# People and Communities Policy Committee

# Agenda

## Members of the People and Communities Committee:

Cllr D Bills (Chairman)
Cllr S Blundell
Cllr M Dewsbury
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr T Holden
Cllr J Hornby (Vice Chairman)
Cllr N Legg
Cllr S Nuri Nixon
Cllr J Wilby

## Date & Time:

Thursday 3 November 2022
9:30 am

## Place:

Council Chamber, South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XE

## Contact:

Leah Arthurton tel (01508) 533610
Email: committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk
Website: www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

## PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

If a member of the public would like to observe the meeting, or speak on an agenda item, please email your request to committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk, no later than 5.00pm on Monday 31 October 2022.

## Large print version can be made available

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance.

# AGENDA

1. **To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;**

2. **Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency**

3. **To receive Declarations of Interest from Members**

   (Please see guidance form and flow chart attached – page 3)

4. **Minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Policy Committee held 21 April 2022**

   (attached – page 5)

5. **Best in Class Housing – Temporary Accommodation;**

   (attached – page 9)

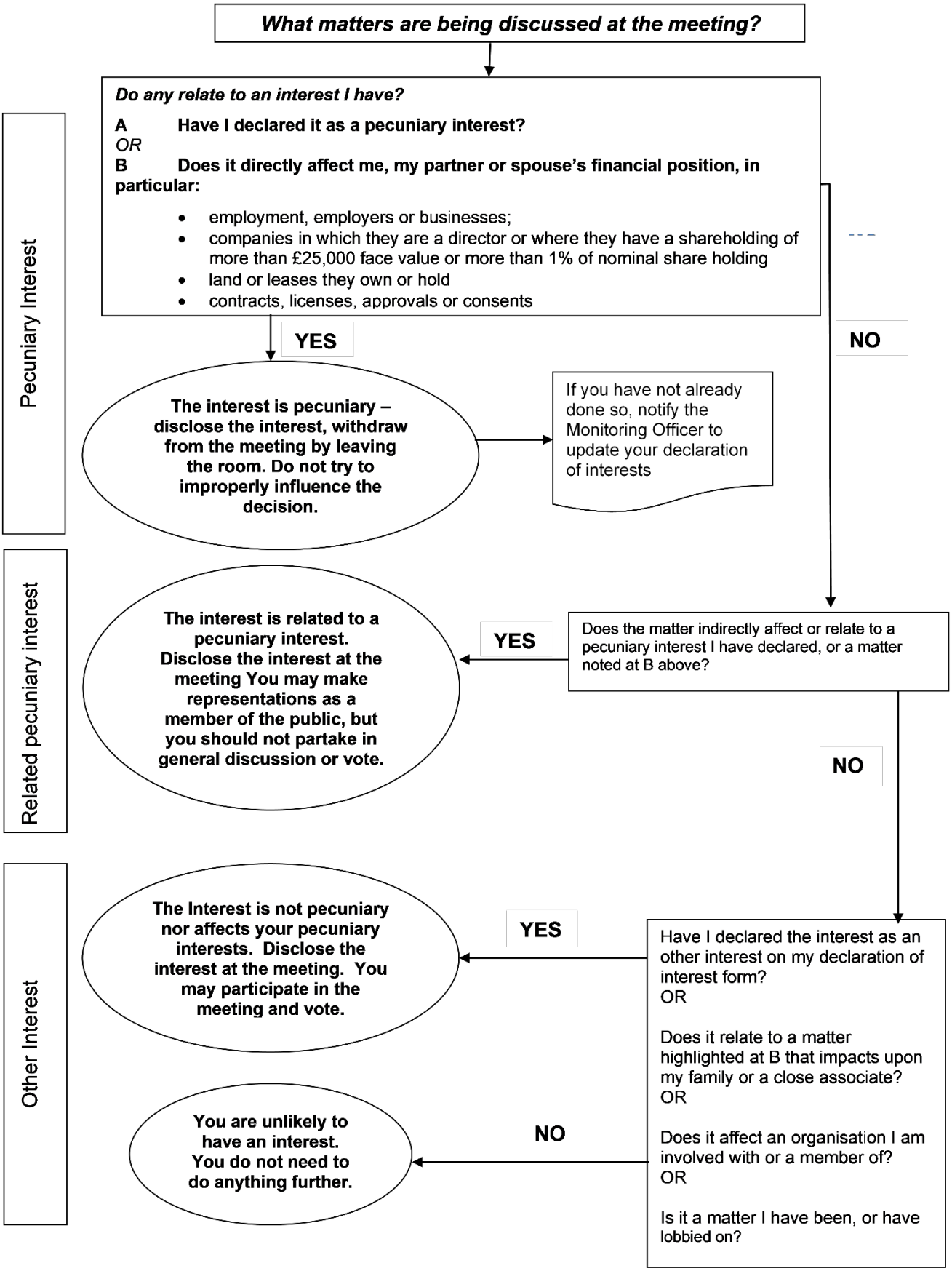
# DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

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.

| |
|---|
| 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. |
| Does the interest directly:<br>1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?<br>2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?<br>3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council<br>4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own<br>5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in<br><br>If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.<br><br>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. |
| Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?<br><br>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. |
| 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. |
| 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. |

**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



**Agenda Item: 4**

# PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES POLICY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting of the People and Communities Policy Committee of South Norfolk District Council held on Thursday 21 April 2022 at 10.00am.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Committee Members Present:** | Councillors: D Bills (Chairman), S Blundell, M Dewsbury T Holden, N Legg and S Nuri Nixon |
| **Apologies for Absence:** | Councillors: J Easter and J Wilby |
| **Substitutes:** | Councillors: F Ellis (for J Wilby) |
| **Officers in Attendance:** | The Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Assistant Director Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), the Housing and Benefits Manager (L Sayer), Domestic Abuse Support Specialist (G Bloomfield) and the Democratic Services Officer (L Arthurton) |

## 42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Easter and J Wilby.

## 43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made.

## 44 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Policy Committee held on 31 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

## 45 ENERGY REBATE SCHEME

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

Members noted that the Government guidance termed the scheme as the ‘Council Tax Rebate Scheme 2022-2023’ however as this was independent of any other Council Tax rebates, Officers had decided to amend the name to ‘Energy Rebate scheme’.

Officers explained that the Council was working in collaboration with an external company to deliver the scheme, which would allow for timely payments to residents, whilst mitigating the administrative burden on the Council Tax and Benefits Teams. The Councils would also provide further support through the Hardship and Discretionary Schemes for residences in need. Members noted that the recommendation listed in the report allowed officers to efficiently engage with any future schemes which might come forward.

In response to a question regarding whether the delegated authority was placed with the individual or with the post, officers confirmed that the post had the authority, but this could always be reviewed by Councillors.

Officers confirmed to members that the increase in staff would see two extra positions in both the Council Tax and Benefit teams. Members noted that each area would have the ability to offer full support to those who needed it and would be funded by the New Burdens Fund.

Conversation turned to the external company that would help administer the payment to residents. Members noted that the company would provide support and the best efficiency when processing the payments. A follow-up question was asked regarding the cost and security of using a private company. The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families confirmed that the £15,000 charge to the Council from the external company was the most efficient way forward when factoring systems and admin costs. He also confirmed that the company had the right security and data protection procedures in place. It was confirmed to members that an external company would only manage the admin and payments with all decisions on funding made by officers at the Council.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report, and it was

**RESOLVED**

**TO RECOMMEND THAT CABINET** delegates permission for future discretionary schemes to be determined by the appropriate Assistant Director and the Section 151 officer in collaboration with the Portfolio Holder

## 46 THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Domestic Abuse Support Specialist introduced the report which provided members with an overview of the Council's work in tackling domestic abuse. The Committee heard that the Domestic Abuse Act became law in 2021, and that there was two key areas of statutory responsibility for tier two local authorities:

- Under Part IV of the act, tier 1 local authorities must provide support within safe accommodation, such as refuge to victims of domestic abuse. Tier 2 authorities must support and cooperate with tier 1 authorities to achieve this. And;
- All eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance

Following this a requirement for two new trained members staff was needed to provide help and support with accommodation matters. Members noted that the New Burdens Funding would help achieve this for the Council. The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation linked with the two posts would enhance the One Team's approach to domestic abuse by strengthening procedures and policies. This would also enable the Council to provide a high quality of service to customers and staff.

Members noted that the structures in place would ensure that contact and help could be easily accessed by all. The Chairman thanked the officers for their report and invited debate from members.

In response to a question, officers explained that staff approached every case professionally and had adopted a victim lead approach. Members also noted that there had been a push in providing training for officers in the Council to provide further support.

One member raised a query regarding the quality of the accommodation, and the Assistant Director explained that the Council provided bespoke accommodation for domestic abuse cases. He also confirmed that the right security measures were in place for the properties. The Council currently had three furnished properties and two self-contained unfurnished properties for family use. The Council did not use unfit properties and would always ensure that people were in suitable accommodation.

In response to a query on the aftercare the Council offered domestic abuse victims, officers confirmed that a support worker would work with individuals for six weeks. Following this, the Community Connectors would continue to work with individuals and offer support. A further question was raised on the out of hours support available, and it was confirmed that the properties would be managed nine to five Monday to Friday and national helplines would be the

point of contact after hours. Support workers provided welcome packs to individuals which included telephone numbers and points of contact.

Discussion turned to how the Council could prevent victims from returning to their abusers, officers explained that wider resources were available and wrap around care would be offered to help prevent this. A further question was raised over how the cases which involved children would be managed and members noted that the Council worked closely with Children's Services at Norfolk County Council in such cases.

Reference was made by a member to the range of victims of domestic abuse and the importance that support was provided for both men and women. Officers confirmed that a recent review of policy had led to the definition and boundaries being widened to become more inclusive.

One member noted that cases of domestic abuse had risen over the pandemic and asked officers if numbers would start to decrease as the country moved out of the pandemic. The Domestic Abuse Support Specialist explained that the Council did see a rise in the number of cases reported over the lockdowns but did not believe that numbers would drop. He further explained that an increase in publicity and access to help would allow victims to come forward for support.

One member suggested that working with the younger generation would help to educate and prevent cases from arising in the future. Officers noted the importance of delivering the message as early as possible and added that this was currently being discussed with wider partners of the Council.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report and it was;

**RESOLVED:**

To note the report.

(The meeting concluded at 11.42 am)

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Chairman

**Agenda Item: 5**
**People and Communities Policy Committee**
**3 November 2022**

# Best in Class Housing – Temporary Accommodation

**Report Author(s):** Mike Pursehouse
Assistant Director
mike.pursehouse@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

**Portfolio:** Better Lives

**Ward(s) Affected:** All wards

**Purpose of the Report:**
The report sets out a plan for our temporary accommodation model to address the double impact of the Covid pandemic, and cost-of-living crisis increasing demand, with the lack of available homes for residents. To deal with this increase, the Council is reviewing our temporary accommodation model to continue to provide effective support to our vulnerable residents, whilst providing a financially viable service.

**Recommendations:**

The Panel is asked to recommend to Cabinet, for recommending to Council:

Capital Items

1. Create an additional capital budget of £1,808,000 to purchase additional temporary accommodation.

2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning Policy and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to purchase individual properties up to £750,000.

Revenue Items

3. To agree to the extension of contracts for temporary additional housing staff up to £266,200 per annum (funded BDC 45% / SNC 55%) to deal with additional demand on housing services.

4. To agree the recruitment of 1 x FTE officer for every additional purchase of 10 units of temporary accommodation, which will be paid for by the additional income received from those properties.

5. That the Council prioritise allocations in temporary accommodation within its own stock, and in the event, that capacity cannot be found within its own stock, place in Broadland District Council stock first.

6. Utilise capital reserves to pay for specialist support to speed up the purchase of properties

## 1 Summary

1.1 The Council has a strong track record of delivering effective housing services, to ensure our most vulnerable residents are supported when they need help the most. Having access to good quality housing is a fundamental basic need if we are to support residents back to good health and economic activity.

1.2 The Council is facing a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation, caused by a number of factors including:

- an increase in demand caused by covid
- an increase in demand caused by the cost-of-living crisis
- reduced housing stock in both social housing and the private rented sector.

1.3 If we do nothing, the Council will have no other option but to accommodate this increased demand by using expensive B&B accommodation.

1.4 It is therefore proposed to remodel our temporary accommodation offer by increasing the amount of temporary accommodation that the council directly owns and manages. This will mitigate the increased costs as well as maintaining our best-in-class support to vulnerable residents.

## 2 Background

2.1 The Best-in-Class Housing & Homelessness Offer report in 2020 set out a transformational programme for our housing services. The report set out how we would transform our services to maximise the benefits of two Councils, one team, improve our housing allocation policy, improving our data system, improving our customer pathway, and re-imagine our temporary accommodation offer.

2.2 The Housing Allocations Policy and new data system were launched in April 2021, with an update to the policy in April 2022. The data system is operational and has brought the two teams together, improved service efficiency and team resilience to deal with enhanced demand, as well as providing joint savings to both Councils of £72,000 over four years.

2.3 The Council has a statutory obligation to deliver housing services under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Although we no longer have our own general housing stock, we are required to support residents who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless. The Council is also the gateway into social housing, working with our 14 registered social landlords to ensure residents have access to the right social home.

2.4 The Council has a substantial track record in investing in prevention services. The formation of the help hub, district direct, social prescribing as well as a housing service that focuses on preventing homelessness rather that reacting to demand has led to the Council being able to deliver exemplar services. This approach will help us more effectively deal with increases in demand, and we are well placed to mitigate where we can through early intervention and working with partners.

## 3 Current temporary accommodation

3.1 Our current temporary accommodation portfolio is detailed in the table below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Council Owned | Kestrel House: 6 x self-contained studio apartments for families, (all ground floor with wet room showers)<br><br>St Andrews: 1 semi-detached 3-bed house, used for3 x singles/couples (1 box room only suitable for a single person). I bathroom, 1 kitchen, 1 living room or can be used for 1 x large family |
| Private Sector Leased | The Manse: 6 x shared rooms, 3 bathrooms 1 large kitchen for singles or couples – 2 ground floor rooms, 4 upstairs, 1 communal lounge. |

3.2 In addition, the Council has benefited from the collaboration with Broadland which provides more options to the housing team, as both Councils have their own stock and leased properties. The flexibility of this accommodation, and the resilience that two Councils, one team brings allows us to think more ambitiously than if we were not collaborating.

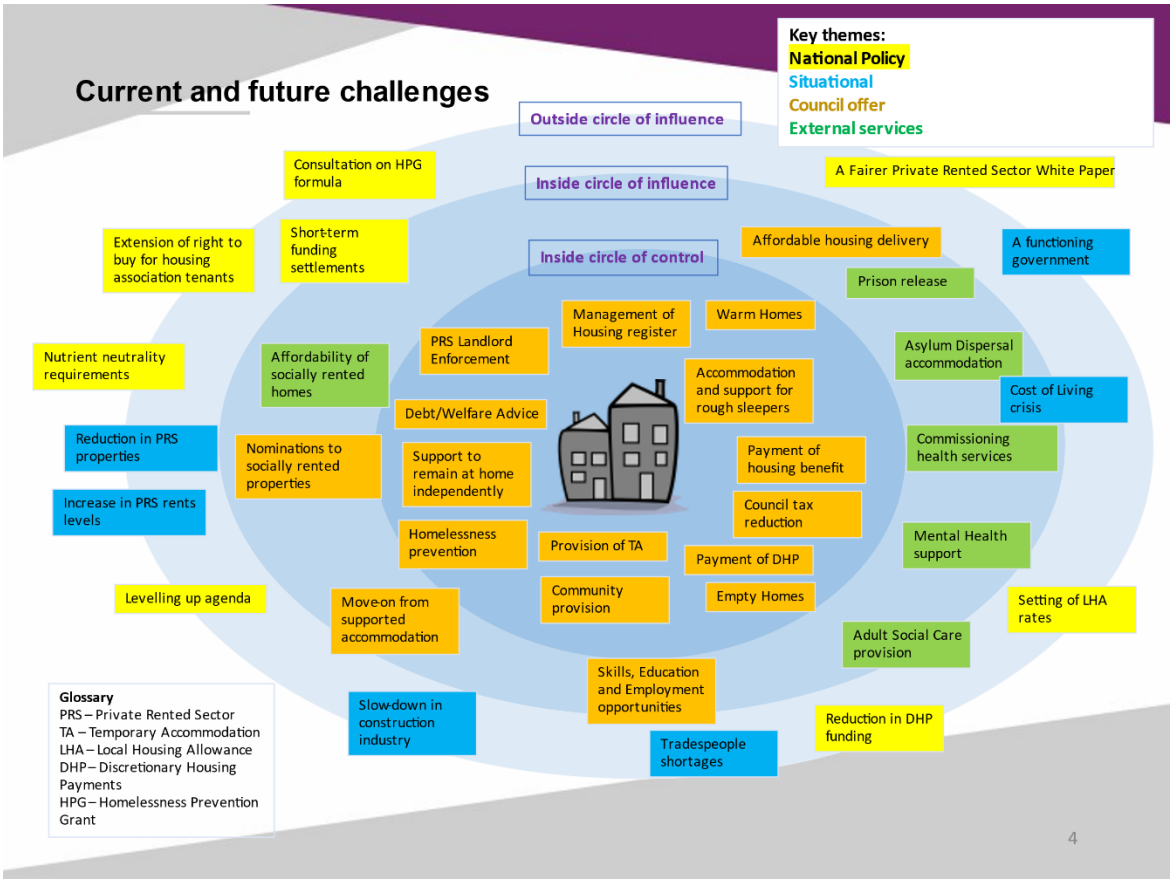
## 4 Expected increase in demand for temporary accommodation

4.1 The demand for temporary accommodation has risen across the Country since the beginning of the covid pandemic. Initially an ‘all in’ call issued from central Government ensured that no one was left rough sleeping or had no fixed accommodation, to help reduce the spread of Covid.

4.2 As economic restrictions continued, more residents struggled with paying rents and essential items and therefore defaulted on payments. At the same time, evictions were halted to reduce the numbers of people homeless and therefore reduced pressure on temporary accommodation during the pandemic, but this was only a short-term supportive measure.

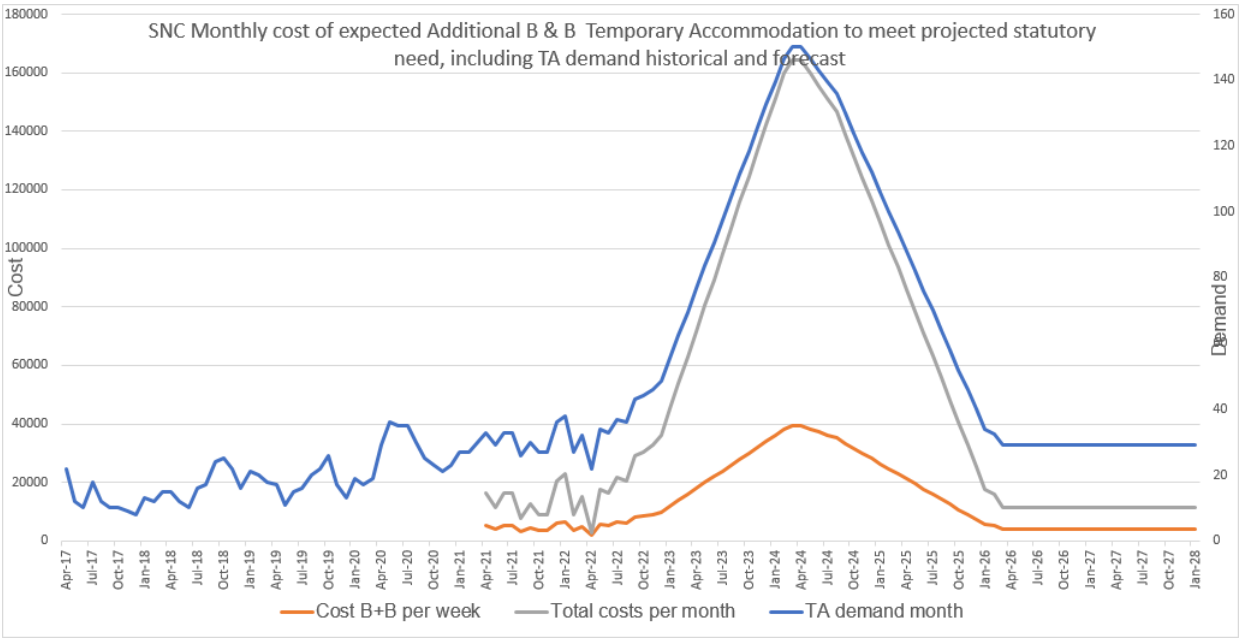
4.3 Currently we are seeing the highest demand for housing services since Covid-19 and the ‘all in’ policy. Officers have worked with external specialists to understand current and future demand modelling which suggest this demand will not reduce in the next few years due to the financial crisis and housing crisis we are now facing.

4.4 The main reasons for this demand increase continuing are shown below. This demonstrates the complexity of the housing system of which temporary accommodation is just one element.




4.5 In order to estimate the likely demand for temporary accommodation in South Norfolk, Campbell Tickell were commissioned to model the impact on temporary accommodation of an economic recession

4.6 The graph below shows the expected additional number of residents in temporary accommodation. This is a best estimate forecast that will be continually reviewed and does not account for further factors that could mean this worsens such as a longer recession, increased numbers of those seeking asylum and housing such as Ukraine. If this were to happen, we would envisage that the high peak would be for a protracted period.




4.7 Essentially the consultants are expecting that demand will increase significantly from 2023, before falling to pre-covid levels in 2026.

4.8 A breakdown of the increase by placement reason is shown below

| Reason for TA placement | Average based on last 12 months | | | 23/24 Estimate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | singles | families | Total | singles | families | Total |
| 1) Parents, extended family or friends no longer able or willing to accommodate | 66 | 48 | 114 | 79 | 58 | 137 |
| 2) End of private rented tenancy (record figure by reason below) | | | | | | |
| Landlord wishing to sell, or relet property | 12 | 10 | 22 | 22 | 18 | 40 |
| Rent arrears, or can no longer afford the rent (whether section 8 notice or section 21 given) | 8 | 6 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 28 |
| Breach of tenancy – not rent arrears (whether section 8 notice or section 21 given) | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Landlord has their property repossessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Other reason including relationship breakdown (not domestic abuse, illegal eviction and abandonment | 12 | 0 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| End of PRS Tenancy not AST | 16 | 8 | 24 | 24 | 12 | 36 |
| 3) End of Social housing tenancy (record figure by reason below) | | | | | | |
| Evicted for rent arrears | 6 | 0 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 12 |

| Reason for TA placement | Average based on last 12 months | | | 23/24 Estimate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | singles | families | Total | singles | families | Total |
| Evicted for breach of tenancy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Abandoned tenancy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| 4) Homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse (regardless of tenure but record refuge cases separately below) | 66 | 40 | 106 | 66 | 40 | 106 |
| 5) Lost owner-occupied property (repossession cases) include shared ownership cases here | 4 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 44 | 50 |
| 6) Lost supported accommodation | 16 | 2 | 18 | 16 | 2 | 18 |
| 7) Homeless NFA (include rough sleepers, left prison, left institution | 8 | 0 | 8 | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| 8) Ukraine household homeless due to breakdown of family visa accommodation or homes for Ukraine sponsorship arrangements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 37 | 52 |
| 9) Afghan household leaving Home Office Bridging Hotel | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| 10) Required to leave NASS Asylum Support accommodation by the Home Office | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 11) Fire, flood or other disaster | 6 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| 12) Non-domestic abuse threats/harassment | 10 | 4 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 14 |
| 13) Property disrepair | 8 | 2 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| 14) Relationship Breakdown non-violent | 22 | 4 | 26 | 24 | 5 | 29 |
| **Total monthly placements actual and predicted 2022/23 and predicted 2023/24** | **264** | **130** | **394** | **341** | **255** | **596** |

## 5 Cost of different types of temporary accommodation

5.1 The cost of temporary accommodation varies according to housing type.

5.2 The table below, based upon current costs for the Council, shows the cost difference between bed and breakfast and owned temporary accommodation.

| Cost per week, per unit | Gross Cost | Cost of maintenance | Staff costs to support residents | Income from HB | Lost interest on investmen 3% | Net |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bed and Breakfast | 350.00 | 0.00 | 38.46 | -98.00 | 0.00 | 290.46 |
| Owned accommodation | 143.58* | 81.00 | 38.46 | -252.00 | 37.26 | -95.28 |

(*£143.58 is the average cost of owing accommodation per unit, including maintenance, staffing costs and utilities, it doesn't include capital repayment)

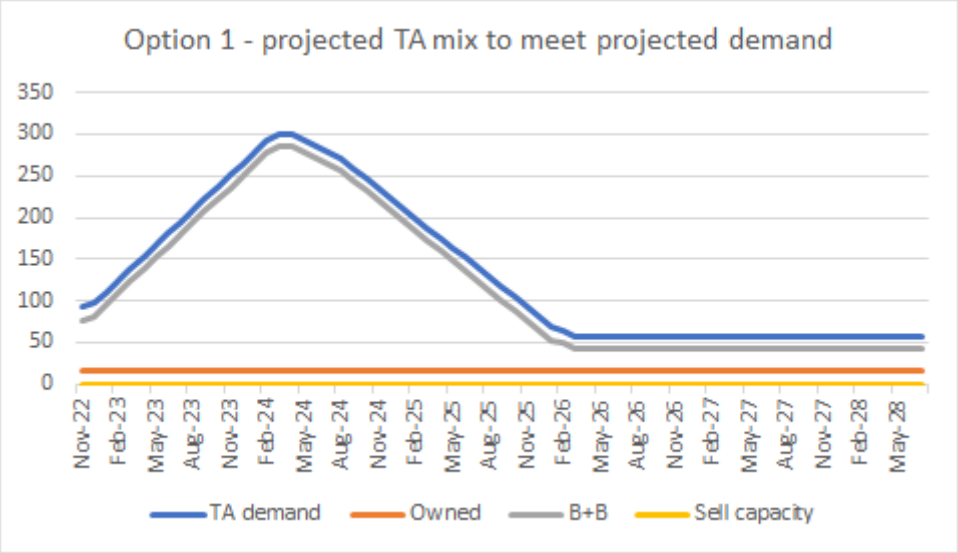
5.3 This shows that the cost of each B&B placement is c£300 a week, whereas owned accommodation is better than cost neutral.

5.4 This is due to the Council having a more efficient stock, less overheads and has a different business model compared to B & B. Coupled with this, the money the Council can draw down from housing benefits for owned accommodation is significantly more than for B&B.

## 6 Expected Cost if we maintain current stock and staffing

6.1 As detailed above the need for temporary accommodation is expected to more than double over the next three years. If we stay as we are with the current stock (15 units) and staffing, we predict that our numbers in TA would be impacted due to staffing levels and there would be an increased reliance of B & B accommodation.

6.2 If we continue with the current model this would put our existing temporary accommodation budget from a pre-covid budget allocation of £33,000, to an annual budget rising to £1.7m in 2024/25.



| | Cost if Continue to use B&B |
|---|---|
| 23/24 | 1,588,191 |
| 24/25 | 1,742,970 |
| 25/26 | 697,423 |
| 26/27 | 288,681 |
| 27/28 | 288,681 |
| 28/29 | 288,681 |
| **Total** | **4,894,629** |

6.3 This not only puts a huge financial pressure on the Council, but with the lack of availability of good quality accommodation, we would have to purchase space in poor quality and unsuitable bed space which the Council only uses as a last resort. This would put our already vulnerable residents in a poorer situation at a time where we want to stabilise their situation and empower them to move back to good health, independence and economic activity.

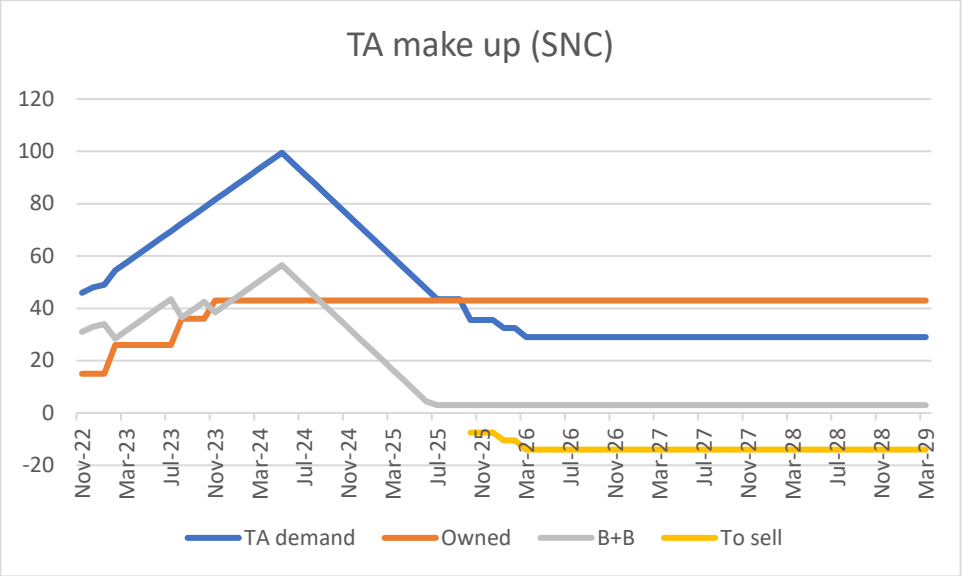
## 7 Expected Cost if we move to more Owned Accommodation and increase staffing (as detailed in 9.5)

7.1 The alternative is to purchase additional temporary accommodation stock.

7.2 With the demand predicted, 43 units would be optimal in terms of ensuring a high utilisation (c90%) meaning a maximum return on capital investment to the council.

7.3 However, there will always be cases for using B&B, due to the Council housing higher risk residents or needing to create a suitable mix of residents in an accommodation block.

7.4 This approach would mitigate the increase cost of temporary accommodation whilst also providing a significantly better quality of accommodation to our vulnerable clients.



| SNC | Cost based on 43 units |
|---|---|
| 23/24 | £450,982.16 |
| 24/25 | £361,027.47 |
| 25/26 | -£147,531.69 |
| 26/27 | -£168,379.45 |
| 27/28 | -£168,379.45 |
| 28/29 | -£168,379.45 |
| **Total** | **£159,339.59** |

7.5 The modelling suggests that demand may begin to subside after 24/25. If this happened this would leave the Council with two options. One would be to dispose of unneeded temporary accommodation. Alternatively, it is well known that a lack of good quality temporary accommodation for a variety of client groups means numerous other agencies such as children's service and other district housing authorities will very likely be willing customers, providing the council with a steady income stream against its investment.

7.6 Based on the current cost of suitable property per square feet (£200) the Council would need to spend £1,808,000 to purchase appropriate units

| Calculation of cost to purchase TA (SNC) | |
|---|---|
| St Andrews | 3 |
| Kestrel | 6 |
| Manse | 6 |
| Total | 15 |
| | |
| Target level | 43 |
| Total needed | 28 |
| | |
| Sq./ft per unit | 322.92 |
| Cost per Sq. ft | 200 |
| Total cost per unit | 64584 |
| Total capital investment | £1808352 |

7.7 Whilst delegation is sought to expedite the purchase of properties, where a individual property value exceeds £750,000 properties will be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

## 8 Team Workload

8.1 Whilst the increase in need puts pressure on bed spaces, it also puts pressure on the team's workload. Currently we have a core staff resource based on pre-covid demand, which is complemented by extra resource funded through Covid. This funding stream ends in April 2023 and therefore we face a double impact of losing staff resource at a time of increased demand. This will create a significant shortfall

in officer resource which would mean reducing the service to a minimal offer. his would be a step change for the Council who have an exemplar reputation both locally and nationally. Also, whilst saving money in the short term, this would mean more residents in expensive crisis in the future.

8.2 This proposal will focus on our immediate need for staff resource, with other workstreams presented to future committees as required, or implemented as part of our continuous improvement programme.

8.3 The proposal will not increase core budget staff costs as we will follow the model, we adopted in covid by creating supernumerary staff. The figures are a worst-case scenario, as we anticipated that additional costs for staff can be offset in 2023/4 by additional funding allocated from un-ringfenced covid funds, additional Ukraine funds and any funds received for asylum dispersal. Depending on external funding availability however, there is an anticipated cost pressure in 24/25. Offsetting costs now with funds that may be needed in future years carries risks, however officers will aim to make additional staff costs in 24/25 cost neutral through income.

8.4 Through covid and with investment of relevant funding, the housing team has experienced growth of personnel as case levels have increased. This has allowed the team to continue to provide a prevention orientated and personalised service to clients under manageable caseloads, as well as implement triage functions to improve the customer journey. These funded roles end in 22/23. It is envisaged that these additional staff will continue to be needed until 25/26 given projected demand, at which point the team will be back to pre-covid levels with exception of additional housing staff needed to manage properties.

8.5 The additional staffing required are detailed below, the cost of these staff (£266,200) have been factored into the overall financial projection.

| Grade | Current perm (FTE) | New total (FTE) establishment | Cost (Annum including on costs) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Triage (Grade B) | 2.09 | 3.09 | £24,495 |
| H register (Grade C) | 2.3 | 4.21 | £56,582 |
| HSO (Grade D) | 14.45 | 17.05 including Early prevention specialist | £91,135 |
| Manager (Grade F) | 7.8 | 9.8 | £93,932 |

8.6 In addition to help manage a broader in-house temporary accommodation estate as outlined above, staff will need to be recruited to manage the maintenance of the accommodation and provide tenancy support to those under our duty of care as a landlord. Based on experience of managing estate to date and via other similar functions, an optimal staffing ratio is one additional housing officer for every 10 units purchased. This cost will be paid for by the additional housing benefit we can draw down and so will be nil cost to the Council, and this resource is factored into financial modelling above.

8.7 Currently the purchasing of property is carried out by existing senior Individual and Families staff. With current workloads and skills sets, this is proving ineffective as we are unable to react quickly to opportunity. The proposal is to bring in a specialist resource at a cost of £500 per day to identify properties and complete the necessary checks to support senior managers. This similar approach in economic growth has proven an effective use of resource. The cost for this will be taken from the allocated capital budgets and will speed up the purchase of properties to help release savings. This cost has been built into the financial figures.

## 9 Joint Working

9.1 The extra properties will be managed by the team as a whole system as the current properties is now.

9.2 Each Council will have its own stock which it will be responsible for costs and maintenance, it is not proposed to have a pooled stock. Residents will be placed in their district owned stock first (following assessment of risk and safety), and then if unsuitable or no stock available, that resident will be placed in the other Councils stock as a second option. Should the risk be too high, there is no suitable accommodation, or no capacity then the resident will be placed in other temporary accommodation. This approach maximises the use of each Councils stock, which reduces costs and improves accommodation standards for tenants and will mitigate oversupply.

9.3 The Council is predominantly looking at larger properties that provides an economy of scale model where several tenants are in the same place. This helps to manage staff time and operational costs. As part of our future transformational work will be undertaken to look at the most optimal ownership and operating model for our accommodation portfolio.

9.4 The Council is committed to a carbon neutral footprint which applies to all its buildings. Whilst the costs presented do not consider making a property carbon neutral, how energy efficient a property is will be part of the criteria for selection, with the committed to making carbon neutral as soon as financially possible.

## 10 Issues and risks

10.1 **Resource Implications** – the resource implications are detailed in this report.

10.2 **Legal Implications** – All purchases will be part of the Councils normal procedures which will be subject to legal advice.

10.3 **Equality Implications** – This proposal supports the most vulnerable in our districts.

10.4 **Environmental Impact** – Any properties will fall into the Councils carbon neutral objectives.

10.5 **Crime and Disorder** – Poor or inadequate housing and environment is one of the main pathways into, and out of, offending behaviour.

**10.6 Risks**

10.7 Property prices could fall therefore meaning a loss in capital. However, the Council is only at risk if it sells properties at a loss. This proposal looks to the long term to retain property as an investment, only selling in the market is right.

10.8 Temporary accommodation is currently paid by housing benefit. The projections are based on this remaining in housing benefit however it may go to Universal Credit. However, it is envisaged that funding will continue to be made available to pay for rent.

10.9 Demand may outstretch current modelling. Whilst this would further validate the capital investment made, we would still see the revenue spend, albeit somewhat mitigated. If this were to happen, we may have to invest further.

10.10 Purchasing properties in the current market requires an expediency that does not match the housing team staff resources and the Council governance structures which we need to address if we are to be commercially aware and maximise opportunities.

## 11 Conclusion

11.1 The Council faces a substantial increase in demand for temporary accommodation. The proposal is to react to this demand proactively and put measures in place to ensure we support the most vulnerable in our district, whilst implementing a financially viable scheme.

## 12 Recommendations

The Panel is asked to recommend to Cabinet, for recommending to Council:

Capital Items

12.1 Create an additional capital budget of £1,808,000 to purchase additional temporary accommodation.

12.2 Delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning Policy and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to purchase individual properties up to £750,000.

Revenue Items

12.3 To agree to the extension of contracts for temporary additional housing staff up to £266,200 per annum (funded BDC 45% / SNC 55%) to deal with additional demand on housing services.

12.4 To agree the recruitment of 1 x FTE officer for every additional purchase of 10 units of temporary accommodation, which will be paid for by the additional income received from those properties.

12.5 That the Council prioritise allocations in temporary accommodation within its own stock, and in the event, that capacity cannot be found within its own stock, place in Broadland District Council stock first.

12.6 Utilise capital reserves to pay for specialist support to speed up the purchase of properties