

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 2022

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND BENEFITS

For the period to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Housing

Temporary Housing

As at 31 December 2021 there were **39** households in Temporary Accommodation, this includes the 10 new & former rough sleepers currently accommodated as follows:

- 3 x Protect & Vaccinate (P&V)
- 3 x Reeves Court
- 4 X Former Rough Sleepers: NSAP (Next Steps Accommodation Programme)

When current purchases/works are complete the Council will have a portfolio of 16 homes for use as temporary accommodation – five units of move-on accommodation for rough sleepers and 11 homes as alternatives to bed and breakfast for homeless households.

Five of the 16 homes have been part funded by the government:

- Next Steps Accommodation Programme - £140,000 grant towards four homes for use by ex-rough-sleepers. All four homes are now in use.
- Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme - £35,000 as a contribution to the refurbishment of a one-bed self-contained flat for rough sleeper move-on housing. This project has now achieved planning permission and the works have been tendered and the successful contractor aims to complete works by February 2022.

Purchase of homes to be used for temporary accommodation has also been possible as Cabinet agreed to the repurposing of £500k Disabled Facilities Grant budget (in March 2021) to purchase accessible temporary accommodation units and £640k of Housing Reserves (in October 2021) to purchase family temporary accommodation homes. The first of these further purchases has completed and the home (an ex-Flagship bungalow) is in use, meaning there are 13 council owned homes being used for temporary accommodation. The remaining three homes are currently in the process of undergoing works to make them ready for occupation.

New Affordable Homes

We project that housing associations will provide 165 new affordable homes in 2021/22. We project 69 affordable rent and 96 shared ownership. These figures

allow for the conversion of two shared ownership homes to affordable rent on a site in Little Snoring. As at the end of December 148 of these homes have been delivered.

Grant for Energy Efficiency Improvement Works

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) as part of the Norfolk Warm Homes Consortium of five Norfolk districts has been successful in a bid for £3.85 million of government grant to provide energy efficiency improvement works to homes occupied by low income households. The funding is part of the government's sustainable warmth programme.

Households are eligible if their household income is no more than £30,000 gross. Eligible properties must have an EPC of band D or lower. Grant is available to meet 100% of the costs for owner occupiers and up to 2/3rds of the cost for landlords. There is a cap on costs of £10,000 for owner occupiers and £7,500 (maximum grant of £5,000) for landlords of privately rented properties. Eligible works include wall, loft, and underfloor insulation and low carbon heating technologies.

Land Owners Event

On 16th March the Housing Strategy team will run a 'Webinar' for land owners, land agents and Parish/Town Councillors. The webinar will explain the process for land owners wishing to sell land for affordable housing. Our aim is to encourage land owners with suitable sites to offer these for affordable housing development.

Housing Options Team

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

Your Choice Your Home

As at 31 Dec 2021 there were **2627** households on the housing list of whom:

- **419** were on the Housing Register (highest priority) broken down as follows:
- Priority Card x **3**
- Band 1 x **243**
- Band 2 x **173**

Lets

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

QTR 2 01 Jul 2021 to 30 Sep 2021: **97** Households have secured social housing

QTR 3 01 Oct 2021 to 31 Dec 2021: **70** Households have secured social housing

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

20 December 2022 – DLUHC instructed all authorities under the Protect & Vaccinate to bring in Rough Sleepers. NNDC at the 20 Dec 2021 had 8 Rough Sleepers through this programme we have brought in 5 –with 3 still rough sleeping and continue to refuse to come in.

3 x Entrenched rough sleepers

3 x Protect & Vaccinate (P&V)

3 x Rough Sleeper in Reeves Court

4 x Former Rough Sleepers accommodated in the NSAP properties

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

As 17 January 2022, there were 145 active live cases:

- Final Duties accepted: 33
- Prevention duty accepted: 36
- Relief Duty accepted: 41
- Decisions 0
- Reviews: 2
- Triage (mixture of new cases, rough sleepers, clients being supported): 33

Benefits

End of year updates

Our systems will be closing down on the afternoon of 23rd February 2022, for the end of financial year updates. We aim for this work to be completed by Monday 28th February 2022. During this time live systems will not be available. Customers can continue to contact the service via telephone, email or web chat. Our self-serve portal My Bills and Benefits and self-serve forms such as the online claim form and change in circumstance form will not be available over the weekend. Alternative arrangements will be put in place and communicated internally and externally.

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide financial support to help with rent or housing costs as a top-up payment to Housing Benefit or Housing Costs as part of a Universal Credit claim. At the beginning of the financial year, North Norfolk District Council was allocated £145,377 in funding from the DWP.

So far this year we have made 128 payments under the fund at a total cost of nearly £93k. This is a priority area of work for the service to ensure households are receiving the financial support they urgently need in order to prevent rent arrears and eviction. In the lead up to the end of the financial year we will be pro-actively identifying households who have not yet claimed support under a DHP.

Test & Trace Support Payment (TTSP)

We are continuing to see a higher number of Test & Trace Support Payment (TTSP) applications. A significant increase has been seen during December and January. The table here shows the number of applications received over the last quarter.

Month	Received	Approved	Rejected	Pending/Outstanding
October 2021	59	39	20	0
November 2021	82	51	31	0
December 2021	128	56	39	33
January up to 16/01/2022	161	16	15	130

Change to Testing Policy

From 11 January 2022 in England, people who receive positive lateral flow results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the UK.

Please note: individuals who self-report a positive LFD test and wish to claim for TTSP will need to take a confirmatory PCR test – the position remains the same.

Change to Self-isolation Rules

From Wednesday, 22 December 2021, people who test positive for COVID-19 can self-isolate for seven days instead of ten days if they receive negative LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period (with tests taken at least 24 hours apart).

This applies to vaccinated and unvaccinated people who test positive for COVID-19. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period. If the LFD test on day 6 is positive, but the two subsequent consecutive daily LFD tests – taken at least 24 hours apart – are negative, a person can leave self-isolation on the day of their second negative LFD test. For example, negative tests on day 7 and day 8 will enable the person to leave self-isolation on day 8.

As applicants will have to isolate for a minimum of seven days and may incur loss of income, they will remain eligible for TTSP. As individuals may need to self-isolate for longer than seven days, and up to ten days, the amount will remain fixed at £500.

There is no change to the guidance for unvaccinated contacts of positive COVID-19 cases who are still required to self-isolate for ten full days after the date of exposure to the virus.

From Monday 17th January 2022 the self-isolation advice for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) has changed. It is now possible to end self-isolation after 5 full days if you have 2 negative LFD tests taken on consecutive days. The first LFD test should not be taken before the fifth day after your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you did not have symptoms). The self-isolation period remains 10 full days for those without negative results from 2 LFD tests taken a day apart.

We have not yet received any further guidance from the DHSC on how the latest self-isolation advice affects the TTSP.

Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund

Applications for the TTSP made by staff working in the care sector will be rejected. Instead, the applicant will be directed to the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund (ICF), which their employer will have access to.

[Household Support Fund \(HSF\)](#)

The Benefits Service is continuing to support the administration of the Household Support Fund. Applications to the fund are being invited through the council's web form and pro-active work is being carried out across People Services to identify eligible cases to the fund. So far we have issued nearly £50k across 96 households. The scheme closes on 31st March 2022. However, as North Norfolk District Council has been allocated a set amount of funding by Norfolk County Council, the scheme may close earlier depending on the number of eligible applications we receive.

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

The team has received 315 new contacts year to date resulting in 176 recommendations for adaptations. 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 11 grants were approved in December with a value of approximately £82,500 taking the total approved for the financial year to 63 with a total commitment of approximately £700,000. 53 grants have been completed to the end of December with a total spend of approximately £601,500 (this includes interim payments for some jobs which have started on site but not yet completed).

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Land Owner Forum March 16th 2022

3 Meetings attended

Cabinet meetings
Portfolio Catch-ups
Business Planning Meetings
Cabinet Working Party
Registered Housing provider meetings
Local Plan Briefings
Intergrated Housing Adaption Team meeting
North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund Panel
Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party
Site Visit to Thursford potential affordable housing scheme
Cromer Academy visit
Group briefings

