and timelines. The HSHAZ project officially ran from April 2020 until April 2024, but there were significant delays to the various schemes because of issues including the COVID-19 pandemic, rising costs, and lack of resources.
- 2.3 The five workstreams were:

1. Public Realm Improvements (Placemaking): improvements to key physical spaces and 'restitching' of the town's historic core.
2. Building Improvement Grant (BIG) Scheme: grants to support the restoration of historic buildings and bring vacant floor space back into use.
3. Cedars Historic Building Restoration: a Grade II visually and historically important building that sits at a principle gateway to the town centre.
4. Cultural Programme: activities and events designed to work with the public realm and improve perceptions of the high street and its heritage.
5. Wayfinding & Interpretation: a design scheme to enhance the visitor experience and build greater civic pride in North Walsham's history.

2.4 The project also attracted significant match funding. The BIG scheme was structured with private investment built in and received upwards of £190k from business owners and landlords. As part of the public realm improvements, the New Anglia LEP provided £1.1m, Norfolk County Council approximately £470k and North Walsham Town Council £45k. Of this, nearly £80k went towards improvements within the HSHAZ boundary, including additional road surfacing, bike hoops, electricity pillars and lighting. Related projects, which were not part of the HSHAZ but were closely linked, included the creation of a bus interchange (completed in June 2022), which used the front part of New Road Car Park, and new and refurbished toilet facilities on New Road and Vicarage Street.

2.5 Towards the end of the programme, an independent evaluation was commissioned by NNDC. This report, considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2024, employed a range of methods to understand the more immediate impact of the programme, including stakeholder interviews, an engagement day and an impact assessment survey. Historic England also conducted its own survey of the wider cultural programme. The evaluation report considered the programme against a number of objective themes, including environmental impact, accessibility & inclusivity, historic preservation, cultural impact and economic impact.

3. Town Centre Health Monitoring

3.1 It is proposed that the Council seeks to further develop its economic intelligence by developing a town centre health monitoring dashboard for each of the towns. Recent improvements to some of the data sources available (in particular ActiveXchange – which analyses footfall from mobile phone data) means that the Council is well placed to develop town centre monitoring methodology that brings together both external and internally held data sources into a single monitoring report. Most of this data already exists, although not all in one locality. Some development has already been undertaken, but the input of the Committee as to what it considers are the priority themes would be welcome.

3.2 Undertaking regular monitoring of town centre vitality provides a range of practical benefits for councils, businesses and residents. The value goes beyond simply collecting data; it creates a shared evidence base for decision-making, accountability and investment. The benefits of this approach include:

- **Evidence-Based Decision Making**
 - Reliable data allows the Council to not rely on anecdote and perception.

- Investments in public realm, events or transport can be justified and prioritised according to measured need.
- Trends (e.g. footfall decline or rising vacancy) can be identified early, allowing preventative action before issues become entrenched.
- **Benchmarking and Comparative Learning**
 - Monitoring enables towns within North Norfolk to be compared consistently with each other, identifying strengths and weaknesses.
 - National and regional comparisons (where available e.g. Norfolk County Council's Market Town Reports) would allow NNDC to understand whether local patterns are unique or part of wider trends.
 - This benchmarking helps demonstrate whether North Walsham or other towns are 'bucking the trend' or movements are consistent.
- **Supporting Funding Bids and Investment Cases**
 - Grant funders such as Historic England or Government regeneration programmes increasingly require robust baseline and monitoring data.
 - Having consistent metrics allows the Council to demonstrate impact and value-for-money, strengthening the chances of success in competitive bidding.
- **Long-Term Resilience**
 - Town centres face structural challenges from online retail, changing consumer behaviour, and wider economic shocks.
 - A monitoring framework allows NNDC to track these changes in real time, adapt quickly, and build resilience.
 - It ensures regeneration is not a one-off project but part of an ongoing cycle of learning and improvement.

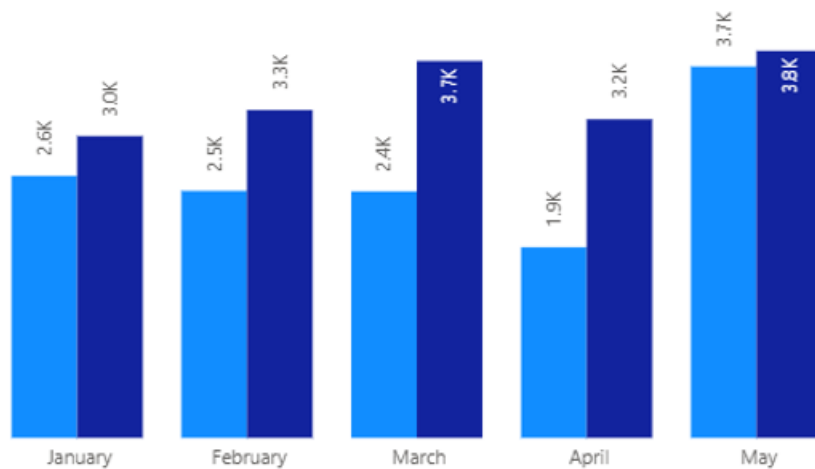
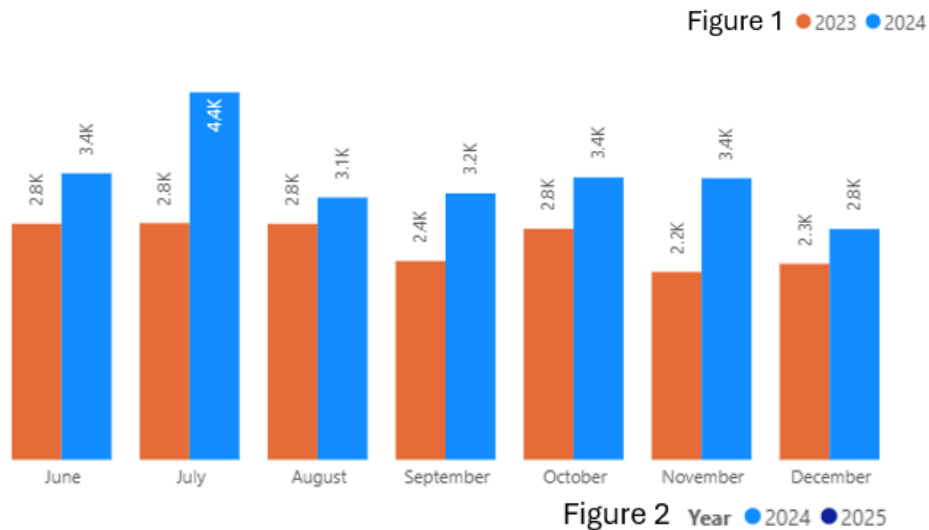
Town Centre Vitality Themes

3.3 It is considered that there are 5 key themes for monitoring town centre health:

- i. Footfall & Town Centre Activity
- ii. Visitor Profiling
- iii. Car Park usage
- iv. Vacancy Rate, Business Unit Mix & New Investment
- v. Public Transport Patronage

3.4 Footfall and Town Centre Activity

Footfall is the single most recognised measure of town centre health. It provides a direct indicator of how many people are present in the town centre, and when. Patterns of hourly daily, weekly and seasonal variation can demonstrate how well a town is functioning, the effect of interventions or even when best to time them (such as cultural events), and the impact of external pressures such as weather or the wider economy. Moreover, understanding dwell time is very useful as the longer people spend in a town typically results in greater local spend. Shorter dwell times tend to indicate that visitors are just coming into the town to access basic services (e.g. a haircut, pharmacy).



- 3.4.1 The North Walsham HSHAZ project ran for four years with all the town centre works finished by end of March 2024. The major capital works and disruption occurred at the Church Approach/Shambles site between February and August 2023. Major infrastructure works in the main marketplace happened between September 2023 and March 2024.
- 3.4.2 Presently there is only ActiveXchange data for 2025 up to May. **Figure 2.** compares footfall in 2025 against the corresponding months in 2024. Where it is not possible to reflect on data in 2025, **Figure 1.** has used 2023 as the baseline and looked at the footfall data comparisons to 2023. All months, both 2024 – 2025 and 2023 - 2024 have shown an upward trend in footfall. Whilst the specific purpose of HSHAZ was not necessarily to deliver increased footfall, it is reassuring to note that footfall appears not only to have been maintained but increased in the period post the capital work improvements to the town centre.

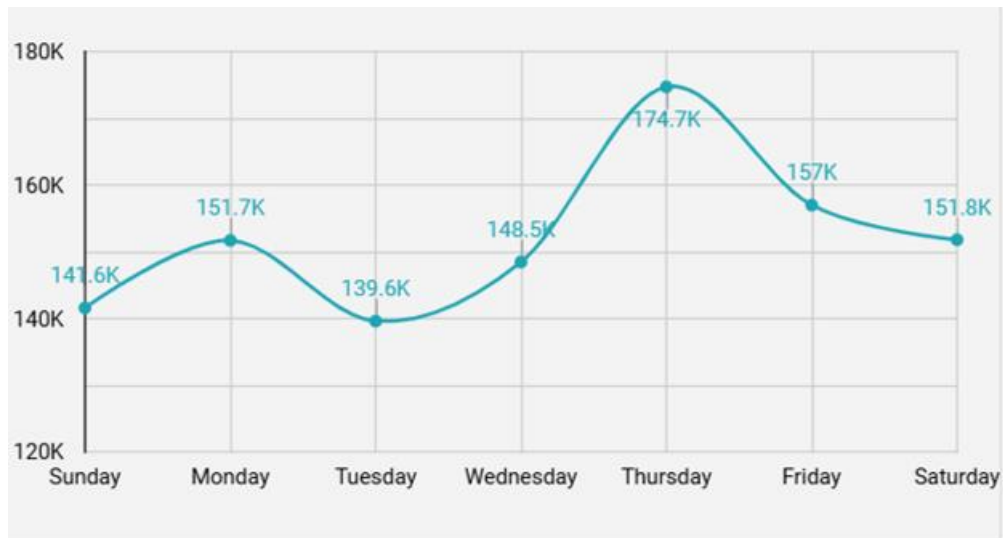


Figure 3 – Daily Visitation Trend (Jan 24-June 25)

- 3.4.3 **Figure 3** illustrates that Thursday market days continue to outperform non-market days, highlighting the enduring role of the traditional market as a driver of activity. 72.4% of visits to the town are during weekdays.

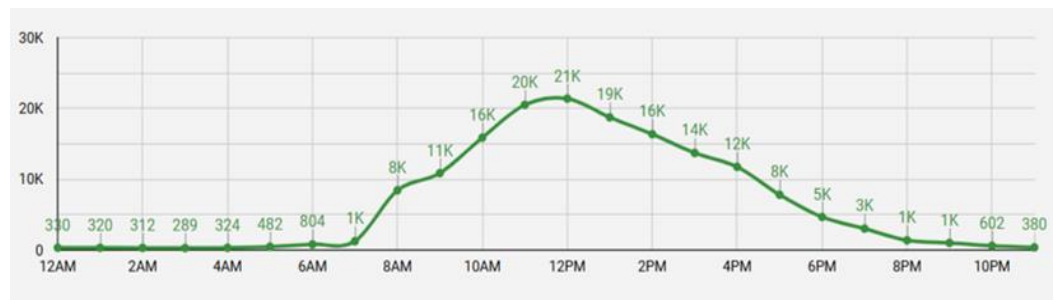


Figure 4 – Hourly Visitation Trend (Jan 24-June 25)

- 3.4.4 **Figure 4** illustrates that visits to the town typically align with normal working hours – climbing steadily from 8am, peaking at mid-day and trailing off at 6pm. This is as one might expect, with activity peaking around lunchtime, particularly with Paston College having two sites close to the town centre. Notably there is very little indication of a night-time economy.

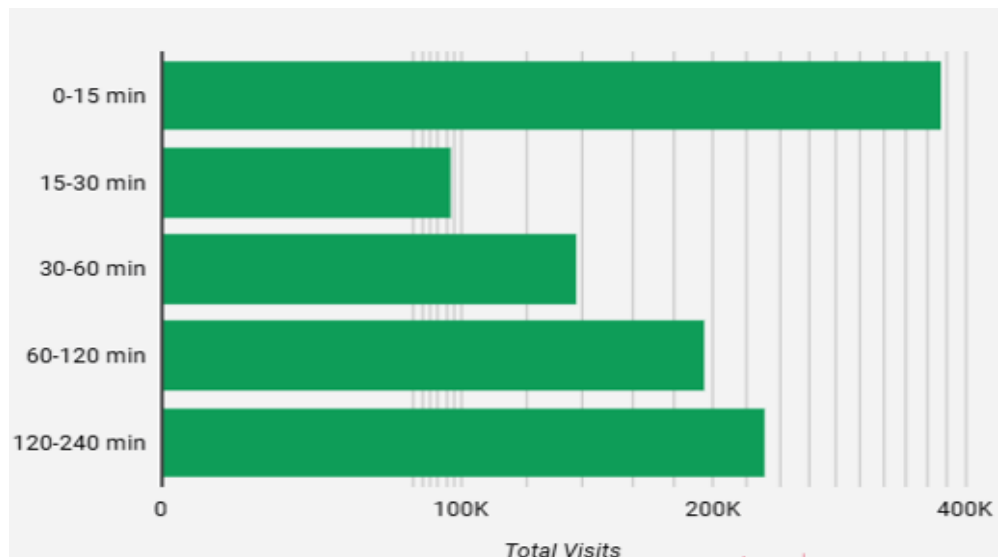


Figure 5 – Visitation Dwell Time – North Walsham (Jan 24-June 25)

3.4.5 **Figure 5** illustrates that the majority of visits are either very brief (<15mins) or 2-4hours+. This suggest that the town centre is likely serving two or three distinct purposes:

- i. **Functional/Convenience** – people are coming into town for quick errands – picking up groceries, using the post office, pharmacy etc. Note that this could also include students/workers entering the town centre to quickly pick up lunch and return to college/work.
- ii. **Work** – people are working within the town and thus reflected in prolonged dwell time.
- iii. **Leisure/Social** – visitors are perhaps spending time socialising and spending sustained time within cafes/restaurants.

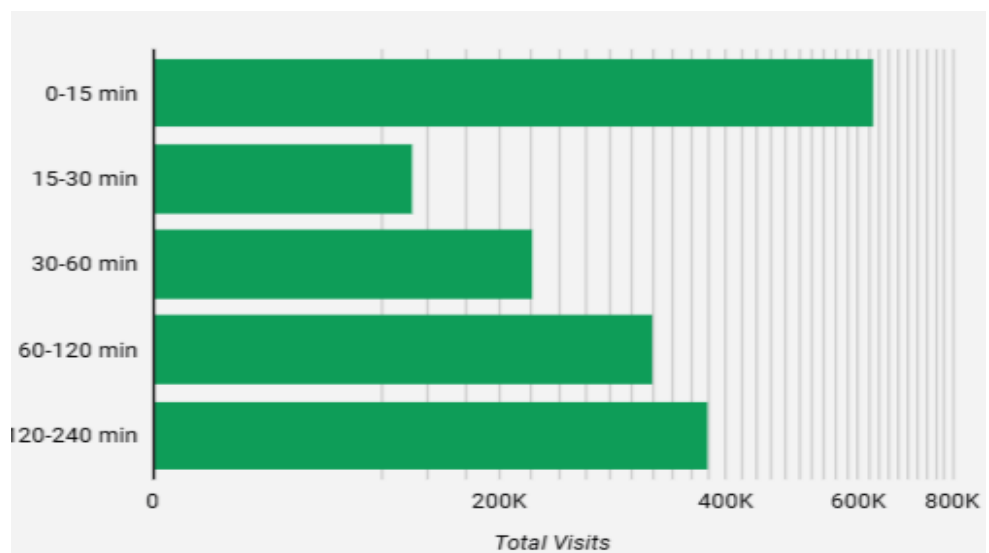


Figure 6 – Visitation Dwell Time – Fakenham (Jan 24-June 25)

3.4.6 For comparison, **Figure 6** illustrates that the dwell time for North Walsham is entirely consistent with Fakenham, a not dissimilar market town to the west of the district.

3.5 Visitor Profiling

Visitor profiling is an important component of town centre health monitoring because it provides actionable insights into who is using the town centre, how they use it, and where they come from. Demographics (age, gender, income level, etc.) help identify which groups are engaging with the town centre. Origin data (where visitors travel from) reveals catchment areas and helps assess the town’s regional draw. Profiling can help estimate spending power and consumer behaviour. This work is still in development, but visitor profiles can be tracked to detect shifts in user demographics, assess the impact of interventions (e.g. new transport links, public realm upgrades) and evaluate resilience to shocks (e.g. post-COVID recovery, cost-of-living impacts).

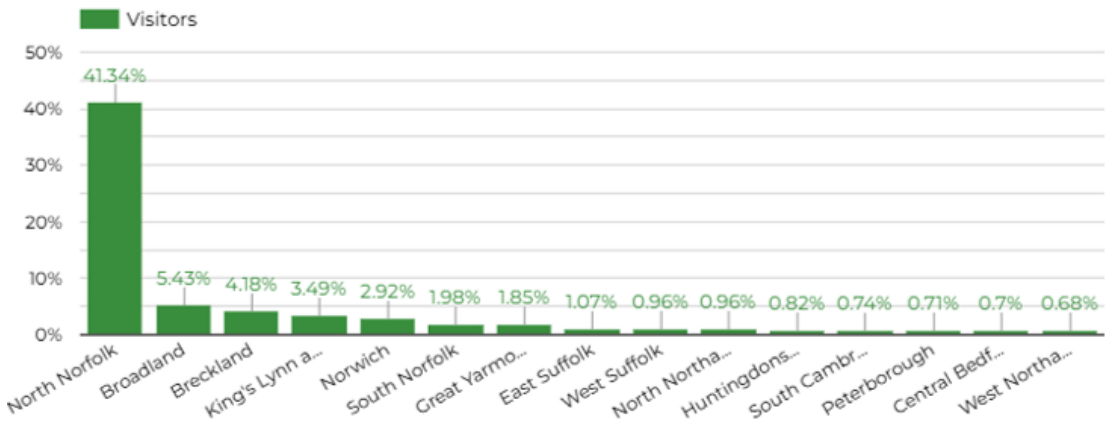


Figure 7 – Visitor Origin (Jan 24-June 25)

3.5.1 **Figure 7** illustrates that North Walsham, unsurprisingly as an inland market town, serves a fairly localised visitor market. Nevertheless, its location is near to the border of the Broadland district, with Aylsham just 8.5 miles away, and so there inevitably will be people travelling from within that locality and similarly from Breckland (20 miles away). North Walsham is also on the Bitten train line to Norwich and so that will account for a proportion of visitors, perhaps commuting for work purposes.

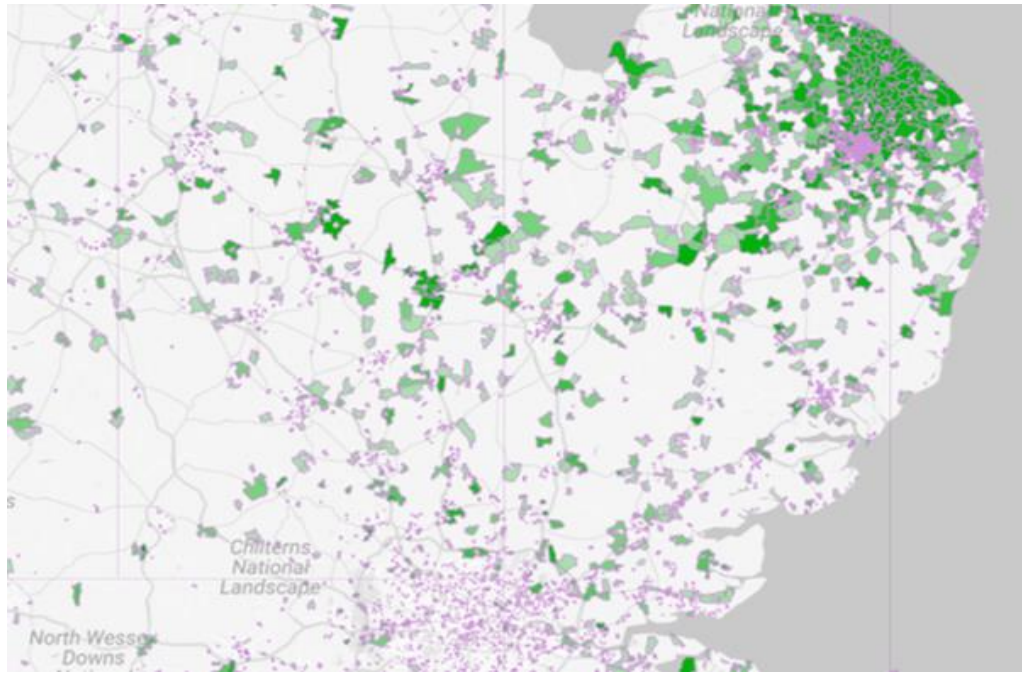


Figure 8 – Visitor Origin Map(Jan 24-June 25) Light green (low intensity) to dark green (high intensity)

3.5.2 The map in **Figure 8** illustrates the visitor origins over the past 18 months, again demonstrating the fairly concentrated local visitor draw.

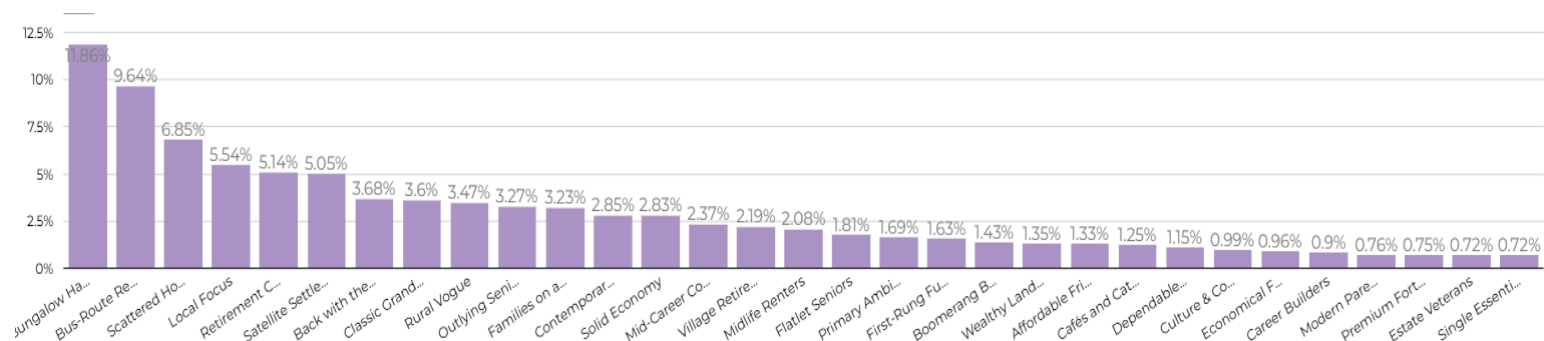


Figure 9 – Visitors by Demographic Segment (Jan 24-June 25)

3.5.3 **Figure 9** breaks down the demographic segments of the people spending time within the town. The top third of visitors are aligned to four profile types. A visual illustration of each of these can be found in **Appendix A**. These are:

- i. **Bungalow Havens** (11.86%) – typically retired couples, homeowners (bungalow estates), degree educated, low technology/online users, lower incomes.
- ii. **Bus-Route Renter** (9.64%) – typically singles renting often private flats, GCSE educated, medium technology/online users, lower incomes.
- iii. **Scattered Homesteads** (6.85%) – typically older/retired couples, homeowners (larger, detached, rural), vocational qualifications, low technology/online users, medium income.
- iv. **Local Focus** (5.54%) – typically families, renting affordable semi-detached homes in neighbouring rural villages, few qualifications, low

technology users (but strong preference for social media), medium incomes.

- 3.5.4 Understanding visitor segmentation can be highly useful when assessing town centre health and vitality. For example, residents in bungalow havens (often older populations) may prioritise accessibility, healthcare, and quiet leisure spaces. Scattered homesteads may rely heavily on transport and need consolidated services when they do visit. Local focus may visit frequently for everyday needs, so maintaining a vibrant mix of shops and services is important. Bus-route renters might be looking for frequent, affordable, and punctual bus services, essential for commuting to work, education, or shopping. Monitoring this over time and comparing with other town centres might help the Council and stakeholders to better align the activities and focus of efforts within these towns.

3.6 Car Park Usage

Monitoring town centre car parking usage (volume and length of stay) helps to corroborate the footfall data and dwell time, identify the key entry points for visitors and whether there are trends in dwell time vs distance from town centre. Potentially this could also inform future pricing models.

- 3.6.1 North Walsham is well served by a number of local car parks, many within less than two minutes' walk to the Market Place. For the purposes of this exercise, this report focuses on the three close-by NNDC-owned car parks. All three car parks have demonstrated a significant increase in car park usage post the HSHAZ project, despite 2025 being an incomplete year at the point of this report being produced.

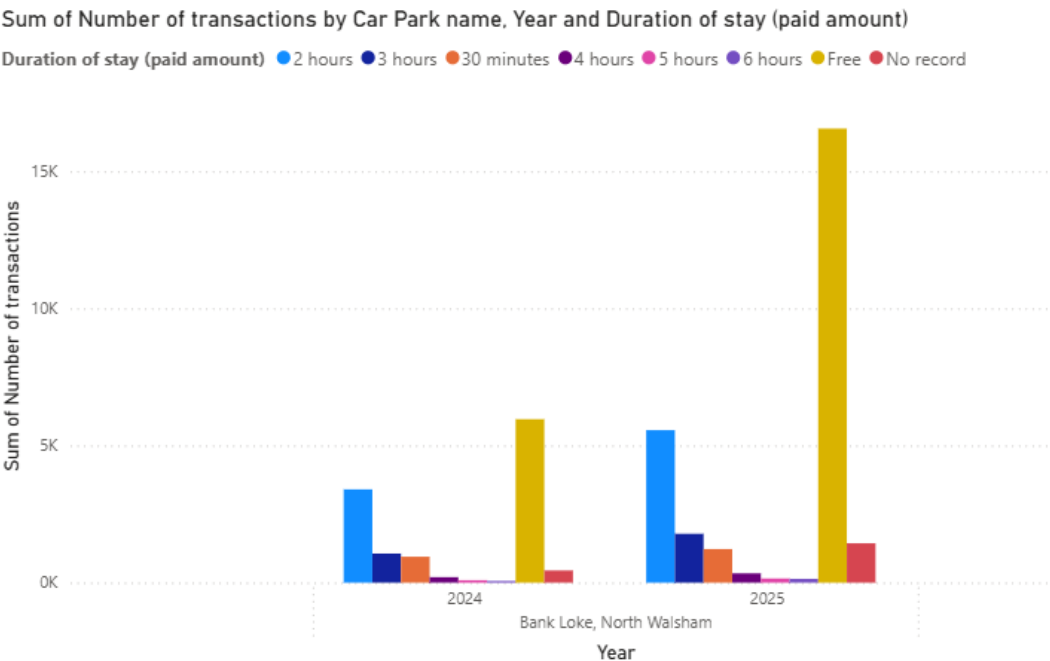


Figure 10 – Bank Loke Car Park

- 3.6.2 Bank Loke Car Park, illustrated in **Figure 10**, shows a marked increase in use between 2024 and 2025, especially for short-stay parking. This is potentially linked both to policy changes (extending free parking from 30 minutes to 1

hour) and possibly to external market shifts, such as the introduction of charges at the adjacent Roys' private car park. The data suggests a healthy churn, enabling frequent, short trips into the town centre.

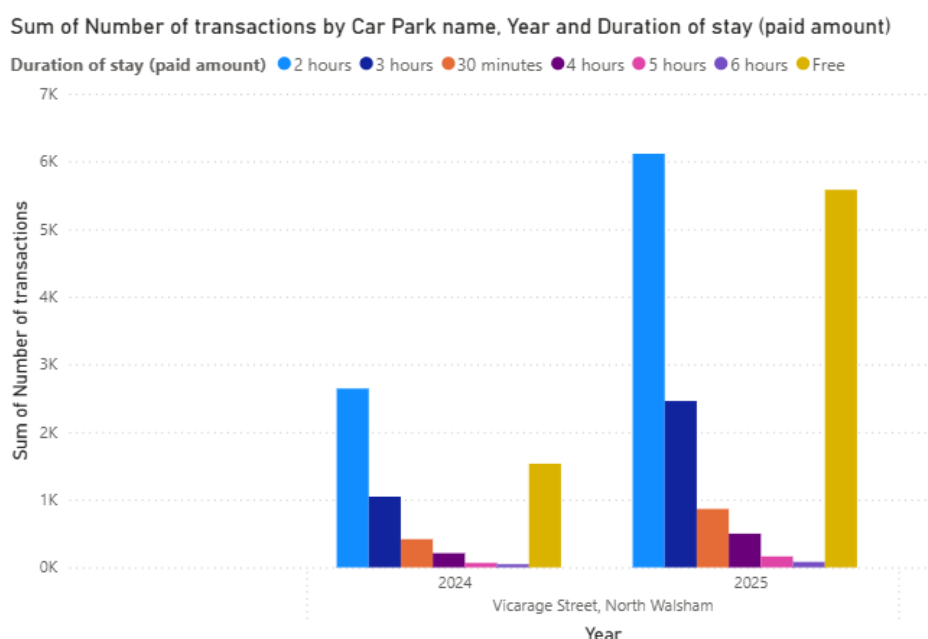


Figure 11 – Vicarage St. Car Park

- 3.6.3 Vicarage St. Car Park, illustrated in **Figure 11**, demonstrates a clear preference for two-hour stays over shorter slots. This indicates visitors parking here are spending longer in the town, perhaps undertaking multiple activities such as shopping, services, and leisure. Nevertheless, the relocation of free parking spaces (with the increase in time) from Market Place into Vicarage Street also potentially accounts for the sizable increase in drivers parking for the free 1-hour provision.
- 3.6.4 The implication is that car park policy can directly support dwell time, which is linked to higher spend per visitor. Comparative evidence from the National Association of Town Centre Management supports this, showing that towns with balanced provision of short and medium stay spaces tend to outperform in terms of both visitor satisfaction and economic yield.

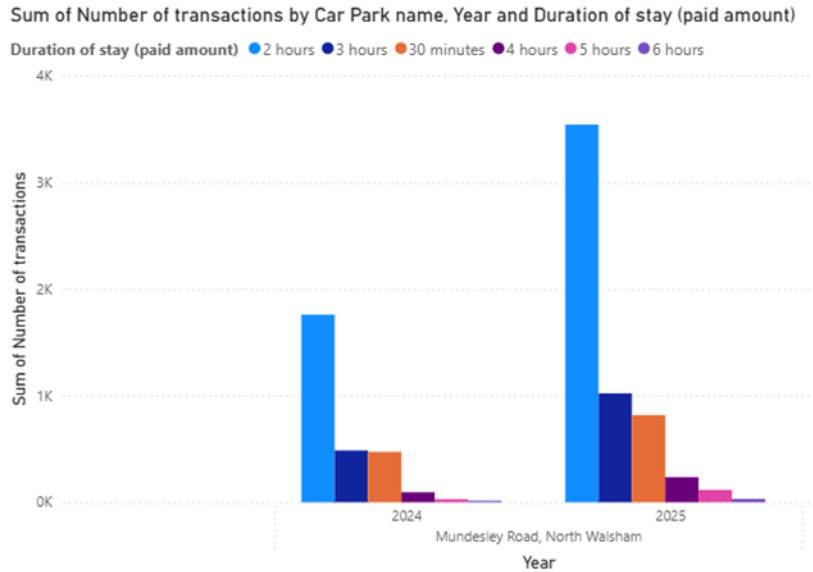


Figure 12 – Mundesley Road Car Park

3.6.5 Mundesley Road Car Park, illustrated in **Figure 12**, is more set back than the other two car parks. It does not have a short-term free parking provision, but nevertheless shows a preference for visitors to stay for 2 hours.

3.7 Vacancy Rate, Business Unit Mix & New Investment

Monitoring town centre vacancy rates, the mix of business unit types, and the volume and nature of new investments provides a comprehensive picture of economic vitality, resilience and future potential.

i. Vacancy Rates

High vacancy rates often signal economic distress, while low vacancy suggests strong demand and confidence. Moreover, vacancy rate monitoring, with sufficient time elapsed, helps to assess the impact of regeneration schemes, policy interventions, or economic shocks (e.g. COVID-19, cost-of-living crisis). Persistent vacancies in specific locations may indicate structural issues (e.g. poor access, low footfall, unattractive environment).

ii. Business Unit Mix

A diverse mix (retail, hospitality, services, culture, community uses) supports resilience and broadens appeal. Over-reliance on one sector (e.g. retail) increases vulnerability to market shifts.

iii. New Investment

Monitoring unit take up (both new and expansion into bigger units) is a good proxy for tracking business confidence in the town centre from both public and private sectors. In addition, it can also reveal emerging trends (e.g. shift to leisure, co-working, residential, health & wellbeing).

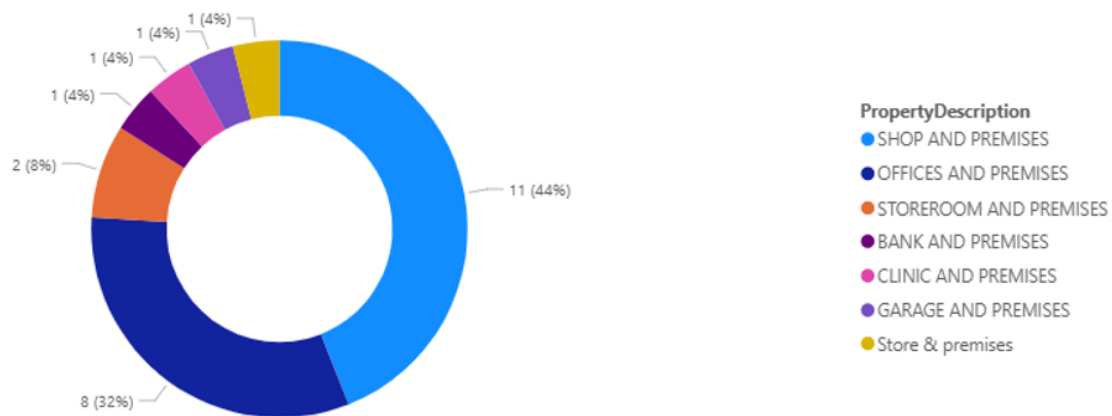


Figure 13 – Vacant units in North Walsham town centre

3.7.1 **Figure 13** illustrates that there are presently 18 (out of 138) units vacant in North Walsham which means a vacancy rate of 13%. However, in terms of retail there are 11 units (8%).

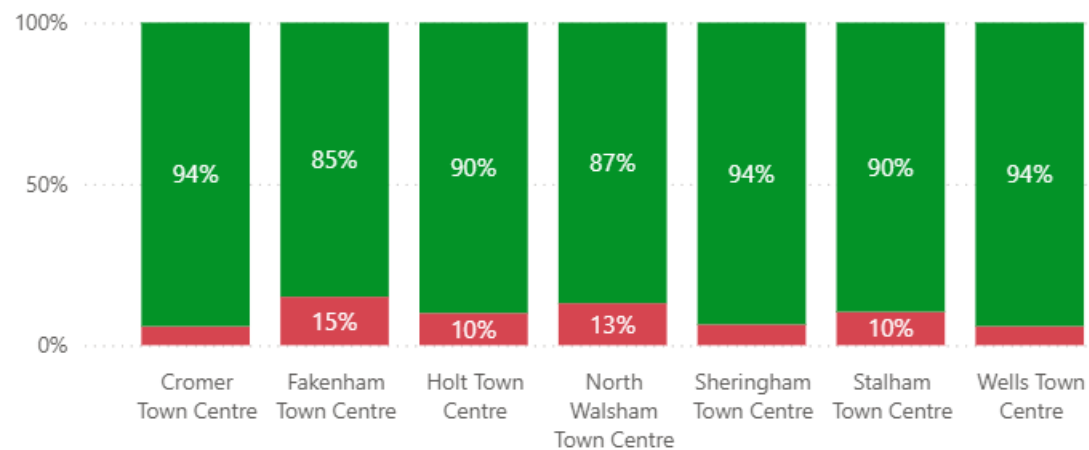


Figure 14 – Vacancy Rates – North Norfolk Towns

3.7.2 **Figure 14** compares vacancy rates of the towns of north Norfolk. Notably the coastal resort towns have a distinctly lower vacancy rate (6% average) vs the market towns of Fakenham, Holt, North Walsham and Stalham, which range 10-15%. As of mid-2025, the average UK town centre business unit vacancy rate is approximately 13.6% for high streets and 16.9% for shopping centres (source: [Savills](#)). As such, North Walsham's vacancy rate is considered comparable to other local market towns and no higher than the UK average.

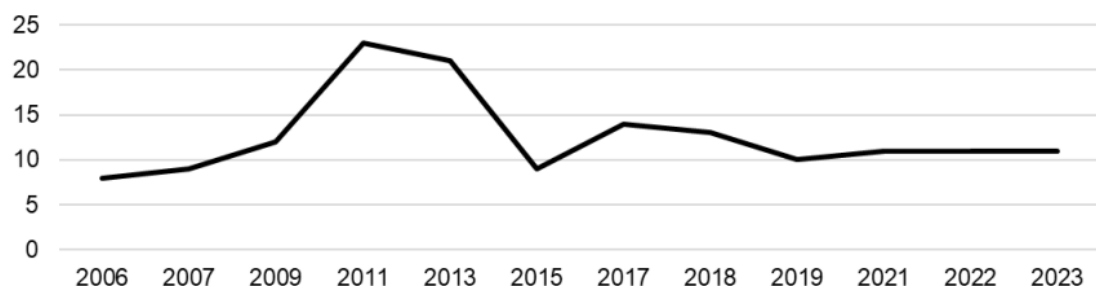


Figure 15 – Vacant Unit Count – North Walsham – Market Town Report 2023

- 3.7.3 Refinements to the Council's town centre monitoring should include trend data to understand vacancy rate changes over time and highlight any concerns. However, at the point of this report, the latest trend data available is from the Market Town Report 2023 (2024 is not available yet) which is produced by Norfolk County Council. This captures vacancy units (not rates) but is believed to be conducted as a visual snapshot and, as such, may not reflect the full breadth of units available. Nevertheless, **Figures 15** suggests that North Walsham town centre has experienced a relatively stable period since 2015, with unit vacancies rising and peaking in the period post the global financial crisis recession of 2008-2009.

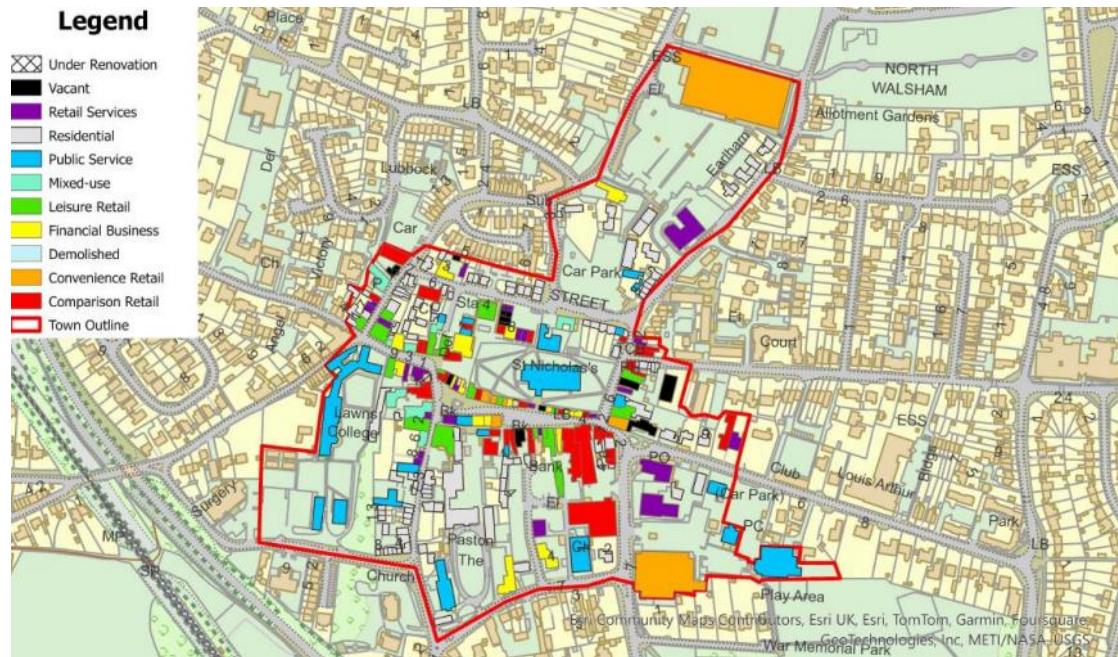


Figure 16 – North Walsham Town Centre by unit type

- 3.7.4 The Market Town Report 2023 also helpfully illustrates the business units by use (see **Figure 16**). An exercise to monitor this is presently being undertaken but was not finalised at the production of this report. Town centre uses in the UK are likely to continue to evolve due to changing consumer habits, economic pressures, and planning reforms—particularly around permitted development rights. It is therefore considered that there would be benefit to developing tools to monitor this.
- 3.7.5 Similarly, there is value in monitoring new investment within towns - whether new start-ups, businesses relocating from other locations, or those in smaller existing units upgrading to larger premises. Such investments within a town, even if simply the turnover of existing units, can be a strong indicator of business confidence. North Walsham has seen a number of such investments within the town centre, both during and since the public realm improvements, suggesting a reasonable degree of business confidence. Whilst not exhaustive, the list of new investments includes:

- Catharsis
- Scrumptious Bakes
- The Mortgage Point
- Phoenix Group (former Barclays)
- Bupa Dental

- Peasants Tavern
- The Craft Bakery
- Morisons Daily
- Coffeesmiths
- Dolly's Gifts and Home
- Norfolk Raws
- The Market Plaice Chippy

3.7.6 In addition, following its restoration through the HSHAZ project, the Cedars Building is presently at 100% (of available) capacity. Presently this is occupied by North Walsham Town Council, Norfolk County Council Registrars, an Independent Financial Advisors and a software developer.

3.8 Public Transport Patronage

Monitoring public transport (train and bus) usage is a powerful tool in assessing town centre health, especially when considered alongside footfall data. Desirably we want our towns to become more sustainable, with people adopting different modes of transport (including walking and cycling), with trains and buses being the easiest to monitor. Desirably, we would seek to better understand the destinations, frequency of movement, and the inbound/outbound data to see the net gain or loss - are people leaving the town to go to work elsewhere or coming into the town for work/to visit?

Number of tickets (outbound and inbound tickets counted separately)

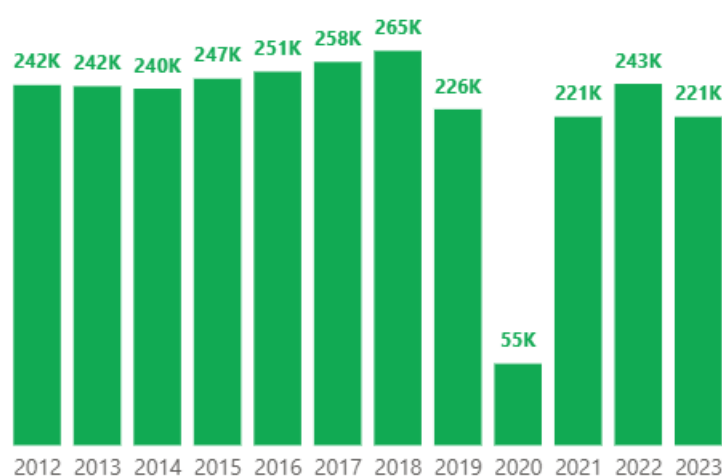


Figure 17 – Train Station footfall by year

- 3.8.1 **Figure 17** illustrates the footfall data for North Walsham train station (inbound and outbound). Whilst unfortunately the present data set is limited to financial year end 2023, the data shows a substantial fall in 2020 – almost certainly as a consequence of the pandemic – with a degree of recovery in 21-23, although not to the 2018 high.
- 3.8.2 There would be value in pursuing additional trainline data in order to get a broader picture. Similarly, there would be benefit in obtaining data on bus patronage, although it is understood that there has been some hesitancy around the provision of this due to potential commercial sensitivities. Nevertheless, it would be anticipated that North Walsham will have likely seen an uplift in bus usage, with the investment in the new 'Travel Hub' on New Road

coinciding with the Government's bus fare caps (£2 – January 2023-December 2024 and £3 since January 2025). Notably, the X55 bus service in North Walsham has seen an increase in frequency and service enhancements in 2025, aimed at improving connectivity between North Walsham and Norwich.

4. Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The recommendations of this report align with the following objectives of the Corporate Plan: 'Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure' (*An environment for business to thrive in & Infrastructure to Support Growth*) – specifically the objective: *working with our Market and Resort Towns to reinforce their roles as local service centres, centres of employment, financial services and business activity, served by public transport*; as well as 'Developing Our Communities' (*Increase accessibility and inclusion for all*).

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial or resource implications immediately arising from this report. The Council has a dedicated Corporate Data Analyst within the Corporate Programme & Project Management team. It is suggested that the Council continues to develop and refine town centre health monitoring using existing resources.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The report does not have financial implications

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no identified legal implications arising from this report.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

No comment provided

7. Risks

- 7.1 There are no identified risks arising from this report

8. Net ZeroTarget

- 8.1 *The Council's Net Zero Strategy & Action Plan requires all decisions to be assessed and tested for consistency against the Net Zero 2030 Strategy & Climate Action Plan. The details of this report and its recommendation have no direct immediate on delivery against this strategy.*

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

- 9.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for the people and communities of north Norfolk. We respect and value difference in our communities and across our own workforce. We want everyone to feel included and able to play their part in making north Norfolk the best place to live, learn work and visit. Improving how the Council monitors town centre health will assist the Council in proposing any future interventions that support inclusiveness and accessibility.

10. Community Safety issues

- 10.1 There are no identified community safety issues arising from this report.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 11.1 This report uses a methodology for monitoring the health and vitality of north Norfolk town centres. Within this framework it considered how North Walsham town centre has fared since the end of the North Walsham High Street Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme. Against these key measures, arguably North Walsham has fared well, observing increased footfall and car park usage, and demonstrated business confidence through new investments in the town, including the Cedars building, which was an important deliverable of the programme.

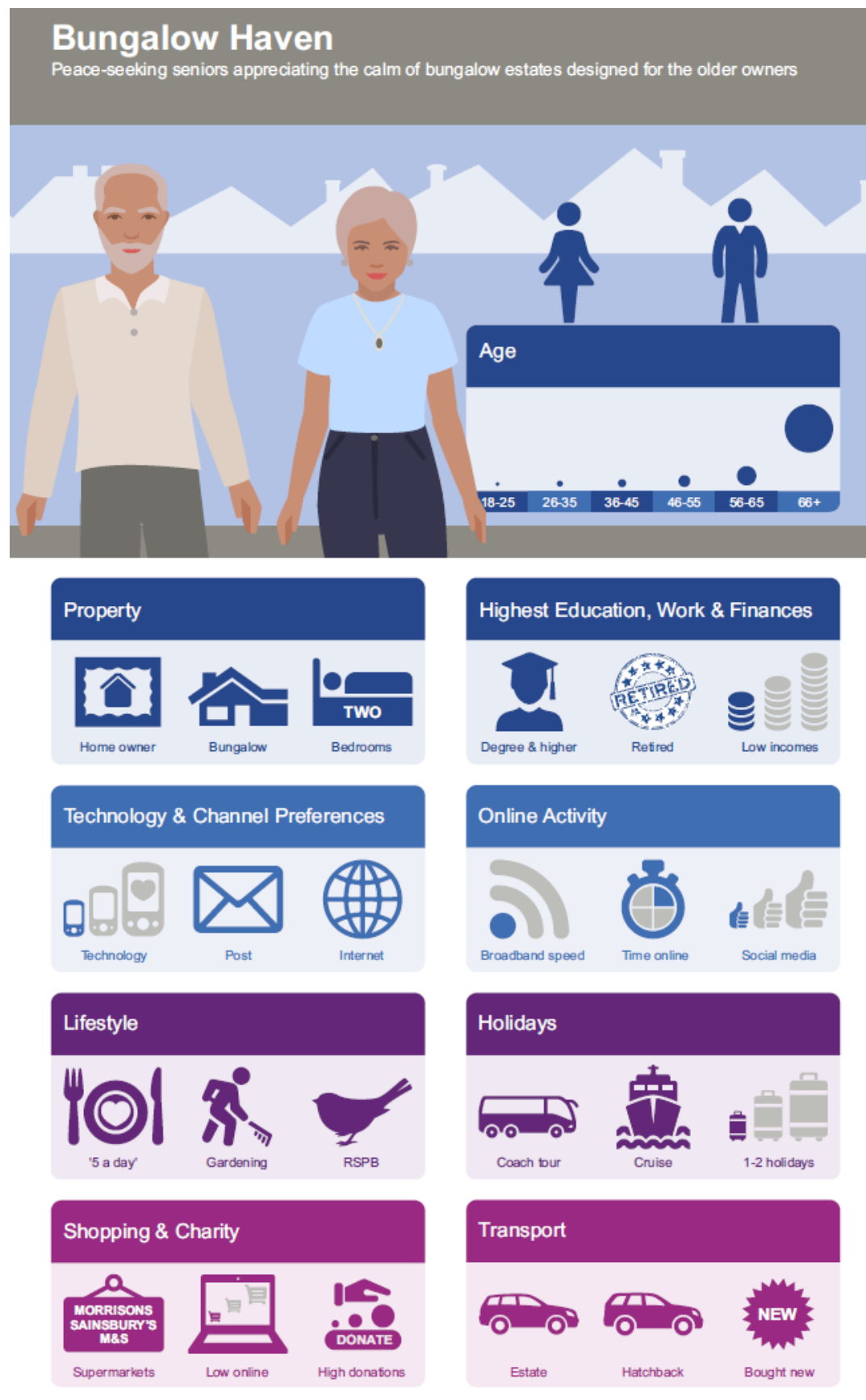
- 11.2 In July 2024, the Committee considered the evaluation report that was prepared at the closure of the programme. The report outlined some of the lessons learnt from the delivery of the programme. However, one of the key lessons drawn out by the Committee was that, at the point of submitting the bid to Historic England, the baseline position for many of the key indicators of town centre vitality for North Walsham were not understood. Subsequently efforts have been made, demonstrated within this report, to improve the Council's understanding. Very recent improvements to key data sources – which are presently being reviewed – will assist further in refining this, including better understanding of comparative data (local, regional, national), trend analysis (to help highlight the success of interventions/'red flag' concerns) and monitoring new unit take up. It is also acknowledged, although not the focus of this report, that a 'healthy' town is not simply about economic factors, and could include indicators such as health & wellbeing, social & community, environmental and accessibility.

- 11.3 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report recognising the contribution the HSHAZ programme made to the achievement of key Corporate Plan objectives.
2. Provide any feedback in relation to the proposed framework for town centre health monitoring, which builds further on some of the positive work already undertaken to profile north Norfolk town centres.

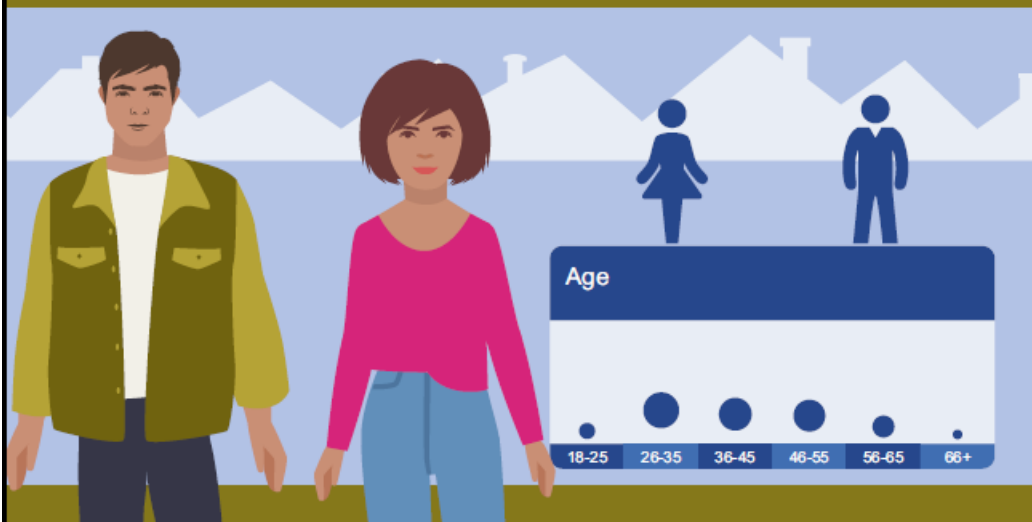
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Appendix A



Bus-Route Renters

Singles renting affordable private flats further away from central amenities and often on main roads



Property



Renting



Flat



Bedrooms

Highest Education, Work & Finances



GCSEs



Full-time



Low incomes

Technology & Channel Preferences



Technology



Post



Email

Online Activity



Broadband speed



Time online



Social media

Lifestyle



Cinema



Video games



Music

Holidays



Lakes & mountains



Backpacking



5+ holidays

Shopping & Charity



Supermarkets



Medium online



Low donations

Transport



Bus



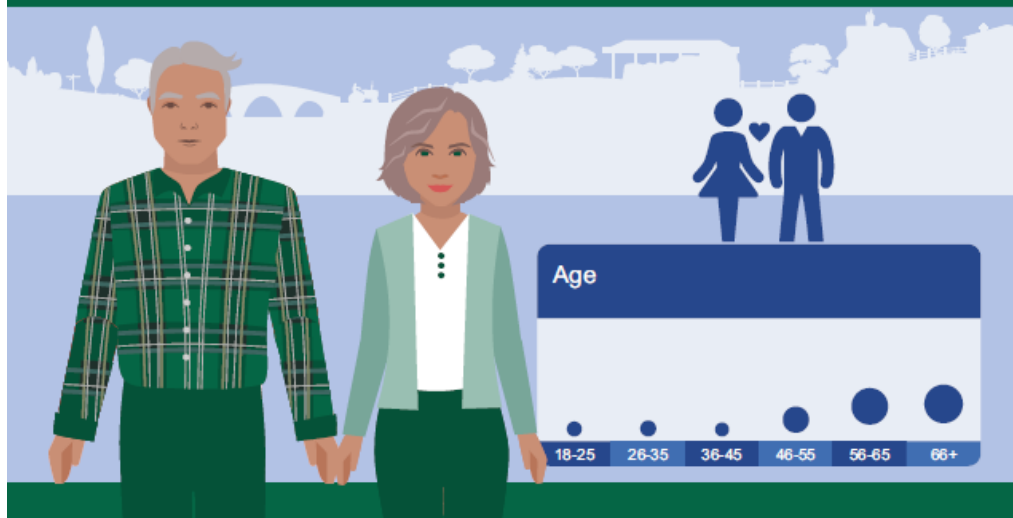
Walking



Hatchback

Scattered Homesteads

Older households appreciating rural calm in stand-alone houses within agricultural landscapes



Property



Home owner



Detached



Bedrooms

Highest Education, Work & Finances



Vocational qualifications



Retired



Medium incomes

Technology & Channel Preferences



Technology



Internet



Email

Online Activity



Broadband speed



Time online



Social media

Lifestyle



Pet dog



Horse or pony



RSPB

Holidays



Winter sports



Lakes & mountains



1-2 holidays

Shopping & Charity



Supermarkets



Medium online



Medium donations

Transport



Off roader/SUV



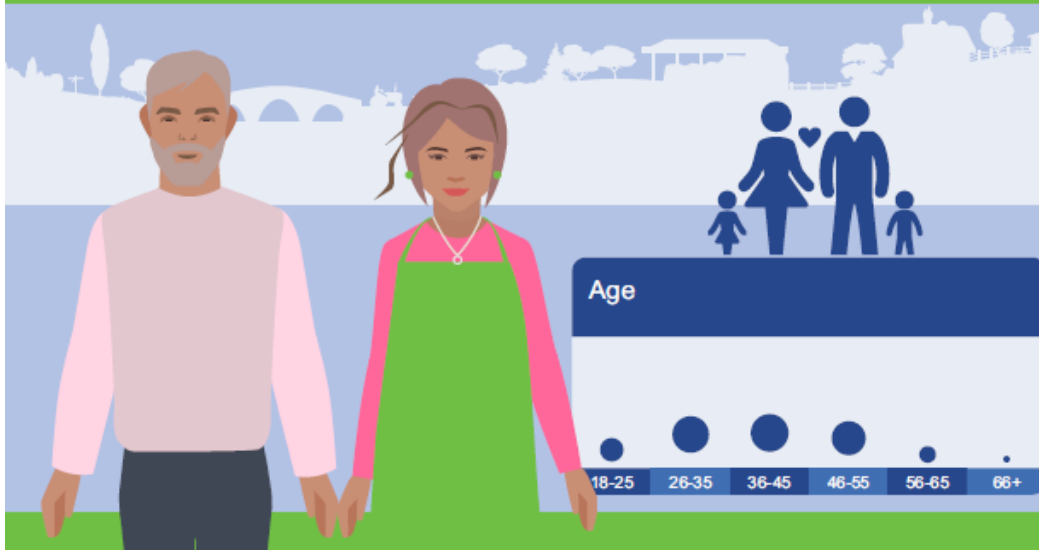
Saloon



Diesel

Local Focus

Rural families in affordable village homes who are reliant on the local economy for jobs



Property



Council / HA



Semi-detached



Bedrooms

Highest Education, Work & Finances



Few qualifications



Full-time



Medium incomes

Technology & Channel Preferences



Technology



Internet



Email

Online Activity



Broadband speed



Time online



Social media

Lifestyle



Video games



Pet rabbit



Gym

Holidays



Holiday centre



Lakes & mountains



1-2 holidays

Shopping & Charity



Supermarkets



High online



Low donations

Transport



Micro car



People carrier



Diesel

Mobile & Digital Connectivity in North Norfolk	
Executive Summary	This report provides a comprehensive assessment of the current state of mobile and digital connectivity across the north Norfolk district, identifying critical gaps in coverage, examining the impact on residents, businesses and visitors, and presenting evidence-based recommendations for strategic intervention.
Options considered	The Council could consider taking no further action and leave it to the mobile and digital operators to deliver without intervention.
Consultation(s)	N/A
Recommendations	It is recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny committee gives consideration to convening a dedicated scrutiny session on mobile connectivity and formally invite the four main Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) - EE, O2, Three and Vodafone - to attend. This will help the Council to better understand their investment plans and present the opportunity to work towards some agreed objectives that will improve and expedite digital connectivity within the district.
Reasons for recommendations	Concerns around poor mobile and digital connectivity have been raised by residents reporting to Members over a number of years. Moreover, MNOs suggest that there are site planning challenges in rural areas like north Norfolk and capacity constraints during peak tourism periods. It is considered that the Council seeks to take a proactive approach to addressing this matter and that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is well placed to provide the appropriate public forum for this.
Background papers	N/A

Wards affected	All Wards
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr John Toye – Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth
Contact Officer	Stuart Quick, Economic Growth Manager, stuart.quick@north-norfolk.gov.uk , 01263 516263

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Investing in our Local Economy & Infrastructure Our Greener Future Developing our Communities
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	North Norfolk Economic Strategy

Corporate Governance:

Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	No
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

1. Purpose of the Report

The objectives of this report are to:

- 1.1 Provide Members with an evidence-based overview of mobile and digital connectivity across north Norfolk, drawing on the latest empirical data including Norfolk County Council's refuse vehicle mapping project.
- 1.2 Outline the key barriers to improved connectivity including planning restrictions, technical limitations, commercial viability, and operator delivery performance against commitments.
- 1.3 Set out the strategic options for the Council to intervene as convenor, facilitator, and advocate, balancing statutory duties with opportunities for partnership working.

2. Introduction & Background

2.1 Strategic Importance of Digital Connectivity

- 2.11 Digital connectivity has become fundamental infrastructure, equivalent in importance to traditional utilities such as water, gas, and electricity. For north Norfolk, a predominantly rural and coastal district with dispersed communities and a significant visitor economy, reliable mobile and broadband connectivity is essential for:
 - **Economic Development:** Supporting local businesses, tourism operators, agricultural enterprises, and enabling remote working opportunities that can help address demographic challenges and retain younger residents.
 - **Social Inclusion:** Ensuring all residents can access digital health services, educational resources, online banking, and government services increasingly delivered through 'digital by default' approaches.
 - **Emergency Services:** Providing critical communications infrastructure for emergency response, particularly important given north Norfolk's vulnerable coastal position and dispersed rural communities. As analogue care alarm systems are phased out in favour of digital and mobile-enabled alternatives, ensuring sufficient mobile phone coverage will become increasingly critical.
 - **Public Service Delivery:** Enabling efficient delivery of council services and supporting the digital transformation of local government operations.

2.2 National Policy Framework

- 2.21 The previous Government's Digital Strategy and Levelling Up agenda explicitly recognised digital connectivity as a key enabler of economic growth and social mobility. Key national initiatives included:

- [UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy \(2023\)](#): Sets ambitions for universal 5G coverage, improved rural connectivity, and nationwide gigabit broadband by 2030, with specific recognition of the challenges faced by rural areas.
- [Shared Rural Network \(SRN\)](#): A £1 billion public-private partnership between Government and mobile operators (EE, O2, Three, Vodafone) designed to increase geographic 4G coverage to 95% by 2025 and eliminate 'total not-spots' where no operator provides coverage by 2027.
- [Project Gigabit](#): Targets the hardest-to-reach premises with £5 billion of public investment to complement commercial fibre builds, with Norfolk designated as Lot 7 for intervention procurement.
- **Planning Reforms**: The [Telecommunications Infrastructure \(Leasehold Property\) Act 2021](#) and reforms to permitted development rights are intended to reduce barriers to infrastructure deployment while maintaining appropriate environmental safeguards.

2.22 The Government's Digital Strategy establishes clear connectivity objectives:

Coverage Targets:

- 95% UK mobile coverage with 4G by 2025.
- Elimination of 'total not-spots' by 2027 through the Shared Rural Network programme.
- Gigabit-capable broadband available to 85% of premises by 2025, 99% by 2030.
- Standalone 5G coverage in all populated areas by 2030.

2.3 Regional Context

2.31 Locally, Norfolk authorities have supported an effort to adopt innovative approaches to mapping and addressing coverage gaps. Norfolk County Council's Digital Connectivity Strategy establishes a framework for coordinated action across Norfolk, recognising the particular challenges faced by rural districts such as north Norfolk. These include:

- **Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN)**: Successfully improved superfast broadband availability county-wide, though rural areas continue to require targeted intervention for gigabit-capable connectivity.
- **Innovation in Monitoring**: Norfolk County Council launched a new online tool that helps residents check mobile signals in their area, using data collected from refuse collection vehicles operating on Norfolk's roads, providing unprecedented real-world coverage data.
- **Fixed Wireless Access (Starlink)**: This initiative has trialled Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite via Starlink technology, to reach remote and hard-to-reach communities where conventional fibre or fixed-wireless is economically unviable. These have been installed on ten village halls in Norfolk, offering free Wi-Fi to local people. Locally, Morston, Hanworth and Swanton Abbott are benefitting from this technology. The possibility of leveraging this service to install Small Cell technology that could improve local mobile phone coverage is presently being explored.

3. Current State Of Connectivity In North Norfolk

3.1 Norfolk County Council's Refuse Lorry Mapping Initiative

- 3.11 Norfolk County Council's Streetwave project has seen devices installed on refuse vehicles to gather data on signal strength and download speed, to create maps of coverage quality. This initiative provides unprecedented real-world data on mobile connectivity across Norfolk and provides the opportunity to challenge the national figures.
- 3.12 **Key Methodology:**
- Data collection covers all four major mobile network operators (EE, O2, Three, Vodafone).
 - Measurements taken during regular refuse collection routes, providing comprehensive geographic coverage.
 - Real-world signal testing that accounts for terrain, vegetation, and built environment factors.
 - Comparison between operator-claimed coverage maps and actual signal performance.
- 3.13 **Critical Findings:** Despite reports from Ofcom stating 95% of properties should receive 4G connections, the refuse lorry mapping has revealed significant discrepancies between theoretical coverage models and actual user experience, particularly affecting the most rural areas of north Norfolk.
- 3.14 The coverage data is publicly available through an interactive map at <https://app.streetwave.co/coverage-checker/norfolk-council/map>, enabling residents and businesses to check real-world coverage in their specific locations. Please see **Appendix A** for coverage maps for the four MNOs.

3.2 Identified Coverage Gaps and Problem Areas

- 3.21 Analysis through the Streetwave project has identified several critical mobile coverage gaps across north Norfolk. In particular, communities in Happisburgh, Horning, Gunthorpe, Tunstead and Neatishead have been identified as some of the worst affected by poor connectivity, with these villages frequently struggling with poor mobile coverage, creating daily inconveniences and potentially serious safety implications.
- 3.22 Areas around Norwich and Kings Lynn generally have the best signal, highlighting the urban-rural digital divide that particularly affects north Norfolk's dispersed communities.
- 3.23 The empirical evidence gathered through this mapping approach has revealed the gap between operator claims (see [Signalchecker](#) and [Ofcom](#)) and *lived experience*. This is particularly significant for north Norfolk given its:
- **Coastal Geography:** Challenging radio frequency propagation conditions along the coast.
 - **Rural Settlement Pattern:** Dispersed communities often at the edge of commercial viability for network investment.
 - **Visitor Economy:** Seasonal visitor peaks placing additional strain on network capacity.

- **Demographic Profile:** Older population, potentially more vulnerable to digital exclusion.

3.24 In addition to this mapping exercise, Norfolk residents have been invited to report any mobile coverage issues. To date over 1000 responses have been received. **Figure 1** illustrates a particularly high concentration of reports in north Norfolk, accepting that this could in part be due to the local efforts made to encourage residents to provide feedback.

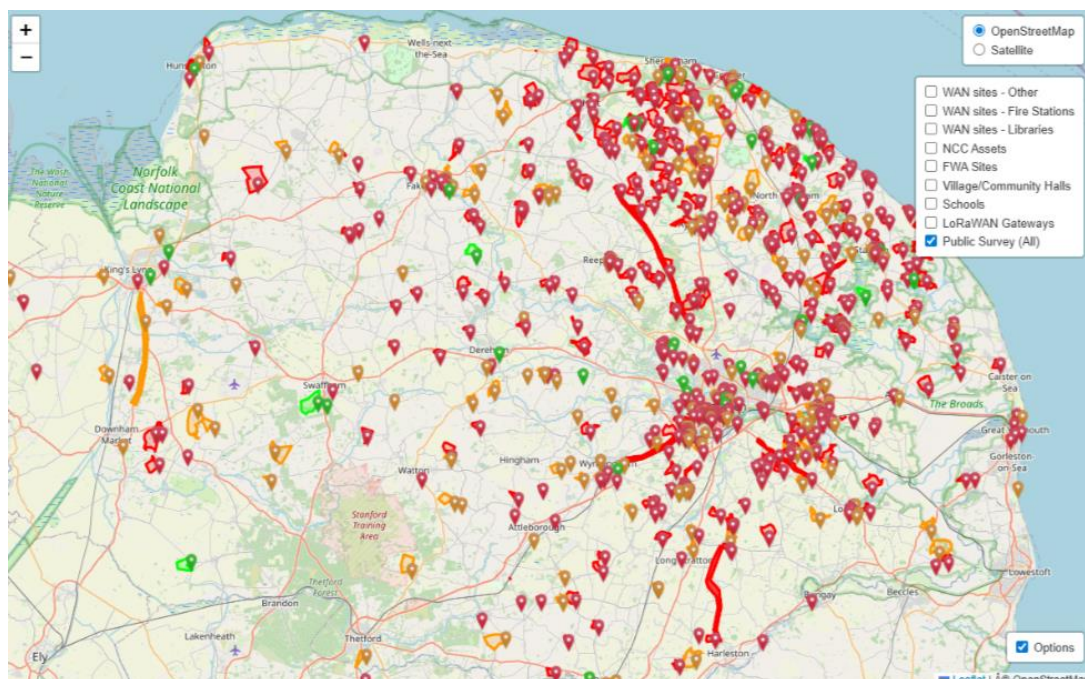


Figure 1 – Mobile Coverage Public Survey results

3.3 Broadband and Fixed Connectivity

- 3.31 **Superfast Norfolk Legacy:** The Better Broadband for Norfolk programme delivered significant improvements to fixed broadband connectivity. However, rural areas of north Norfolk continue to experience challenges with 'last mile' connectivity to properties in remote locations.
- 3.32 **Future-Proofing Requirements:** The increasing demand for gigabit-capable infrastructure to support economic development, remote working, and digital service delivery means that the previous 'superfast' standard (≥ 30 Mbps) is no longer adequate for contemporary needs.
- 3.33 **Commercial Rollout Patterns:** Full fibre deployment by commercial providers typically prioritises areas of higher population density, meaning rural north Norfolk communities often face longer wait times for upgrades without targeted intervention.

4. Planning & Infrastructure Deployment Challenges

4.1 Current Planning Framework

4.11 Mobile network infrastructure deployment in north Norfolk operates within the following planning framework:

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** Supports high quality communications infrastructure while requiring consideration of visual impact, promoting mast sharing, and protecting designated landscapes and heritage assets.
- **General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) Part 16:** Provides permitted development rights for telecommunications installations up to specific height limits, with prior approval processes for larger installations, recent reforms having streamlined some procedures.
- **Local Planning Context:** NNDC's current and emerging Local Plan outlines that mast proposals must balance connectivity needs with environmental protection in a district with extensive Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation and numerous heritage assets.

4.12 5G and Satellite Services

4.13 Presently Norfolk as a whole is ranked 86 out of 96 areas for mobile coverage (see [here](#)), with Vodafone being particularly poor on 5G delivery in Norfolk (0.3% coverage). EE and Three are leading the 5G rollout, with coverage in over 100 towns and cities each (see [here](#)). EE has committed to full nationwide 5G coverage by 2028, and Three is on a similar trajectory. O2 presently covers 94 towns and cities and had aimed for 50% population coverage by 2023. No firm date for full coverage has been announced. Vodafone has 5G in 94 towns and cities. Rollout in rural areas is anticipated to be slower, likely to inevitably lag behind easier wins in more densely populated urban area and where 360 degree coverage can be achieved.

4.14 Vodafone, in partnership with AST SpaceMobile, is preparing to launch a satellite-based mobile broadband service by 2026. This service aims to provide 2G, 4G, and 5G connectivity directly to standard smartphones, especially in areas with poor terrestrial coverage (see [here](#)). These Direct-to-Device (D2D) satellite services are being supported by Ofcom, which is currently consulting on regulations to enable their use (see [here](#)). The aim is to improve coverage in remote areas and provide backup connectivity during terrestrial outages. Other MNOs may also participate in satellite-based services, but Vodafone is understood to be the most advanced in its plans.

4.2 North Norfolk Specific Challenges

4.21 Environmental Designations

- Extensive National Landscape designation across the district restricting potential development options.
- Conservation Area restrictions in historic market towns and villages
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) constraints.

- Comparatively large numbers of Listed Buildings (and their settings) requiring careful consideration of visual impact.

4.22 **Community Concerns**

- Recurring objections to telecommunications infrastructure based on visual impact grounds.
- Health-related objections to mobile masts despite robust scientific evidence of safety from Public Health England and Ofcom.
- Need for enhanced community engagement and education about the essential nature of modern telecommunications infrastructure.

4.23 **Technical and Commercial Constraints**

- Limited suitable sites in optimal locations for network coverage in rural areas
- Land ownership complications and site rental costs potentially deterring operator investment.
- Challenging radio frequency propagation conditions in coastal and rural environments.
- Seasonal capacity constraints during peak tourism periods.

4.3 **NNDC's Planning Process**

4.31 NNDC currently processes telecommunications applications as submitted, with standard consultation procedures, but undertakes limited proactive site identification or strategic facilitation.

4.32 In the last four years (1 January 2020-23 September 2025 there have been in north Norfolk:

- 15 planning applications related to telecommunication proposals **(all of which were approved)**.
- 4 prior approval applications related telecommunications proposal **(two of which were approved and two refused)**.
- 53 notification applications relating to permitted development associated with telecommunication proposals.

4.33 These statistics suggest that the Council's planning determinations are not likely to be posing a barrier to the delivery of local telecommunication infrastructure.

5. **Economic and Social Impact Assessment**

5.1 **Economic Impact of Poor Connectivity**

5.12 **Business Development Constraints**

Economic research consistently demonstrates the correlation between digital connectivity and productivity growth. Poor digital connectivity can result in:

- Limited ability for businesses to operate cloud-based systems, online booking platforms, and digital payment processing.
- Reduced competitiveness in the tourism sector where visitors increasingly expect seamless digital connectivity.
- Barriers to remote working opportunities that could help address demographic challenges and retain skilled workers.
- Constraints on agricultural businesses requiring real-time data communications e.g. for precision farming and environmental monitoring.

5.13 Visitor Economy Implications

The north Norfolk visitor economy is estimated to deliver in excess of half a billion pounds per annum to the local economy (£547.5m – Economic Impact of Tourism Report for North Norfolk 2024). Inconsistent digital connectivity can cause:

- A failure to meet visitor expectations for digital wayfinding, real-time information updates, and social media sharing.
- Transaction risks when card payment terminals and digital booking systems lack reliable connectivity.
- Competitive disadvantage versus better-connected destinations in Norfolk and neighbouring counties.

5.2 Social Impact and Digital Exclusion

5.21 The rurality of north Norfolk is such that access to essential and emergency services is often challenging, with many having to travel significant distances to access these. This issue is further exacerbated by poor digital connectivity, which in part could help to overcome some of the accessibility issues. The UK's transition from analogue to digital telephony (PSTN switch-off by 2025) means many care alarms and emergency systems now rely on internet or mobile networks. However, digital services are vulnerable to power outages, and without battery backup or mobile failover, these systems can fail completely during emergencies. In areas with poor mobile signal, residents may have no alternative communication method if landline-based digital services go down. This is especially dangerous for:

- Telecare users relying on alarms for falls or medical emergencies
- Isolated individuals with no nearby support
- Emergency responders who depend on mobile networks for coordination

5.22 Key issues include:

Access to Essential Services

- NHS digital services including eConsult, NHS App, and telemedicine requiring reliable internet connectivity.
- Online banking and financial services becoming increasingly essential for daily transactions.
- Educational resources and remote learning capabilities, which were particularly brought to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Government services moving to 'digital by default' delivery models.

Emergency Communications

- Critical importance of mobile connectivity for contacting emergency services, particularly in remote coastal and rural areas.
- Visitor safety implications in areas popular for walking, cycling, and water sports.
- Business continuity for essential services during weather events and emergencies.

Social Connectivity and Inclusion

- Isolation experienced by residents unable to maintain digital contact with family and friends.
- Reduced access to information, entertainment, and social networks.
- Impact on young people's educational and career development opportunities.

5.3 Demographic Considerations

5.31 North Norfolk's demographic profile, with a higher proportion of older residents, creates particular vulnerabilities around digital exclusion. However, it also presents opportunities as many older residents are increasingly embracing digital technologies for:

- Health monitoring and telemedicine appointments.
- Online shopping and service access.
- Maintaining contact with family members.
- Access to information and entertainment.

6. Proposals & Options

6.1 It is proposed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee should give consideration to formally inviting representatives from all four major mobile network operators (EE, O2, Three, Vodafone) to attend a dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting focused on mobile connectivity in north Norfolk.

6.2 Meeting Objectives could include

- Presentation of empirical evidence regarding coverage gaps using Norfolk County Council's Streetwave mapping data & anecdotal information captured through real world experience from residents and Members.
- Seek to understand the Operator's investment plans, delivery timescales, and north Norfolk specific commitments. There is concern that when new masts do go in they are not the latest technology (i.e. 4G not 5G) and that north Norfolk continues to remain behind the technology curve.
- Discussion of barriers to infrastructure deployment and identification of collaborative solutions.
- Establishment of ongoing dialogue and accountability mechanisms with regular progress reporting.
- Exploration of partnership opportunities including site identification and planning process streamlining.

6.3 Anticipated Outcomes

- Enhanced operator engagement leading to tangible commitment to addressing identified coverage gaps with specific timescales. Focus could be agreed on the identified very worst coverage areas.
- Improved coordination between NNDC planning processes and operator deployment requirements.
- Greater transparency regarding investment plans and delivery against national programme commitments.
- Strengthened advocacy position for north Norfolk residents, businesses, and visitors.

7. Corporate Priorities

7.1 The recommendations of this report align with the following objectives of the Corporate Plan:

- **Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure**
 - *An environment for business to thrive in* – dependable mobile/data is now a basic trading utility (payments, bookings, cloud), crucial across tourism, farming and SMEs.
 - *Infrastructure to support growth* – potential role for the Council through its action to act as a 'digital champion' to address local broadband/mobile disadvantages.
 - *Skills for jobs* – connectivity enables digital skills delivery, FE access, apprenticeships and remote/hybrid work options that particularly help to retain younger people.
- **Our Greener Future**
 - *Continue our journey to Net Zero* – better connectivity enables remote working and online service access, cutting travel emissions; it also supports smart energy management and precision agriculture.
 - *Protect and transition our coastal environments* – resilient mobile coverage aids emergency comms, visitor safety and coastal operations during severe weather and flood events.
- **Developing Our Communities**
 - *Engaged and supported individuals and communities* – reliable coverage lets residents access information, report issues and participate in local decision-making.
 - *Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all* – connectivity underpins NHS App/eConsult, telehealth and social support, particularly important in dispersed rural communities.
 - *Increase accessibility and inclusion for all* – tackling digital exclusion (poor signal/not-spots) improves access for older residents and harder-to-reach groups.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 There are no financial or resource implications immediately arising from this report, other than a modest amount of Officer time in contacting the Operators and coordinating the meeting.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

There are no perceived financial impacts at this time.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications arising at this stage.

10. Risks

- 10.1 There are no identified risks arising from this report.

11. Net Zero Target

- 11.1 The Council's Net Zero Strategy & Action Plan requires all decisions to be assessed and tested for consistency against the Net Zero 2030 Strategy & Climate Action Plan. Section 2.2 of the Strategy (*Supporting Net Zero across North Norfolk*) identifies that Local Authorities are enablers of change in delivering Net Zero and have the potential to play a transformative role outside of their own operations in their districts. The Council has supported a number of initiatives over the years (eg Norfolk Warm Homes grants, Sustainable Communities Fund etc). Championing improved digital connectivity attunes with this strategy for a number of reasons as outlined within this report, least of all better digital connectivity supports remote working and with accessing online services which helps to reduce travel emissions.

12. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

- 12.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for the people and communities of north Norfolk. We respect and value difference in our communities and across our own workforce. We want everyone to feel included and able to play their part in making north Norfolk the best place to live, learn work and visit. Advocating for improved mobile and digital infrastructure helps to support the principle of digital inclusivity.

13. Community Safety issues

- 13.1 There are no identified community safety issues arising from this report.

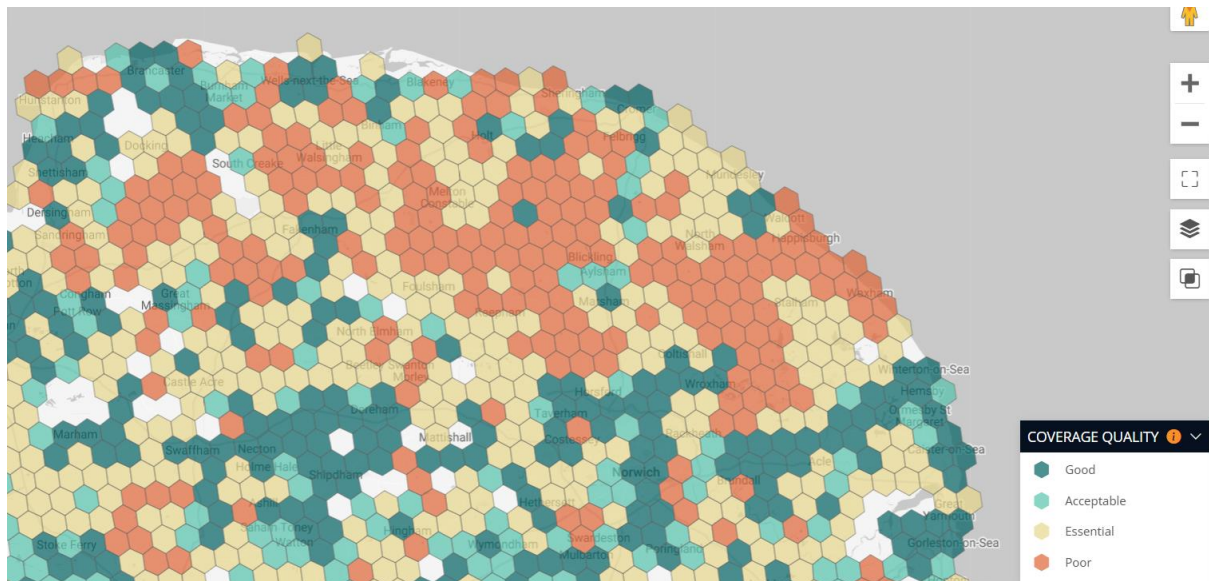
14. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 14.1 Digital connectivity is fundamental to supporting economic growth, social inclusion, access to emergency services, and supporting public services. For north Norfolk, a predominantly rural and coastal district with dispersed communities and a significant visitor economy, reliable mobile and broadband connectivity is essential.

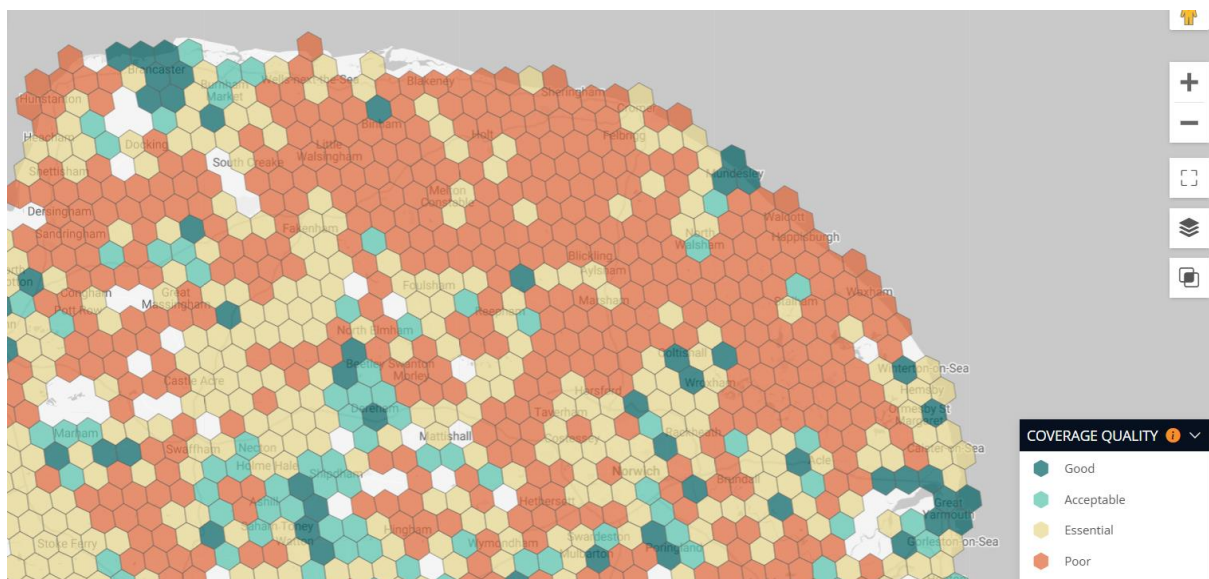
- 14.2 Whilst it is appreciated that, for perhaps predominantly commercial and pragmatic reasons, the roll out of digital infrastructure has been concentrated in urban and more populous areas, it should be recognised that this comes at both an economic and social cost to rural areas, such as north Norfolk, to which access to better digital infrastructure – sooner rather than later - could help to overcome logistical issues that impair access to services, employment and education.
- 14.3 NNDC has a strong precedent of working with partners to achieve more; seeking to overcome barriers to growth and ways to improve services for local residents. Where there has been concern, the Council has not been afraid to robustly challenge and seek to work collaboratively to work towards a positive outcome. To this end, it is recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny committee gives consideration to convening a dedicated scrutiny session on mobile connectivity and formally invites EE, O2, Three and Vodafone to attend. This will help the Council to better understand the MNO's investment plans and present the opportunity to explore ways in which the parties could work towards some agreed objectives that will improve and expedite digital connectivity within the district.

Appendix A – Streetwave Data from Refuse Lorries

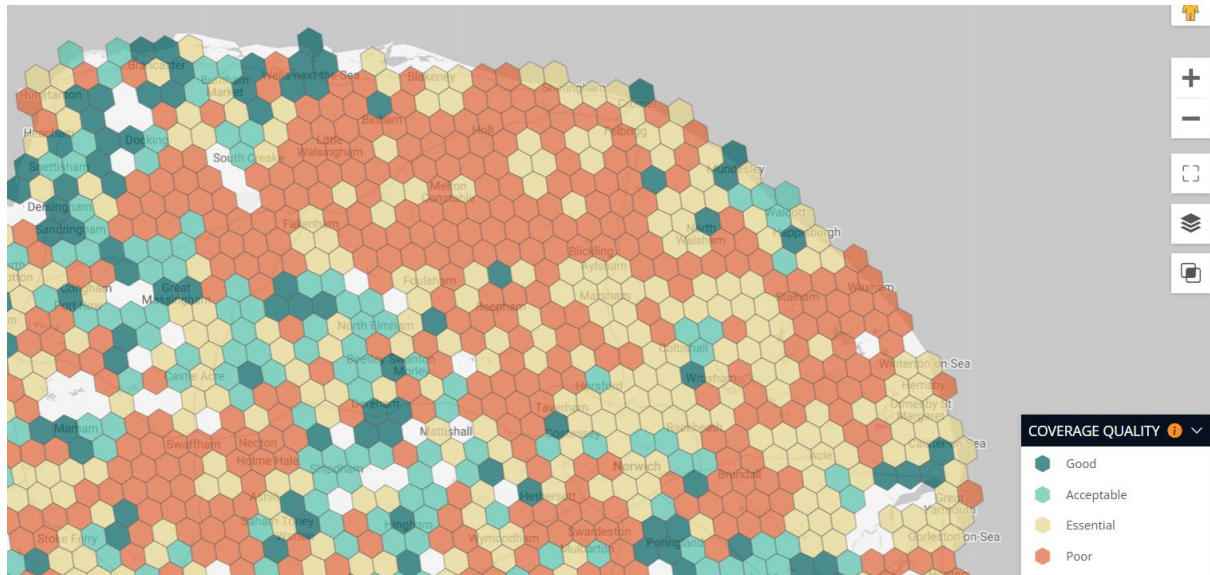
EE Coverage



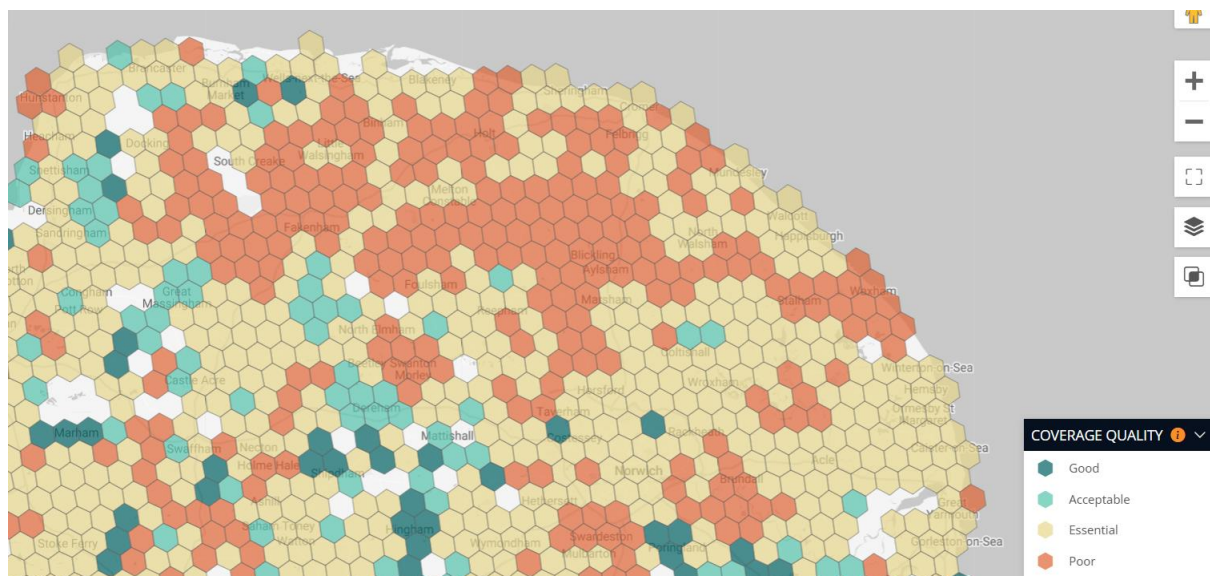
Three Coverage



O2 Coverage



Vodafone Coverage



Assistant Director Finance & Asset

Daniel King

6 October 2025

I'm providing this budget update to give Members an overview of our current financial position, the work underway to develop the 2026/2027 budget, and the main challenges and opportunities we're managing as part of that process.

Current Position

The finance team are currently progressing on three main areas of work, Capital Bids, Revisiting budget projection assumptions, and reviewing the treasury management strategy. We have received the request for additional to the capital programme for 2026/2027 – these are currently being considered, and work is being progressed internally by the finance team before bringing these proposals before CLT. We are also currently revisiting the budget projections for 2026/2027. In this process group accountants are meeting with budget holders to determine whether their budgets remain appropriate ahead of 2026/2027. We are also revisiting our treasury strategy ahead of 2026/2027 ensuring that it remains appropriate in our operational and the wider economic climate.

As well as the above, proposals for savings and additional income are being sought from the wider group of Assistant Directors with some early indications of additional revenue generation and budget efficiencies have been received.

Challenges, Pressures, and Opportunities

Changing environment and financial planning assumptions

The external financial environment continues to evolve, and the timing of key Government announcements has shifted. The initial dates suggested for the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement have been revised, creating uncertainty around funding assumptions for 2026/27 and beyond. It is anticipated that we will receive the draft settlement in the week commencing 15 December 2025

Domestic waste contract – addition of food waste collections

The Council is preparing to implement weekly separate food waste collections in line with new national requirements under the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms. The introduction of this additional service presents a significant financial pressure on the revenue budget. This service is currently being negotiated as an incorporation within the existing domestic waste contract with Serco.

Costs are expected to rise due to the need for new collection vehicles, caddies, and required depot upgrades. Although the Government has indicated that new burdens funding will be made available to support councils with implementation, the details, timing, and adequacy of this funding remain uncertain. Officers are working with Serco and other local authorities to plan implementation efficiently and to minimise the ongoing revenue impact once the service becomes operational.

Additional income generation – North Lodge Park Car Park

There are also opportunities to strengthen the Council's income base. The development of the North Lodge Park Car Park is progressing, with operational commencement anticipated during the 2026/27 financial year. The scheme contributes to improved visitor access and local economic activity in the surrounding area. Also, once operational, the facility is expected to generate a steady stream of income to support core services and offset some of the wider financial pressures.

Funding uncertainty – Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Reset

The Government has indicated that both the Fair Funding Review and the Business Rates Reset are now expected to be implemented in the 2026/2027 financial year. While this provides a clearer planning horizon than in previous years, there remains considerable uncertainty around the detailed methodology, redistribution impacts, and potential transitional arrangements.

Both reforms have the potential to significantly reshape the Council's future funding position – particularly through changes to baseline needs assessments and the resetting of business rates growth accumulated since 2013. To help assess the potential implications, the Council is working with Pixel Financial Management to model a range of scenarios and understand the likely financial impact once further information becomes available. These insights will feed into the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, ensuring the Council remains well prepared for potential changes to the funding landscape.

Engagement

The Council continues to place strong emphasis on engagement and transparency throughout the budget-setting process. During 2025/2026, there has been ongoing

engagement with Members, CLT, and the wider Management Team to ensure that financial planning remains responsive to emerging pressures and opportunities.

As the national and local financial context continues to evolve, CLT and Management Team have been regularly updated on changes to budget modelling and forecasting to support informed decision-making. This iterative approach allows key officers to assess the impact of new information – such as government announcements, funding updates, or service-level pressures.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has continued to play an active role in financial oversight, receiving both the 2024/2025 outturn reports and the 2025/2026 in-year budget monitoring reports. This regular reporting enables Members to scrutinise financial performance, understand key variances, and challenge emerging risks and mitigations in a transparent and constructive manner.

Next Steps

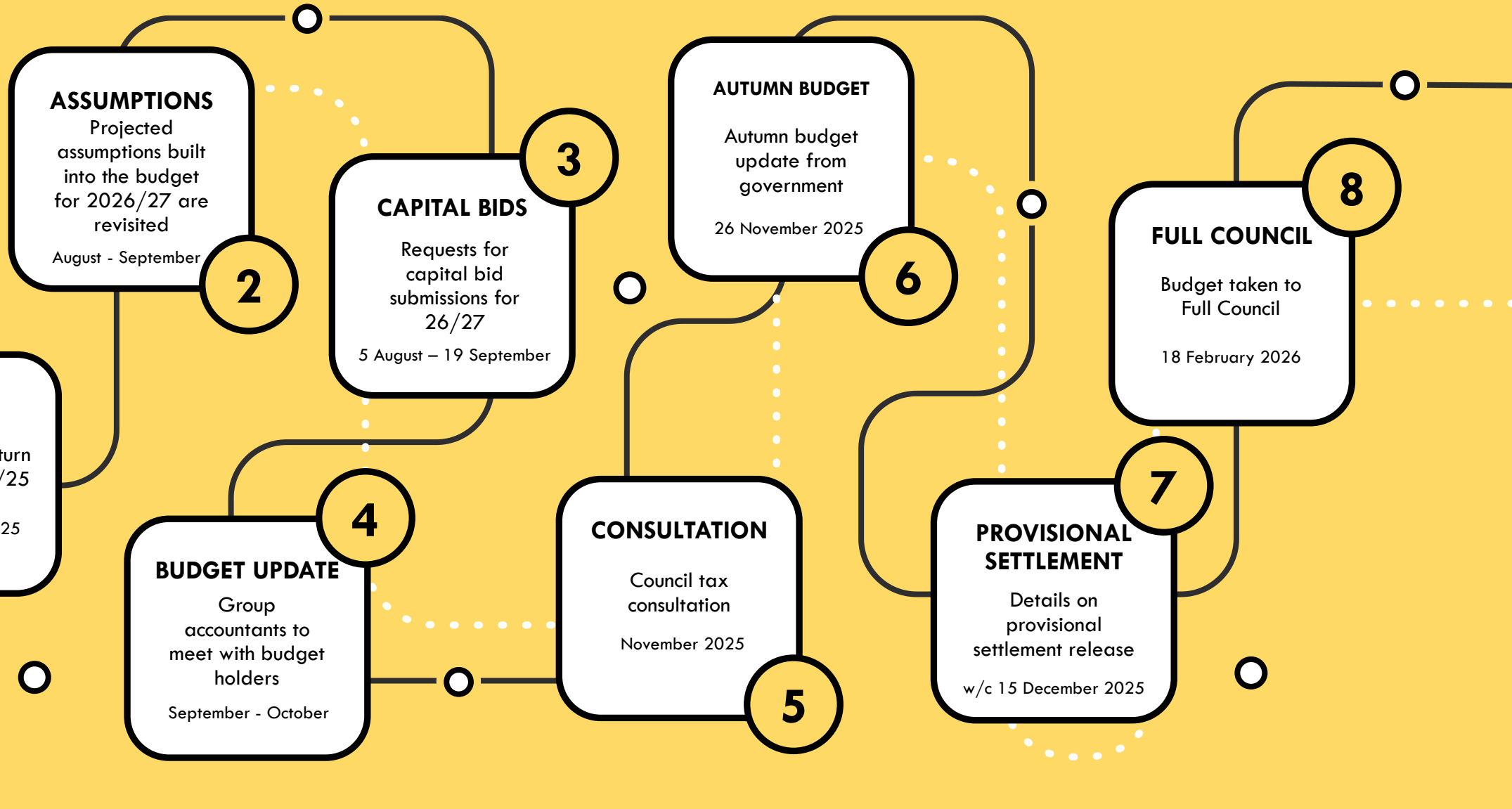
The proposed next steps are as follows:

- Finalisation of capital programme proposals
- Food waste contract negotiations
- Completion of budget review meetings
- Generations of savings and income proposals
- Treasury strategy review
- Keeping up to date to changes in the modelling and funding updates
- Continue active engagement with key stakeholders

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BUDGET SETTING 2026/27

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023-25	
Executive Summary	This report aims to provide the Council with an outline of the role of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, a summary of the work undertaken throughout 2023-25 period, and highlight any issues encountered by the Committee during this time.
Options considered	N/A
Consultation(s)	O&S Chair
Recommendations	It is recommended that Full Council notes the report, affirms the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and considers the following concerns raised within the key issues section of the report: • An average of more than 1.5 apologies given every meeting with limited substitutes being sought needs to be considered and addressed by Members. • Now the new Scrutiny Officer is in place training needs should be assessed so that the Scrutiny Officer can best support the Members of the Committee in fulfilling their roles. Any training Members need to help them feel more confident in their roles should be encouraged. • Monitor the work programme and avoid slippage in key areas such as the Police and Crime Plan to ensure that there is no lengthy gap.
Reasons for recommendations	To inform Council of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2023-25 and address concerns raised.
Background papers	Overview & Scrutiny work programme 2023-25
Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	N/A
Contact Officer	Adam Faulconbridge - Democratic Services & Governance Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01263 516374 Email: adam.faulconbridge@north-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Introduction – Role of the Committee

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the Council's primary oversight Committee that holds Cabinet to account and ensures that reliable services are provided, whilst best value for money is achieved. Introduced by the Local Government Act 2000, Scrutiny Committees are able to monitor internal Council affairs and also review the work of external bodies such as the Police, health providers, and utility companies.

1.2 As outlined in the Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference are as follows:

- To scrutinise and review decisions or other actions taken with respect to Cabinet functions. This includes call-in of Cabinet decisions.
- To scrutinise and review decisions or other actions taken with respect to non-executive functions.

- To make reports or recommendations to Full Council or to the Cabinet about one or more particular issue(s), service(s) or matter(s), which affects North Norfolk and its residents. Reports or recommendations may be carried out on whatever issue, service or matter the Committee thinks fit and may be carried out on any subject if Full Council or the Cabinet requests it to do so.
- To carry out best value reviews.
- To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee.
- To produce an annual report to Council on the work of the Committee over the year.

1.3 The remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S Committee) also includes undertaking policy review and development, monitoring performance management, promoting community well-being and improving the quality of life in the District. Scrutiny is Member-led and independent of party-political arrangements. At North Norfolk District Council, the O&S Committee is chaired by a member of the opposition. Scrutiny should always be viewed as a function which belongs to and benefits the whole Council.

2. Who participates in Scrutiny

- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the O&S Committee take a pro-active role throughout the process, attending pre-agenda meetings to steer and scope the direction of questioning and investigation.
- O&S Committee Members – Scrutiny is different from other committees in that it calls for Members with investigative and creative minds who are prepared to “do their homework” out of the Council Chamber and think outside of the usual committee framework, tailoring the method of review to suit the topic.
- Cabinet Portfolio Holders are invited to attend meetings of the Committee to present and answer questions on reports relevant to their portfolio. The aim is that the Portfolio Member should have an opportunity to contribute to any issues relating to their portfolio.
- All non-Executive Members of the Council are routinely invited to attend Committee Meetings and offered the opportunity to ask questions on issues that matter to the residents they represent.
- Officers are involved in a number of ways – those directly involved in supporting the scrutiny process and those who are called to prepare reports for the Committee on a range of issues.
- Invitees and Witnesses can be called not just from within the Council, but from partners and public service providers.
- The public are welcome to attend meetings of the Committee, with a provision to submit questions or statements 2 days in advance of the meeting, in order to raise issues of concern that they would like the Committee to consider.

3. Committee Role and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Scrutiny of decisions made by Cabinet - The O&S Committee routinely reviews decisions made by Cabinet to ensure that they are appropriate, justified and provide best value for money.
- 3.2 Pre-Scrutiny - This enables greater co-ordination between the Cabinet and Scrutiny work programmes, whereby the Committee can provide input into policy development and decisions prior to their approval. This process

ensures that the O&S Committee and wider Members can provide meaningful input into key issues, reducing the likelihood of call-ins. Some examples include:

- Commenting and providing input on corporate projects
 - Pre-scrutinising the annual budget.
 - Providing input during the policy development process.
 - Considering key strategies prior to approval.
- 3.3 Call-ins - All key decisions made by Cabinet that have not been pre-scrutinised are subject to a five day 'call-in' period, prior to implementation. This enables the O&S Committee to consider whether any contentious decisions are appropriate and provides the opportunity to recommend to Cabinet that the decision be reconsidered, if necessary.
- 3.4 Financial Scrutiny – This allows the Committee and wider Members the opportunity to review and comment on draft budget proposals, budget monitoring reports, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and other financial strategies. Consideration of financial reports is a statutory requirement of the Committee's work programme.
- 3.5 Performance Monitoring - This is a quarterly item for the Committee that provides an opportunity to ensure that service areas are meeting performance targets, or to highlight issues where further investigation may be required. It is also important for holding the Cabinet to account, by considering whether the administration is meeting the objectives set within their Corporate Plan and subsequent Delivery Plans.
- 3.6 External Organisations - The Committee may request briefings on matters of concern from external organisations. These are usually followed by a Q&A session to gain further insight into the chosen subject. The O&S Committee has a statutory obligation to oversee crime and disorder in the District, which is usually in the form of a briefing from the Police and Crime Commissioner, accompanied by senior Police Officers.
- 3.7 Focused/Rapid Reviews - The Committee may choose to look at a topic in depth over a specific period of time to consider whether the Council is achieving the necessary outcomes. This could be undertaken by the whole Committee as a rapid review in a single day, or as a smaller review by a Task and Finish Group, usually lasting six months.
- 3.8 Petitions - The Committee has an obligation to consider petitions received from members of the public, which can be submitted electronically or by hard copy. There is a threshold of 750 signatures required from within the District in order for the petition to be subject to full debate by the Committee.

4. Work of the Committee 2023-25

The period of 2023 to 2025 was a very busy two years for the Committee with the lead-up to the 2024 General election, the Peer Review and Local Government Reform (LGR) all coming at a time when the Scrutiny Officer position had many changes in personnel resulting in additional challenges. With several large projects reaching completion at the time, as well as the Peer Review, and subsequent feedback from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), the Committee was seeking to be more effective and inclusive to fulfil the important role that it has in the role of governance. Those

challenges, and the recommendations from the LGiU were met positively by the Committee and they have worked hard to eradicate any issues that may have existed within Scrutiny at that time. The dedication of the Committee for self-improvement and to best highlight, and investigate, the issues of importance to the local community should be noted. Twenty-one formal Committee meetings were held throughout the two-year period, with one being an extraordinary meeting to debate a Call-In decision for the Rocket House Café in Cromer. Apologies were given on thirty-four occasions with substitutes covering nine of those absences. This highlights the continued need for those absences to be covered more robustly in the coming year in order to maintain a fair, and thorough, balance of debate and questioning.

4.1 Highlights from the 2023/25 Work Programme are listed below:

- **June 2023 & ongoing:** Waste issues - With the many changes impacting waste services across the District, such as the continuing need to amend collection routes and the impending introduction of food waste collections, the Committee closely scrutinised the services provided and debated them at three O&S Committee meetings within the period in question. This included the need to purchase two additional refuse collection vehicles, making certain the council, and communities served, received the best value for money. The recommendation was that these additional vehicles should be purchased but funded by borrowing of £335,000 and a revenue contribution of £50,000. It was also agreed that given the performance levels having improved, future updates are only made to the O&S Committee if, in the view of the Director of Communities, performance has dropped to a level that is, again, of significant concern.

In **Feb 2024** Cabinet supported the O&S Committee recommendation that *Full Council agrees to write to the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) setting out the evidence associated with the shortfall in allocation and the anticipated annual capital costs that the Council will incur in relation to food waste collection.*

- **June 2023:** Appointment of representative and substitute for the NCC Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC). The O&S Committee correctly felt that NNDC needed a representative on NHOSC with key issues needing raising, such as ambulance wait times and access to NHS dental services within North Norfolk. The Committee were asked to consider relevant councillors responsibilities, skills or experience, as well as time available to devote to the role. With that Cllr Boyle was appointed as representative to the NHPSC and Cllr Holliday was appointed substitute. It was noted that Cllr Boyle suggested these arrangements be reviewed after a period of 12 months, so this item is in line to be raised again in the 2025/26 work programme.
- **Nov 2023 and ongoing:** Anglian Water (AW)– There were a number of water and drainage related issues for the Committee to consider over the past 24 months. There was a briefing held in November 2023 by AW regarding sewage outflows and also the East of England Local Government Association Water Summit held in March 2024. The Committee noted the progress being made by AW who returned to O&S Committee in June 2025 for a further update. With regards to the Water Summit, the O&S Committee resolved that AW be invited to speak to the Committee on the strategic water issues that affect North Norfolk to include the Anglia Water Strategic Investment Plan and the Committee

would ask Cabinet to provide advice on what it would like the Council to take forward on water issues following the East of England Water Summit.

- **Oct 2023:** NHS Dental Services – The Committee resolved to write to the ICB to request more detailed information on several factors, including amongst other things, how service demand is determined if waiting list information is not collated and any data on the number of patients accessing private dental care. The NNDC representative at NHOSC raised concerns at their meeting as to what preventative work is being done to address dental issues and what was causing issues with capacity across Dental Services, was it training and the recruitment of Dentists. The O&S Committee did receive a positive response on those queries and there was a request from NHOSC to the Committee to recommend that the Leader of the Council write to the Cabinet member for Public Health in support of school dentistry as this was a significant gap in dentistry provision for children.
- **Jan 2024:** Councillor Call for Action: Homelessness. Cllr Holliday raised this call for action due to the tragic national crisis that our District along with the wider population, were facing and the many homes and families it affected in our area. The Committee resolved that a Task and Finish Group be established to investigate the causes and relief of homelessness in the District and make recommendations to the O&S Committee on its findings. The Task and Finish Group subsequently made two visits back to the Committee to report on their findings and outcomes. In **Sept 2024** it was Recommended to Council that,
 - ***To prevent homelessness, it expands its homelessness service prevention work to undertake such work at an earlier stage along with multi agency support, on an invest to save basis, to seek to reduce the number of people going into temporary accommodation and the costs of that to the council.***
 - ***Managing homelessness***
 - ***Housing allocation***
 - ***Increase housing supply***
 - ***Increase affordable house building/supply***
 - ***Increase/sustain Private rental tenancies***
 - ***Reducing Long Term Empty Homes***
 - ***Sustain social tenancies***
 - ***Prevention of/provision for victims of Domestic Abuse.***

These recommendations were all approved by Full Council. In **Feb 2025**, The Portfolio Holder for Housing & People Services wrote to central government, setting out the situation in North Norfolk regarding the private rental sector reducing housing stock levels and the key reasons for the withdrawals and asked central government for action to address the progressive stock loss and help this Council retain and even grow private sector stock levels

- **July 2024:** Ambulance Response Times – The Committee again took a keen interest in a subject that was very important to the community, this time focusing on Community First Responders (CFR). It made 3 recommendations to the Council,

- **Request the East of England Ambulance Trust to provide the mapping of CFRs in North Norfolk to establish where any gaps in the numbers of volunteers are &**
- **Communication materials for members of the council to use when talking to their respective Parish and Town Councils about the co-responding and the role of CFRs**
- **O&S also asked the Council to work with the Norfolk Ambulance Trust to help promote its Campaign on Community First Responders and co responding by signposting members of the public towards the Ambulance Trust's Community First Responders**
- **Oct 2024: Public Question – Benjamin Court.** The Committee heard from the 'Save Benjamin Court as a Reablement Unit' Group to question what more NNDC could do to ensure the facility is secured for health and care services of the community in the future. The O&S Committee recommended that:
 - **(A) the issue of Benjamin Court Cromer be referred to the November full council meeting for decision along with additional data to be provided in the report, where possible, on delayed discharges, the numbers of digitally excluded people and the availability of home-based care staff,**
 - **(B) it was noted, with the Committee's support. that the Leader of the Council intended to write to the Secretary of State as a matter of urgency on the need to retain Benjamin Court, Cromer and to request that NHS Property Services doesn't dispose of the building, and**
 - **(C) it was noted that the Chief Executive intended to make representations on the Health Watch suggestion that a team of community nurses could be stationed at the Council Offices rather than use the Benjamin Court building.**

Councillors welcomed the endorsement that the Council sought to contact the NHS Property Services team and promised to report back to O&S Committee as they learn more. Full Council agreed it was important that we kept this issue in the public domain. This is a good example of the how the Committee are actively supporting the Community on wider issues important to the local population and getting the public's voice heard at a higher level which can, potentially, affect positive change.

- **Oct 2024: Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP) –** In Sept 2023 O&S requested that a concluding report be added to the work programme for summer of 2024 to include a summary of performance following the implementation of the PSIP. In Oct 2024, upon receiving that report, the Committee welcomed the improvements that had been noted and that any future performance reports will be made via reports to Development Committee, quarterly, and annually.

- **Oct 2024:** Car Park Charges – The annual scrutiny of the car park fees and charges drew much discussion as many changes were proposed. The O&S Committee recommended that Cabinet consider the following changes to be implemented from 1st April 2025.
 - **(1) that fees for the Council's Standard Car Parks be increased by 10p per hour, for the Coastal and Resort Car Parks be increased by 30p per hour, and**
 - **(2) the question of whether there could be no increase in fees at the standard car parks and a charge of 40p at the Coastal and Resort car parks be explored**
 - **That seasonal charges are not introduced at this time**
 - **A flat rate evening charge across all car parks is not re-introduced at this time**
 - **Season ticket prices are increased by the inflationary increase since 2016 only this year and increases to season ticket prices should be reviewed annually**
 - **Coach Parking charges are increased to £12, £24 and £96**
 - **That all the potential options for charging at Hornbeam Road Car Park in North Walsham be explored**
 - **Car parking charges are reviewed every other year with the next review taking place so that any changes are implemented from 1 April 2027 apart from season tickets which should be reviewed annually as mentioned under recommendation D above**

Cabinet subsequently noted the positive impact on their decision making the O&S Committee recommendations had and the recognition by the Committee of the Council's financial position. Cabinet supported many of the O&S Committee's recommendations and agreed on an increase of 10p at Standard Car Parks, 20p at Resort Car Parks and 30p for Coastal Car Parks. Cabinet also agreed to no evening or seasonal charges be introduced at this time, whilst season ticket prices increased in line with inflation. The Cabinet explored options for Hornbeam Road Car Park, as a result of the O&S Committee's recommendation, agreeing leisure users at Victory Leisure Centre to be offered a 3hrs parking at a standard charge, via app only, with permit holders also having usage. It was also agreed that parking fees and charges to be reviewed again in 2025/26 rather than every other year. Reviewing charges lead to the Council considering charges at other local authorities and private providers which resulted in cheaper or highly competitive prices than many similar locations nationwide, including for coach Parking fees thus encouraging the tourist economy.

This type of collaborative work between the O&S Committee and Cabinet is a demonstration of how the Committee has taken on board the observations of the Peer review and how working together as a group, independent of political agendas, can achieve a common desired goal.

- **Nov 2024:** The Closure of Cromer Tourist Information Centre – the O&S Committee debated an issue very important to the local community and wider visiting population. The Committee recommended that Cabinet Consider:
 - **The building being made available for an alternative income generating use.**
 - **What provision can be made to continue a tourist information service – be that through an enhanced online presence, electronic information boards or physical leaflet stands at prominent locations within Cromer such as the Pier and other visitor attractions.**
 - **Relocation of the current Deep History Coast display housed within the North Norfolk Visitor Centre to a suitable alternative location, possibly Cromer Museum.**

Cabinet discussed these recommendations in **Jan 2025**, with Portfolio Holder for Leisure supportive of those recommendations and agreed to advertise the premises as available for let. It was noted that Officers were considering alternative means of providing visitor information within the town and wider district. Cabinet also agreed that the relocation of the Deep History Coast display be explored, noting the partnership nature of the development with the Norfolk Museums Service. This is a very good example of the cooperative working mechanisms of the O&S Committee and Cabinet, achieving an outcome beneficial to the Community and wider public whilst making financial savings and generating additional income from the asset.

- **Dec 2024:** Petition – Closure of Stalham Public Conveniences. The petition was brought to the Committee after it was agreed that it had gained the required number of signatures in support for it to be discussed. On hearing the local Councillors presentation, the O&S Committee requested an Officer report to be prepared by Director of Resources to provide information covering,
 - **Details as to how levels of usage have been captured.**
 - **Costs of maintaining this asset and cost comparisons.**
 - **Impact of not having these facilities from an assets and social economic perspective.**
 - **Any alternative opportunities including partnership funding.**
 - **Understanding how this aligns with the High Street Task Force.**
 - **Reasons for closure, and why appropriate, being the only town in the district that would be without public toilets.**
 - **Consultation with Cllrs Shires, Taylor and Bayes.**

- **Conversations with STC to continue in the meantime.**

Subsequent developments in LGR have impacted on proposed closures to public conveniences but the importance of the O&S Committee being able to hear and debate and respond to local petitions should be welcomed and noted.

4.2

In summary, the Committee undertook a substantial amount of business throughout the two-year period, with seventy-two reports or briefings, though this includes a number of recurring items such as performance and budget monitoring. Twelve of these topics could be defined as 'pre-scrutiny', in that they were reviewed by the Committee or looked at in greater detail by the Task and Finish Group in advance of consideration or approval by Cabinet or Council. This is in line with 2022/2023 and although shows a drop from the year 2021/2022, the Committee undertook more investigatory work as well as hearing a petition and a Call-in. In total, the Committee made over one hundred recommendations to Cabinet, Council and GRAC, with further action requests made to the Corporate Leadership team (CLT) and other officers. This equates to approximately five recommendations per meeting, with only three not accepted throughout the entire two-year period. Overall, the Committee remained highly active throughout this period with a focus on undertaking investigations and reviewing Cabinet decisions, whilst also maintaining oversight of Council services and performance.

4.3 **Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review:** The Committee noted that,

- I. It was clear to the Peer Review Team that the Committee is working much better with improved attendance, debate, and outcomes.
- II. The new strategic oversight boards that had been established in July 2024 to provide clarity of operational and strategic management. With each board being chaired by a director with a focus on monitoring progress and performance and reporting to members by exception.
- III. That in regard to of the support offers available for members around devolution and local government reorganisation the LGA will be providing support to councils to help them address specific challenges at all stages of devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR).

5. **Key Issues**

- 5.1 There were thirty-four instances where apologies were given over the period 2023-2025, with substitutes only available on nine occasions. This equates to an average of just under two absences per meeting requiring substitutes. It is hoped that the recruitment of a new Scrutiny Officer will see continued improvement on what had become a recurring theme for the past 3 years. Group Leaders must ensure that all efforts are made to arrange a substitute where possible.
- 5.2 The O&S committee has not had a permanent, or consistent, Scrutiny Officer for much of the past 12 months or more and this has affected the continuity of the Committee. The need to build strong relationships and for Members to have confidence in the Scrutiny Officer can only strengthen the Committee. In addition, training may support Members to fulfil their challenging roles.

- 5.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections in May 2024 proved a further challenge in allowing the PCC sufficient time and opportunity to attend an O&S meeting within the past 2 years. This has undoubtedly hindered the Committee's ability to give an informed contribution or opportunity to comment on the Police and Crime Plan. It is hoped that with the new PCC being due to attend in September 2025 we can best serve and reassure North Norfolk Communities that NNDC are looking after the Public's best interests to this regard.

6. Corporate Priorities

- 6.1 One of the Committee's key responsibilities is monitoring the performance of the Council against its corporate priorities. This is done on a quarterly basis to provide Members with an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns, as a result the Committee helps to ensure that all corporate priorities of the Council are achieved.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no explicit proposals contained within the report that present financial or resource implications, however the Committee does in principle support any operational actions taken by the S151 Officer to increase the available resource within the Finance Team, which will have an associated financial implication.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications presented within the content of the report.

9. Risks

- 9.1 There are no immediate risks raised within the content of the report, however the key concerns outlined in section five may negatively impact the ability of the Committee to operate effectively, which could present a level of risk to the Council.

10. Net Zero Target

- 10.1 There are no net zero implications presented within the content of the report.

11. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 11.1 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion implications presented by the content of the report.

12. Community Safety issues

- 12.1 Whilst there are no direct community safety issues presented by the content of the report, the absence of the Police and Crime Commissioner's attendance for the crime and disorder update, these past 3 years, means that community safety issues may not have been given adequate attention in 2023-25. Efforts have been made to ensure that the PCC attends the Committee meeting in Sept 2025, or that a representative will be sent in their place. The intention also being that the new Scrutiny Officer can develop a stronger relationship with the PCC office so that these types of absences are avoided in the future.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1 2023-25 was a challenging but very productive two years for the Committee, with several investigations and reviews that required significant time and resource to complete. The result of these investigations were positive recommendations that helped Cabinet and the Council to improve its services and adapt to rising challenges, most explicitly in the areas of public interest such as access to NHS Dental Services and tackling Homelessness. The Committee also undertook important scrutiny work on external bodies, including Anglian Water and the Ambulance Service, both of which related to matters of significant concern for residents of the District. As a result, the Committee can also be seen to have worked in the public interest for the residents of North Norfolk and will continue to do so in the year ahead.
- 13.2 The Committee made one hundred and six recommendations to both Cabinet and Council, with a further 18 requests made for actions from officers. Recommendations were largely accepted, with healthy debate over the car park fees and charges resulting in the best outcomes for local, and wider visiting, communities, which suggests that the work of the Committee was widely supported by all Members of the Council. There was one decision made by the Cabinet that warranted call-in by the Committee, concerning the Rocket House, which was resolved that no further action be taken. It is a positive sign that Scrutiny can Call-in decisions to keep the public's best interest at the heart of what they do. The positive decision demonstrates that Scrutiny and the Executive are able to work effectively together.
- 13.3 There are matters of concern for the Committee that have been highlighted under the key issues section of the report. These relate to the number of apologies given and substitutes arranged, the lack, until now, of a consistent Scrutiny Officer for 12 months, and the absence of a briefing from the PCC. Members and officers are asked to reflect on these concerns and consider whether any actions for improvement can be made. Despite the challenges faced, the Committee was still able to provide valuable and effective oversight for the Council, whilst providing input into policy development, monitoring service performance, and undertake reviews or investigations. In summary, the Committee was clearly able to add value to the operation of the Council.

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Cabinet Work Programme – October 2025 to January 2026					
November 2025					
Committee	Meeting	Report title	Cabinet member	Corporate Plan theme	Decision details
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Local Choice Functions - review	Tim Adams <i>Cara Jordan Monitoring Officer</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Net Zero Strategy & Action Plan	Adam Varley <i>Kate Rawlings</i>	<i>Our Greener Future</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025	Review of 2024/25 footprint report and draft replacement NZSAP	<i>Climate & Environmental Policy Manager</i>		
Council	19 Nov 2025				
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Budget Monitoring P6	Cllr L Shires <i>Don McCallum Director for Resources</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025				
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Cllr W Fredericks <i>Karen Hill AD for People Services</i>	<i>Meeting Local Housing need</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025				
Council	19 Nov 2025				
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Property Disposal Programme	Lucy Shires <i>Renata Garfoot Estates & Asset Strategy Manager</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	 May contain exempt information



Key Decision – a decision which is likely to incur expenditure or savings of £250,000 or more, or affect two or more wards. (NNDC Constitution, p9 s12.2b)

* Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (As amended by the Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Exempt Information) (England) Order 2006)

Committee	Meeting	Report title	Cabinet member	Corporate Plan theme	Decision details
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Sheringham Enabling Land	Lucy Shires <i>Renata Garfoot Estates & Asset Strategy Manager</i>	<i>Investing in local economy & infrastructure</i>	May contain exempt information 
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Review of Car Parking Charges	Lucy Shires	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025		Dan King		
Council	19 Nov 2025		AD for Finance & Resources		
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Property Transactions	Lucy Shires <i>Renata Garfoot Estates & Asset Strategy Manager</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	 May contain exempt information
Cabinet	03 Nov 2025	Delegated Decisions	Tim Adams	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025		Emma Denny <i>DS & Governance Manager</i>		
December 2025					
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Local Plan - approval	Cllr A Brown	<i>Meeting Local Housing need</i>	
Full Council	17 Dec 2025		Iain Withington <i>Acting Planning Policy Manager</i>		
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Property Transactions	Lucy Shires <i>Renata Garfoot Estates & Asset Strategy Manager</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	 May contain exempt information



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Committee	Meeting	Report title	Cabinet member	Corporate Plan theme	Decision details
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026 onwards	Cllr L Shires <i>Don McCallum</i> <i>Director for Resources</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	Pre-Scrutiny
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025				
Council	17 Dec 2025				
Scrutiny	12 Nov 2025	Fees & Charges 2026/2027	Cllr L Shires <i>Don McCallum</i> <i>Director for Resources</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025				
Council	17 Dec 2025				
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Council Tax Discount Determinations 2026/2027	Cllr L Shires <i>Sean Knight</i> <i>Revenues Manager</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Scrutiny	10 Dec 2025				
Council	17 Dec 2025				
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Non-Domestic Business rates Policy 2026/2027	Cllr L Shires <i>Sean Knight</i> <i>Revenues Manager</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Council	17 Dec 2025				
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Dog Control PSPOs	Cllr C Ringer <i>David Addy</i> <i>Environmental Protection Team Leader</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Coastwise – Proposed approach to support residential properties at risk of coastal erosion in the short to medium term.	Cllr H Blathwayt <i>Rob Goodliffe</i> <i>Coastal Transition Manager</i>		



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Committee	Meeting	Report title	Cabinet member	Corporate Plan theme	Decision details
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Reporting progress implementing Corporate Plan 2023-27 Action Plan– to end of Q2	Cllr T Adams Steve Blatch Chief Executive	A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council	
Scrutiny	10 Dec 2025				
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	Treasury Management Strategy 2026/2027	Cllr L Shires Dan King Assistant Director of Resources	A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council	
GRAC	02 Dec 2025				
Council	17 Dec 2025				
Cabinet	01 Dec 2025	RIPA – Annual Update	Cllr C Ringer Steve Hems Director for Service Delivery	A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council	
January 2026					
Cabinet	19 Jan 2026	Capital Strategy 2026/2027	Cllr L Shires Dan King Assistant Director of Resources	A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council	
Scrutiny	28 Jan 2026				
Council	18 Feb 2026				
Future Items – Dates to be confirmed					
Cabinet		Asset Management Plan	Lucy Shires Renata Garfoot Estates & Asset Strategy Manager	Investing in local economy & infrastructure	FC approval required – Policy Framework Could go to GRAC
Scrutiny					
Council					
Cabinet		Former Shannocks	Cllr L Shires, A	A Strong, responsible	May contain exempt information



Key Decision – a decision which is likely to incur expenditure or savings of £250,000 or more, or affect two or more wards. (NNDC Constitution, p9 s12.2b)

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		Hotel site, Sheringham	Brown <i>Russell Williams</i> <i>AD for Planning & Enforcement</i>	<i>and Accountable Council</i>	
Cabinet		Property Transactions Marrams Bowls Club Donkey Shelter North Lodge Park	Cllr Lucy Shires <i>Renata Garfoot</i> <i>Estates & Asset Strategy Manager</i>	<i>A Strong, responsible and Accountable Council</i>	 Reports regarding property transactions may contain exempt information



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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026

October 2025				
Topic	Purpose	Type/ function	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
NW HAZ Update	To update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time on the impact of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative and learning from this, to establish a set of evaluation criteria, including baselines, that can then be used for similar projects in other towns in North Norfolk. <i>(delayed from July as work is contingent on pulling together datasets specifically new insights through the ActiveXchange footfall reporting) which requires support from the Data Analyst)</i>	Annual review overview <i>slipped</i>	Cllr J Toye	O&S
Mobile Phone Connectivity	Data collated from survey on mobile phone coverage across Norfolk	At request of O&S scrutiny	Cllr J Toye	O&S
Homelessness Strategy	Pre-scrutiny of the Homelessness Review	Pre-scrutiny	Cllr W Fredericks	Scrutiny Cabinet FC
O&S Annual Report 2023-2025	To recommend to Full Council the Committee's Annual report summarising its key achievements and highlighting any issues over the previous two years	Annual overview	N/A	O&S Full Council
Budget Setting 2026/2027	To consider how the Committee wants to feed into the Budget setting process for 2026/2027 – including pre-scrutiny of key reports such as the MTFS <i>Agree date for Budget setting workshop/discussion – possibly with Cabinet?</i>	Annual Pre-scrutiny/ scoping	Cllr L Shires	Full Council

Overview – a broader, review-based approach to a topic, particularly where it impacts on the district and its residents as a whole.

Scrutiny - a more in-depth approach, 'drilling down' into key areas of concern, evaluating proposals and making recommendations to Cabinet/Council

Pre-scrutiny – the committee considers items in the early stages of development/drafting and makes recommendations to Cabinet, ahead of implementation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026

Topic	Purpose	Type/ function	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
November 2025 Finance / Budget pre-scrutiny				
Council Tax Discount Determinations 2026/2027	To make recs to Full Council <i>(the committee may want to discuss whether they wish to consider this report)</i>	Annual overview	CLlr L Shires	O&S Full Council
Budget Savings	To consider savings proposals for 2026/27 and make any recs to Cabinet ahead of the Budget setting process	Annual Pre-scrutiny	CLlr L Shires	Cabinet
Budget Monitoring P6	To review the BM report and make any recs to Cabinet	Cyclical overview	CLlr L Shires	Cabinet
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026 onwards	Pre-scrutiny of the MTFS – making recs to Cabinet	Annual Pre-scrutiny	CLlr L Shires	Full Council
Prudential Indicators 2026/2027	To review the PI's and make recs to Full Council	Annual scrutiny	CLlr L Shires	Full Council
Fees & Charges 2026/2027	To review the Fees & Charges and make recs to Full Council	Annual scrutiny	CLlr L Shires	Full Council
Overview of NNDC Workforce (People Strategy)	Through a Financial and Transformational 'lens' <i>Impact of LGR, transformation to Unitary – impact on service delivery and morale</i> <i>How vacancies are managed, how agency staff are used, what work the council does to recruit staff, as well as the impact of vacancies, especially key staff, on the Council's service delivery and budget.</i>	(scrutiny)	CLlr T Adams	

Overview – a broader, review-based approach to a topic, particularly where it impacts on the district and its residents as a whole.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026

December 2025

Topic	Purpose	Type/ function	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
Budget Proposals	To consider the Budget proposals for the 2026/ 2027 Budget	Pre-scrutiny	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet Council
Reporting progress implementing Corporate Plan 2023-27 Action Plan– to end of Q2	To review the Council's performance and make any recommendations to Cabinet	Quarterly scrutiny		Cabinet
Net Zero Strategy & Action Plan	Review of 2024/25 footprint report and draft replacement NZSAP prior to approval by full council.	Pre-scrutiny	Cllr A Varley	Scrutiny Cabinet FC
NHOSC Report	Update from recent NHOSC meeting	Quarterly	Cllr J Boyle	Scrutiny
Anglian Water	Progress report on AW actions following June Meeting reductions to rivers and coastal outlets.	Scheduled Update overview	Cllr H Blathwayt	O&S

January 2026

Mobile connectivity / Digitalisation - transition from landlines	- Review of mobile connectivity data collated by NNDC - Consider inviting Telecoms providers to attend a meeting to respond to questions.	overview	Cllr J Toye	O&S
Overview of NNDC Workforce	Through a Financial and Transformational 'lens' <i>Impact of LGR, transformation to Unitary – impact on service delivery and morale</i> <i>How vacancies are managed, how agency staff are used, what work the council does to recruit staff, as well as the impact of vacancies, especially key staff, on the Council's service delivery and budget.</i>	(scrutiny)	Cllr T Adams	

Future Items

Overview – a broader, review-based approach to a topic, particularly where it impacts on the district and its residents as a whole.

Scrutiny - a more in-depth approach, 'drilling down' into key areas of concern, evaluating proposals and making recommendations to Cabinet/Council

Pre-scrutiny – the committee considers items in the early stages of development/drafting and makes recommendations to Cabinet, ahead of implementation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026

Topic	Purpose	When	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
Local Government Reorganisation	To feed into the LGR process at key stages, making any recs to Full Council – this will be added to the programme on a rolling basis – as and when required.	Autumn 2025 onwards overview	Cllr T Adams	Full Council
Council's Workforce Development / People Strategy	A new strategy aimed at setting out and shaping the visual leadership, management, behaviours of employees and members and the culture of the organisation <i>Members may want to consider whether O&S can add value to this item</i>	(scrutiny)	Cllr T Adams	Scrutiny Full Council
FLASH <i>(may slip – tbc)</i>	To assess the framework agreement for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub and receive an update on the project <i>No date when this might be in so may slip to Nov/Dec</i>	scrutiny	Cllr L Withington	Cabinet/ Lead Officer
Substance Abuse	Scoping required. To consider the piece of work by Cllr Shires and if the Committee could add any value to it.	overview	Cllr L Shires	O&S
Asset Management Plan <i>(Slipped, spring at earliest, impacted by LGR) TBC</i>	To make recommendations to Full Council <i>Slipped to Autumn – needs to be updated to include changes needed to reflect impact of LGR and Audit recs.</i>	Review of AMP scrutiny	Cllr L Shires	Scrutiny Full Council
Car Park Income <i>(May drop, no date planned, Scrutiny sees as part of budget setting) TBC</i>	Report to Committee following agreement on its content– to ensure committee can add value and are satisfied with the presentation of data.	scrutiny	Cllr L Shires	Recs to Cabinet

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Pre-scrutiny – the committee considers items in the early stages of development/drafting and makes recommendations to Cabinet, ahead of implementation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026

Housing Benefit Debt Recovery Report <i>July 2026 – if needed.</i>	To make recommendations to Full Council	scrutiny	Cllr W Fredericks	Scrutiny Full Council
September 2026				
Police & Crime Commissioner – Review of Police and Crime Plan	The PCC to attend the Committee to provide an overview of the Police & Crime Plan and respond to questions	Annual Update overview	N/A	Scrutiny
Budget Monitoring P4	To review the BM report and make any recs to Cabinet	Cyclical overview	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet
Reporting progress Implementing Corporate Plan 2023-27 Action Plan– to end of Q1	To review the Council's performance and make any recommendations to Cabinet <i>It may be worth considering this in conjunction with the BM report as they both focus on monitoring performance.</i>	Quarterly overview	Cllr T Adams	

Overview – a broader, review-based approach to a topic, particularly where it impacts on the district and its residents as a whole.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations and Actions Tracker

Ref	Scrutiny Recommendation (Cabinet member / Lead officer)	Decision Maker	Decision	Update on progress	Outcomes Achieved
17/07/24 North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative	To update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time on the impact of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative and learning from this, to establish a set of evaluation criteria, including baselines, that can then be used for similar projects in other towns in North Norfolk. (Cllr J Toye / Economic Growth Manager)	Cabinet 9 Sep	Agreed	To be completed Oct 2025	Update to October meeting - work is contingent on pulling together datasets (some of which have just become available – specifically new insights through the ActiveXchange footfall reporting) which requires support from the Data Analyst.
20/09/2024 Page 209	Car Park Income - Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman to meet with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates and Property Services and appropriate officers to consider the information that should be in a future report to the Committee on the Council's Car Parks	Cabinet		On track – New Head of finance. May wish to see if O&S can add any value or remain as part of Budget Setting.	To ensure that the next report on car park income data includes information that the Committee wants to see – so that it can add value to any ongoing discussions
20/09/2024 Corporate Plan Reporting	More detailed information to be provided within the action plan that would include delivery dates where possible and success criteria to give a greater understanding of the progress being made against each of the RAG targets. (Cllr T Adams / Corporate Director for Communities)	Cabinet	Agreed	Ongoing	Corporate Plan Annual Action Plan
Ref / Date	Scrutiny Recommendation (Cabinet member / lead officer)	Decision Maker	Decision	Update on progress	Outcomes Achieved

12/03/2025 NZSAP	NNDC Net Zero Strategy and Climate Action Plan (NZSAP), which details how NNDC will meet the Net Zero target by 2030. This requires routine measuring of our carbon emissions and the reporting of the progress we have made. <i>(Cllr A Varley / Climate & Environmental Policy Manager)</i>	Cabinet	Agreed	On track As of 30/07/25 draft 24/25 footprint report available and 1st draft of Decarbonisation strategy due to go to that board on 15th Sept. <i>Due to come to O&S in Dec to give time to go to CLT and/or Cabinet</i>	Local Investment Priority 'Decarbonisation and Growth' programme' addressing rising energy costs by supporting businesses with decarbonisation measures. Net Zero 2030 Strategy and Climate Action Plan
April 2025 Rural England Prosperity Fund	That a copy of the report received from central government is shared with the committee.	O&S		In progress	
July 2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Review	<i>(Cllr W Fredericks/ Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager)</i>	Cabinet		On track Homelessness review coming as pre-scrutiny to Oct O&S	This will help feed into the first stage of the development of a new Homeless Strategy to replace the current one. O&S to consider what to focus on and add value to.
July 2025 Housing Benefit Debt Recovery Report	<i>(Cllr W Fredericks/ Benefits Manager)</i> <u>Actions:</u> The technical nature of the report was raised by Cllr Cushing, and it was suggested that future reports were written in a more accessible format.	Cabinet		To be completed	Assistant Director for People Services noted and would look to amend format accordingly going forward.

17/09/2025 Police and Crime Commissioner	Governance Officer	O&S	N/A	Completed	PCC came to meeting in September to update on the Police and Crime Plan and to answer Committee questions
17/09/2025 Mobile Connectivity	As part of the scoping document on Mobile Connectivity to liaise with The Economic Growth Manager in obtaining NCC data collated on the subject, together with coverage maps prepared by mobile providers and to include as appendices to the report. <i>(Cllr J Toye / Economic Growth Manager)</i>	O&S	Agreed	To be completed Data coming to O&S in Oct	Committee to discuss scoping document to focus on what value we could add to the topic.
17/09/2025	To write, as a Committee, to the Secretary of State for Health to express the detrimental effect the closure of Healthwatch would be to Norfolk and to ask them to reconsider their decision. To liaise with NHOSC in doing so. Cllr J Boyle / Democratic Services Manager	O&S	Agreed	Completed	Letter to the Secretary of State for Health sent/emailed on 26/09/25.

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