

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

September 2024

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 31 August 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Financial Inclusion

We are continuing to reach out to our communities and support the most vulnerable through income maximisation. During the period 1st April 2024 to 29th August 2024, we have identified over £900k per annum of missed benefits and income for residents, of which the residents are now receiving. A breakdown is represented below:

| Type of Support | Value of Support Provided |
|---|---------------------------|
| Welfare Benefits | £898,961.96 |
| Council Tax Support/Council Tax Discount (Severely Mentally Impaired) | £73,155.37 |
| Discretionary Housing Payments/ Grants/Vouchers | £6,447.07 |
| Total financial support provided | £978,564.40 |

In addition, we have undertaken a Council Tax Support Campaign and invited 216 households who potentially are eligible to Council Tax Support but not currently receiving this.

We have also undertaken a Pension Credit Campaign and identified and invited 145 residents who potentially are eligible to Pension Credit, which could maximise their income further. If entitled, they would be able to receive their winter fuel payments too. Alongside this the Department for Work and Pensions are undertaking a national Pension Credit Week of Action during 2nd September to 8th September 2024. We are trying to reach out to as many residents as we possibly can to see if they are entitled to claim Pension Credit and maximise their income and 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 2024/25, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037.00, and up to 31st August 2024 we have spent 48% of our allocation across 60 households. A further total of 103 applications (across 99 households) 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 60 households can be seen below.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Single Working Age Households | |
| Number of successful applications | 39 |
| Rent Arrears | £2,508.22 |
| Rent Deposit/Moving Costs | £400.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfall | £22,109.69 |
| Sub Total Expenditure | £25,017.91 |
| Single Pension Age Households | |
| Number of successful applications | 3 |
| Rent Arrears | £0.00 |
| Rent Deposit/Moving Costs | £0.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfall | £3,100.34 |
| Sub Total Expenditure | £3,100.34 |
| Couple Working Age Households | |
| Number of successful applications | 3 |
| Rent Arrears | £2,034.73 |
| Rent Deposit/Moving Costs | £0.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfall | £318.37 |
| Sub Total Expenditure | £2,353.10 |
| Couple Pension Age Households | |
| Number of successful applications | 1 |
| Rent Arrears | £0.00 |
| Rent Deposit/Moving Costs | £2,154.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfall | £0.00 |
| Sub Total Expenditure | £2,154.00 |
| Family Working Age Households | |
| Number of successful applications | 14 |
| Rent Arrears | £2,527.26 |
| Rent Deposit/Moving Costs | £1,502.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfall | £13,109.77 |
| Sub Total Expenditure | £17,139.03 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Family Pension Age Households | |
| Number of successful applications | 0 |
| Rent Arrears | £0.00 |
| Rent Deposit/Moving Costs | £0.00 |
| Ongoing Rent Shortfall | £0.00 |
| Sub Total Expenditure | £0.00 |
| Total Expenditure | £49,764.38 |

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 31 August 2024 there were 2369 households on the housing list with 488 (20%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs.

The tables below highlight the makeup of housing need and the size property that is required by applicants on the housing list . Although the greatest demand for housing is those with a 1-bedroom need, there are significantly fewer larger properties allocated with a current demand for 4 bed+ properties being 242 with only 1 four bedroom house being let between 01 April to 31 August 2024.

| | Housing List by Bedroom Need | | | | Homes Let by Property size (Bedrooms) | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|--|-----------------|----------|------------|
| | Housing Register | Housing Options | Transfer | Total | Housing Register | Housing Options | Transfer | Total |
| 1 Bed | 200 | 922 | 193 | 1315 | 49 | 1 | 4 | 54 |
| 2 Bed | 103 | 363 | 100 | 566 | 57 | 6 | 3 | 66 |
| 3 Bed | 91 | 112 | 43 | 246 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 15 |
| 4 Bed | 85 | 91 | 36 | 212 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 5 Bed + | 9 | 12 | 9 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 488 | 1500 | 381 | 2369 | 119 | 8 | 9 | 136 |

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 2024 to 31 August 2024 we have opened 510 new 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).

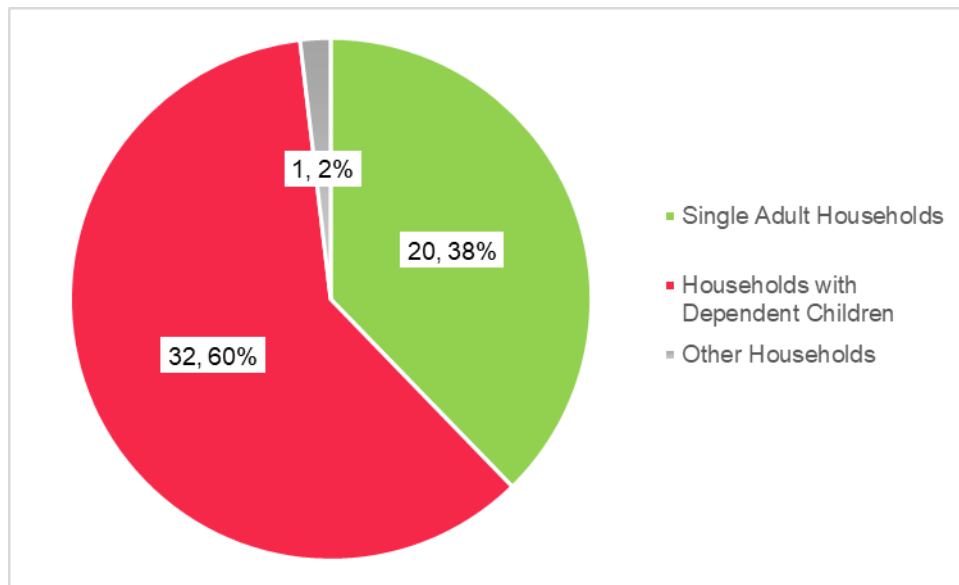
As at the 31 August 2024 there were 215 open homeless cases. Of which 138 households were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness (70 - prevention Duty) or were homeless (68 Relief Duty), of these 60 households included (131) dependent children.

The three most common triggers of homelessness were:

- End of Private Tenancy
- Family/Friends no longer/willing to accommodate
- Domestic Abuse

Temporary Accommodation

As at the 31 August 2024 there were 53 households in Temporary Accommodation. This is an overall decrease of 22% from the same date last year (31 August 2023). Included in the 32 Family Households there are 73 children.



Rough Sleeping

During the month of August (at various points in time) 7 people were reported/verified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk, this includes 1 person with entrenched experience of rough sleeping, 5 people who have previously slept rough in the district and 1 person who was new rough sleeping in the District.

Housing Strategy

New Affordable Homes

We have a healthy affordable housing scheme pipeline, many of which are 'rural exception' housing sites at various points in the development process. There are over twenty developments which will, subject to approvals, yield more than 350 new affordable homes in the next few years. In common with most of Norfolk, 'Nutrient neutrality' is a delaying factor for many sites within the district.

In 2024/25 we expect Housing Associations to provide 68 new affordable homes in the district. So far in 2024/25 16 new homes have been provided. Recently Planning has been approved for a site of 47 affordable homes in Bacton.

The exception scheme in Northrepps recently completed and was officially opened in July, the exception scheme in Hindringham was also officially opened in August.

Development of affordable homes in Sheringham (Westwood), Warham, Salthouse and West Beckham are also on site, as well as affordable homes as part of a market site at Beresford Road, Holt.

North Norfolk have been asked to give a presentation on our success in delivering affordable homes through rural expectation schemes at a national Rural Services Network event.

Temporary Accommodation

The Council currently holds 25 units of Temporary or other homeless accommodation (including five units on move on accommodation for ex-rough sleepers). Some of these units have been partly funded using government grant, including Local Authority Housing Fund grant (which has also helped to fund Flagship Housing to purchase 10 affordable homes).

We are in the process of purchasing the 26th home, which should complete in the next two months.

Social Prescribing

The focus in August has been progressing and closing long standing complex cases, as overall referrals have been lower over the summer months. Across the team, officers have undertaken reviewing processes for the collection of data as well as creating an improved version of the Social Prescribing referral form.

August 2024:

Referrals received into SP = **34**

Total number of issues/concerns supported by SP = 102

Total number of referrals discussed at North Norfolk Help Hub = **16**

YTD:

Referrals received into SP = 516

Total number of issues/concerns supported by SP = 924

Total number of referrals discussed at North Norfolk Help Hub = 165

Note: All cases raised at the North Norfolk Health Hub meeting are complex cases with multiagency working practices in place

Community Hub

A third meeting is planned for Thursday 12th September Agenda Includes:

- Alzheimer's Society Presentation
- MIND Presentation on Supporting clients with Complex Mental Health
- Winter Cost of Living Advice & Guidance

IHAT

The team are continuing to promote IHAT and discretionary grant available throughout 2024-25 in addition to undertaking DFG Core adaptations. Some examples include:

Key objectives

- Key focus at present on preparing vulnerable residents for winter, this involves:
- Identifying faulty heating systems with existing client and undertaking repairs / replacement heating systems.
- Supporting existing clients to apply for household support fund where necessary.

- Identifying any necessary repairs on properties that will be detrimental over the winter months to our vulnerable clients e.g. leaking roofs / windows etc and undertaking essential repairs.

The table below shows the number of DFG referrals and current expenditure (excluding discretionary grants).

| Figures 2024-25 – Disabled Facilities Grant | |
|--|-------------|
| Total new contacts for period | 94 |
| YTD New contacts | 220 |
| Total Completed cases YTD | 43 |
| Total approval value YTD | £445,861.81 |
| Total spend Value YTD | £596,926.24 |

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

September

Anglian Water Workshop
 Visit to Water Lane Mundesley re improvements
 Cabinet and Comms meeting
 Mundesley Golf Club Meeting regarding Net Zero discussion
 LGA MP Parliamentary Reception Whitehall
 Ripple Catchup
 Planning Briefing
 LGA Transformation Refresher
 Cabinet
 Business Planning
 Meeting with Solo Housing Association
 Victory Housing Meeting
 Meeting with Rentplus
 Patient Reference Group
 LGA comms Training
 Rural Fair Funding and Economy Webinar
 Southern Hill Hospital Meeting
 Rural Affordable Housing Webinar
 Data Support Catch-up
 Overview and Scrutiny
 MPC Housing Meeting
 Rural Health and Care Webinar
 Beam Meeting
 Holt Land Discussion
 Norfolk Wind offshore event
 MPC Full Council

3 Meetings attended

August

BBC Radio interview

Cabinet

Cromer Visit

PH Housing Catchup

SNAP Meeting

Housing Allocation Drop in

Ripple Meeting

EELGA Meeting

Task and Finish Group OandS

Rent fair

Completion of Hindringham Development Celebration