

Notice of Motion – Homelessness Crisis

Homelessness has increased by 40% in North Norfolk over the course of the last 3 years, reflecting similar pressures in District and Borough Councils throughout England

We continue to see this number increasing and between 01 April and 31 October 2023, 228 households have been assessed as threatened with or were already homeless.

The primary reasons for Homelessness were:

- Private landlord Eviction: **78**
- Friends and Family no longer able to accommodate: **54**
- Domestic Abuse: **38**

As at the 31 October 2023 there were 75 households in Temporary Accommodation. This is an overall increase of 33% from the same date in 2022. The number of children living in temporary accommodation has also increased by 44% compared to October 2022. This means that 85 children are living in unstable accommodation and the majority of cases are living without space to play, away from schools, work and support network and sometimes out of District entirely. It is overwhelmingly disruptive and challenging and mentally harmful.

There is not just a human cost to using Temporary Accommodation, there is also a major financial cost. The Council is only able to reclaim a small proportion of the amount it spends on nightly, bed & breakfast type accommodation. If the Council places a household in bed & breakfast type accommodation costing £700 per week we are only able to claim £98 of that cost back. The Council's net costs for purchased TA have risen from £371k in 2021/22 to a forecast figure of £910k for this year.

While we are constantly exploring options to increase our provision of decent Temporary Accommodation, it's also important that we focus on longer-term solutions to ensure that a household's stay in temporary accommodation is as brief as possible and they can secure a more permanent housing solution. In addition to homeless demand pressures, we have also seen a significant reduction in the supply of permanent accommodation with a 38% reduction in available properties across our Housing Register partners. The reasons for this reduction are complex but are primarily associated with reduced levels of new-build completions and tenants not wanting to move due to cost-of-living pressures and generally unfavourable economic conditions.

We have over 2,500 households on the Housing List and the severe shortage of social rented homes, means, on average, there are 150 bids for each property advertised through Your Choice Your Home, with additional pressures for family homes with some properties receiving over 300 bids.

The private rental sector is out of reach for most applicants as Local Housing Allowance levels for all of North Norfolk residents, has been frozen by Central Government since 2020, based on rent levels in the 2018-19 financial year. Monitoring of private rented homes to let has found only seven homes available with rents within Local Housing Allowance levels so far this year. Real-terms spending power for Councils remains substantially below 2010 levels.

This Council are committed to tackling the Homelessness Crisis through all available means. Local Authorities (LAs), regardless of political administration, have been let down by Central Government's lack of investment in building affordable rented homes and enabling affordable homes for sale to local people. This has left Councils ill-equipped to tackle the

current Housing Crisis or develop long-term strategies to mitigate future housing pressures and sustainable market resilience.

Affordable new homes construction performs a pivotal role in addressing the Temporary Accommodation Crisis and will be a key contributor to the reduction of supply and demand driven private rental revenue costs for LAs.

I also want to highlight the extreme stress on our housing teams who are listening to the most vulnerable and desperate members of our communities, with limited resource to help them.