

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & PEOPLE SERVICES

JUNE 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Household Support Fund (round 4)

The Government has announced round 4 of the Household Support Fund from 1st April 2023 and is to run to the end of the financial year. North Norfolk District Council has been allocated £196k under the scheme. We will be proactively targeting vulnerable households throughout the year using data analytics, who need additional support with the cost of energy, food, and wider essentials. As part of the scheme, we are setting up an emergency response for households in need of groceries. This will be delivered by officers through the Eden Red voucher scheme.

Discretionary Housing Payments

We continue to administer **Discretionary Housing Payments** (DHP) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people to stay within the community. Cases are worked on as a panel which includes officers from the Benefits Team and Housing Options.

For 2023/24, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037, and up to 31st May 2023 we have spent £28,291.05 which equates to 27% of our allocation across 47 households. A further 43 applications have been refused as the circumstances of the household are outside the scope of the scheme. Where we have not been able to provide support through the DHP scheme, the team will consider other funding options and signpost the customer accordingly.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated can be seen below:

| Area of expenditure | Amount allocated |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rent Arrears | £2,121.06 |
| Rent Deposit | £1095.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfalls | £25,074.99 |
| Total Expenditure | £28,291.05 |

Speed of Processing for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

Our speed of processing times has increased during April, due to the normal increase in demand we see at this time of year due to income upratings, rent increases, and other income changes. Our targets for 2023/24 remain unchanged (new claim is 20 days and 14 days for a change in circumstance). During April, new claims were being processed within 19 days, and changes in circumstances within 18 days.

Housing Strategy

Local Authority Housing Fund

The government have offered the Council up to £1,245,210 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) to provide 11 additional affordable homes in the district by December 2023 – initially to house Ukrainian and Afghan refugee households. Cabinet (on 6/3/23) agreed to accept the money and work with the Flagship Housing Group to deliver the 11 homes. We have identified 11 suitable properties and, as at 1st June 2023, offers have been made and accepted on all 11. One home will be owned by NNDC and the remaining 10 will be owned by Flagship.

Long-term these homes would be available to households on the Council's housing list, either as temporary accommodation for homeless households or as a long-term affordable home.

New Affordable Homes

We have a healthy affordable housing schemes pipeline, many of which are Rural Exception Housing Sites at various points in the development process. There are 20+ developments which will or could, subject to approvals, yield 350+ new Affordable Homes in the next few years. Officers have worked with Broadland Housing Association to get in-principle support from Homes England (the government's funding agency for affordable housing) to fund a package of five Exception sites in North Norfolk to be delivered over the next 2-3 years.

We anticipate completion of 70 affordable homes in 2023/24.

Grant for Energy Efficiency Improvement Works

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) is part of the Norfolk Warm Homes Consortium of five Norfolk districts.

The consortium has been successful in a bid for £3,933,000 to improve the energy efficiency of 'off-gas' homes. Eligibility criteria for future grants has been simplified and will include any home within the most deprived areas in the UK (measured by the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation income deciles 1-3) if privately owned or privately rented, provided the Energy Performance Certificate is rated D-G and the households has no more than £100k in savings. This will open up the grant to many more eligible households – across Norfolk there are 603 postcode areas covering 2,600 properties we believe meet the criteria and 23% of these are in North Norfolk.

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 31 May 2023 there were **2,537 households** on the housing list with (571) 22% being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs.

Housing List by Bedroom Need:

| | Housing List – Bedroom Need: | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5 Bed | 8 Bed | Total |
| Housing Register | 260 | 137 | 83 | 84 | 2 | 5 | 571 |
| Housing Options | 1012 | 374 | 97 | 85 | | 13 | 1581 |
| Transfer | 191 | 107 | 38 | 41 | | 8 | 385 |
| Total: | 1463 | 618 | 218 | 210 | 2 | 26 | 2537 |

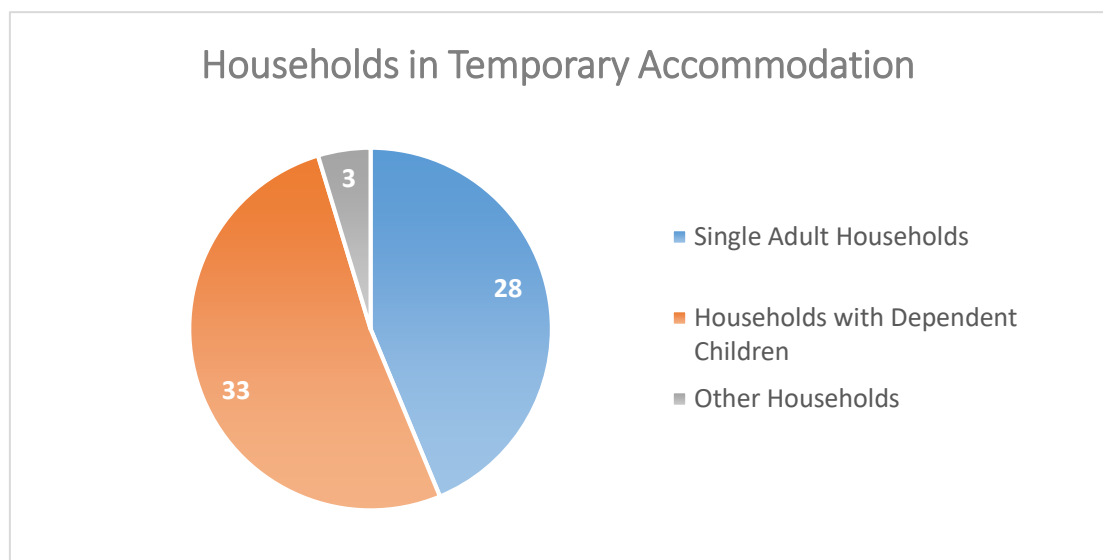
Homes Let

Social Housing lets by banding and bedroom size between 01 April 2023 to 31 May 2023

| | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed + | Total |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Housing Register | 18 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 34 |
| Housing Options | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Transfer | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total: | 19 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 38 |

Temporary Accommodation

As at the 31 May 2023 there were **64** households in Temporary Accommodation.



* *Other households includes couples and families with older Children.*

In addition to the above, all 5 units of Next Steps Accommodation (4) and Rough Sleeper Accommodation (1) are being used to accommodate previous rough sleepers. NSAP and RSAP properties provide a portfolio of NNDC self-contained dwellings with wraparound support, in accommodation provided for up to two years allowing dwellings to be “re-used” for other former rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping.

Access to NSAP properties not only offers a safe home to a rough sleeper but enables a supported environment for a tenant to work with our Pathway, Prevention & Sustainment Officers to improve their interpersonal and social skills and enable them to build their resilience and live positively within the community. Assistance is also helping people take the next steps in their journey to sustained tenancies and prevent them from returning to a life on the streets, and in February one of our tenants housed under the NSAP team back in July 2021, was successful in securing a Social Housing Tenancy.

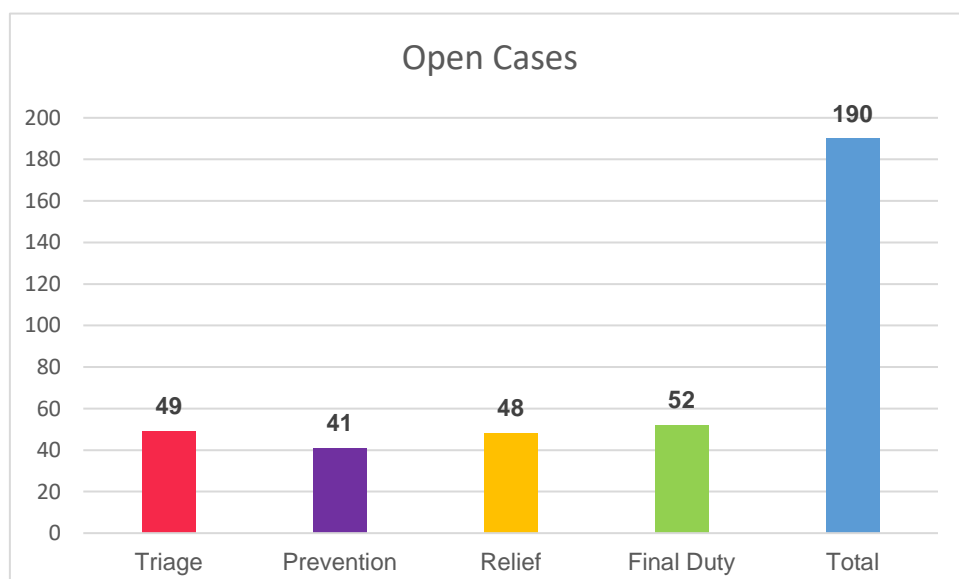
We continue to actively seek opportunities to identify alternative solutions to nightly paid accommodation, this includes increasing our own portfolio of accommodation. We are close to completion on a 2-bed property in Mundesley. Upon completion the Council will have a portfolio of 18 home for use as temporary accommodation

Households Assessed and Duty Owed

Open Cases

Our Housing Options Service offers advice to anyone who has a housing problem, and offers support and assistance if someone is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, within the next 56 days.

Demand on the service remains high, as at the 31 May 2023, there were 190 open cases and 17 cases where ongoing outreach support is being provided.



Closed Cases

Between the 01 April 2023 and 31 May 2023, **108** triage cases were closed, for cases assessed under statutory homeless legislation, the following outcomes were achieved:

Total number of households whose prevention duty ended: **47**.

Secured new or existing accommodation for a period of 6 months or more: **13**.

Withdrew Application: **2**

56 days or more expired and no further action: **5**

Homeless not prevented: **27**.

Total number of Households whose relief duty ended: **89**.
Secured new accommodation for a period of 6 months or more: **7**.
Withdrew Application: **12**
No longer eligible or contact lost: **5**.
Homeless not prevented: **65**

Total number of Households assessed, following relief duty end, as unintentionally homeless and priority need (owed main duty): **50**.

Accommodation outcomes (main duty):

- Hospital (psychiatric): **1**
- Social Housing: **38**
- Private Rented: **7**
- Staying with Family: **2**
- Not Known/Other: **2**

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

We continue to support 2 entrenched Rough Sleepers.

Whilst it is not always possible to locate rough sleepers, we respond to reports from the community and via Street Link to quickly identify and verify rough sleepers and help the most vulnerable access the services they need.

Ukraine Households - Homelessness

Since February 2022, 9 Ukrainian households have been owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty. 5 of these were households with dependent children. 1 homeless household has come through the Family Scheme and 8 through Homes for Ukraine. As at the 31st of May 2023, 3 Families remain Homeless, 2 households are in temporary accommodation and 1 household remains with host but has been asked to leave by the end of June.

We anticipate that we will see an increase in Homeless presentations over the coming months as more sponsorship arrangements end.

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

The end of March 23 / financial year saw increased demand placed on IHAT, managing and progressing existing cases and increased numbers of new referrals has presented the team with many challenges. IHAT continues to operate efficiently and we continue to actively look at ways we can improve the service and better manage demand with the current level of resource.

End of year analysis demonstrates improvements within some key areas that have been identified; customer wait times and completion of adaptations.

Year to date (YTD) a total of 545 new contacts have been received (433 for same period 2021-22), 296 assessments have been completed. From this 197 recommendations for adaptations submitted. YTD 142 adaptation cases have been completed with the full DFG Budget being committed for 2022-23. (70 for same period 2021-22) and 160 cases have been approved (99 same period 2021-22).

March and April's new contacts demonstrate further increase in referrals for Housing adaptations services with 57 new contacts for the service in March and 60 in April. This is up approximately 20% on the same period for 2021-22. With the increased demand IHAT have been actively looking at ways to meet customers' needs with a focus on **prevent, reduce delay**.

Development of an NNDC Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Policy

A Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Policy to allow for the introduction of targeted grants to meet a wider range of service user's will be presented to Cabinet in June. Additional funding from the Better Care Fund for 2023-25 will support the implementation of the Housing Assistance Policy. It is anticipated that the introduction of a discretionary policy will increase access to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for some residents and provide further opportunities to access a range of discretionary grants to meet identified needs that fall outside the scope of the current mandatory DFG.

Community Connectors

The Council is a lead member of the North Norfolk Health & Wellbeing Partnership (NNH&WP). On behalf of the Partnership, the Community Connector service organised and ran eight **PositiviTea** events across North Norfolk during Mental Health Awareness Week. Please see: [Home | PositiviTea: Community wellbeing sessions to be hosted across the District \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#) for more details. All events were well attended by a variety of community groups and statutory organisations. Venues in town centers drew in good numbers of the public, but events out of town centers were less well attended.

Overall feedback was very positive. Holding events across North Norfolk meant that residents benefited from being able to access, talk to and receive support and advice from a range of statutory and voluntary organisations relevant to their local area.

Organisations represented highlighted the benefit of the events for networking relationships and public outreach. A survey ran alongside PositiviTea which has been extended to increase responses. [Home | What affects your mental health? Take our survey \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

A full report plus learnings from PositiviTea will be presented to the North Norfolk Health & Wellbeing Partnership on 20 June.

The Community Connectors host a weekly radio show which provides information about a range of topics. [Community Connectors Poppyland shows | Mixcloud.](#)

Social Prescribing

In May 2023, forty-six new Social Prescribing referrals were received requesting support with one hundred and forty-four issues. Benefit, financial, mental health, long term health conditions and social isolation are the most frequent reason for referral.

The total number of referrals received in 2023 until 31st May is three hundred and twenty-two.

An increasing number of referrals are complex and require multi agency input. Referrals where hoarding is a factor have risen.

In addition to NNDC funded Living Well Officers, NNDC has a contract with North Norfolk Primary Care Network to deliver a Link Worker Social Prescribing service to Birchwood, Paston, Mundesley, Cromer and Aldborough Practices. External funding has also been secured to deliver a Social Prescribing in Secondary Care Service.

Homes for Ukraine (H4U)

There has been a significant decrease in the number of new hosts offering to sponsor and accommodate guests from Ukraine.

Despite an increase in the monthly Thank you Payment offered to hosts to help offset the cost of having Ukrainian guests stay, an increasing number of hosts are no longer able to continue to host H4U guests.

Initial support to new arrivals is still offered and host accommodation is checked to ensure it is suitable. However, the emphasis has changed to helping existing H4U guests who wish to remain in the UK to source employment and to secure their own independent accommodation. Language and transport difficulties can impact on employment opportunities which makes becoming independent and self-sustaining more difficult.

Data to the end of May 2023 shows that approximately 180 guests have arrived in north Norfolk since the H4U scheme started and approximately 60 have left North Norfolk either to return to the Ukraine or to move to accommodation elsewhere in Norfolk or out of county.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

- EAC Training
- Coastal Walk in Mundesley
- Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party
- Portfolio Holder Meeting Peoples' Services
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Performance Monitoring Training
- North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership
- Cabinet Media Training
- Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board ICP
- Portfolio Holder Meeting Housing
- NNDC Full Council

3 Meetings attended.

- Development Committee
- Mundesley Parish Council Full Council April
- Coronation Celebrations in Gold Park
- New Members presentation at the Reef
- Group Briefings
- Communities Directorate presentation
- Positivitea Event at Cromer Community Centre
- Meeting with Housing Strategy regarding Homelessness
- Mundesley Parish Council Full Council May
- Portfolio Holder Meeting Housing
- AGM NNDC
- Local meeting Business Forum
- Resources Directorate presentation
- Resident meeting regarding ASB
- North Norfolk Help Hub Collaboration Meeting
- Lunch with People's Services event
- Cabinet