

SCOPING REPORT: COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION – IMPACT OF SECOND HOMES AND HOLIDAY LETS

Summary: This report and accompanying scoping document outlines the key lines of enquiry in response to the Councillor Call for Action on the potential impact of second homes and holiday lets on the District. Subject to approval of the questions raised, Officers and contributing Members will have until July 2022 to collect data and submit evidence. Upon completion of this process, a summary report will be prepared outlining the potential next steps in responding to the CCfA.

Options considered:

1. The Committee can choose to either approve the report and accompanying questions to proceed with the investigation, subject to possible amendments, or choose not to approve the report, in which case the investigation will not proceed.
2. Members should consider the time required to gather a range of evidence and data, as well as the time required to prepare a summary report on this information. As a result it is suggested that the summary report be prepared for consideration at the July O&S Committee meeting.

Conclusions: This report and associated scoping document will gather and summarise the necessary evidence to determine any potential future actions the Council could take to address any potential impacts of second homes and holiday lets on the District.

Recommendations: **To approve the scoping report and associated questions in appendix 1 to allow officers to commence the investigation.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To support the Committee's actions in responding to the Councillor Call for Action on the impact of second and holiday homes.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s): John Toye
Ward(s) affected: All

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1. Background

- 1.1 At the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held in December 2021, Cllr L Withington proposed a Councillor Call for Action to address the following issue as outlined, 'A request for O and S to consider holding a One Day Rapid Review Process, focussing on the management and mitigation of the impact of second homes, holiday lets, B&Bs or Air B&Bs (Visitor Accommodation) in North Norfolk by NNDC'. The CCfA was seconded by Cllr J Toye – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement.
- 1.2 Following consideration of the CCfA, the Committee resolved to request that a scoping report be prepared for the earliest possible meeting to consider the Committee's options to review the impact of second homes and holiday lets on the District.

2. Scoping and Investigation

- 2.1 This report and the accompanying scoping document seek to outline in detail the lines of enquiry that will be used to gather evidence to determine and address any potential issues relating to second homes and holiday lets in North Norfolk. It is suggested that this should be undertaken as part of a four stage process that includes approving the questions and key lines of enquiry, then allowing officers and contributing Members to gather evidence, data and information relevant to the investigation. Officers will then prepare a summary report that outlines the findings of the investigation, which will be used to inform the Committee of any recommended further steps or actions required.
- 2.2 As outlined in the scoping document, the officers expected to either provide or help gather evidence and/or information for the investigation have been identified, and it is noted that given the current demand on officer resource, a summary document is not expected to be complete until July 2022. Where applicable, Members may also be asked to provide information relevant to their Ward or Cabinet Portfolio.
- 2.3 Whilst the majority of information required for the investigation will be held by the Council or its partners, it may also be necessary to gather information from external sources. This could include comparative analysis of the approach taken by other local authorities to address related issues, seeking data from social housing providers or local lettings agents and landlords. Officers will also look to review the existing policy tools and legislative options available or already in place to address any potential issues.

3. Corporate Plan Objectives

- 3.1 Within the 'Local Homes for Local Need' priority of the Council's 2019-2023 Corporate Plan it is stated that, 'With a local housing market driven by strong demand for second and holiday homes and people wishing to retire to the area, however many local people on average wages struggle to access the housing market through being able to afford a home of their own. Further, the availability of private rented accommodation is lower than in many other areas of the country due to the higher returns investors can make renting accommodation for holiday lets.'

3.2 Whilst addressing the impact of second and holiday homes is not a direct objective of the Corporate Plan, it is acknowledged that the high prevalence of second and holiday homes in the District, as recently report in the local press as being the highest in the Country outside of London, does potentially place pressure on the local housing and rental markets.

3.3 As a result, it is possible that properly investigating the impacts of second and holiday homes on the District will help to provide an evidence base that can be used to support the further delivery of local homes for local need aspect of the Corporate Plan.

4. Medium Term Financial Strategy

4.1 At present there is no impact on the medium term financial strategy

5. Financial and Resource Implications

5.1 At present there are no financial implications that arise from the report, however approval of the investigation will require reasonable officer resource in order to collect, interpret and summarise data/evidence. This should be taken into context alongside the existing workload of officers and substantiates the requirement to allow a reasonable period for the data/evidence collection.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 No issues identified at this time.

7. Risks

7.1 To avoid reputational risks to the Council, it is important to ensure that any investigation is fair in order to avoid criticism from second and holiday home owners or those that believe they are a victim of any negative impacts. It is also important that expectations are adequately managed, as ultimately the Council may be limited in its ability to influence any potential impacts. Despite the these limitations, public perception of the potential issues caused by second homes and holiday lets remains a very sensitive subject, and it is therefore advised that the Committee considers the merit of all evidence and options available to the Council.

8. Sustainability

8.1 No issues identified at this time.

9. Climate / Carbon impact

9.1 No issues identified at this time.

10. Equality and Diversity

10.1 No issues identified at this time.

11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

11.1 None.

12. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 12.1 It is recommended that Members agree to proceed with the investigation as outlined in the report, in order for the Committee to determine any potential impacts of second homes and holiday lets on the District, and whether any further action is required as a result of the findings.