

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

November 2024

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 30th November 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Council Tax Support scheme 2025/26

The Council Tax Support scheme consultation ended on 24th November. An evaluation of the responses will be presented to the working party shortly, recommending the proposals are put forward to cabinet for consideration.

Financial Inclusion

In this financial year, the team have claimed over £1.4 million* in missed benefits and/or funding for households across North Norfolk, with the highest amount of income being claimed for disabled households.

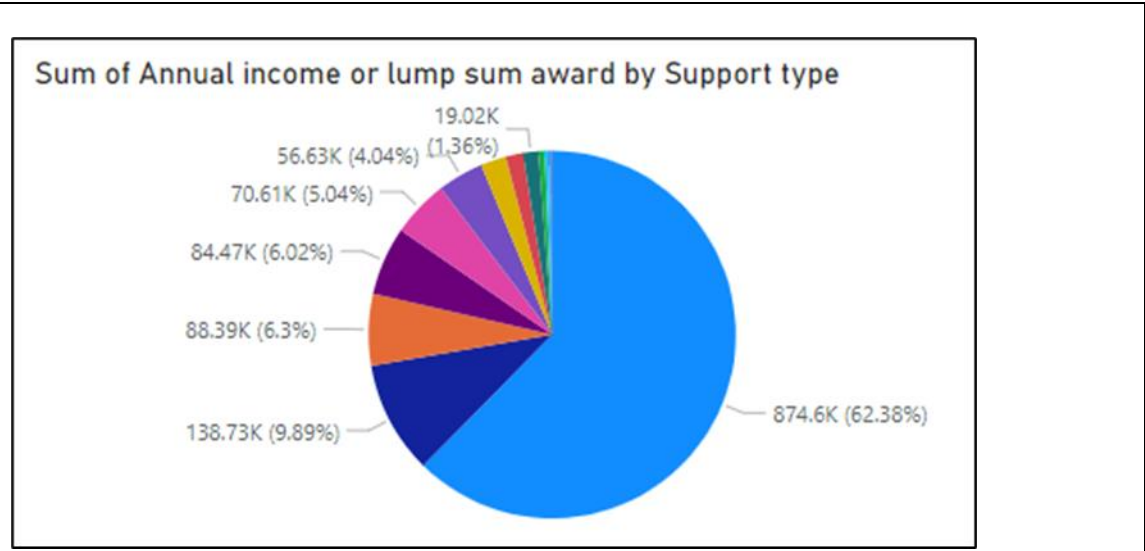
We are continuing to run take-up campaigns to maximise household income. So far this year the take up campaigns for Council Tax Support and Pension Credit have realised over £100,000 of additional support to households.

Households which have been contacted through our take-up campaigns but have not yet claimed, are now being contacted by the Financial Inclusion Triage Officer to support with their application.

** Sum of income or lump sum award calculated on an annual basis.*

Income Tracker 24/25

<u>Support type</u>	<u>Sum of Annual income or lump sum award</u>
Carer's Allowance /Premium	70,605.60
Council Tax Support/ Discount	84,473.60
Disability Living Allowance/ Attendance Allowance / Personal Independence Allowance	874,595.80
Discretionary Housing Payment	4,720.13
Edenred/Argos Voucher	7,515.00
Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance	21,304.40
Energy Bank Voucher	3,819.00
Household Support Fund/ Discretionary Household Support Grant	670.00
Housing Benefit	56,625.40
Pension Credit	138,725.60
Take-up Campaign Council Tax Support	31,595.01
Take-up Campaign Pension Credit	88,393.76
Universal Credit	19,021.68
Total	1,402,064.98



- Support type**
- Disability Living Allowance/ Attend...
 - Pension Credit
 - Take-up Campaign Pension Credit
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 - Carer's Allowance /Premium
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 - Household Support Fund/ Discretio...

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 30th November 2024 we have spent 77% of our allocation across 91 households. A further total of 176 applications (across 162 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 considers other funding options and support available and signposts the customer accordingly.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 91 households can be seen below.

Single Working Age Households	
Number of successful households	57
Rent Arrears	£5,058.10
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£2,275.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£36,915.50
Sub Total Expenditure	£44,248.60
Single Pension Age Households	
Number of successful households	5
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£5,360.48
Sub Total Expenditure	£5,360.48
Couple Working Age Households	
Number of successful households	4
Rent Arrears	£2,034.73
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£822,38
Sub Total Expenditure	£2,857.11
Couple Pension Age Households	
Number of successful households	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 households	24
Rent Arrears	£2,527.26
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£2,265.95
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£20,261.98
Sub Total Expenditure	£25,055.19
Family Pension Age Households	
Number of successful households	0
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£0.00
Total Expenditure	£79,675.38

Helping to reduce the council's environmental footprint

To support the council in achieving its ambitious environmental and climate targets, we are starting to move our working age customers onto paperless notifications, to reduce the distribution, paper, ink, and energy use which will in turn reduce the costs to the council financially and support its carbon emission targets.

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 30 November 2024 there were 2315 households on the housing list with 483 (21%) being on the Housing register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs, including households to whom the council owns a statutory housing duty.

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 for those with a 1-bedroom need, there are significantly fewer larger properties allocated with a current demand for 4 beds+ properties being 219 with only 1 four-bedroom house being let between 01 April to 30 November 2024.

Some properties have a minimum age requirement, for example, in some cases only people over 55 years of age can apply, this applies to 37 properties let during 01 April to 30 November.

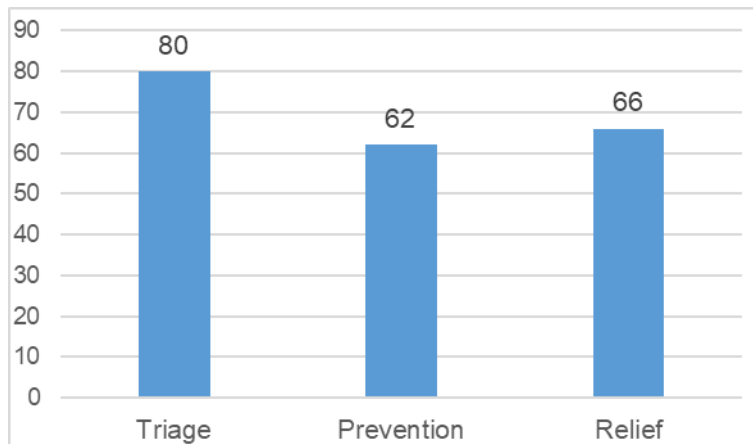
	Housing List by Bedroom Need				Homes Let by Property size (Bedrooms)			
	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total
1 Bed	212	913	173	1298	66	2	6	74
2 Bed	98	355	91	544	84	7	7	98
3 Bed	76	106	47	229	18	1	4	23
4 Bed	88	95	36	219	1			1
5 Bed +	9	9	7	25	0			0
Total	483	1478	354	2315	169	10	17	196

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 30 November 2024 we have opened 821 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 30 November 2024 there were 207 open homeless cases. The table below shows the levels of Homelessness, where a household is owed either the prevention or relief duty following initial assessment.



The three most common triggers of homelessness for Households owed a homeless duty by reason for loss, or threat of loss, of last settled home were:

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

Outcome of main duty decisions for eligible households

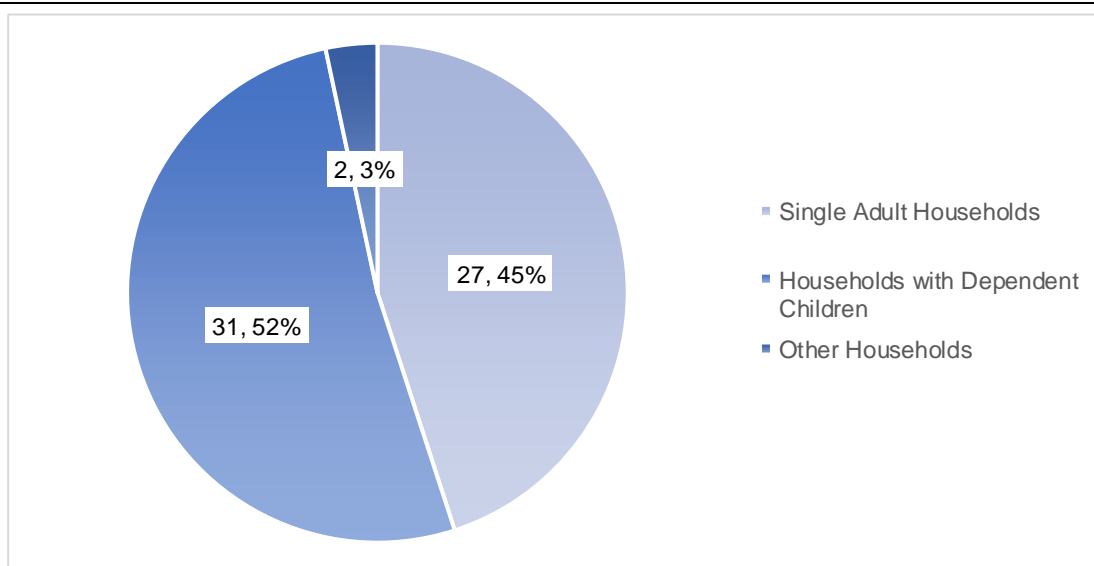
Main homelessness duty describes the duty a local authority has towards an applicant who is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has priority need. Households are only owed a main duty if their homelessness has not been successfully prevented or relieved.

Between 01 April to 30 November 2024, 125 main duty decisions have been taken with 92 households (74%) being found to be Homeless, priority need, and unintentionally homeless.

Temporary Accommodation

As at the 30 November 2024 there were 60 households in Temporary Accommodation.

Included in the 31 Family Households there were 81 children.



Rough Sleeping

During the month of November (at various points in time) 6 people were reported/verified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk, this includes 1 person with entrenched experience of rough sleeping, 4 people who have previously slept rough in the district and 1 person who was a new rough sleeping in the district.

At the end of the month, 2 people remain sleeping rough, 1 person has been supported into Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), 1 person has been offered interim emergency accommodation and two have left the area.

[Housing Strategy](#)

Temporary Accommodation

The Council currently holds 25 units of Temporary or other homeless accommodation (including five units of 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).

Value for money analysis of our in-house TA has been completed and has concluded the homes do provide VFM, especially compared to expensive (and inferior) nightly paid accommodation.

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 59 new affordable homes in the district – this is a lower figure than previously reported as one scheme will now begin handing over homes in early 2025/26. So far in 2024/25 23 new homes have been completed, including well-received Exception Schemes in Northrepps and Hindringham.

Recently Planning has been approved for a site of 47 affordable homes in Bacton and 50+ homes on Station Road in North Walsham.

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 recently gave a presentation on our success in delivering affordable homes through rural expectation schemes at a national Rural Services Network event.

Social Prescribing

There has been an increase in referrals from NN2 surgeries this month due to proactive promotion of the service amongst new GPs.

November 2024:

Referrals received into SP = **45**

Total number of issues/concerns supported by SP = **147**

Total number of referrals discussed at North Norfolk Help Hub = **20**

YTD: (Figures from 1/4/2024)

Referrals received into SP = **350**

Total number of issues/concerns supported by SP = **928**

Total number of referrals discussed at North Norfolk Help Hub = **179**

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

North Norfolk Help Hub

The North Norfolk Help Hub will hold its last official meeting of the year on the 11th December. A smaller meeting will be held on 18th December. The first meeting of 2025 will take place on the 15th January.

Community Hub

The latest meeting took place on Thursday 15th November. This was the last meeting of 2024.

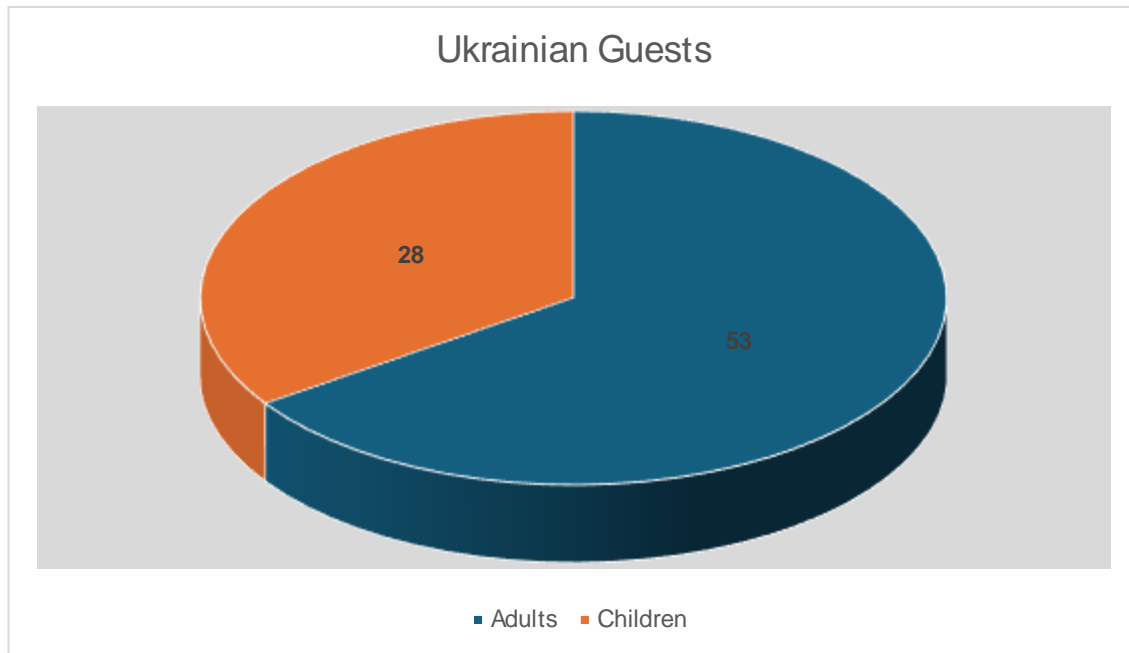
Presentations included:

- Mind – Suicide Support Service Norfolk & Waveney
- Mind – Routes Employment Services

The next newsletter will be going out to all partners on Friday 6th December 2024.

Homes for Ukraine (H4U)

There are currently eighty-one Ukraine guests being supported in North Norfolk, of which fifty-three are adults and twenty-eight are under the age of eighteen, in thirty-two host settings.



In addition, there have been a number of updates for the new Visa Scheme which the Ukrainian officer will be supporting the Ukrainian guests with over the coming months.

IHAT

- Reviewing and evaluating current discretionary grant policy looking at what benefit grants have provided and identifying any further gaps in provision.
- Researching and networking with other IHAT districts to explore potential options for expanding the discretionary policy and the amount of grants offered under this.
- Reviewing team resource and identifying potential additional demand on team resource and existing customer wait times from expanding policy.
- Consideration to where the introduction of new discretionary grants could aid the streamlining of the DFG process as a whole and maximise overall spend and outcomes whilst reducing wait times for each stage.
- Increase in demand across IHAT as a whole is placing additional pressure on each stage and leading to wait times increasing across the whole DFG process. Evaluating how we manage this along with the predicted continuation in demand following promotion of IHAT grants and natural increase in demand for adaptations due to demographics and focus on prevention from other services, such as NHS and local community healthcare services.

Update on figures 2024-25 – Disabled Facilities Grant

YTD Total approved grants 2024 – 25	£880,321.13
YTD Approved value outstanding 2024-25	£625,610.92 / 61 cases
Brought forward approval value from 2023-24 (not yet completed)	£113,627.94
Brought forward approved cases 2023-24 (not yet completed)	11 cases
Oct 24 & Nov 24 total spend	£357,088.80
Oct 24 & Nov 24 total approval value	£344,821.51 / 31 cases
Total spend YTD	£1,038,502.90
Average time for all category of cases (working days) between:	
Triage and assessment being completed	65 days
Recommendation for adaptations schedule of work	105 days
Case start to completion of work	325 days

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

Meetings for November and December 2024

- Cabinet
- Business Planning
- Laying Wreath at Mundesley
- LGA Training Risk Management
- Armistice Day at NNDC
- Social Value Calculator Meeting
- Overview and Scrutiny
- AGM Libdem
- Business Planning Budget
- Group Meeting
- Portfolio Catch up with Housing Strategy
- NNDC Full Council
- Housing Conference London 26-28th November
- District Council Network presentation HOP Westminster
- Homestead Charity Meeting
- Business Planning & Budget Meeting
- LGA Audit Training
- Planning Training Refresher
- Coastal Forum

- PH Catchup Peoples Services
- Site Visit to Warham with Flagship
- DCN Reception (Parliament) to celebrate 50 years of District Councils (NDC to present their works)
- Housing Strategy with local agent re MUN03
- Development Committee
- Meeting with WNKL & Breckland DC
- Overview and Scrutiny Snap meeting North Walsham, Mundesley Parish Council and Full Council Meeting
- Mundesley Site Visit to High Street with NCC Highways