

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Members of the Committee

Cllr M Murrell (Chairman)

Cllr S Riley (Vice Chairman)

Cllr N Brennan

Cllr P Bulman

Cllr S Catchpole

Cllr J Davis

Cllr N Harpley

Cllr S Holland

Cllr C Karimi-Ghovanlou

Cllr K Kelly

Cllr K Leggett MBE

Cllr G Nurden

Cllr R Potter

Cllr S Prutton

Cllr N Shaw

Date & Time:

Tuesday 28 June 2022 at 4.00pm

Place:

Council Chamber Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 0DU

Contact:

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PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRImsTCIng>

If a member of the public would like to attend to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to committee.bdc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk, no later than 5.00pm Thursday 23 June 2022. Please see further guidance on the options for public speaking at page 2 of this agenda.

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8 | 3 |
| 2. Apologies for absence | |
| 3. Minutes of meeting held on 7 June 2022 | 5 |
| 4. Matters arising therefrom (if any) | |
| 5. Chairman's Announcements | |
| 6. Public Speaking | |
| <p>To consider representation from the members of the public who have expressed the wish to convey their views on items on this agenda.</p> <p>In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per member of the public.</p> | |
| 7. Review of Empty Homes Policy | 15 |
| 8. Broadland District Council Staff Turnover Time and Task Panel Report | 20 |
| 9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme | 23 |

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

<p>Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.</p>
<p>Does the interest directly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position? 2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner? 3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council 4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own 5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in <p>If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.</p> <p>Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.</p>
<p>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</p> <p>If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.</p>
<p>Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.</p>
<p>Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</p>

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE**

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Broadland District Council, held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 10.00 am when there were present:

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: M Murrell (Chairman), S Riley (Vice-Chairman), N Brennan, S Catchpole, N Harpley, S Holland, C Karimi-Ghovanlou, K Kelly, K Leggett MBE, G Nurden and S Prutton.
Apologies:	Councillors: Cllr Bulman, Cllr Potter, Cllr Davis and Cllr Shaw
Substitutes:	Councillor: S Clancy (for P Bulman)
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillors: T Mancini-Boyle, J Leggett, J Emsell and F Whymark.
Officers in Attendance:	The Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director for Finance, the Assistant Director for Planning, the Assistant Director for ICT/Digital and Transformation, the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, the Assistant Director Economic Growth, the Assistant Director for Regulatory, the Strategy and Intelligence Manager, the Food Safety and Licensing Team Manager, the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager, the Housing and Benefits Manager, the Programme Manager – Economic Growth, the National Management Trainee and the Democratic Services Officer.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Bulman (with S Clancy appointed substitute), Cllr Potter, Cllr Davis and Cllr Shaw

3 MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements made.

5 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There was no public speaking.

CABINET REPORTS

6 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 2021/22

The report provided an overview of the performance of the Council in Quarter 4 against the key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan for 2021/22.

The Strategy and Intelligence Manager introduced the Performance section of the report. Members noted that 15 areas were currently at a green status having met the performance measure criteria for 2021/22. Nine were at an amber status, including Council tax collection, where it was noted that improvement had been seen from the previous review and was forecast to continue. Lastly, there were two areas currently at a red status. Members were advised that these related to the Planning service area with a focus on the timeframe decisions were made. It was noted that an improvement had been seen from Q3 to Q4 with the service level currently sitting at 91 percent.

In response to a query on why there were fewer audit days scheduled for the Chief of Staff Directorate, members were advised that due to the timing of the budget approval, the Audit Plan was still in its draft form.

Following several questions on the red status of the planning service area, the Assistant Director for Planning explained that concerns were being addressed and that this was the subject of an item later in agenda. In relation to a question regarding to whether there were any applications awaiting decisions, members were advised that there were ongoing conversations with some applicants to address the issues.

It was also confirmed that following the recent guidance received from Natural England on nutrient neutrality, the planning department had requested a six-month extension on major applications and a two-month extension on minor applications.

In response to a query regarding the Risk Register, officers explained that the register was being reviewed by Cabinet and would be part of the next reporting cycle.

A member expressed concern about the recovery rate for Housing Benefits overpayments and asked officers for clarification on how overpayments occurred and what the Council could do to reduce them. The Assistant Director for Finance explained that overpayments occurred due to a range of circumstances relating to the individual, and members further noted that the recovery of overpayments had become more difficult since individuals had moved over to the Universal Credit system.

Referring to the staff satisfaction survey, a member raised concerns over the 18 percent of staff members who did not feel that Senior Management encouraged them to look after their mental health. The Chief of Staff explained that the Council had invested in training mental health first aiders within teams to provide further support and that further training was being provided for managers. A further question was asked concerning the parameters of the survey itself and whether staff could feed back anonymously. It was confirmed that the surveys were anonymous to a degree but with a breakdown to director level in order to address any issues.

The Assistant Director for Finance introduced the Finance section of the report and stressed that the figures listed in the report were only provisional due to the final accounts not being signed off. Members noted that overall, the Council was in a strong position going forward.

In response to a question on the salary underspend in the Resource directorate, members noted that the figures were detailed in Appendix one of the report. A further question was raised on the breakdown of how much favourable variance was due to pay. The Assistant Director for Finance explained that he did not have the information to hand but would circulate the information to members after the meeting.

Following a question raised on the local concerns regarding the Bure Valley Railway crossing, officers confirmed that a further update would be provided outside the meeting by the lead officer involved. A further question was asked regarding the collaborative work with Norfolk Constabulary on anti-social behaviours and it was confirmed that the Assistant Director for the area would provide members with a briefing outside the meeting.

In response to a query on the transitional cost associated with implementing the OneTeam, members noted that although policies, processes and procedures were being (jointly) reviewed as part of the One Team, it is good practice to review policies, processes and procedures regularly and thus each council would have reviewed these separately. It was also noted it would have

been difficult to monitor transitional costs without a complex recording system, as it is difficult to separate time spend on One Team implementation from Business as Usual activities.

A final question was raised regarding emergency planning training for members, and officers confirmed that the Member Development Panel would be reviewing members' training requirements in the near future.

Following a show of hands, it was

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

1. Receive the revenue and capital position for Quarter 4 (variance details in Appendix 1)
2. To agree to add the IT and waste revenue budget underspends to the existing IT / Waste reserves (as detailed in para 3.15)
3. To agree to recommend to Full Council the slippage requests for capital (as detailed in para 3.16).
4. Receive the 2021/22 performance for Quarter 4 and the year end position (detail in Appendix 2).
5. Receive the year end update of the 21/22 Delivery Plan (detail in appendix 3).

7 LICENSING SERVICES – SERVICE ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS

The Assistant Director of Regulatory presented the report which outlined the options for the introduction of paid for licensing related advice and support to businesses. Support and advice were currently offered to businesses, mainly via the new Business Regulatory Support Hub which offered free advice to businesses.

The proposed full cost recovery basis for discretionary advice and support reflected the Commercialisation Strategy and enabled support to be offered more widely to businesses in the district to grow and this proposal, if agreed by members, would deliver the concept of commercial licensing services as agreed in the Delivery Plan.

The Food, Safety and Licensing Manager reminded members that the existing availability of free advice would not be eroded; this was a way to provide value added services that businesses might wish to pay for. All the fees would be reinvested in the service to support the regulatory function.

Members noted that since the report had been debated at the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee, the proposed levels of fee charges had been reviewed and lowered under the advice of the Assistant Director of Finance.

After several members of the Committee raised concerns over charging businesses for advice in the current economic climate, officers reassured members that the report proposals would provide additional advice to that what was currently on offer and that this additional help would be provided at the business' discretion. The proposed services were enhanced and would act as another level of advice and information for the service area.

Discussion turned to Appendix two of the report and whether the fees and charges for the service would be reviewed regularly. The Chief of Staff confirmed that these would be looked at through the annual reviews of all fees and charges set by the Council.

Officers explained that free advice has been provided on an ad hoc basis, but it was noted that officers would not be able to sustain this offer for all businesses under the current provisions and resources.

In response to a question on whether the new proposals would require additional staff, officers explained that whilst there was a service review for the area built into the current Delivery Plan, the impact of the proposed enhanced services was neutral due to the full cost recovery and reinvestment in additional staffing hours so that statutory service levels would be unaffected.

After several members reiterated concerns over businesses' access to advice and information, an additional recommendation was proposed, seconded and agreed, which stressed the need for the current free advice to be maintained alongside the new proposals. It was then resolved:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- 1 To authorise the piloting of enhancements to Licensing services at full cost recovery, for a 12-month period starting in 2022/23.
- 2 The reinvestment of income generated from service enhancements to licensing activity into the Council's regulatory licensing service, so as not to impact on regulatory service capacity
- 3 Cabinet to ensure that the current free advice is maintained alongside the new proposals.

The Committee adjourned at 11.05 am and reconvened at 11.15am, when all the Committee members listed above were present.

8 FOOD SAFETY SERVICES – SERVICE ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS

The Food, Safety and Licensing Manager introduced the report which mirrored the licencing report members had earlier discussed, but related specifically to food safety.

In answer to a question on whether the Economic Development team could assist and help new start-up businesses through these proposals, officers explained that there were no current start-up grants available. However, the team could offer advice and support to new business if requested.

In response to a query on why the hourly rate was higher than the proposed Licensing charges, members noted that this was due differences in the salary bands between the two areas.

During discussion, members were advised of the benefits of the proposals for new and existing businesses. If a food business received a low food hygiene rating score, through the proposals, they could choose to pay for an immediate re-visit (one that is not permitted under the national scheme unless a business elects to pay for it). However, some businesses may prefer to take up the option of a 'pre-inspection' visit, to receive advice on how to 'gain or retain' a higher rating beforehand, rather than be reactive to a drop in their rating after a regulatory food inspection. This would help businesses and lessen the potential risk of trade being blighted by a poor rating, alongside protecting the customers in relation to food safety.

Following a concern raised over staffing levels in the department, officers explained that the proposed service charges were at a cost recovery level and any income would be fed back into the service area. Members noted that the cost recovery finance additional hours for current staff to prevent impact on existing service levels.

Several members expressed concerns over the potential impact on new businesses and how the proposals could dissuade new businesses starting up. A member expressed the need for the Business Regulatory Support Hub to be maintained to allow businesses to have access to information and advice required to start up. Several members agreed and an amendment was proposed, seconded and agreed to add at the end of recommendation 1: *This to be operated and reviewed in conjunction with the Business Regulatory Support service to ensure that quality advice is available free at the first point of contact.*

Following a further vote, it was resolved:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

1. To authorise the piloting of enhancements to Food Safety services at full cost recovery, for a 12-month period starting in 2022/23. This to be operated and reviewed in conjunction with the Business Regulatory Support service to ensure that quality advice is available free at the first point of contact.

2. The reinvestment of income generated from service enhancements to food safety activity into the Council's regulatory food safety service, so as not to impact on regulatory service capacity.

9 ENERGY REBATE SCHEME

The Housing and Benefits Manager presented the report which outlined the details of the £150 Energy Rebate Scheme which was to be administered by Council Tax billing authorities and sought approval for the Discretionary Payment Scheme.

Members were reminded that on 3 February 2022 the Government announced a package of support for the rising energy costs, which included a £150 non-repayable rebate to all households who permanently resided in a property in Council Tax bands A-D. A discretionary fund was also available for households who were either ineligible under the main scheme or who required additional support.

Officers explained that the Council was working with an external company to make the process easy and quick when sending out payments to residents. In terms of how the payment would be made, members were advised that customers who paid their Council Tax bill by Direct Debit would receive a payment directly into their bank account once verification checks had been made. Where bank account details were not held, the customer would be contacted by letter and advised how to apply for the payment.

Following the recent announcement from Government, it was likely that further grants would be available to residents, and officers were seeking delegated permission for future schemes in order to efficiently organise further payments. Officers confirmed that the delegated permission would be reviewed in the future.

In response to a question about whether there was further grant support available to individuals who had been forced out of their homes, officers confirmed that further support could be offered to individuals under the wider schemes offered by the Council.

In answer to a query on the progress of the payments, it was confirmed that the process was going well with letters being sent out to all non-direct debit customers. Members noted that over half of these customers had now been paid, and that officers were looking through cases where there had been delays to resolve issues quickly.

A concern was raised over the payslip evidence needed for grants listed under category two in the report. Officers confirmed that it was the resident's responsibility to provide correct details. However, there were measures in place to review any evidence received.

In response to a question regarding call wait time for residents calling in, officers explained that additional resources were added to the team to help combat the high number of calls.

Members also noted that a wide range of support was available for residents through the Community Connectors and other services, if required.

Following a question on how the delegated powers would be reviewed over time, the Chief of Staff suggested that this could be added to the work programme through the “Topic” process, should members feel it to be necessary.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously resolved:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

To delegate permission for future discretionary schemes to be determined by the appropriate Assistant Director and the Section 151 officer in collaboration with the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

10 PLANNING BUSINESS CASE – APPOINTMENT TO NEW VACANCIES AND UPDATES TO STRUCTURE

The Assistant Director of Planning introduced the report and outlined the results of the recent full review of the Development Management service. The review saw that more resources were needed in order to create additional capacity and be able to adequately deal with large-scale developments.

The Council had received a number of large developments at present alongside the large, proposed development at Rackheath in which more resources would be needed to effectively and properly consult with the parishes, the members and public. In addition, the next iteration of the Local Plan would be coming soon, planning applications were on the increase, as well as Development Consent Orders, Nutrient Neutrality and many other issues.

The proposal was to create eight new posts, which would be the equivalent of an additional 6.4 FTE at a total extra cost of £146,491, but that would be split between the two Councils. Some existing posts would be deleted to assist in the funding of the new posts and the remainder would be funded by an increase in income.

The key changes would be the creation of a Strategic Growth Team to focus on this key area across the district, and the creation of more capacity to address the workloads and deliver against new workstreams. Members noted that there were three apprentices currently in post and there would be opportunities for promotion.

A Member raised concerns over the lack of guaranteed funding from potential larger developments in the future. The Assistant Director for Planning explained that the positions would be monitored continually going forward. The posts would also not form part of the main planning structure and would be monitored alongside predicted income.

In response to a question regarding the staff requirements for the future, the Chief of Staff confirmed that all service areas were monitored to review future circumstances so departments could plan accordingly. The Assistant Director of Planning added that the Planning department was looking ahead with the potential opportunity to provide training for current members of staff to develop into higher roles.

In response to further questions on the risks involved with the new posts within the team structure, the Assistant Director for Planning reassured members that the positions would be reviewed over time and balanced with the projected income.

Discussion turned to the potential need for a restructure in the department to incorporate the new positions within the report. Members noted that the positions were flexible and could be moved around to suit demands, therefore a restructure would not be required. Members also noted that the current vacant posts within the planning structure were being reviewed and adapted to address the existing work demand.

Following a show of hands, it was resolved:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

To approve the proposed changes to the Planning team and the intention to fill the current and new vacancies.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

12 REVIEW OF TRAINING SERVICES & CARROWBRECK HOUSE

The Committee considered the exempt report regarding a review of training services at Carrowbreck House, which set out potential options for generating additional income to offset running costs, proposed a commitment to

continuous review of the Council's training offering and proposed a revised fee structure for 22/23.

The Programme Manager – Economic Growth stated that the facility had been running since 2015 and she gave details of the running costs and income generated. She explained that as part of the review of training services offered, the opportunity was taken to engage a commercial agent to undertake a valuation of the facilities to understand the opportunities for the site.

Officers responded to a number of questions, during which it was confirmed that the building was running as efficiently as possible with regard to energy use, with solar panels installed on the building.

Following a question regarding the current management of the site, members noted that this was currently incorporated within the Economic Development team, with one member of the team working from the site during office hours.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously resolved:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

To agree the recommendations laid out in the exempt report.

13 EXEMPT MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 3 MAY 2022

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

(The meeting concluded at 12.30pm)

Chairman

EMPTY HOMES POLICY UPDATE

Report Author(s): Kevin Philcox
Housing Standards Senior Manager
01603 430578
kevin.philcox@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Portfolio: Housing and Wellbeing

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:
Review of the Councils Empty Homes Policy one year after Cabinet approval.

Recommendations:

- The committee are asked to acknowledge this report and offer any recommendations.

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Empty Homes Policy is complementary to the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy. The Policy clearly sets out the parameters in which discretionary activity will take place in relation to empty homes. The Policy was approved by Cabinet on 15 June 2021. [Link](#)
- 1.2 This report outlines the functions of the policy, the actions taken by Housing Standard Officers as a result of the adoption of procedures detailed in the policy and the status of Empty Homes in the district.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An empty home can have a negative impact on the local community, the property itself and, in some cases, the wellbeing of the owner.
- 2.2 Homes can be empty for a variety of reasons including.
- Financially prohibitive for owners to undertake repairs or property upkeep.
 - Poor marketing or pricing of the property on the market.
 - Difficulty identifying owners of property, for example tracking down heirs to a property or owner disputes.
 - Planning restrictions.
 - Owners unwilling to sell, let or inhabit the property.
- 2.3 From a wider perspective, the New Homes Bonus rewards local authorities for net additional homes added to the Council Tax Base, this includes and reduction in the number of empty properties.
- 2.4 The Council's empty homes policy details a responsive approach to reports of empty homes, supplemented by an online procedure. The approach is primarily an engagement process with the owner and advice and support is offered. A check is also made to ensure the property is on the correct council tax classification. Formal enforcement activity is considered for very long-term empty properties or where conditions require a quicker response.
- 2.5 In terms of tackling empty homes, the Council has a series of powers it can call upon to take action against empty properties in their area under a comprehensive set of legislation. The two main legislative tools the Council can apply to enforce empty properties being brought back into use are the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) under the Housing Act 2004 and/or Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and the Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) under the Housing Act 2004.
- 2.6 In addition to enforcement, Council Tax classification that requires a premium payment for empty homes now plays an important part as a deterrent measure. The table below details the current position, the scope and timescales are currently under review by central government at present.

Time property has been empty	Additional charge as of April 2021
Empty between two and five years	100%
Empty between five and ten years	200%
Empty over ten years	300%

Scale of additional council tax charges for long term empty properties

2.7 Formal enforcement intervention such as that detailed above is complex and time consuming. Initial interventions as set out in the Policy take the form of advice and information for property owners. The Policy also details financial assistance available to owners as part of this process.

2.8 The June 15 Cabinet 2021 approved the Empty Homes Policy and to:

- agree a proposal that Cabinet provides approval to seek to undertake Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPOs) processes on a case by case basis; and
- To approve the creation within the 2021/22 financial year of: A reserve fund of £650,000 in order to undertake a voluntary offer of purchase as part of a Compulsory Purchase Order procedure and to enforce housing standards.

3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

3.1 Data gathered by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) as informed by the Council Tax Base shows that Broadland District Council has the lowest rates of empty homes in actual terms and as a percentage of overall dwellings in the County.

3.2 The figures below are based on a snapshot of a particular day of properties that have been empty for more than six months. The total number of empty homes will vary from day to day as properties become empty and others move back into use.

Area	Empty Homes 2020	Empty Homes 2021	No of Dwellings 2021	% change*	Empty properties (2021) as % of dwellings*
Breckland	609	427	62,934	-30	0.7
Broadland	380	254	59,784	-33	0.4
GYBC	712	574	48,760	-19	1.2
KLWN	979	996	74,550	2	1.3
Norwich	779	622	68,141	-20	0.9
NNDC	554	497	55,754	-10	0.9
South Norfolk	310	388	64,214	25	0.6
Norfolk	4323	3758	434,137	-13	0.9
England	-	246,644	2,498,7468	-	1

*Figures rounded

Table 3: Empty Homes by Norfolk Local Authority Area. Source: Action on Empty Homes from MHCLG data November 2021

- 3.3 The figures for Broadland detail a reduction in the number of empty homes vacant for a period of 6 months or more.
- 3.4 14 properties have been reported to the Housing Standards team for being empty and investigated appropriately. The properties reported fall broadly into two categories. Those that are considered short term empty and with advice and support are likely to return to occupation relatively soon, and those that require further investigation and engagement. There are 6 of the former and 8 of the latter.
- 3.5 We have completed one loan to bring a property back in to use.
- 3.6 One full report on a possible Council purchase of a property and to place this property on the open Market will shortly be on the forward plan.
- 3.7 A further report for permission to initiate a Compulsory Purchase Order on a property in will soon to be placed on the forward plan.
- 3.8 Properties being charged additional council tax have reduced, in 2020 there were 98 properties with an empty home's premium applied. In 2021 this figure was 83.
- 3.9 The information above provides evidence that current preventative measures through Council Tax premium and enforcement procedures are successfully bringing down the number of empty homes in the district.

4 PROPOSED ACTION

- 4.1 To acknowledge the report and implementation of the Empty Homes procedure.
- 4.2 To continue with the procedures and initiate enforcement action using procedures detailed in the current policy to ensure effective use of properties, provide an accountable deterrent and increase community resilience.

5 OTHER OPTIONS

- 5.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the empty homes policy. There are no alternative options to consider.

6 ISSUES AND RISKS

6.1 Resource Implications –

- Costs have been approved by Cabinet and have yet to be tested.
- Staffing – Staff resource for the empty homes approach detailed in the current policy will be met within existing capacity.

- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – As detailed in original Empty Home Policy report.

6.3 **Equality Implications** – As detailed in original Empty Home Policy report.

6.4 **Environmental Impact** – As detailed in original Empty Home Policy report.

6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – As detailed in original Empty Home Policy report.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 This report provides an overview of the actions taken by the Housing Standards and Council Tax Teams as detailed in the current Empty Homes Policy.

7.2 The report details that Empty Homes in Broadland are presently the lowest in the County.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To acknowledge this report.

8.2 To continue the procedures as detailed in the current Policy

Background Papers

Empty homes report and policy [Link](#)

BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL STAFF TURNOVER TIME AND TASK PANEL REPORT

Report Author: Cllr Steve Riley
Chairman Time and Task Panel

Portfolio: Transformation and Organisational Development

Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

The Time & Task Panel reported to Overview & Scrutiny in November 2021 and was requested to further review the position with exit interviews. This report concludes on this further work.

Recommendations:

1. To note the content of the report and the conclusions of the Panel
2. Or, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to make a further recommendation in considering the report

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Time & Task Panel reported to Overview & Scrutiny in November 2021 and were requested to further review the position with exit interviews. This report concludes on this further work.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in November 2021 the Committee reviewed the final report of the Time and Task Panel and accepted the majority of the findings of the Panel.
- 2.2 The Panel was however requested to look in more detail at the previous low uptake of exit interviews, and whether it was in fact possible to write to those staff who left historically to find out the reason why.
- 2.3 The Panel met on 24 May 2022, and this report concludes on the meeting. Members may wish to review the report received in November 2021 alongside this report for completeness.

3. Findings

- 3.1 The Panel focussed on the access to personal data and when this can occur and how this can occur.
- 3.2 It was explained that personal data is held by the Human Resources (HR) team for all staff currently in employment. There are different retention purposes for different sets of data that need to be adhered to in line with data protection principles.
- 3.3 In relation to exit interviews these are held with the employee by either the line manager, a member of the HR team or any other individual requested by the leaver. The data in relation to exit interviews is therefore held to enable this to happen before the member of staff leaves and to access this data following the exit would be against the record of processing principle i.e., there is no legal right to access that data once they have left for this purpose.
- 3.4 Furthermore, in accord with an opinion sought by officers from an expert in Data Protection Law and Information Governance, using the contact details of ex-employees for exit interviews would breach the first principle of the GDPR on the grounds that it would amount to 'unfair processing' of their personal data. A member of staff would not reasonably expect their data to be accessed in order to contact them in this way, once they had left the employment of the Council, especially as they had already declined to take part in an exit interview at the time. Use of data in this way could lead to a complaint to Information Commission Officer, against which the Council would not be able to justify the action, as the first principle of GDPR had been breached.
- 3.5 The Panel noted this position, and it was also highlighted by the Chief of Staff that due to further interventions that had been put in place, the uptake of exit interviews had in fact increased over the last two years and more meaningful data is now received. This is reported through to Cabinet, and Overview and Scrutiny, as part of the Performance and Risk Reports.

4. Proposed action

- 4.1 The Panel have concluded the extra work requested of them in relation to exit interviews and thus have reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. Other options

- 5.1 The Committee could choose to make recommendations based on the information before them in this report.

6. Issues and risks

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** – there are no implications as a result of this report however staff are an important resource for the Council, and it needs to be ensured that they are valued as such.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – not applicable to this report.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** – there are no implications as a result of this report however the Council does ensure that all staff are treated equally.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** – not applicable to this report.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – not applicable to this report.
- 6.6 **Risks** – as the Panel and the Committee are aware recruitment and retention of staff is important and actions are already in place to ensure that this is well managed. It is recognised that the entire workforce is in a re-set position and that it is becoming much more of an employee's market. The Council will need to be mindful of this as the country moves out of the pandemic and ensure that alternative action is taken as needed and that this is proportionate to the issues that are faced.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Panel has scrutinised a variety of data and now has a better understanding of how the One Team is managing turnover, and how the One Team is not an outlier when compared nationally and locally.
- 7.2 The Panel noted that exit interviews are incredibly important and support the work of HR and line managers in ensuring that these are undertaken, as it provides a valuable insight for the Councils.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 To note the content of the report and the conclusions of the Panel
- 8.2 Or, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to make a further recommendation in considering the report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022–2023

In setting future Overview and Scrutiny **TOPICS**, Members are asked to consider the following: **T**imely – **O**bjective – **P**erformance – **I**nterest – **C**orporate Priority

T Is this the right **time** to review this issue and is there sufficient **officer time** and resource to conduct the review? What is the **timescale**?

O What is the reason for review; do officers have a clear **objective**?

P Can **performance** in this area be improved by input from scrutiny?

I Is there sufficient **interest** (particularly from the public)? The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.

C Will the review assist the Council to achieve its **Corporate Priorities**?

Date	Topic	Lead Officer / Portfolio	Objectives and Desired Outcomes	Comments
28/6/2022 (added 15/6/2021)	Review of Empty Homes Policy	Assistant Director Individuals & Families	To review the Empty Homes Policy to ensure it meets desired outcomes and to identify and make any recommendations for improvement.	Review of policy following its implementation in June 2021.
28/6/2022	Report of the Time and Task Ltd Panel – Staff Retention	Chief of Staff	To present the Committee with a final report from the Time and Task Limited Panel – Staff Retention	
6/9/2022 (Annual item)	Community Safety Update	Assistant Director Individuals & Families	Update on Community Safety Issues in Broadland and our Partnership Response.	
6/9/2022 (added 29/3/2022)	Broadband and mobile phone coverage in the district	Assistant Director Economic Growth / Economic Development	For Committee to review progress of broadband rollout throughout the District and identify any concerns or recommendations, as necessary.	Steve Cunningham - Norfolk County Council to provide presentation.
6/9/2022 (added 29/6/2021)	Customer Strategy Update	Customer Engagement and Insight Lead	To receive an update on the measures being used to deliver the Customer Strategy. To include details of how to better publicise and raise awareness of consultations.	To report on the work of the Customer Engagement and Insight Lead. (Item moved from June 2022 meeting).

Date	Topic	Lead Officer / Portfolio	Objectives and Desired Outcomes	Comments
15/11/2022 (added Dec 2021)	Housing Allocations Policy	Assistant Director Individuals & Families / Housing & Wellbeing	To review the Housing Allocation Policy to ensure it meets desired outcomes and to identify and make any recommendations for improvement.	Review of policy following its implementation in April 2021. Reviewed in December 2021, due to be reviewed again in 9-12 months.
15/11/2022 (added April 2022)	Community Safety - Police and Crime Plan	Assistant Director Individuals & Families	To review the Police and Crime Plan to ensure it meets desired outcomes and to identify and make any recommendations for improvement.	PCC to be in attendance
15/11/2022 (Annual item)	Council Partnership Register Review	To be confirmed / All Portfolios	Committee to receive an update against the Council's partnership register and to identify any partnership concerns that may require further investigation by a nominated time and	Annual item – restarted in 2022 following pause due to Covid-19.
24/1/2023 (Annual item)	Joint Budget Meeting (following the Budget Workshop in October 22)	Assistant Director Finance and all Portfolio Holders	To receive responses to the Committee's budget questions and to raise any further questions with Portfolio Holders.	Annual item.
4/4/2023 (Annual)	Annual Report O&S Committee	Senior Governance Officer	Committee to approve the draft Annual Report for presentation to the Council's AGM in May.	Annual item – complete for 2022
As and when appropriate	Water – supply, management and climate change	Water Management Officer / Environmental Excellence	To investigate how water was being managed in the district and what measures were being put in place to address climate change.	To receive updates from Jo Copplestone as BDC's rep on Water Resources East or Ken Kelly as representative on Broads & Rivers IDB as and when appropriate.

Meeting dates: 29 March 2022, 28 June 2022, 6 September 2022, 15 November 2022, 24 January 2023, 4 April 2023

Time and Task Panel reviews

Topic	Objectives	Lead Officers	Comments
<u>Staff turnover</u> Cllrs: Adams; Brennan; Harpley; Holland, Nurden and Riley	To scrutinise the staff turnover figures further, incl: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break-down of figures by department and grade• Analysis of what stage employees were leaving	Assistant Director Chief of Staff	Final report to O&S Committee on 28 June 2022

Workshops

Topic	Objectives	Lead Officers	Date
Preparing to meet with Cabinet to discuss budget performance	A facilitated workshop attended by the Assistant Director of Finance for committee members to identify, agree, and allocate questions for Cabinet to answer at the joint budget meeting.	Assistant Director of Finance & Finance Team staff	October 2022

Process for adding items to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

