

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

14 September 2021

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING & BENEFITS

For the period – August to September 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Test & Trace Support Payment

The number of Test & Trace Support Payment applications increased significantly in July but have now started to decline again.

In addition to the DHSC Test & Trace Support Payment we also operate a local Discretionary Test & Trace Support Payment scheme as part of a county co-hort with Norfolk Councils. The scheme provides local top-up funding of £250,000 per an authority, which has been funded by Norfolk County Council.

Where eligibility meets the DHSC scheme, the funding from DHSC would be used first but where the eligibility does not meet this scheme, payment can be considered under the local discretionary scheme. The guidelines for the local scheme have been discussed and agreed by all Norfolk councils.

The table below shows the number of applications received since January 2021.

Month received	Number of standard applications	Number of discretionary applications	Number of local discretionary applications
January 2021	62	52	0
February 2021	12	18	0
March 2021	8	5	0
April 2021	1	1	0
May 2021	2	2	0
June 2021	7	7	0
July 2021	60	42	1
August 2021	8	5	2

The table below shows the total applications received since the scheme started on 28th September 2020. The DHSC scheme is due to end on 30th September 2021.

Scheme	Received	Approved	Rejected	Outstanding/Pending
Standard	252	112	134	6
Discretionary	226	93	126	7
Local Discretionary	3	3	0	0
Total	481	208	260	13

Caseload outstanding as at 9th September 2021

Number of benefit cases – 1154

Number of Housing Benefit overpayment cases - 105

Housing Benefit Debt Recovery as at 31st August 2021

Debt outstanding to recover - £744,295

Debt recovered during 2021/22 - £75,576

Debt raised during 2021/22 - £60,250

Debt written off during 2021/22 - £18,629

Speed of processing as at 31st July 2021

New claims – 13 days (target 20 days)

Changes in circumstances - 10 days (target 14 days)

Housing

Temporary Housing

There are currently **40** households in Temporary Accommodation, this includes the **6** rough sleepers currently accommodated as follows:

- 2 x Spot Purchase
- 1 x Reeves Court
- 3 X NSAP (Next Steps Accommodation Programme)

Following the Council's successful bid to secure £140,000 from the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) to help provide four homes for single rough sleepers or people at a risk of rough sleeping, purchasing these homes is progressing well. We have completed the purchase of the four 1-bed properties and checks and minor works are now being carried out on these with the first 3 tenants already moved in and the 4th tenant moving in week commencing 13 September 21.

Cabinet also agreed to the repurposing of £500k Disabled Facilities Grant budget to purchase accessible temporary accommodation units. The first purchase, of an ex-Flagship bungalow, has now completed. Again, minor works are underway to bring the home into use shortly. A further bungalow, capable of being made fully wheelchair accessible is under offer.

The Council has also received £35k from the MHCLG Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) as a contribution to the refurbishment of a one-bed self-contained flat for rough sleeper move-on housing.

New Affordable Homes

We project that housing associations will provide 183 new affordable homes (71 affordable rent and 112 shared ownership) in 2021/22. The 2021/22 figures include Housing 21's Fakenham Extra Care Housing scheme of 66 flats (30 affordable rent and 36 shared ownership) which completed in April 2021.

Housing Strategy

Full Council approved the new Housing Strategy at its meeting in July. Officers have begun work on the actions in the Housing Strategy action plan and reports on progress will be reported as actions complete.

Community Led Housing

We continue to provide support to existing and new community led housing groups – this year grant has been given to Stable Door (community led housing organisation in Sheringham) to help purchase an additional home and one new Community Land Trust has formed with the aim of providing affordable homes for local people.

Housing Options Team

The team continue to focus on supporting all clients that approach the service.

Your Choice Your Home

As at 08 September 2021 there were **2638** households on the housing list of whom:

- **347** were on the Housing Register (highest priority) broken down as follows:
 - Priority Card x 5
 - Band 1 x **203**
 - Band 2 x **139**

Breakdown as requested of need within Housing Register (1*, B1 & B2)

08-Sep-21																				
Count of Applicant Calculated Bedroom Need	Column Labels																			
	Band 1						B1 Total	Band 2					B2 Total	1*				1* Total	Grand Total	
Bedrooms	1	2	3	4	5	8		1	2	3	4	8		1	2	3	8			
2 adults (including carer)		4					4		1				1							5
Access to children		1					1													1
Couple	18						18	5						5						23
Family 1 Child		38	2				40		15					15		1			1	56
Family 2 children under 10 years		11	4				15		6	2				8						23
Family 2 children, 1 child 10 or more years, both same sex			9				9			4				4						13
Family 2 children, 1 child 10 or more years, one of each sex			8				8			22				22		1			1	31
Family 3 children				13			13			1	26			27						40
Family 4 children				5			5			1	5			6						11
Family 5+ children				1		2	3				1	2		3			1		1	7
Other family			1	2	1		4		2	3				5						9
Single Person	85						85	43						43	2				2	130
Grand Total	103	54	24	21	1	2	205	48	24	33	32	2	139	2	1	1	1	5	349	

Lets

QTR 1 01 Apr 2021 to 30 June 2021 - **88** Households have secured social housing

QTR 2 (part) 1 Jul 2021 to 31 Aug 21 – **49** Households have secured social housing

Homelessness

There is still a firm focus on Rough sleepers from MHCLG in that we are still reporting monthly stats in relation to rough sleepers within the district.

As at 31 August 2021 the authority is working with 12 Rough Sleepers.

6 x Rough sleeping within the district, of these 3 are entrenched and 4 have been rough sleeping since July 21.

2 x Rough Sleepers currently being accommodated under Spot Purchase

1 x Rough Sleeper in Reeves Court

3 X Fomer Rough Sleepers accommodated in the NSAP properties

Following a recent discussion with MHCLG we are still focusing on finding solutions for our single clients to whom the authority is accommodating.

As at 08 September 2021, there were 137 active live cases:

- Final Duties accepted: 18
- Prevention duty accepted: 29
- Relief Duty accepted: 39
- Reviews: 3
- Triage (mixture of new cases, rough sleepers, clients being supported): 48

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

There are still issues with contractor capacity and some contractors have advised that they do not have capacity to provide quotes for works at the current time, this along with the increased complexity of jobs and shortage of materials is affecting completions. There is a lot of demand in the system, assessments are being completed relatively quickly but a backlog of cases needing schedules of work is building. This situation is being closely monitored. A further 8 grants were approved in August with a value of approximately £75,000 taking the total approved for the financial year to 34 with a total commitment of approximately £243,000. In addition 3 grants were completed in August taking the total for the financial year to 26 with a total spend of approximately £378,000 (this includes interim payments for some jobs which have started on site but not yet completed).

3 Meetings attended

Meeting with Victory/ Flagship at Tom Moore House Meeting regarding potential sites for affordable housing

MCHLG Webinar Rough Sleeping

Visit to see completed and future projects at Homes for Wells Strategic Partner Liaison Meeting with Victory/ Flagship Cromer to Mundesley Sea

Defence Briefings North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund Planning Policy and Built Heritage Meeting Weekly / Monthly Portfolio Holder catchups

Zero Budget Training Cabinet meetings Business Planning meetings Group Meetings

Intensive work on:

Domestic Abuse and facilitating help

Finding additional accommodation for TA

Working on bringing forward more social rented housing