

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period September 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

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 August 2023 we have spent 40.6% of our allocation across 63 households. A further total of 92 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 across the 63 households can be seen below:

Single Working Age Households		Couple Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	36	Number of successful applications	1
Rent Arrears	£1,321.06	Rent Arrears	£700.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£210.00	Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£26,212.45	Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£27,743.51	Sub Total Expenditure	£700.00
Single Pension Age Households		Family Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	5	Number of successful applications	19
Rent Arrears	£0.00	Rent Arrears	£800.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00	Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£1,095.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£2,002.50	Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£8,498.36
Sub Total Expenditure	£2,002.50	Sub Total Expenditure	£10,393.36
Couple Working Age Households		Family Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	2	Number of successful applications	0
Rent Arrears	£0.00	Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00	Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£1,042.62	Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£1,042.62	Sub Total Expenditure	£0.00
		Total Expenditure	£41,881.99

We are continuing to use data insights to proactively target low-income households who have rent arrears, rent shortfalls, or who are at risk of homelessness.

Cost of Living

We are providing a package of financial support to residents utilising the funding received from the DWP through the Household Support Fund. Using data insights, we have proactively targeted low-income households* who:

- have not received the DWP Cost of Living payments allocated earlier this year, and have a property energy efficiency rating of E, F, or G; or,
- are in receipt of disability benefits and have a property energy efficiency rating of E, F, or G; or,
- provide care to a person in the household; or,
- are a large household (5 or more children).

During August 1024 households received a voucher for £80 towards the cost of energy, food, or wider essentials, utilising 42% of the fund. A second tranche of payments will be allocated during the Autumn/Winter period to the same co-hort of households.

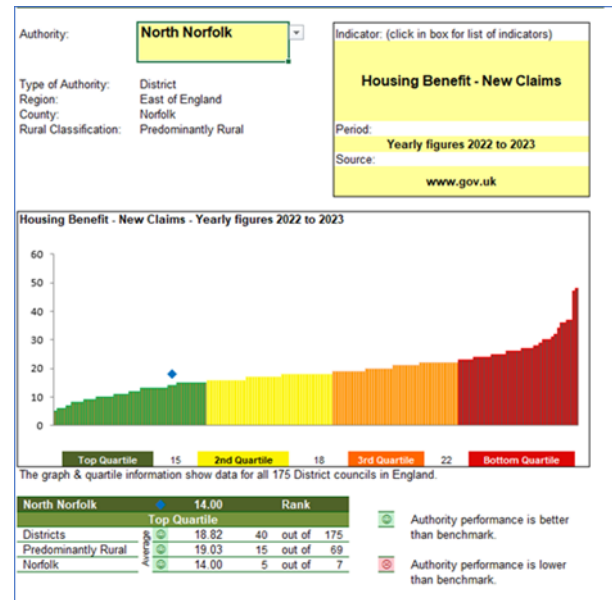
Emergency Support has also been set up for households in crisis and who need access to groceries within a 48-hr. window. Where the customer has engaged with People Services, the Financial Inclusion team will be able to offer a food voucher through the Eden Red voucher scheme which will allow the recipient to buy groceries online or in store at most of the main stores in our area. [Edenred-Select-Grocery-eCode-Redemption-Userguide.pdf](#)

* Low income has been determined by the household being in receipt of either Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support.

Performance

We are pleased to confirm the average speed of processing performance for new claims for year-ending 2022/23 resulted in North Norfolk being in the top quartile of local authorities across the East of England as shown opposite.

Our current performance for new claims is 9 days up to 31st August 2023, which based on the benchmarking for 2022/23, would continue to see us sitting in the top quartile.



Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 31 August there were 2,529 households on the housing list with 585 (23%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs.

	Housing List by Bedroom Need			
	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total
1 Bed	258	990	189	1437
2 Bed	130	383	103	616
3 Bed	90	101	40	231
4 Bed	100	81	40	221
5 Bed	7	11	6	24
+				
Total	585	1566	378	2529

	Homes Let by Property size (Bedrooms)			
	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total
1 Bed	43	0	2	45
2 Bed	42	2	3	47
3 Bed	4	0	1	5
4 Bed	0	0	0	0
5 Bed	0	0	0	0
Total	89	2	6	97

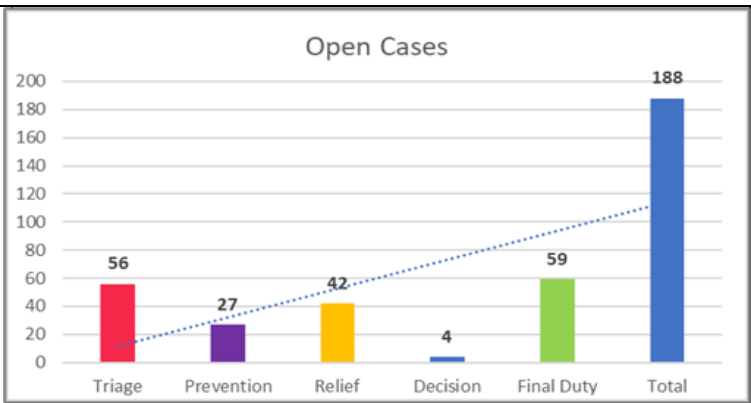
Households Assessed and Duty Owed

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.

Approaches to the service remain high and between 01 April to 31 August we have opened **444** cases. Each case represents a household who has contacted us as they have some sort of housing need, and we are still seeing an increase in homeless households (relief cases).

As at the 31 August 2023, there were 188 open cases, the majority of these cases are at risk of homeless or already homeless.

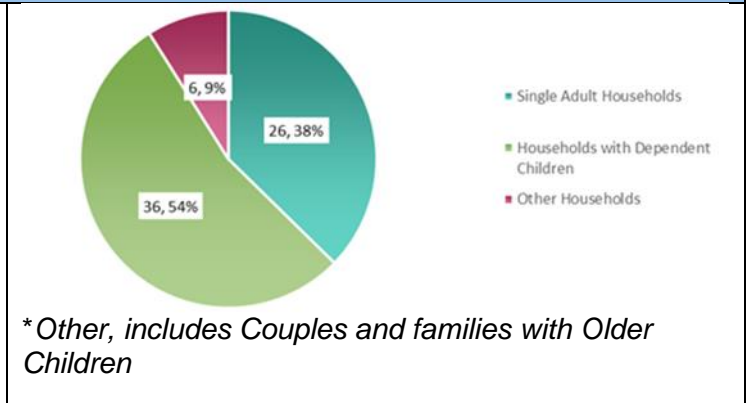
Between 01 April – 31 August 269 cases have been closed. This includes 18 prevention cases with 39% of cases resulting in a positive outcome with an offer of new or existing accommodation.



Temporary Accommodation

As at the 31 August 2023 there were 68 households in Temporary Accommodation. This is an overall increase of 48 % from the same date in 2022, and an increase of 44% of Households with dependent 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.



Rough Sleeping

For the month of August 4 people were sleeping rough in North Norfolk. We continue to support 2 entrenched Rough Sleepers, 1 person was new to rough sleeping and 1 person who has previously slept rough (within the past 180 days) received assistance from our Pathway, Prevention & Sustainment Officers

Housing Strategy

Local Authority Housing Fund

In the first round of funding, government offered the Council up to £1,245,210 to provide eleven 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 eleven homes. We have identified eleven suitable properties and offers have been made and accepted on all. The Council will own one and Flagship will own the remaining ten.

The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has offered a further £560,000 of funding to provide four further homes. Three would initially be to house Afghan refugee households. The fourth would be to provide a home to house a homeless household. The proposal is for the Council to buy four homes; three properties for Afghan refugees whilst the fourth home will add to the Council's stock of homes used for temporary housing.

New Affordable Homes

In the long term, all fifteen 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.

We have a healthy pipeline of affordable housing schemes, many of which are *rural exception* housing sites at various points in the development process. More than twenty developments will or could, subject to approvals, yield 350+ new affordable homes within 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 implemented over the next 2-3 years.

We anticipate completion of twenty-seven 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

Early Help and Prevention

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

The team has received 256 new contacts year to date, these have included referrals for adaptations, advice on adaptations for self-funders and requests for Housing needs reports (HNRs). There is a lot of demand in the system, assessments are being completed relatively quickly but an increased number of referrals coming into the service (for both adaptations, advice and HNRs) is increasing wait times for all customers. Increased demand has also led to increased wait times for schedules, this situation is being closely monitored and it is has been improved by the Flagship partnership, we anticipate this will continue to reduce further over time. A further 14 cases were approved for August with a value of approximately £112,132, This takes the total approved cases for the financial year to 59.

Community Connectors

Poppyland Radio

Weekly Poppyland Radio Show <https://www.poppylandradio.co.uk/shows/community-connectors>

Events attended:

- 2 August Roys of Wroxham
- 9 August WOW Bus in Cromer
- 10 August North Walsham Market
- 15 August Cromer Carnival with the Local Maternity & Neonatal System, Children's Services & Public Health teams
- 21 August Victory Housing Engagement Event (Stanley Road, North Walsham)
- 24 August Volunteer Day Merchants Place
- 31 August WOW Bus in Fakenham

Presentations:

- 31 August PositiviTea NNHWP OPWG

Business As Usual:

- Regular presence at warm spaces, community groups, food hubs, food banks, coffee mornings, libraries, community lunches, dementia cafes and wellbeing walks.
- In July, Debi Haydn joined the team as the Community Connector for Fakenham, Wells and surrounding areas.

Social Prescribing

In August 2023, seventy four new Social Prescribing referrals were received. Benefits, financial advice, mental health, long term health conditions and social isolation are the most frequent reason for referral. The total number of referrals received in 2023 up to 31st August is six hundred and four.

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

Homes for Ukraine

There are currently 142 Ukrainian Guests being supported in North Norfolk under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Eighty nine are adults and fifty three are children. There are currently forty seven hosts. Three families are in temporary accommodation. The number of guests moving into non hosted accommodation, returning to Ukraine or moving to another area outweighs the number of new arrivals.

Funding

Sustainable Communities Fund

The outcome of the meetings held on the 11 July were

- £1,000-£15,000 Panel – 5 applications received and awarded a total of £41,337.15
- Under £1,000 - 2 applications received. 1 application was awarded £950, a recommendation for the other application was deferred pending further information.

Arts & Culture Fund

5 applications were received - 4 applications were awarded a total of £10,351; 1 application was not put forward for consideration as it was considered to be incomplete because not all supporting documentation was received.

Community Transport

1 application for continuation funding of £2,000 was received and approved.

Carer Friendly Tick Accreditation

NNDC have successfully been awarded the Carer Friendly Tick Employer award. This accreditation is valid for 2 years.

Meetings attended:

20/7 DCN Driving better health outcomes
20/7 Site visit to Northrepps Broadland Housing Association
21/7 North Norfolk Community Engagement ICB
25/7 NNHWBP
26/7 Archelogy for wellbeing
31/7 Mundesley Parish Council and Everyone Active

7/8 Business Planning
15/8 Lynda Thomas NHS Norfolk
16/8 PH Meeting Housing
21/8 Pre Cabinet
22/8 PH Meeting Peoples Services
23/8 DLUHC Roadshow 5
29/8 Chairs Meeting ICB Health and Wellbeing Partnerships
30/8 Consultancy briefing affordables project

4/9 Cabinet
4/9 Business Planning
5/9 EELGA Role of DCs in Health Inequalities
6/9 Meeting with Rent Fair
11/9 Meeting with Rent Fair
12/9 Corporate Peer Challenge Cabinet.

Meetings and events coming up:

13/9 Overview and Scrutiny
13/9 ICS District Councils Meeting
13/9 Corporate Peer Challenge Housing Challenges
13/9 ICB
14/9 Corporate Peer Challenge Health and Communities
14/9 North Norfolk Health and Well Being Board – Chair

15/9 Norfolk Leaders Meeting
15/9 Corporate Peer Review
18/9 Pre Cabinet
18/9 Business Planning
15/9 PH Meeting Housing
15/9 NNDC Full Council

Workshops for the Corporate plan