

# Cabinet

## Agenda

### Date

Tuesday 3 November 2020

### Members of the Cabinet

Cllr S A Vincent  
Chairman (Leader) Policy

Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle  
(Deputy Leader) Finance

### Portfolio holders

Cllr J K Copplestone Economic Development

Cllr J J Emsell Transformation and  
Organisational Development

Cllr L H Hemsall Planning

Cllr J Leggett Environmental Excellence

Cllr F Whymark Housing and Wellbeing

### Time

6.00 pm

### Place

To be hosted remotely at  
Thorpe Lodge  
1 Yarmouth Road  
Thorpe St Andrew  
Norwich

**If any Member wishes to clarify details relating to any matter on the agenda they are requested to contact the relevant Director / Assistant Director**

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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 ask a question, or make a statement on an agenda item, please email your request to [committee.services@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@broadland.gov.uk) no later than 5.00pm on Friday 30 October 2020.

## **A G E N D A**

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<b>1</b>	<b>To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8</b>	<b>4</b>
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<b>4</b>	<b>Matters arising therefrom (if any)</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Public Speaking</b>	
	To consider representation from the members of the public who have expressed the wish to convey their views on items on this Agenda.	
	In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per member of the public.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Representations from Non-Cabinet Members</b>	
	To receive the views from non-Cabinet Members on items on this agenda. Members are reminded to advise the Leader if they wish to attend and speak at the meeting.	
	In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per non-Cabinet Member.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	
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<b>22</b>	<b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>	
	The Chairman will move 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.	
<b>23</b>	<b>Exempt Minute of meeting held on 29 September 2020</b>	<b>372</b>

Trevor Holden  
Managing Director

## 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:

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

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

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?

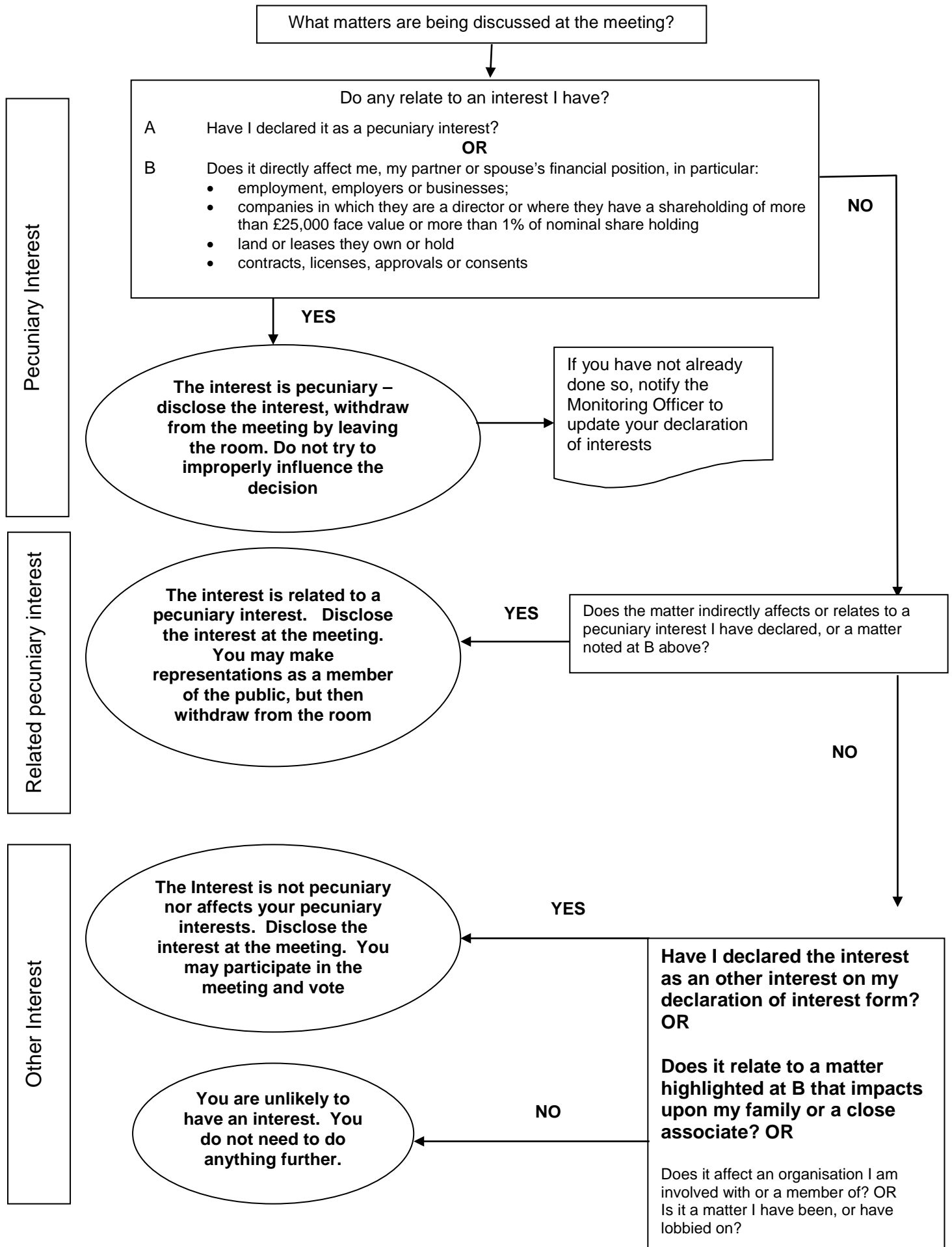
If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be another 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



Minutes of a meeting of **Cabinet** held by video link on **Tuesday 29 September 2020** at **6.00pm** when there were present:

Cllr S A Vincent – Policy (Chairman)

Portfolio holders:

Cllr J K Copplestone	Economic Development
Cllr J J Emsell	Transformation and Organisational Development
Cllr L H Hempsall	Planning
Cllr J Leggett	Environmental Excellence
Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Finance
Cllr F Whymark	Housing and Wellbeing

Cllr T Adams, Cllr S Catchpole, Cllr K Kelly, Cllr K Leggett, Cllr G Nurden and Cllr S Riley were also in attendance.

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Director Place, Director Resources, Director People and Communities, Chief of Staff, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager, Policy and Partnerships Officer and the Democratic Services Officer (JO).

### **132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Minute No &amp; Heading</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr J Leggett	140 - Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025, South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement 2020-2022.	Non- pecuniary interest, trustee of Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services.

### **133 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

*Minute No: 123 Covid-19 – Norfolk Wide Fighting Fund*

Cabinet was advised that the £150,000 for the Fighting Fund had been

allocated, but not yet released.

#### **134 REPRESENTATIONS FROM NON CABINET MEMBERS**

The Chairman agreed that, at his discretion, all non-Cabinet Members in attendance be allowed to join the debate at the relevant point of the proceedings on request.

#### **135 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2020.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members on the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet Agenda on 22 September 2020, as each item was considered.

#### **136 WELLBEING PANEL**

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellbeing Panel held on 5 August 2020.

#### **137 UPDATED DELIVERY PLAN POST COVID-19**

The Chief of Staff introduced the report, which set out the updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21 in the light of the updated priorities of the Council following the recent impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was originally intended that the plan would be an interim one-year plan for 2020/21, whilst a new two-year plan was developed for 2021/22. However, with the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and a constantly changing environment, it was recommended that the development of a two-year Delivery Plan and Budget setting process be postponed for one year and allow for the development of a one-year plan for 2021/22, alongside the budget, returning to Council in February 2021.

The updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21 outlined the proposed amendments to be made to the key priority focus areas and projects for the Council. These had been revised to take account of; ongoing Covid-19 response work; impacts on timescales; adjustments to resource allocations and budgetary implications.

Overall, in light of the ongoing implications and challenges of Covid-19, the Plan ensured that organisationally the Council had a clear overview of its

priorities and the right resources and plans in place to support the recovery effort for the District.

In response to a query, Cabinet was advised that the disparity between Broadland and South Norfolk in the total controllable funding for 2020/21, was due to South Norfolk's leisure centres, as well as their larger commercial portfolio.

It was noted that the options for a single waste model and the alignment of waste customer support services projects were out of date. It was confirmed that these projects would be updated for the Quarter 2 Performance Report, which would be brought to Cabinet in November.

In answer to a query about the number of vulnerable residents supported by the discretionary prevention services, and homelessness interventions it was confirmed that these figure covered both authorities. However, when they were presented to Cabinet in Performance Reports they would be split to show the figures for each council.

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families advised the meeting that the pandemic had presented an opportunity to build upon collaboration and partnership working and as remote meetings were more convenient to attend they had made this process easier. There had been a very good community response to the pandemic with many volunteers coming forward and it was the officer's intention to maintain this level of community engagement and participation after the crisis had passed.

Members were also advised that although collection rates of Council Tax and Business Rates were likely to be down within the year due to the pandemic the collection targets would remain the same, so that any variance could be clearly identified.

It was noted that proposals to install electric vehicle chargers in the carpark, as well as the other internal works at Thorpe Lodge were on hold due to the pandemic and the 'new ways of working' project.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development noted that there was a lot of work going on in Broadland to improve the aspirations and skills of residents and that the Norfolk Strategic Fund was also leading specific targeted projects across the County.

Cabinet was also advised that an officer had been appointed to drive forward a new country park at Houghen Plantation.

In response to a query about the Food Innovation Centre, the Director of Place informed the meeting that it could also be seen as a long term investment for South Norfolk, as the Food Enterprise Zone crossed over both



Districts.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised the meeting that the Committee had raised concerns that the Council had implemented measures in market towns in response to Covid-19, without consulting Ward Members. The Leader noted this point and emphasised the importance of Members being made aware of activities taking place in their Ward.

Cabinet was also informed that a Customer Satisfaction Survey across a number of activities was being developed and would be brought to the November Cabinet meeting with further details.

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

1. To approve the adoption of the updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21; and
2. To approve the development of a one-year plan for 2021/22, returning to Councils in February 2021.

### **Reason for decision**

To support the response and recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **138 RESPONSE TO MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MHCLG) CONSULTATIONS**

The Assistant Director Planning introduced the report which informed Members of the key changes proposed by MHCLG on the future of the planning regime and proposed consultation responses to two planning related documents: a White Paper entitled 'Planning for the Future' and a consultation paper on 'changes to the planning system'.

In the White Paper, the Government proposed the most radical changes to the planning system since 1947 and sought to simplify the role of Local Plans, so that they focused on identifying land under one of three categories: Growth Areas, Renewal Areas and Protected Areas.

It was proposed that Local Plans would set clear rules, rather than general policies for development and the frontloading of the local plan process would ensure that there was significant community engagement at the development allocation stage.

In addition housing numbers would no longer be set locally, but by Government. The Local Plan process would be restricted to 30 months and would be based on a more digitally accessible format.

It was also proposed to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 agreements with a new Infrastructure Levy. This proposal was lacking in detail about how the transition between the two systems would work and this had been raised in the response as a concern.

The second key topic in the White Paper was Development Management. Here it was proposed that where land had been allocated in a more detailed way there would be a presumption in favour of planning permission. Whilst the principle of generic policies to cover the majority of subject areas was accepted, it was suggested in the Council response that consideration needed to be given to local characteristics and constraints as well.

Proposals in the White Paper for web based digitised local plans were welcomed, but the Council had also made the point in its response that not all members of the public had access to IT.

The White Paper also proposed strengthen enforcement powers to ensure planning standards were maintained.

The consultation on the White Paper would run until 31 October 2020.

The second consultation: 'Changes to the current planning system', proposed changes to the standard methodology for assessing local housing need and introduced a new set of proposals to secure First Homes, which would be available at a 30 percent discount in perpetuity. It was also proposed to lift the small sites threshold, below which affordable housing was not required, from 10 homes to either 40 or 50 homes and extend the current Permission in Principle provisions to major developments.

The proposed changes to the standard methodology was a concern, as under the current system there were around 2,000 homes being delivered in Greater Norwich per year, but if the revised methodology was adopted this would rise to 3,256 per year. This figure was seen as unreasonable and it was hoped that the Government would modify this proposal in light of the rate of delivery already being achieved in Greater Norwich.

The paper proposed that 25 percent of all affordable housing should be First Homes, which would be homes for first-time buyers with a minimum 30 percent discount against market value in perpetuity.

First Homes would be calculated as part of the affordable housing allocation for Greater Norwich.

Of particular concern was a proposal to temporarily raise the threshold for contributions to affordable housing from 10 dwellings to 40 or 50 homes, for 18 months. In Greater Norwich a significant percentage of affordable homes were delivered through small sites, whereas larger sites sometimes failed to

deliver as many affordable homes, as infrastructure requirements could reduce viability and the number of affordable homes delivered. The officer response was, therefore, to object to this proposal.

The final change proposed in the paper was to extend the current Permission in Principle consent regime to major developments.

Cabinet were advised of the amendments and suggestions proposed by the Place Shaping Panel at its meeting on 18 September 2020, when it had considered this report.

For question 1 of the Planning for the Future White Paper response it was suggested by the Panel that the three words they most associated with the planning system were:

*Fragmented, overly complicated and time-consuming.*

The Panel's top three priorities for planning (question 4) were:

1. Increasing the affordability of new housing.
2. The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change needs to be addressed as part of the design and location of new homes and places.
3. Supporting the local economy with more or better local infrastructure.

However, it was noted that the choice of priorities was from a prescribed list and that if only these were available when the online consultation was completed, the priorities should be:

1. The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change.
2. Supporting the local economy.
3. Increasing the affordability of new housing.

For question 8a, (page 107) it was agreed that figures should be included to show clearly that the increase in housing numbers in Broadland would not be deliverable, if the standard methodology for housing need was revised.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning noted that there was a lack of clarity regarding the distribution of affordable housing, as well as the protection of the landscape in the White Paper; which was especially relevant to low lying areas, such as the Waveney Valley and the Broads. She suggested that the Environmental Strategy should be used to shape some of the responses to

the White Paper.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development suggested that a strong response should be made regarding the provision of infrastructure to support economic growth and she also emphasised the importance of cross boundary arterial roads, especially if the Duty to Cooperate was to be abolished.

The Assistant Director of Planning confirmed that consultation on the White Paper did not close until 29 October, so the suggested comments from Cabinet could be included in the final response, which would be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for Planning

## RESOLVED

Option (1, *as amended* and 2)

1. To agree the draft responses to the following MHCLG consultation documents as outlined in appendices 2 and 3 of this report; *with the addition of the suggestions made by the Place Shaping Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;*

Changes to the current planning system

White Paper: Planning for the future

2. Delegate any updates to these responses to the Director of Place in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning.

## Reason for decision

To respond to Government consultation papers.

### 139 GREATER NORWICH HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2020-2025 SOUTH NORFOLK AND BROADLAND ROUGH SLEEPER STATEMENT 2020-2022.

The Policy and Partnerships Officer introduced the report, which presented the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025 and the South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement 2020-2022 for publication.

This was the fourth iteration of the Homelessness Strategy, which was produced in partnership with Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council. Also presented for approval was the Rough Sleeper Statement, which it was proposed that from 2022 would be developed into a Greater Norwich Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy set out the following four priorities under which sat a series of actions which were ambitious in scope, realistic to achieve and reflected the urban/rural context within which the Strategy was located.

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Preventing Homelessness
3. Single and Youth Homelessness
4. Financial Inclusion, Welfare Reform and Economic Growth

The priorities were developed using an evidence and data based approach in consultation with partners. There was a desire to look to alleviate the drivers of homelessness i.e. low income, skills training and accessing affordable housing. The Covid-19 pandemic had delayed progress with development of the Strategy but had provided an opportunity to review the priorities to see if they were still relevant and had concluded that they were even more important post Covid-19.

With regard to rough sleeping, at the beginning of lockdown, the Council had been able to offer accommodation to all rough sleepers in the District, as per the Government's 'Everyone In' emergency measure. There was a desire to continue this work to ensure those accommodated could continue to secure housing suitable to their needs.

In summary, the Strategy and Statement aimed to further develop the existing joined up working with partners on homelessness and rough sleeping which fed into the work underway to redesign the housing offer across Broadland and South Norfolk and to take a person centred approach to increasing resilience and offering background support.

The Leader commended the work undertaken across Greater Norwich to accommodate rough sleepers during the lockdown.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing noted the increased workload of the Housing Team, who were taking around 2,000 calls per week from people worried about their housing situation. During normal times this figure was around 750, which demonstrated the extent of concern being felt by residents in the District. He also noted that the average age of death of a rough sleeper was only half that of a person in settled accommodation, which underlined the importance of the work being done by the Council to address this issue.

**RESOLVED**

to approve adoption of the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025 and the South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement 2020-2022.

**Reason for decision**

To meet legislative requirements.

**140 LOANS TO PARISH COUNCILS**

The Assistant Director – Finance introduced that report, which set out the governance arrangements for the distribution of loans of under £25,000 to parish and town councils, which had been agreed as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic at the 16 June 2020 Cabinet.

The report recommended that the agreement of any Covid-19 related loans to parishes under £25,000 and repayable within five years be delegated to the Assistant Director – Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance. Any loan request above £25,000 would be subject to a report to Members.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance added that loans under £25,000 would be charged at base rate plus one percent.

**RESOLVED**

To delegate to the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, authority to agree Covid-19 related loans to parish councils of up to £25,000 provided these are repayable within five years.

**Reason for decision**

To provide financial assistance to parish and town councils during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**141 COUNCIL TAX COVID-19 HARDSHIP FUND 2020-21 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/POLICY**

The Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager introduced the report, which asked Cabinet for retrospective authority to continue administering the Covid-19 Hardship Fund 2020-21.

In March 2020, as a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Government announced local authorities would receive a grant to support working age economically vulnerable residents.

Broadland received £637,216 to administer the fund and following the instruction from central Government officers took immediate action to ensure the money was provided to reduce Council Tax bills and support working age vulnerable residents as soon as possible.

It was now necessary to request authorisation from Cabinet to retrospectively consider the policy, so that officers could align Council Tax policy to reflect the instruction.

Those residents eligible for the grant were all working age residents who received Council Tax Reduction during the financial year 2020-21. If the resident's liability was less than £150.00 their liability would be reduced to nil.

As part of the fund Broadland had also allocated £100,000 to a Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund for working age residents who were experiencing severe hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, following the recent Government announcement that it would be awarding £500 to people told to self-isolate and losing income as a result, it was anticipated that the demand on the Severe Hardship Fund would be reduced.

In response to a query from the Leader, it was confirmed that the £150 Council Tax reduction had only been made in line with the policy.

## **RESOLVED**

To retrospectively agree the policy for Council Tax COVID-19 Hardship Fund 2020-21, so we can continue to administer hardship fund following the central Government guidelines.

### **Reasons for decision**

To support economically vulnerable residents during the Covid19 pandemic.

## **142 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY**

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) presented the report, which consisted of two elements: the Risk Management Policy and the proposed risk appetite within the Policy.

The Risk Management Policy had been drafted by the Internal Audit Manager and developed through the Audit Committee and brought the Council in line with best practice.

The Risk Management Policy included the following key features:

- The Policy now outlined the Risk Management framework.
- A process for the management of risk was outlined.
- Roles and responsibilities and governance arrangements for the reporting of risk were outlined.
- A risk appetite statement and accompanying scoring system was provided.
- Guidance was provided on the scoring of risk in line with the risk appetite.

Members' attention was drawn to the Risk Impact table at Appendix B to the report, which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked to be retitled 'Impact on Delivery of Services' in order to provide greater clarity.

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) asked Cabinet to consider the Risk Appetite and confirm if they were happy with the approach proposed.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked the Chairman of the Audit Committee and commended officers for their hard work in putting together the document and confirmed that the proposed Risk Appetite was acceptable.

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that the risk scores would be used in performance reports, which would also include Red, Amber and Green status reporting.

## **RESOLVED**

To approve the proposed risk appetite within the Risk Management Policy;  
and

## **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

To approve the Risk Management Policy, *subject to amendment of title to risk impact table in Appendix B to 'Impact on Delivery of Services'.*

## **Reasons for decision**

To endorse a revised and updated Risk Management Policy, in line with best



practice.

**143      EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC  
RESOLVED**

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I 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.

**144      UPDATING THE FOOD INNOVATION CENTRE BUSINESS CASE**

The Assistant Director - Economic Growth introduced the report, which provided an update of the proposed new financial arrangements and conditions to deliver the capital element of the Food Innovation Centre, as detailed in the exempt Minutes.

**RESOLVED**

1. To approve the revised funding package, as set out in the report; and
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Resources to adjust the amount of any specific component within the overall revised funding package by +/- 10%, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance; and
3. To allocate the revenue funding, as set out in the report; and
4. To delegate authority to sign off on the RIBA Stage 2 concept design to the Director of Place.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

That the capital programme for the Food Innovation Centre is increased to cover the full capital cost and contingency amount, as set out in the report.

**Reasons for decision**

To submit the funding bid for the Food Innovation Centre, whilst recognising that a range of unresolved project details would be addressed and brought back to Cabinet before final approval of the scheme.

**145 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

*The meeting closed at 7.30pm*

DRAFT

## Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee

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Minutes of a meeting of the **Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee** held via video link on **Monday 5 October 2020** at **6pm**

A roll call was taken and the following were present:

Cllr J Emsell–Chairman

Cllr P E Bulman

Cllr D King

Cllr J L Thomas

Cllr S J Catchpole

Cllr G K Nurden

Cllr S Holland

Cllr S M Prutton

Also in attendance were the Director of Resources, the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), the Chief of Staff, the Strategy and Programme Manager, the Corporate Programmes Lead and the Democratic Services Officers (JO & LA).

### **7 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr D Roper.

### **8 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the correction of the date in minute no.3 to 2018.

### **9 MATTERS ARISING**

A Member asked for clarification on the Committee system which was proposed to be discussed in the informal meeting and whether a new system was being proposed or a change in the way Committees were being run (minute no. 4 refers). The Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) explained that the informal session discussed IT projects, including Members IT and the possible convening of a Members IT Working Group to assist in the process. She confirmed that and the minute was referring to a Committee Administration Management Software package which would assist in the production of Agendas, the booking of meetings, managing FOI's etc.

### **10 PROJECT UPDATE- INCLUDING IT AND WEBSITE**

The Chief of Staff presented the report which provided Members of the Committee with an update on the major transformation SPARK projects. Officers advised Members that the impact of COVID-19 had changed the priority of some projects and took Members through each section stopping for questions along the way.

Members were informed of the progress regarding the joint email system, with the aspiration of rolling out Office 365 for all staff and members by January 2021. A Member raised concern over the joint domain name of

@SouthNorfolkandBroadland being used, but it was noted by the Chairman that this issue had already been debated and approved by Council.

Officers clarified further points which included the plans for the rollout of Office 365 and how any delay would be managed. Members noted that the implementation of Office 365 was needed to move Members onto a more agile platform for accessing emails and utilising the wider office suite of applications. A Member working group was to be arranged to gauge what IT equipment Members needed going forward.

During discussion the Chairman spoke of how Members had been keen for Office 365 to be implemented, but reminded Officers that potentially some Members would need help in understanding how to use it. The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) assured Members that there would be training for all users on the software.

The discussion turned to the One Network, where Officers explained that in January a budget across the two Councils, was agreed at 1.6 Million for IT infrastructure investment. Members noted that there had been appointments to two interim roles within the Councils IT and Digital Team to work on the project and the scoping of the documentation for the procurement process had started.

Members raised concerns over the phone system and call waiting times. Officers explained that Broadland users had migrated over to the Mitel Phone System, which would enable staff to take phone calls wherever they are working from. One Member raised the concern that some phone calls were not being picked up and for a public facing authority, this was not acceptable. Officers explained that there was still a lot of learning to be done with the phone system and the Council priority was to make sure staff were using the software properly. Members noted that feedback from the Committee would be fed into the Assistant Directors and Managers to help address the problems in their areas. A Member queried the time taken to implement the new phone system from the initial lockdown announcement, with Officers assuring Members that from the early stages of lockdown temporary solutions had been put in place for key services, with the full project then being delivered at speed.. The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) advised Members that an update on the phone system, would be brought before Committee at the next meeting, and that work would continue with services to ensure these issues were resolved.

The conversation turned to the Website Project where the Chief of Staff explained that following the agreement of the joint domain name in 2019 and the budget in 2020, the next steps involved workshops with Members looking at designs. A Member raised concern that he was unaware of the workshops taking place, officers referred to an email had been sent out to all Members of the committee but would circulate a further one to make sure everyone was aware. Officers also clarified further information regarding dates in the document for the project delivery and that the final delivery of the website could be impacted by the organisation's Covid-19 response.

A Member asked for clarification on the section within the report on Organisational Development, the Assistant Director of Governance and

Business Support (Monitoring Officer) explained that the focus was on the ways to invest in staff to be the best they could be. The Chairman thanked Officers for their report which Members noted.

### 11 NEW WAYS OF WORKING UPDATE

The Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) presented her report, which included an update on the ways of working, the opportunities that have been realised in response to Covid-19 and the next steps that were needed. The Assistant Director drew Members' attention to the start of the country's lockdown in section two of the report, where it detailed the work which had been undertaken to make sure staff could work from home and have the equipment they required, with the addition of an improved remote access platform, video conferencing rollout and live streaming of public committee meetings.

Members were informed of the current position relating to the new ways of working including; the promotion of the wellbeing of staff, confirmation of Covid-19 secure workplaces, reorientation meetings for all staff and the clearing of unneeded documentation. A further update on the review of Member's IT, with a small Working Group potentially being set up to investigate options, was also noted.

A Member asked about the process if Councillors needed to arrange meetings with Officers, the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) advised Members that Officers could set virtual meetings up if required, all staff were available via email, and also through phone. It was advised that it would be good practice to liaise through email/phone first due to the various working locations for staff.

In response to a query regarding the current number of staff working in the offices, Members noted that on averages there are about 70 at Thorpe Lodge and about 40 at South Norfolk House a day. This was under continual review. In response to a request the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that she would look into the practicality of providing a monthly update on staffing numbers across both offices.

As part of the return to the office project, all staff were contacted by either the Assistant Director or there Manager to ensure their personal preference for working from home, working in the office, or a mixture of both, This was then compared to the business need for those service areas, with a 90% match being achieved.

Some Members expressed concern over the continued use of virtual meetings, specifying the length and processes of the meetings. A Member raised a query on using voting options in the virtual meeting setting to enable some of the roll calls and votes to be achieved quicker. The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) explained that this was not an option currently as the platform had not developed a solution that met the openness and transparency requirement of the Legislation, but that

she was confident that this would evolve. Further discussion followed where the Chairman explained that he would like to see all Members in face to face meetings, but the safety of Members and Officers needed to take priority in the current climate and the continuing of the virtual meetings was the safest option.

### **12 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE, RISK AND FINANCE REPORTING**

Members considered the report which provided an update on the approach for the Strategic Performance, Risk and Finance reporting.

The Committee was advised that the quarterly reports, would be comprised of four sections, section one would consist of an overarching dashboard dealing with the health of the Council and highlight risks alongside achievements. Section two of the report would provide updates on the progress of each delivery measure which leads into section three: Risk, where an outline, would be given on the current Strategic Risks and their status. The final section of the report: Finance would provide updates on the financial funding gap, the overall budget and similar topics.

A Member raised concern over the writing style within reports and highlighted the need for the reports to be easy to understand. It was also requested that corporate jargon be avoided on documents posted on the Council website to avoid potentially confusing residents.

The Chairman expressed an interest in seeing how Broadland Council's actions were comparing against other similar Councils to gauge progress and gain assurances that the Council was operating in the right way. Members noted the report and the Chairman thanked officers for their report.

### **13 WORK PROGRAMME**

Members suggested the inclusion of the Environmental Strategy on the Work Programme to focus on any improvements which might be needed. Officers explained that the Strategy would be picked up in the Environment Excellence Panel's own Work Programme.

*The meeting closed at 7.30pm.*

Minutes of a meeting of the **Wellbeing Panel** held via video link on **Wednesday 7 October 2020** at **6pm**.

A roll call was taken and the following members were present:

Cllr F Whymark – Chairman

Cllr A D Crotch  
Cllr R R Foulger,  
Cllr S Lawn

Cllr M Murrell  
Cllr J A Neeson

Cllr S M Prutton  
Cllr N C Shaw

In attendance were the Director of People and Communities, the Assistant Director Individuals and Families, the Housing Standards Senior Manager, the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager, the Policy and Partnerships Officer and the Committee Officers (DM and LA).

### **23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Minute No &amp; Heading</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr Crotch	27 – Housing Standards Enforcement Policy	Owner of a rental property – other interest

### **24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr N J Harpley and Cllr L A Starling.

### **25 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Wellbeing Panel meeting held on 5 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **26 MATTERS ARISING**

None raised.

### **27 HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Panel considered the report inviting them to make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the adoption of the Council's new Housing Standards

### Enforcement Policy.

The Housing Standards Senior Manager outlined the background to the report pointing out that the current Housing Standards Enforcement Policy was out of date and needed refreshing to ensure the Council remained compliant with the latest housing enforcement legislation and regulations. Particular changes to the policy were needed in respect of new Electrical Safety Standards and inclusion of a new council Banning Order Policy developed in accordance with MHCLG Guidance. On the whole, the remainder of the document was consistent with the Council's previous approach and did not detail any further enforcement procedural changes.

In response to questions from members, the Housing Standards Senior Manager confirmed that there was no formal register of rented property in the district and the enforcement role was largely reactive. When notified of an issue regarding a property, the Council would undertake a full evaluation of the issue and the property as a whole. To date, the Council had been involved in one civil penalty decision process. With regard to carbon monoxide detectors, the Housing Standards Senior Manager confirmed that carbon monoxide alarms were required to be fitted to any habited room which contained a solid fuel burning combustion appliance. With regard to the issue of houseboats, it was noted that this was a difficult area in terms of legislation and complaints had to be assessed under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and if the problems were prejudicial to health. There were challenges in relation to the moorings at Thorpe St Andrew in terms of clarity of the responsible authority for taking action and this was still being resolved with the Council's legal advisors with a view to ensuring officers had dual authority with the City Council.

Members welcomed the updated Housing Standards Enforcement Policy and it was, by a show of hands,

### **RESOLVED to recommend Cabinet**

to consider and approve the Council's new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

## **28 THE VISION FOR A BEST IN CLASS HOUSING OFFER AND DRAFT ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

Members considered the report, together with the addendum circulated and published.

The report had been drawn up following a number of workshops and considerable work to review the policies of both Councils and bring together a proposal based on a one-team approach. The review had been undertaken



before and during the COVID-pandemic which had created an opportunity to be mindful of the likely demand on the service from the crisis.

Following a successful bid to the LGA housing advisor programme, officers had been working in conjunction with external consultants Campbell Tickell and had developed a “best in class housing offer”. A fundamental part of the offer was the proposed allocations scheme and a four-stage accommodation model which sought to provide a universal service open to all with a housing need and which included a range of housing solutions.

The current banding system was being changed from 3 bands to 4 to allow for a band to accommodate those in most urgent need. A process of stabilisation was also being introduced to allow for suspended bidding to provide opportunity to help bidders manage and resolve issues affecting their ability to sustain accommodation. In response to a question regarding the high numbers of people in the low band and the likelihood of them ever being offered accommodation, officers commented that a reassessment of those in the low band had taken place and was ongoing, to ascertain if they still wished to remain and this had reduced numbers significantly. Over the proposed 4 bands there was likely to be approximately 1000 people registered for accommodation. Whilst those in high bands were more likely to be allocated a property, difficult to let properties and Section 106 restrictions on the allocation of properties offered to those with a local connection helped to secure offers to those in lower bands. A willingness to move outside a specific area was also an option to help increase the likelihood of securing a property. It was noted that, whilst the numbers of those on the register within the 4 bands within South Norfolk was lower than in Broadland, the South Norfolk register had undergone a thorough review and the proportion of those registered within each band was common across both councils.

With regard to temporary accommodation and the high costs associated with this, it was noted that efforts were continuing to secure a range of options for offering temporary accommodation including the current private sector leasing and houses in multiple occupation. The potential for purchasing properties for this purpose was also being explored. The aim was to secure options which were financially more viable and more akin to the LHA rent levels and which offered the right accommodation with the right support for the vulnerable clients. Reference was made to discussions taking place with a housing association regarding the allocation of a number of managed properties with coordinated support for those in need of temporary accommodation.

It was noted that, in addition to the online registration process, other options to assist with bidding would be available to support those unable to access services online.

In response to a comment about the high cost of software for the new system, officers pointed out that the current software was due to be replaced in 2021 and that the proposal for replacement of the current 2 systems with a single

common system would result in a £70k saving for Broadland over a 4 year period.

The new combined system would allow for a single point of access to bid for properties across both Councils with properties being allocated to those residents within the district where the property was located in the first instance, but ultimately offered to a bidder in the other district if the property was not taken, thereby helping to reduce the incidence of empty properties and facilitating mobility. The bidding process would be explicit about priority being given to the allocation of properties to bidders within the same district as the property.

In response to a question about the number of people in rent arrears following COVID, officers commented that, whilst this data had not been collected, some modelling of the potential numbers of such cases had been done as part of the review to ensure the service was best placed to try and respond to the likely increase in demand for help and guidance. It was anticipated there would be a peak in demand over the next 6-12 months with an ongoing impact for the next 2-3 years whilst arrears were repaid.

Members then made the following comments/amendments in relation to the Allocation Scheme:

- Paragraph 3.4 (f) on page 182 of the papers (page 18 of the Scheme) – reassess and if necessary amend the period of rent arrears applicable to the disqualification for an allocation – shown as 14 weeks for weekly paid rent and 4 months for monthly paid rent to see if these should align;
- Paragraph 5.2.3 on page 203 of the papers (page 39 of the Scheme) - amend the reference to “Thursday” to “Tuesday”;
- Prevention table on page 213 of the report (page 49 of the Scheme) - amend reference to “high” priority;
- Paragraph(e) of appendix 3 on page 223 (page 59 of the Scheme) - amend to include reference to requests and appeals being received by other means including telephone calls as well as submitted by email.

It was noted that the consultation on the proposals would commence on Friday 9 October and would be circulated widely.

Subject to the comments and amendments above, members welcomed the comprehensive report and supported the proposals contained therein. They thanked officers for their hard work in reviewing the existing arrangements and preparing the proposals.

### **RESOLVED to recommend Cabinet**

to endorse that officers work towards the Best in Class Housing model and support the draft allocations scheme as presented prior to public consultation.

### **29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

With regard to concerns raised about the impact of COVID on mental health of residents of Broadland and employees of the Council, members were advised that the next meeting of the Panel would be considering a report on the review of Health and Wellbeing which would include mental wellbeing. Whilst this was not a function of the Council, the organisation was well placed to support and influence others in this vital area of work. Members noted some of the measures being put into place to support staff at this time including the training of members of staff as mental health first aiders. Members agreed it would be helpful to include reference to this in the Members Bulletin and to consider including reference to their status as a trained mental health first aider within the email signatures of those staff to help raise awareness of the support available.

The Chairman advised that he had invited representative of the YAB to join a meeting of the Panel in the future (provisionally December 2020) to help inform the Council's policies.

*The meeting closed at 7.20pm*

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environmental Excellence Panel** held by video link on **Thursday 8 October 2020** at **6pm** when there were present:

Cllr J Leggett – Chairman

Cllr D J Britcher

Cllr K S Kelly

Cllr S M Prutton

Cllr A D Crotch

Cllr K E Lawrence

Cllr J M Ward

Cllr J F Fisher

Cllr G K Nurden

Cllr S Catchpole, Cllr K Leggett and Cllr T Mancini-Boyle also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Assistant Director - Community Services, Assistant Director – Regulatory, Recycling and Partnerships Officers (MB and NN), Policy and Partnerships Manager, Policy and Partnerships Officer, Democratic Services Officer (LA) and the Democratic Services Officer (JO).

### **32 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr B Cook.

### **33 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **34 RECYCLING INITIATIVES SCOPING REPORT**

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer (MB) introduced the report which presented high level options and project proposals for reaching a 60 percent recycling rate by 2025, as set out in the Environmental Strategy, which was an uplift from the current rate of 49.6% of 10-11.5 percent.

Broadland Council already had the highest recycling rate for both 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 in Norfolk (49.6%) although this included a significant amount of green waste from brown bins. In comparison, South Norfolk and Norwich were top in terms of dry recycling.

The 60 percent recycling rate ambition by 2025, was in line with the Government's 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy that had a target of 65 percent by 2035.

The Recycling Team for Broadland and South Norfolk currently consisted of 1.2 FTE Recycling and Partnership Officers, as well as one temporary FTE officer funded until the beginning of March 2021, plus a vacant apprentice post that had yet to be filled.

The Team covered approximately 120,000 properties across Broadland and South Norfolk with the potential for approximately 228,000 recycling collections to take place per fortnight.

Work within the Team was split between implementing projects to improve recycling rates and to reduce contamination, whilst 40 percent of officer time was the preparation of data and completing statutory returns for both Broadland and South Norfolk, which impacted on capacity to manage large recycling initiatives.

Research into the top recycling authorities in England had been undertaken in order to better understand drivers for success. The main trends identified included smaller residual waste bins (140L or 180L compared to the 240L used by the Council), widespread food and garden waste services and collection of additional materials at the kerbside. All of which could promote residents behaviour change, to increasing the recycling rate.

In order to achieve the 60 percent recycling target a number of options that had been found to have the greatest impact on reducing waste production and increasing recycling, were proposed for consideration.

These were:

- weekly food waste collections
- three weekly collections for general waste
- smaller bins for general waste and improvements to kerbside recycling.

However, Members were asked to note that the adoption of any of the proposals would have significant financial implications that would need to be carefully considered.

For example, expanding the weekly food waste service to all households in Broadland would include a capital requirement of £102,888 and increased revenue costs by £311,244 per year. An alternative option would be to promote food digesters, but this would only be viable if the homeowner had adequate garden space and would not contribute to composting tonnages.

A free garden waste service would increase use, but the cost would be £670,844 per year and result in a loss of £1,498,579 in revenue. The Government were potentially looking at introducing a free service, but had confirmed that they would cover the cost of funding it.

Reducing the size of the residual bins from 240L to 180L would lower residual waste, as more would be recycled. However, replacing the bins would cost

£937,500 along with £187,500 for their delivery. Consideration would also need to be given to how the old bins were disposed of.

Collecting residual waste on a three weekly basis had also been shown to produce cost savings, decreased residual waste and increased recycling rates. However, as with smaller bins, residents have proved resistant to such proposals and a separate nappy collection service might be necessary. It was not proposed to both reduce the size of bins and collect them on a three weekly basis.

A kerbside collection service for textiles, batteries and small electrical items was another possible initiative that would increase recycling and be convenient for residents.

Consistent communications campaigns would keep recycling fresh in residents' minds, and could take advantage of the lessons learned during the behavioural change project carried out in Sprowston. Texting residents was also an idea that had successfully been used elsewhere.

The Panel was requested to consider and identify any proposals that should be taken forward to include a full assessment of opportunities and risks, detailed costings and resource requirements, in addition to timescales for delivery.

A Member noted that some of the top achieving recycling districts had very different geographical characteristics to Broadland that would be very difficult to emulate. He also suggested that a three weekly collection would not work and noted that during lockdown residents were buying far more online, which generated greater quantities of cardboard.

In respect of cardboard the Panel were advised that it could be left alongside the recycling bin, if the weather was suitable. It was also confirmed that waste from bins of 180, 240 and 360 litres could be collected with the same vehicle.

Another Member was in favour of three weekly collections as well as communicating to residents via text, but thought that free garden waste collection would be too costly.

In respect of recycling contamination, it was confirmed that specific areas had been targeted in the past via a Materials Recycling Facilities audit to detect problem areas. Students had then been used to monitor bins, with contaminators being followed up by intervention techniques (bin tags, leaflets, letters and visits) to address contamination. Work could also take place with housing associations and private landlords that used communal bins, which were sometimes hot spots for contamination.

The Panel was also advised that the refuse crews could help with contamination campaigns and it was noted that new estates frequently led to polystyrene contamination when new household bought new products for their home.

It was noted that one of the Government's targets was the earlier separation of materials, for example separate kerbside collections for glass etc. rather than co-mingled collections.

A Member suggested that smaller residual bins should be rolled out to new residential properties and as bins were replaced. He also suggested that an initial free period of six months might be an incentive for residents to take up the garden waste collection service.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the success of the leafleting campaigns, which would be worth funding, as they would cover the cost in increased recycling credits.

In response to a query regarding trialing smaller residual bins or three weekly collections in a small area, the Policy and Partnerships Manager confirmed that a trial could be arranged, but would come at a price and would depend on how quickly Members wanted to get to the 60 percent recycling target.

The Chairman noted that three weekly collections could be very complex and hard for residents to understand, which could lead to greater contamination.

In summing up, the Chairman requested that more information should be provided on one-off electrical collections; the feasibility of extending food waste collection to market towns, increasing recycling publicity campaigns, encouraging more Brown Bin customers and linking in with Norfolk Recycles, a body that encouraged the reuse of household products.

### **RESOLVED**

To note the report and agree that the following proposals should be taken forward for further development, before being brought back to the Panel for further consideration:

- behaviour change,
- extending food waste collection,
- smaller bins for some residents,
- text messaging to residents, and

- improving communication (leaflets, stickers etc.)

### 35 RECYCLING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE REPORT

The report outlined the Behaviour Change project that commenced in Sprowston in February 2020 and provided an update on the current situation and options for ways forward.

The aim of this project had been to reduce levels of contamination in kerbside recycling bins, by targeting indoor recycling behaviours and began with an information gathering questionnaire followed by delivery of an indoor recycling container to each household, an email newsletter campaign and weekly infographics on different recycling topics.

Monitoring individual and communal bins had taken place twice a week for eight weeks, with the number and type of contaminants being documented to form the baseline data for the project. Two audits were also conducted at the MRF. It had been intended that the data would also be gathered again at the end of the project to compare findings and draw conclusions.

The Recycling Team had the questionnaire results in a raw format, however no quantitative results had been gained from the project as post-project data collection did not occur. The project stopped mid-implementation, so any data gathered now would not only be incomplete but also impacted by COVID-19.

The Team was keen to continue implementing behavioural insights in future projects and activities.

It was suggested that to bring the project to a close, a letter could be sent out to residents reiterating the aims and sharing the remaining infographics which were currently up on the Norfolk Recycles website. The remaining email newsletters, to which 183 residents signed up to, could be completed by the Jump survey company. This would allow residents to receive educational recycling information and the chance to win the remaining prizes. It was emphasised that this was not resource intensive, and would allow the Recycling Team to focus on future initiatives to increase the recycling rate.

Replicating the project had been considered, but this would be resource intensive and requiring a large commitment from the Recycling Team. It was, therefore, proposed that although the project was not complete it be brought to a close.

However, this work would not be wasted as the learnings from the project to 'nudge' residents through behavioural insights would help towards achieving a 60% recycling rate for Broadland.

In response to a query from the Chairman, Officers confirmed that if one lesson had been learned from the project, it was to have a contingency plan



in place to complete the project. Such as obtaining more email addresses to deliver the infographics, or letting people know where they were available online.

A Member suggested that the letter to residents who took part in the project should at least contain the initial data taken to provide them with a snapshot of their recycling rate. It could also ask them to sign up to a newsletter, so that more email addresses could be obtained for any future follow up post pandemic.

A Member agreed with these suggestions and added that it would be useful to try to get feedback from residents regarding their own recycling behaviour and any possible reasons for the levels of contamination found in their recycling.

Officers confirmed that they could implement these suggestions as part of the project closure.

The Panel were also advised that as the estate consisted of one round for Veolia the load could be isolated at the Material Recycling Facility for auditing and sampling, to assess if any improvements had been made since the initial data was gathered.

The Assistant Director - Community Services reminded the Panel that the Recycling Team, had very limited resources and it should be ensured that projects that were undertaken by it should take this into account.

### **RESOLVED**

to note the content of the report; and

### **RECOMMEND TO CABINET**

to bring the project to a close, with a letter to residents that would include Members' suggestions regarding sharing data, collecting feedback and contact details, as well as gathering an analysis of current levels of contamination on the estate.

## **36 CONSULTATION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN – SUGGESTED RESPONSE**

The report presented the Council's proposed responses to the Government's Consultation on the Waste Management Plan for England.

The Waste Management Plan for England was required to be reviewed every six years and the Plan being consulted upon did not include any new policies or announcements.

The questions asked were:

1. If the Waste Management Plan for England met the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011?
2. If the Council's agrees with the conclusions of the Environmental Report (which supported the Waste Management Plan)?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'There will be no additional burdens for businesses, consumers and local authorities arising directly from the adoption of the Plan'

The Council proposed response was to agree with all the questions. The County Council had also agreed with the questions.

The Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) had additional concerns regarding possible additional burdens and responsibilities on local authorities and a paper setting this out had been circulated to the Panel.

The Panel were asked if they agreed with the proposed responses and asked if they would like to have the LARAC comments added to the Council's responses.

Members were informed that this was a six yearly review that was required by legislation and that the consultations to be held next year would be a more appropriate opportunity to provide feedback.

### **RESOLVED**

to note the content of the report and agree with the suggested responses, as presented in the report.

## **37 UPDATE ON WASTE PROCUREMENT**

The Assistant Director – Community Services advised the meeting that since the Member Workshop last week Officers had been working with Eunomia to agree the specification for soft market testing with all six of the potential contractors on 19 and 20 October 2020.

Members were asked to clarify two points ahead of this exercise: firstly was a ten year contract, with a possible ten year extension acceptable and secondly would a depot located outside the District be acceptable?

The Panel confirmed that the contract length was acceptable and that the location of the depot should not be an obstacle to agreeing the contract.

Members were advised that a visit to the Frettenham depot could be arranged for the Panel and that the visit could be timed to coincide with the trial of an electric refuse vehicle next week.

A number of Members expressed an interest in visiting the depot and the Assistant Director – Community Services confirmed that he would email those Members with further details following the meeting.

### **38 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The following items were added to the Work Programme:

26 November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental Strategy Progress</li><li>• Fly tipping</li><li>• Anti-Social Behaviour &amp; Crime</li></ul>
28 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recycling Initiatives</li><li>• Waste Contract Procurement</li><li>• MRF Contract Update</li></ul>
25 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waste Contract Procurement</li></ul>

The Chairman advised the meeting that a graduate apprentice would be starting at the Council next week and would be scoping out the implementation of the Environmental Strategy and drafting a Delivery Plan. The Chairman also advised the meeting that a budget report to the November Cabinet would include a request for £44,000 to help deliver the Environmental Strategy.

### **32 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **RESOLVED**

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, would be disclosed to them.

### **33 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were agreed subject to a number of amendments, as detailed in the exempt Minutes.

*The meeting closed at 8.16pm.*

DRAFT

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Success Panel** held by video link on **Monday 12 October 2020** at 6pm when there were present:

Cllr J Copplestone – Chairman

Cllr S Beadle

Cllr S Catchpole

Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle

Cllr P Bulman

Cllr A Crotch

Cllr S Prutton and Cllr F Whymark were also present.

Ross Pinney, Mark Adey and Martin Rose joined the meeting to take part in the informal briefing at the conclusion of the meeting.

In attendance were the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, the Assistant Director Economic Growth, the Communities Senior Manager and the Democratic Services Officers (DM and LA).

### **26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

None made.

### **27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr N Harpley and Cllr K Vincent.

### **28 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **29 MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman reported that she would be meeting with Karen O’Kane and the Better Broadband for Norfolk Team on 21 October to discuss progress with Contract 3 of the Better Broadband for Norfolk project.

She also advised that applications for funding from the three-Council Confidence Campaign had now closed as requests for support to date had utilised the funding available. Work was ongoing to coordinate and bring together local stakeholders in relation to the Confidence Campaign work in Reepham.

### **30 FUTURE OF COMMUNITY GRANTS**

Members considered the report of the Communities Senior Manager who highlighted key points in the report and invited members to support the changes to the member led ward grant system, support the introduction of a start-up grant linked to the new community at heart lottery and endorse the development of a whole council approach to community funding for example linking with business grants and CIL. .

Over the years several different grant schemes had been utilised and the member led funding scheme was the current main source of community

funding together with the management of the external (County Council) funded “keep it going” grant. Communities and voluntary groups were currently facing a very difficult time and it was important to review schemes to ensure they were meeting the needs of recipients. Any grant scheme should also reflect the asset based community development approach which sat at the heart of council services. The aim was to ensure that there was a clear purpose to grants, reduce demand on services, support inclusive growth and promote health and wellbeing. Work was also needed to improve the current evaluation process of the impact of grants.

### **Member Led Grant Scheme**

There was currently an underspend by some members and a demand for additional funding from others but overall the current fund was underspent. The promotion of the scheme relied solely on the member and was a passive system for the community. Proposals included retaining the £23,500 total pot of funding but allowing members to access up to £1,000 of funding per year (minimum project £50, maximum £1,000). Applications would be processed on a first come first served basis and local communities could themselves register their interest for funding on line which would then generate a contact with the local member to oversee the application. Additional branding and promotion of the scheme would be developed.

Members commented that in general they were satisfied with the way the current member led grant scheme was working. Some members supported the suggested increase in the grant amount as this would help those members who had used up all their allocation and if necessary the budget could be increased to allow for each member to apply for funding of up to £1,000. Overall however, the Panel did not support increasing the grants to £1,000 per member on a first come first served basis as this could be to the detriment of projects coming forward later in the year when all funds had been allocated. An increase in the allowance for all members to £1,000 would require an increase in the total budget from £23,500 to £47,000 which would have to be found from other budgets and was a matter for consideration by the Council when setting its budget. The Panel did not see this as a priority at the current time. Members acknowledged the officers’ ambition to see the budget fully utilised and suggested that any underspend available at a cut of date of 31 January could be utilised to support projects which had come forward from the community via a direct online request. It was confirmed that the proposed changes to the scheme related to 2021/2022 and not this year’s scheme.

### **Community at Heart Lottery**

Members were advised that the launch event for the lottery would be on 5 November with tickets being sold from January 2021. The lottery would raise money for a variety of projects/activities including day to day running costs and the Council would receive 10% of the ticket price which would be available to be used for reinvestment in the community, potentially for use in the proposed start up grant scheme. Members welcomed this proposal.

### **Start-up Grant**

The idea for this scheme was to provide a light touch approach to offer advice, guidance and financial support (up to £300) to informal groups to see if an idea was viable, get it off the ground and provide a gateway to other funding. Members welcomed this proposal.

**RESOLVED to recommend Cabinet** to endorse officers' proposals on a new approach to community grants including:

1. the Development of a whole Council approach to community funding,
2. the introduction of a start-up grant; linked to the new Community at Heart Lottery,
3. subject to the changes/comments above, development of the member-led ward grant system.

*The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.*

*At the conclusion of the formal meeting members were invited to remain for an informal briefing on the Food Innovation Centre.*

## **BUDGET UPDATE REPORT**

<b>Report Author:</b>	Rodney Fincham Assistant Director Finance <a href="mailto:rodney.fincham@broadland.gov.uk">rodney.fincham@broadland.gov.uk</a>
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Finance
<b>Ward Affected:</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	To provide an update on the budgetary position.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet to recommend to Council the following:

1. To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £115,000, to fund the rollout of additional laptops to better facilitate the New Ways of Working.
2. To increase the BDC annual Revenue Budget by £44,000 (with a pro-rata adjustment for 20/21 as only a part year effect) to fund an additional resource to help implement the actions set out in the recently agreed Environmental Strategy.
3. To agree that the unspent 'joint waste budget' can be applied to cover the costs of the waste procurement and depot projects.
4. To increase the budgetary provision for Covid 19 expenditure from £250,000 to £295,000 to cover the additional £45,000 regulatory expenditure.
5. To reduce the budgetary provision for Covid 19 direct hardship payments by £77,000 and return the money to the main Council Tax Support hardship allocation.
6. To agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets as set out in paragraph 4.17.
7. To agree that the Assistant Director Regulatory is authorised to spend the new Coronavirus Enforcement grant of £49,421, to help the public and businesses understand the latest Covid 19 regulation, and increase compliance work and enforcement checks on businesses.
8. To remove the post of Assistant Director Consultancy Team from the establishment.



Cabinet to note:

9. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.
10. That the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development will be asked to approve the criteria for the distribution of discretionary local lockdown grants, in line with Part 3 of the Constitution Para 16.5 (1) Delegation of powers to Portfolio Holders, and Para 19.18 (22) Oversight of the Council's Grants Policy.

## **1 ROLLOUT OF LAPTOPS**

- 1.1 At present only 327 officers have laptops.
- 1.2 As part of our New Ways of Working, we have now categorised our staff as either:
  - Permanent home worker 80 (Will work primarily from home)
  - Home enabled worker 396 (Will work a mix of at home & in the office)
  - Dedicated office worker 70 (Will work primarily from the office)
- 1.3 Permanent home workers and home enabled workers will need to be provided with a laptop, with appropriate accessories, in the first instance as this will allow them the flexibility to work in multiple locations as and when required outside of their working location classification.
- 1.4 Dedicated office workers should also move onto a laptop rather than a desktop PC as this allows for more flexibility in terms of mobility and agile working when required – an example of this would be if there were to be a further lockdown and these staff need to relocate to work from home.
- 1.5 In addition to the provision of laptops, we also wish to supply laptop bags and wireless keyboards/mice. This will mean that staff can transport their own equipment and will not have to share peripherals such as keyboards and mice in the office or at other locations. This will in turn help to enhance the Covid secure working arrangements. There is also a need to purchase extra external monitors so that every desk in the offices for dedicated office workers and home enabled staff is equipped with a single 27"+ external monitor.
- 1.6 Both Councils currently have existing annual budgets for the rolling replacement of IT equipment which has reached the end of its operational life. However as can be seen above we are currently 219 laptops short. Therefore, to complete a roll out of laptops plus peripherals we need a further £256,000 (including 20% contingency) split BDC 45%, SNC 55%. Please note that the overall costs are for laptops, associated accessories, and monitors.
- 1.7 **Member approval is therefore requested to increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £115,000 to fund the rollout of additional laptops to better facilitate the new ways of working.**
- 1.8 BDC still has some unallocated Covid 19 grant monies, and the need for additional laptops is in part driven by the need to facilitate Covid 19 secure working

practices. It is therefore proposed to allocate funds from the unallocated Covid 19 grant monies in order to fund this extra cost.

## **2 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY**

- 2.1 BDC is committed to continuous environmental improvement; playing our part in tackling environmental challenges and improving the quality of the local environment.
- 2.2 On 30 July 2020, Full Council agreed an ambitious new Environmental Strategy. This Strategy expands on the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan, showing the Council's approach to addressing environmental concerns within the organisation and within the district and highlighting where communities and businesses can work with us.
- 2.3 As part of the discussion at Full Council, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence made reference to the need to ensure adequate resources were in place to aid the delivery of the Strategy as it cut across all services of the Council and needed a coordinating role to promote the strategy, report on progress and capture ideas.
- 2.4 Officers have now reflected on the available resources, taking account of Members desire to progress with the strategy quickly.
- 2.5 **To increase the BDC annual Revenue Budget by £44,000 (with a pro-rata adjustment for 20/21 as only a part year effect) in order to allow for a new permanent role of Environmental Strategy Coordinator.**  
(Note: BDC and SNC are being requested to agree one post each. In reality if both Councils agree, the 2 co-ordinators will work together to progress both Strategies, and the costs will be shared 45%/55%).
- 2.6 This role will help drive the implementation of the strategy and coordinate the various strands of work. It will enable the strategy to be robustly monitored and for successes and progress to be publicised. Without this role there is a risk that the strategy will be a piecemeal continuation of 'business as usual' with a limited sense of corporate ownership.
- 2.7 In addition to this new role, it is also proposed to use the National Graduate Trainee, that has recently been appointed, to help support this work as part of their placement. The Graduate trainee will be able to support some of the groundwork under the supervision of the Co-ordinator.

## **3 WASTE UPDATE**

- 3.1 In the 20/21 Revenue Budget there is a budgetary allowance of £125,000 for the 'joint waste project'. Spend against this budget has been £28,000 (£62k x 45%).
- 3.2 Given recent decisions on the future provision of waste services, it is now necessary to repurpose the remaining budget to provide resource to progress with the waste procurement project, and work to develop options to improve the Frettenham Depot.

- 3.3 Members are therefore requested to agree that the unspent 'joint waste budget' can be applied to cover the costs of the waste procurement and depot projects.**

## **4 COVID 19 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

### **A) Direct Expenditure – Regulatory Services**

- 4.1 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our food safety (along with workplace safety) and Licensing regulatory services have been seriously impacted and face a range of service demands beyond the capacity of existing staffing resources.
- 4.2 Some businesses have continued to operate in differing ways throughout the Covid-19 lockdown whereas others will have experienced a complete business interruption or a range of increasing pressures. Whilst in many the attention to regulatory compliance will be undiminished, there is a risk that a few will have cut corners or adopted unsafe methods.
- 4.3 It was not possible to conduct regulatory inspections of businesses during the emergency restrictions and under prevailing changes in national guidance to regulators. There are programmed work backlogs, worsening of public protection / business threats requiring attention, and new areas of Covid-19 service demand. In some areas, worsening business conditions will increase needs for regulatory surveillance and intervention to protect the public. The Food & Safety and Licensing teams have been operating at stretch for a sustained period and this poses significant risks to operational service delivery, together with potential compromise to strategic aims.
- 4.4 It is the additional requirements for COVID-19 support to businesses and protection of the public which is most challenging team capacity. We need to commence a substantive program of face-to-face business contacts targeting sectors which either pose risks of blatant disregard for social distancing and hygiene controls or possess low confidence and competence to keep staff and the public safe. These premises are where we may most likely anticipate new clusters of COVID-19 infection arising in our district.
- 4.5 CMLT have therefore approved 3 additional posts for a limited period at a cost of £100,000 (split BDC 45%, SNC 55%)
- £50k EHO Food & Safety & Infectious Disease, 12 months
  - £25k Licensing & Enforcement Officer 0.5FTE, 12 months
  - £25k Interim Licensing team leader (short term).
- 4.6 These additional resources have now been recruited, and are already starting to help.
- 4.7 If Covid work subsides, this additional resource would also be used to help support any additional duties arising from the forthcoming Brexit changes.
- 4.8 As these costs are COVID 19 related, Members are now requested to retrospectively approve the allocation of COVID 19 grant funding to cover these costs.**

## **B) Hardship Direct Payments**

- 4.9 Cabinet on 16 June 2020, endorsed a provision of £100,000 to cover direct hardship payments to residents during the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 4.10 This was funded by top slicing the Government hardship funding of £637,216 that BDC received to cover the cost of awarding £150 council tax support to all working age Council Tax Support claimants.
- 4.11 As at end September £13,000 has been paid out in direct hardship payments to residents.
- 4.12 Members are therefore requested to reduce the top slice to £23,000. This will allow £77,000 to be returned to help cover the cost of the £150 council tax discounts which are currently standing at £573,000.**

## **C) Income Compensation Scheme for Lost Sales, Fees and Charges**

- 4.13 Cabinet on 16 June 2020 agreed to reduce the 20/21 income budgets by £431,000 to reflect estimated lost income due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 4.14 On 2 July 2020 Government announced a new, one-off income loss scheme that will compensate councils for irrecoverable and unavoidable losses from sales, fees and charges.
- 4.15 The scheme involves a 5% deductible rate, whereby authorities will absorb losses up to 5% of their planned 2020/21 sales, fees and charges income, with Government compensating them for 75p in every pound of relevant loss thereafter.
- 4.16 It is therefore now necessary to review the income budgets again to reflect the new income loss scheme. Initial projects are showing that the authority will recoup about 50% of the income loss as follows:

Income Loss	£431,000
Less offsetting savings	£ 54,000
Less 5% deductible	<u>£ 90,000</u>
	£287,000
75% claim amount	£215,000

- 4.17 The following table therefore shows the original budget reductions and the new proposed changes.

	Original Budget £'000	Change £'000	Amended Budget £'000	Estimated Compensation £'000	New Amended Budget £'000
Planning	980	-245	735	122	857
Car Parking	1	-	1	-	1
Waste Charges	51	-13	38	7	45
Land charges	220	-55	165	27	192
Housing Benefit Overpayment	400	-100	300	50	350
Council Tax recovery	70	-18	52	9	61
Licensing	164	-	164	-	164

	Original Budget £'000	Change £'000	Amended Budget £'000	Estimated Compensation £'000	New Amended Budget £'000
Recycling credits	768	-	768	-	768
Green Waste	2,212	-	2,212	-	2,212
Other income and service specific grants	2,165	-	2,165	-	2,165
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,031</b>	<b>-431</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>6,815</b>

*Note: The compensation payment is not a straight 75% of the lost income as the Council is required to deduct any compensating savings (ie by holding posts vacant or redeploying staff) from the amount claimed.*

**4.18 Members are requested to agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets.**

**D) Discretionary Local Lockdown Grants**

- 4.19 On 9th September 2020, Government announced a new Local Restrictions Support Grant to support businesses that are required to close during localised Covid 19 restrictions.
- 4.20 The rules announced were that Eligible businesses who are within the relevant Local Authority area covered by localised restrictions will receive a grant of up to £1,500 for each eligible hereditament (ie business rates assessment) and for each three-week period that the restrictions are imposed as a result of the use of Government powers.
- 4.21 Then on 9th October the grant values were changed to the following
- Where rateable value is less than £15,000, grant of £1,334 per month
  - Where rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000, grant of £2,000 per month
  - Larger businesses can claim £3,000 per month.
- The payment period also changed from every three-weeks to fortnightly
- 4.22 The Local Authority will receive an additional 5% of top-up funding allowing the Local Authority to run a local discretionary scheme to provide support to non-business rate paying businesses that are required to close, as well as other businesses that are not required to close but which may be severely affected (e.g. as a result of the closure of customer businesses). It will be at the Local Authority's discretion as to which types of closed and severely impacted businesses are most relevant to their local economy. There will be no penalty for Local Authorities because of their use of discretion to prioritise some business types. Local Authorities may use their discretion to provide grants of any value up to and including £1,500.
- 4.23 The precise set of businesses eligible for the scheme may vary between each local lockdown area based on the localised restrictions that are established in recognition of the specific evidence and conditions for each area.

- 4.24 Although we hope that our district will avoid any localised restrictions, it is sensible to be prepared just in case. Officers are therefore currently undertaking preparatory work.
- 4.25 Members are therefore asked to note that in due course the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development will be asked to approve the criteria for the distribution of discretionary local lockdown grants, in line with Part 3 of the Constitution Para 3 16.5 (1) Delegation of powers to Portfolio Holders, and Para 19.18 (22) Oversight of the Council's Grants Policy.**

### **E) Coronavirus Enforcement**

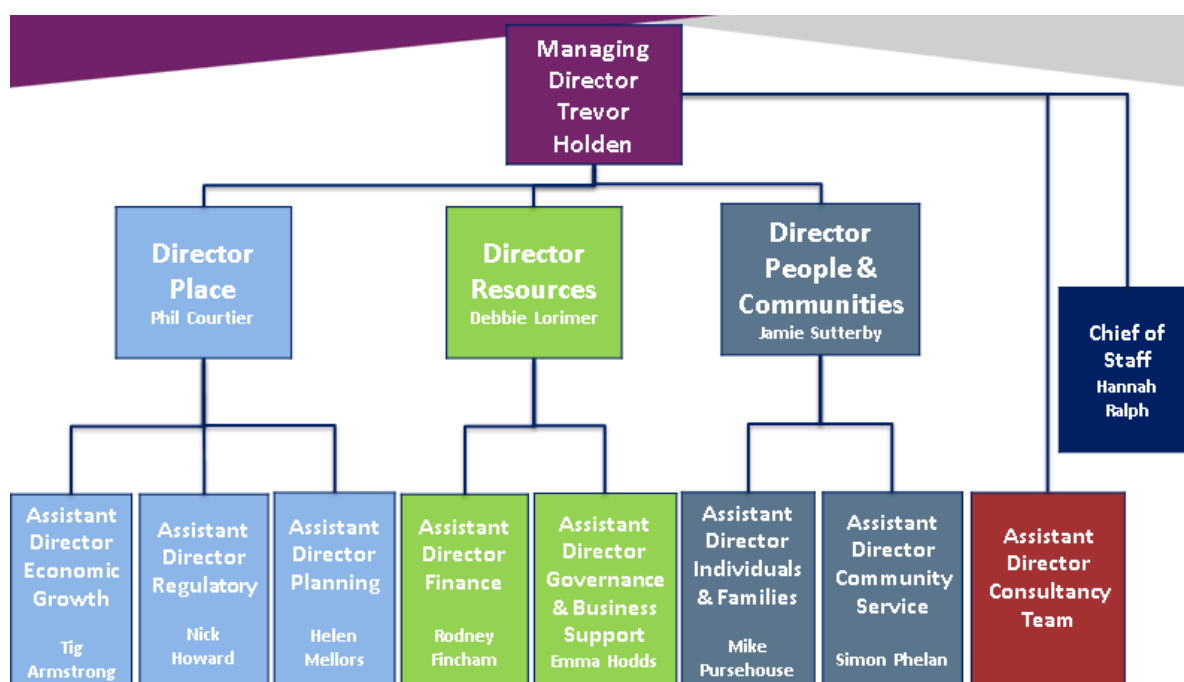
- 4.26 Local authorities play a central role in ensuring compliance with COVID-19 guidance in their local communities. Enforcement officers such as Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are responsible for explaining and encouraging businesses and communities to follow the latest guidelines, carrying out inspections, issuing fines and closing premises in the case of non-compliance.
- 4.27 On 8 October Government announced £60 million 'surge funding' to boost Coronavirus enforcement with £30 million each for police forces and local councils.
- 4.28 BDC has been allocated £49,421. The money will be ringfenced to spend on COVID-19 related compliance and enforcement activities.
- 4.29 The Government has also published new guidance outlining the types of compliance and enforcement activities councils could carry out using the £30 million funding. This includes covering costs associated with stepping up enforcement activity, measures to help the public and businesses to understand the latest regulations and funding the cost of dedicated staff to encourage compliance with the rules, including marshals.
- 4.30 Resourcing this new responsibility will be challenging, as it is difficult to recruit additional appropriately trained EHO staff. It is therefore likely that the Assistant Director Regulatory will need to ask existing EHOs to work extra hours. In general, under the Council's One Team Terms and Conditions, overtime is only paid in exceptional circumstances. Senior officers consider this to be an exceptional circumstance.
- 4.31 Members are therefore asked to agree that the Assistant Director Regulatory is authorised to spend the new Coronavirus Enforcement grant of £49,421, to help the public and businesses understand the latest Covid 19 regulation, and increase compliance work and enforcement checks on businesses.**

## **F) Future Preparations**

- 4.32 In order to be as ready as possible, it is important that the Council prepares for potential Covid challenges over the next 6-12 months.
- 4.33 Work is therefore underway to ensure the Councils have the appropriate resources in place, and if necessary a future report will be prepared for member consideration.

## **5 ESTABLISHMENT**

- 5.1 The current senior management establishment is as follows:



- 5.2 The post of Assistant Director Consultancy Team, has only briefly been filled. This post is currently vacant, and is not budgeted for. Key responsibilities of this role were picked up as part of the one team restructure, and absorbed into the transformation team under the leadership of the Chief of Staff.
- 5.3 **Members are therefore requested to agree that the post of Assistant Director Consultancy Team is removed from the establishment.**

## **6 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 6.1 Following recent decisions and the information above, it is appropriate to update the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **A) MTFS - As Presented in Jun 20**

- 6.2 The 'Review of 2020/21 Budgets' report presented to Cabinet on 16 June 2020, included a MTFS.

- 6.3 This reported a small surplus of £62,000 in 20/21, followed by a funding gap of approximately £1.5m in future years as follows.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	12,118	12,668	12,344	12,422	12,563
<b>Total Funding</b>	12,180	11,105	10,860	10,636	10,961
<b>Funding Gap</b>	-62	1,563	1,484	1,786	1,602

## **B) MTFS – Update**

- 6.4 The MTFS assumptions have now been reviewed and the following changes made.

### **Impacts on Net Budget Requirement**

- Inflation assumption for 21/22 has been increased from 2% to 3%, later years have remained at 2%.
- The waste savings previously assumed from joint working have been removed, as until the procurement is complete the Council cannot be certain what if any savings will be delivered.
- Additional resource has been included to help deliver the environmental strategy.
- An estimate of the income compensation grant has been made.
- Additional Covid 19 spending pressures have been included (including allocation to fund additional laptops).

### **Impacts on Funding**

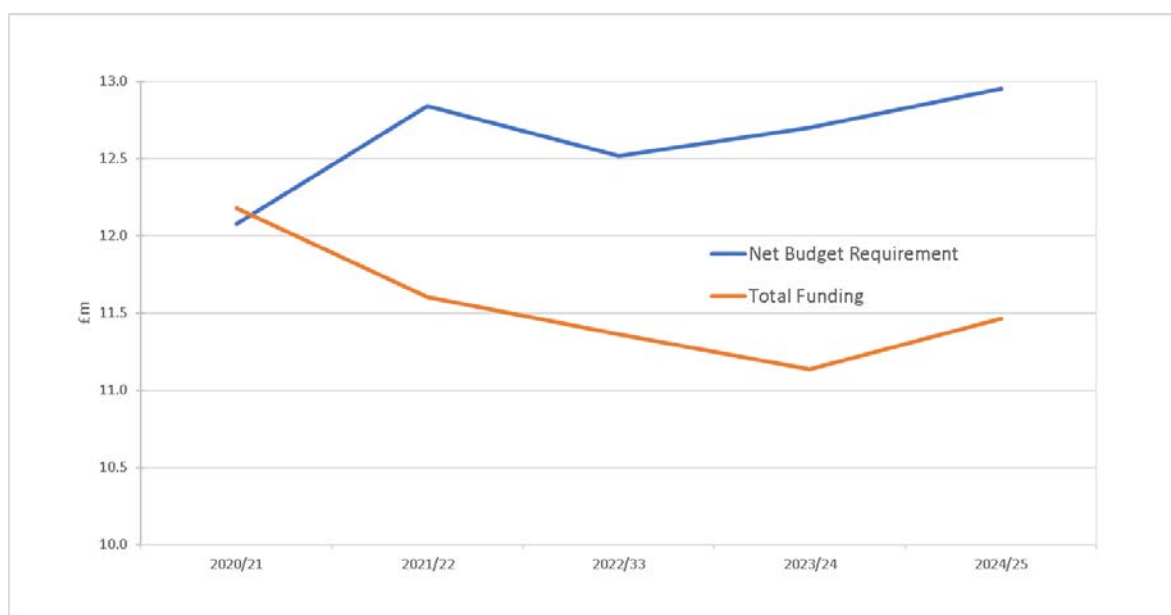
- It has been assumed that some additional income will be received from New Home Bonus or its replacement.

- 6.5 Further details are shown in the Appendix.

- 6.6 The updated MTFS now shows that the 2020/21 surplus has now increased to £106,000. However, the future funding gap has remained at approximately £1.5m a year.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	12,074	12,839	12,518	12,699	12,951
<b>Total Funding</b>	12,180	11,605	11,360	11,136	11,461
<b>Funding Gap / (Annual Suplus)</b>	-106	1,234	1,158	1,563	1,490





6.7 The following table shows how the funding gap has changed.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<b>Original Funding Gap / (Annual Suplus) - June</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>1,602</b>
<u>Impacts on Net Budget Requirement</u>					
Increase in inflation assumption		127	130	133	144
Removal of savings from joint waste				100	200
Resource to deliver environmental strategy	11	44	44	44	44
Income Compensation grant from Government	-215				
COVID 19 - Spending Pressures	160				
<u>Impacts on Funding</u>					
New 'New Homes Bonus' scheme		-500	-500	-500	-500
<b>New Funding Gap / (Annual Suplus)</b>	<b>-106</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,490</b>

## 7 OTHER OPTIONS

7.1 Members have discretion to agree the requested budget changes, or propose alternatives.

## 8 ISSUES AND RISKS

8.1 Resource Implications – This paper provides an update on the medium term financial position.

8.2 The Council currently has £15.3m in general reserves and £8.7m in earmarked reserves.

8.3 The Council also has limited capital reserves (£0.9m). In general capital reserves can only be used to fund capital expenditure and are not permitted to be used to fund revenue deficits.

8.4 The key risks are:

- There could be a second wave of Covid 19 infections, which could require a second full lockdown incurring further costs and income losses to the Council.
- Until the Provisional Finance Settlement is issued in December 2020, there is material uncertainty over the future funding position.

8.5 Legal Implications – The Council has a legal duty to ensure its financial position remains robust.

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet to recommend to Council the following:

1. To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £115,000, to fund the rollout of additional laptops to better facilitate the New Ways of Working.
2. To increase the BDC annual Revenue Budget by £44,000 (with a pro-rata adjustment for 20/21 as only a part year effect) to fund an additional resource to help implement the actions set out in the recently agreed Environmental Strategy.
3. To agree that the unspent 'joint waste budget' can be applied to cover the costs of the waste procurement and depot projects.
4. To increase the budgetary provision for Covid 19 expenditure from £250,000 to £295,000 to cover the additional £45,000 regulatory expenditure.
5. To reduce the budgetary provision for Covid 19 direct hardship payments by £77,000 and return the money to the main Council Tax Support hardship allocation.
6. To agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets as set out in paragraph 4.17.
7. To agree that the Assistant Director Regulatory is authorised to spend the new Coronavirus Enforcement grant of £49,421, to help the public and businesses understand the latest Covid 19 regulation, and increase compliance work and enforcement checks on businesses.
8. To remove the post of Assistant Director Consultancy Team from the establishment.

Cabinet to note:

9. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.
10. That the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development will be asked to approve the criteria for the distribution of discretionary local lockdown grants, in line with Part 3 of the Constitution Para 16.5 (1) Delegation of powers to Portfolio Holders, and Para 19.18 (22) Oversight of the Council's Grants Policy.

**Background Papers**      None

## Appendix

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Comment
Base Net Expenditure	12,225	12,416	12,596	12,443	12,624	
<b>Recurring Adjustments:</b>						
<b>Inflationary Pressures</b>		372	252	249	252	3% 21/22 then 2% annual increase
Collaboration Savings		-405	-405	-68		Based on 45% of latest figure from cost and savings tracker
<b>Waste arrangements - Now removed</b>						No allowance for expansion of food waste, or increased disposal costs
<b>Resource to deliver environmental strategy</b>	11	33				
Recycling Gate Fee	180	180				£30 per tonne extra x 12,000 tonnes. Half year effect 20/21.
Base Net Expenditure for following year	12,416	12,596	12,443	12,624	12,876	
<b>Lost income</b>						
- Planning	245					25% reduction in 20/21, then bounce back
- Waste	13					25% reduction in 20/21, then bounce back
- Land Charges	55					25% reduction in 20/21, then bounce back
- Recovery of overpaid HB	100					25% reduction in 20/21, then bounce back
- Council Tax Summons Costs	18					25% reduction in 20/21, then bounce back
- Other Income						25% reduction in 20/21, then bounce back
<b>Income Compensation grant from Government</b>	-215					
<b>Non Recurring Adjustments</b>						
COVID 19 - Spending Pressures	500					One off cost 20/21.
<b>COVID 19 - Spending Pressures</b>	45					<b>Regulatory costs</b>
<b>COVID 19 - Spending Pressures</b>	115					<b>Laptops</b>
Investing in the Public Realm	0					Initial costs covered by grant
Additional Council Tax Support	224	168				20/21 50% increase. 21/22 reducing to 25%. Then back to current levels.
Requests for additional funding	100					Hardship Payments - £150 Council Tax Support
Measures to reduce in year spend	-265					eg freezing vacant posts
COVID 19 - Government Funding	-1,352					One off income 20/21.
Investment Income - General	-207	-207	-207	-207	-207	Assume remains stable over time
Investment Income - Loans to companies	-75	-225	-300	-300	-300	Assume income from Broadland Growth covers interest payable
Interest Payable	75	225	300	300	300	Financing costs for £10m investment to Broadland Growth
Internal Drainage Board Precept	252	252	252	252	252	Assume remains stable over time
Transfers to / (from) Earmarked Reserves	30	30	30	30	30	Assume remains stable over time
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>12,074</b>	<b>12,839</b>	<b>12,518</b>	<b>12,699</b>	<b>12,951</b>	
<b>Funded by</b>						
Council Tax - District Element	5,828	6,133	6,444	6,762	7,087	
Reduction in Council Tax Collection Rates	-120	-60				20/21 2% cut. 21/22 1% cut. Then back to current levels.
Council Tax - Special Expenses	141	141	141	141	141	Assume remains stable over time
NNDR (Business Rates)	3,983	3,733	3,733	3,733	3,733	Amount of funding from growth likely to be scaled back in future.
RSG	30					
<b>New Homes Bonus</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	Falling in line with figures in 20/21 provisional finance settlement
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>12,180</b>	<b>11,605</b>	<b>11,360</b>	<b>11,136</b>	<b>11,461</b>	
<b>Funding Gap / (Annual Supplus)</b>	<b>-106</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,490</b>	
<b>Council Tax Calculation</b>						
Council Taxbase (Homes)	46,430	46,987	47,551	48,122	48,699	1.2% annual increase
Council Tax	125.52	130.52	135.52	140.52	145.52	£5 annual increase
Broadland's share of precept (£000)	5,828	6,133	6,444	6,762	7,087	
<b>New Homes Bonus Calculation</b>						
2017-18	511					
2018-19	616	616				
2019-20	542	542	542			
2020-21	649					
<b>New incentive scheme</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	
	2,318	1,658	1,042	500	500	

## **REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES**

<b>Report Author:</b>	Madeleine Bussens Senior Finance Business Partner <a href="mailto:madeleine.bussens@broadland.gov.uk">madeleine.bussens@broadland.gov.uk</a>
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Finance
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	To review the Council's Earmarked Reserves.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet to recommend to Council to agree the following changes to the Council's Reserves:

1. The closure of the following reserves:
  - a. External Funding Reserve.
  - b. Community Right to Challenge Reserve.
  - c. Systems Thinking Reserve.
2. The reduction in the Business Rates Reserve by £703,000.
3. The merging of the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Reserve.
4. The creation of the following Reserves:
  - a. Refuse Services - £7m.
  - b. New Ways of Working - £4m.

## **1 GENERAL FUND RESERVE**

- 1.1 The General Fund Reserve is the main unallocated reserve held by the Council. The balance on the General Fund Reserve as at 31 March 2020 was £15.346m. The current recommended minimum level of the General Fund Reserve, set by the Council's s151 officer, is £1.2m.

## 2 EARMARKED RESERVES

2.1 Earmarked Reserves are amounts that have been set aside to provide financing for specific future events.

2.2 The following table shows the breakdown of the Council's Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2020. These total £8.733m.

Reserve	Usage	Balance 31 Mar 2020 £'000
Repairs & Renewals (General)	To finance significant irregular replacement, repair or maintenance works to Council owned assets.	322
Repairs & Renewals (Street Lighting)	To finance replacement and maintenance to footway lighting managed on behalf of six town and parish councils.	70
External Funding Reserve	To cover projects that are funded by specific government grants and contributions.	221
Community Right to Challenge Reserve	To meet expenditure incurred on the challenges to potential community asset sales.	46
Systems Thinking Reserve	To fund future Systems Thinking projects.	70
Business Rates Reserve	To offset the effects of successful appeals against business rates charges.	2,703
Economic Success Fund	To create jobs and foster economic growth within the Broadland area.	284
Broadland Growth Reserve	To fund projects to encourage economic growth within the district.	2,177
Spend Equalisation	To smooth out fluctuations in revenue expenditure incurred in irregular annual patterns.	688
Insurance	To cover increased excess charges that were agreed as part of the revised insurance contract.	59
Building Control Trading	To cover expected losses in revenue on the formation of the CNC Building Control Partnership.	14
Housing Assistance Policy	To earmark repayments of housing loans in accordance with the Housing Assistance Policy.	260
Developer Contributions – Adopted Land	To earmark S106 agreement receipts for the future maintenance of adopted amenity land.	445
Developer Contributions - Play Areas	To earmark receipts received under S106 Agreements for the provision of children's play areas.	131
Neighbourhood Plans - Front Runner	To fund work on the district's Forward Plan.	203
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve	To contain income from the Community Infrastructure Levy for expenditure on infrastructure projects.	393
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve	To contain income from the Community Infrastructure Levy for expenditure on infrastructure projects	10
I.T. Reserve	To fund a rolling programme of hardware and software upgrades	305
Bridge Maintenance Reserve	To fund maintenance on Marriott's Way bridges.	330
<b>Total</b>		<b>8,733</b>

### 3 PROPOSALS

#### Suggested Closures / Reductions

3.1 It is proposed that:

- The External Funding Reserve is closed, as the monies in this reserve originate from historical grant payments (£79k Planning Delivery Fund, £2k LABGI, £140k LAA Waste Performance & Efficiency).
- The Community Right to Challenge Reserve is closed, as there have not been any community challenges in recent years. The balance has remained unchanged since 2015.
- The Systems Thinking Reserve is closed, as the Council is now looking at efficiencies and savings through the Council's spark programme and invest to save schemes which includes new IT systems will be funded from the proposed New Ways of Working Reserve as described in 3.3 below.
- The Business Rates Reserve is reduced by £703,000. The Council has consistently seen growth in business rates and has therefore not need to draw on this reserve. However, Covid 19 has increased the risk of a downturn in business rates income. In addition, there is still an ongoing appeal by NHS bodies regarding their liability for business rates. If successful, this reserve would be used to cover the loss of Income.

#### Suggested Mergers

3.2 It is proposed that the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Fund are merged into a new 'Economic Growth Fund' as the purposes of these 2 funds are very similar. The purpose of this new fund will be to fund projects to support economic growth within the district.

#### New Reserves

3.3 It is proposed that two new reserves are created as follows:

- A Refuse Services Reserve of £7m is created. This would be to help fund the purchase of a new fleet of refuse vehicles, and improvements to the depot. This investment will be required regardless of the new contract arrangements.
- A New Ways of Working Reserve of £4m is created. This would be to fund any accommodation / IT improvements arising from the New Ways of Working Project.

## Covid 19

- 3.4 If there is a second wave of Covid 19, the Council is likely to incur additional costs. To date, central Government has provided funding towards any additional costs associated with the pandemic, but this is by no means guaranteed going forward.
- 3.5 It would therefore be a valid option to set aside money in an Earmarked Reserve as a contingency for any additional Covid costs. However, the alternative way of dealing with this uncertainty is to ensure that the minimum level on the General Fund Balance is increased to provide an additional contingency. The s151 officer is therefore advising that the minimum level on the General Fund Reserve needs to increase in the short term from £1.2m to £2m.

## Summary of Changes

- 3.6 The following table summarises the proposed changes.

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2020 £'000</b>	<b>Suggested Closures / Reductions £'000</b>	<b>Suggested Mergers £'000</b>	<b>New Reserves £'000</b>	<b>New Balance £'000</b>
Repairs & Renewals (General)	322				322
Repairs & Renewals (Street Lighting)	70				70
External Funding Reserve	221	-221			0
Community Right to Challenge Reserve	46	-46			0
Systems Thinking Reserve	70	-70			0
Business Rates Reserve	2,703	-703			2,000
Economic Success Fund	284		-284		0
Broadland Growth Reserve	2,177		284		2,462
Spend Equalisation	688				688
Insurance	59				59
Building Control Trading	14				14
Housing Assistance Policy	260				260
Developer Contributions – Adopted Land	445				445
Developer Contributions - Play Areas	131				131
Neighbourhood Plans - Front Runner	203				203
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve	393				393
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve	10				10
I.T. Reserve	305				305
Bridge Maintenance Reserve	330				330

Refuse Services				7,000	7,000
New ways of working / LGR				4,000	4,000
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>8,733</b>	<b>-1,041</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>18,692</b>
<b>General Fund Reserve</b>	<b>15,346</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-11,000</b>	<b>5,387</b>

## 4 OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 Members have discretion to earmark reserves for any legitimate purpose. Members are therefore able to accept or reject the above proposals and / or propose other changes.

## 5 ISSUES AND RISKS

### 5.1 Resource Implications

The creation of the new Earmarked Reserves will reduce the General Fund Reserve to £5.387m. This is still significantly above the minimum recommended level of £2m.

### 5.2 Legal Implications

None

### 5.3 Equality Implications

None

### 5.4 Environmental Impact

There may a positive environmental impact as a result of improving the Refuse Depot and / or the Accommodation.

### 5.5 Crime and Disorder

None

### 5.6 Risks

None not mentioned elsewhere in this report.

## 6 RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- 6.1 Cabinet to recommend to Council to agree the following changes to the Council's Reserves:

1. The closure of the following reserves:
  - a. External Funding Reserve.
  - b. Community Right to Challenge Reserve.
  - c. Systems Thinking Reserve.
2. The reduction in the Business Rates Reserve by £703,000.
3. The merging of the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Reserve.



4. The creation of the following Reserves:
  - a. Refuse Services - £7m.
  - b. New Ways of Working - £4m.

**Background Papers**

None

## **TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 REPORT 2020/21**

**Report Author:** Darren Slowther  
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**Portfolio:** Finance

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

This report reviews the treasury management activity during the first six months of the financial year 2020/21 and reports on the prudential indicators.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to request that Council:

1. Note the treasury activity for the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy.
2. Note the 2020/21 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Investments totalled £43.770 million as at 30 September 2020.
- 1.2 Interest received on the Council's investments and savings on loan charges are forecast to be above the level budgeted for at the end of the year. However uncertainty around Brexit and the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the performance of the Council's externally managed funds will influence the final year end figure.
- 1.3 There has been no need to externally borrow so far this financial year.
- 1.4 There have been no breaches of the Council's Prudential Indicators. However the Council have exceeded their counterparty limit for Barclays PLC (£12.5m as per the 20/21 Investment Strategy) as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

## 2 INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

- 2.1 The Council's total investments as at 30 September 2020 are outlined below:

Counterparty	£m	Interest Rates
Ninety One (Formally Investec)	8.33	Return varies, dependent on the performance of the underlying fund
Payden & Rygel	3.13	
Banks	9.00	0.20% to 1.10%
Instant access deposits with banks (interest bearing accounts)	23.31	0.00% to 0.12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.77</b>	0.34%
Investments of behalf of Town and Parish Councils	£'000	Terms of Interest Paid
Charitable organisations	3.0	0.5% below Base Rate
Parish Deposits	1,046.0	Average internal rate achieved on all investments
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,049.0</b>	

- 2.3 The authority purchased units in Payden & Rygel and Ninety One's pooled funds some time ago. Changes in the value of the Council's share reflect the net growth in the overall value of the funds.
- 2.4 The Payden & Rygel investment is in an AAA rated Sterling Reserve Fund. At the 30 September 20 the value of the Council's shares in the Payden & Rygel investment fund was £3.30m, and the market value of the Diversified fund with Ninety One Asset Management totalled £7.887m. The fund suffered from depreciation in value in March 2020 due to the impact on markets of Covid-19 of

£773k, but has since recovered £638k of this loss.

## **INVESTMENTS MADE DURING APR - SEPT**

- 2.5 During the first six months of 2020/21, the Council have been faced with an unprecedented situation in aiding the residents and businesses affected by Covid-19. Central Government initiatives to provide financial support meant a greater level of importance was placed on liquidity for this reason, and to aid the authorities operations generally if income levels dropped dramatically. In this period 3 fixed term deposits were arranged. Cash levels were managed through transfers into or out of the Council's call accounts as a flexible alternative.
- 2.6 The total sum invested by the in-house team as fixed term deposits ranged from a minimum of £30.09m to a maximum of £49.79m during the six month period, with an average investment of £35.69m per day. This included sums invested on behalf of town and parish councils and other charitable organisations. As at 30 September 2020, these amounted to a total of £1.049m.

## **INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS**

- 2.7 The Council's budgeted investment income for the year was set at £235,600 and interest earned to the 30 September was £294,600. A forecast of £400,000 is predicted at year-end, around £160,000 above budget and which includes savings on loan charges.
- 2.8 However, this could change depending on rate changes as a result of Brexit and Covid-19 and the performance of the External Managed Funds, particularly with regards to any changes in the diversified fund with Ninety One.
- 2.9 As per the agreed capital programme, there were outstanding loans as at 30 September 2020 of £330k to Broadland Growth Ltd and £260.5k on Facility Agreements with two of the Parish Councils. Interest rates on the Broadland Growth Loans is 4% above base rate, reflecting the relative risk in the company and the market environment.

## **3 BORROWING ACTIVITY**

- 3.1 The authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) represents its theoretical need to borrow to fund capital expenditure. The capital programme's financing has been fully funded and is zero for 2020/21. There has been no need to borrow so far this year.

## **4 COMPLIANCE WITH PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

- 4.1 The Council approved a set of Prudential Indicators for 2020/21, in March 2020, as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
- 4.2 The authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 followed the principles in MHCLG's 2010 'Guidance on Local Government Investments' ("Guidance") and CIPFA's 'Treasury Management Code of Practice 2017 (TM Code)". Security and liquidity of investments take priority over yield and surplus funds have been invested in high credit quality counterparties. No counterparty in which the Council has invested funds had a credit rating lower than A- as stated in the Council's Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21.
- 4.3 The 2020/21 Treasury Management Policy set an operational boundary for external debt of £4m and an authorised limit of £8m. This means that if the authority's level of external debt (including notional debts on implied finance leases) exceeds £4m at any stage during the year the fact must be reported to Council as soon as possible and that debt is not allowed to exceed £8m without receiving prior authorisation from Council. No overdrafts have been incurred as part of treasury operations. The Operational Limit of £4m on debt has not been breached at any point.
- 4.4 The authority is required to report on the ratio represented by its net financing costs to its net revenue stream. This is a measure of affordability, indicating how much of the authority's revenue is taken up in financing its debt. However, as Broadland is a net investor and it's net revenue stream is negative (income) it has a positive ratio of 0.77%, indicating that its net financing position is represented by income equivalent to just over one percent of its other grant and taxation revenues.
- 4.5 Under the Council's Constitution, the Full Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy and therefore any deviation or breach must be reported to Full Council. In practice, all breaches are also reported to Cabinet prior to Full Council. The prudential indicators are outlined in Appendix A. There were no breaches of the indicators between April and September.
- 4.6 However the Council have exceeded their counterparty limit for Barclays PLC (£12.5m as per the 20/21 Investment Strategy) as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council received grant payments in excess of £30m during April and May to be distributed as various forms of relief to residents and businesses in the district. As timings of these cash flows was hard to estimate and likely to be erratic, a larger volume of liquid cash was retained by the authority. Additionally there were, and continue to be, ongoing concerns over the potential loss of income to the authority from Council Tax, Business Rates and service related activities.

## 5 ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT & INTEREST RATES

- 5.1 As expected, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee kept Bank Rate unchanged on 6th August at 0.1%. It also kept unchanged the level of quantitative easing at £745bn.

The fall in GDP in the first half of 2020 was revised from 28% to 23%. This is still one of the largest falls in output of any developed nation. However, it is only to be expected as the UK economy is heavily skewed towards consumer-facing services – an area which was particularly vulnerable to being damaged by lockdown.

The peak in the unemployment rate was revised down from 9% in Q2 to 7½% by Q4 2020.

It forecast that there would be excess demand in the economy by Q3 2022 causing CPI inflation to rise above the 2% target in Q3 2022, (based on market interest rate expectations for a further loosening in policy). Nevertheless, even if the Bank were to leave policy unchanged, inflation was still projected to be above 2% in 2023.

- 5.2 It also squashed any idea of using negative interest rates, at least in the next six months or so. It suggested that while negative rates can work in some circumstances, it would be “less effective as a tool to stimulate the economy” at this time when banks are worried about future loan losses. It also has “other instruments available”, including QE and the use of forward guidance.
- 5.3 The MPC still expects the £300bn of quantitative easing purchases announced between its March and June meetings to continue until the “turn of the year”. This implies that the pace of purchases will slow further to about £4bn a week, down from £14bn a week at the height of the crisis and £7bn more recently.
- 5.4 the MPC acknowledged that the “medium-term projections were a less informative guide than usual” and the minutes had multiple references to downside risks, which were judged to persist both in the short and medium term. One has only to look at the potential for a second wave of the virus to see the dangers. However, rather than a national lockdown, as in March, any spikes in virus infections are now likely to be dealt with by localised measures and this should limit the amount of economic damage caused. In addition, Brexit uncertainties ahead of the year-end deadline are likely to be a drag on recovery. Overall, the pace of recovery is not expected to be in the form of a rapid V shape, but a more elongated and prolonged one.
- 5.5 Overall, it is expected that there has been a strong pickup in economic growth during the back-end of quarter 2 of 2020. However, that pace is likely to fade as the furlough scheme ending in October will lead to many job losses during the second half of the year. Consumers will also probably remain cautious in spending and this will dampen growth. Uncertainty over the outcome of the UK/EU trade negotiations concluding at the end of the year will also be a headwind.

- 5.6 The latest interest rate forecasts from the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, are shown in the table below. The coronavirus outbreak has done significant economic damage to the UK and around the world. The Bank of England took emergency action in March to cut Bank Rate to first 0.25%, and then to 0.10%. However, the Governor of the Bank of England has made it clear that he currently thinks a move to negative rates would do more damage than good and that more quantitative easing is the favoured tool if further action becomes necessary. As shown in the forecast table below, no increase in Bank Rate is expected within the forecast horizon ending on 31st March 2023 as economic recovery is expected to be only gradual and, therefore, prolonged.

Link Group Interest Rate View 11.8.20											
	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23
Bank Rate View	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 month average earnings	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	-	-	-	-	-
6 month average earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	-	-	-	-	-
12 month average earnings	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	-	-	-	-	-
5yr PWLB Rate	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30
25yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70
50yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50

## 6 ISSUES AND RISKS

- 6.1 All investments were made within the statutory requirements that govern local authority money market activities.
- 6.2 The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the authority to report on treasury management activities at least twice a year, including a report on the Prudential Indicators
- 6.3 The main aim of the investment strategy is to minimise the risk of loss of principal. The Council's investments are with counterparties offering higher security, at the expense of yield if necessary. The Council works with its financial advisors to ensure that risks are reduced.
- 6.4 The report has no specific impact on Equalities. Treasury decisions are made primarily on the basis of the security of counterparties, with the needs of the authority's cash-flow second and other considerations such as equality and diversity given lower priority.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Cabinet is recommended to request that Council:
- Note the report on treasury activity undertaken in the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy.
  - Note the 2020/21 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

## Appendix A: Prudential Indicators

### Capital Financing Requirement and Borrowing

Estimates of the Council's Capital Financing Requirement for 2019/20 to 2021/22 are shown in the table below:

	<b>31/03/2020</b> <b>Outturn</b> <b>£000's</b>	<b>31/03/2021</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£000's</b>	<b>31/03/2022</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£000's</b>
Capital Financing Requirement before MRP	120	0	0
Less Minimum Revenue Provision	(120)	0	0
<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The table below shows the maximum borrowing planned, which is both internal borrowing from cash balances and external borrowing from funders such as PWLB.

	<b>31/03/2020</b> <b>Outturn</b> <b>£000's</b>	<b>31/03/2021</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£000's</b>	<b>31/03/2022</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£000's</b>
Existing Profile of Borrowing	0	0	0
<b>Less: Other Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Borrowing in Year	0	0	5,000
<b>Cumulative Maximum Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,000</b>

### Balances and Reserves

Estimates of the Council's level of Balances and Reserves (both Revenue and Capital) for 2019/20 and future years are as follows:

	<b>31/03/2020</b> <b>Actual</b> <b>£000's</b>	<b>31/03/2021</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£000's</b>	<b>31/03/2022</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£000's</b>
Balances and Usable Reserves	24,079	22,473	20,354



These have risen from the estimates in the Treasury Management Strategy due to lower than anticipated capital expenditure during the year.

### **Prudential Indicator Compliance**

**(a) Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt**

- The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to set an Affordable Borrowing Limit, irrespective of their indebted status. This is a statutory limit which should not be breached.
- There was no external borrowing in 2020/21 to date and therefore the limits set for 2020/21 were not breached.

**(b) Interest Rate Exposure** - The Council has managed the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. It has done this during the year to date by making a combination of fixed and variable rate investments.

**(c) Limits on Exposure to Interest Rates** - The Council is also required to set limits on its exposure to fixed and variable interest rates, to the maturity structure of its borrowing and the total amounts invested for initial terms of more than 364 days. As the Council is aware of the changing economic situation at the moment, it is minded to keep these limits as flexible as possible to take advantage of the best opportunities as they present themselves. These limits are therefore set as follows:

<b>Upper limits</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Fixed rate exposure	100%	100%	100%	100%
Variable rate exposure	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Total principal sums invested for initial terms over 364 days</b>	<b>A maximum of £5m medium term (up to 5 years) and £5m long term (up to 10 years)</b>			

**(d) Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days**

- This indicator allows the Council to manage the risk inherent in investments longer than 364 days.
- The limit for 2020/21 is set at a maximum of £5 million medium term (up to 5 years) and £5 million long term (up to 10 years)

## **STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT FOR QUARTERS 1 and 2 2020/21**

**Report Author(s):**

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**Portfolio:**

Transformation and Organisational Development  
Finance

**Ward(s) Affected:**

All

**Purpose of the Report:**

The purpose of the Strategic Performance and Finance Report is to provide a summarised overview of the performance of the Council against the key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan for 2020/21. This Quarterly Report covers Quarters 1 and 2, the period from April to September 2020.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet to:

1. Note the revenue and capital position (variance details in Appendix 1).
2. Note the 2020/21 performance for Q1 and Q2 (detail in Appendix 2).

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the performance of the Council and is aligned to the key outcomes set out in the Council Delivery Plan for 2020/21. This Quarterly Report covers Quarters 1 and 2, the period from April to September 2020.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council agreed in March 2020 to move forward with implementing the four-year Strategic Plan which sets out the vision and ambitions of the Council. Alongside this, the Council developed an in-year Delivery Plan for 2020/21, which has recently been updated and agreed by Cabinet to reflect the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 2.2 At the heart of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, is the vision for our place:

***‘Working together to create the best place for everyone, now and for future generations’***

- 2.3 This vision is underpinned by the Council’s strategic priorities:

- Growing the economy
- Supporting individuals and empowering communities
- Protecting and improving the natural and built environment, whilst maximising quality of life
- Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively

- 2.4 The Delivery Plan sets out the key activities to be delivered within the first year of the Strategic Plan, broken down into service delivery and major projects/programmes of work. There is clear link between the Council’s vision and aspirations, detailed in the Strategic Plan, the Council’s priorities and projects, and the Strategic Performance and Finance Reports. To enable success of the activities to be monitored, the Delivery Plan provides several Delivery Measures which are reported into Cabinet in Q2, Q3 and Q4.

- 2.5 This report summaries the Council’s performance and finance position for Q1 and Q2, with additional detail set out in the appendices as follows:

Appendix 1 – Finance

Appendix 2 – Delivery Measure Performance

- 2.6 For future Quarters, an update of the Council risk register will also be presented for review. The current draft risk register is being reviewed by the Audit Committee at its October meeting.

### 3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

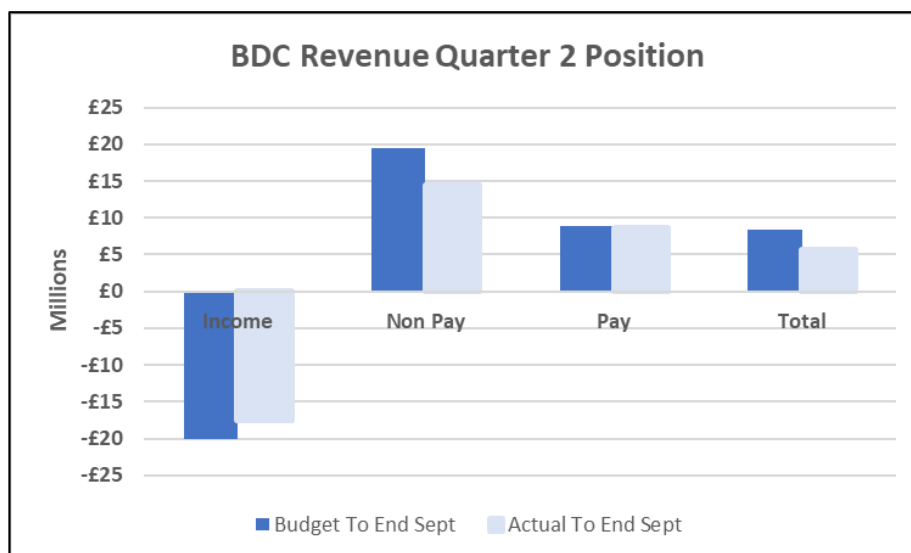
- 3.1 The below dashboard provides a summary for Q1 and Q2 finance and performance data. From Q3, a summary of the Council's risk position will also be included in the dashboard.

#### Finance Dashboard Overview

- 3.2 The following table provides a summary of the revenue budget position as at end of September 2020:

BDC	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to date £'000	Actual to date £'000	Variance £'000
Resources	4,863	2,104	689	1,415
Place	2,258	1,087	766	320
People & Communities	4,250	2,111	1,830	281
Managing Director	947	471	433	39
<b>Total – variance (favourable)</b>	<b>12,318</b>	<b>5,773</b>	<b>3,718</b>	<b>2,055</b>

- 3.3 The year to date results show a favourable variance of £2.1m. Reasons for the variations are chiefly:
- Resources - £1.4m including £1.3m unspent Covid-19 funding, Governance under recruitment
  - People and Communities - £0.3m. Increased income from Recycling and other operational cost savings
  - Place - £0.3m. Planning application income exceeded Covid-19 adjusted budget
- 3.4 A more detailed analysis of the main areas of variance by service is attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The quarter 2 Revenue Position is set out in the graph below:



- 3.6 **Pay budgets:** The overall pay expenditure was £3.9m, compared to the budget figure of £3.8m. There is an adverse variance of £0.1m.
- 3.7 **Non-Pay budgets:** The overall non-pay expenditure was £13.3m, compared to the budget figure of £16.6m. This represents a favourable variance of £3.3m. This is predominantly down to the reduction in payments for Housing Benefit £1.9m. There is also an additional £0.8m favourable variance within People and Communities due to reduced non-pay expenditure and budget for home improvements which have not incurred any expenses to date. £0.3m unspent Covid-19 funding and £0.3m favourable variances across other cost areas have contributed to this.
- 3.8 **Income Budgets:** Overall income was £13.5m, compared to the budget figure of £14.6m. This represents an adverse variance of £1.2m, a shortfall to budget in money received for Housing Benefits income of £1.9m and £0.3m in other service areas. These shortfalls are being offset by £1.0m Income received for COVID which was not budgeted.

### Capital Position

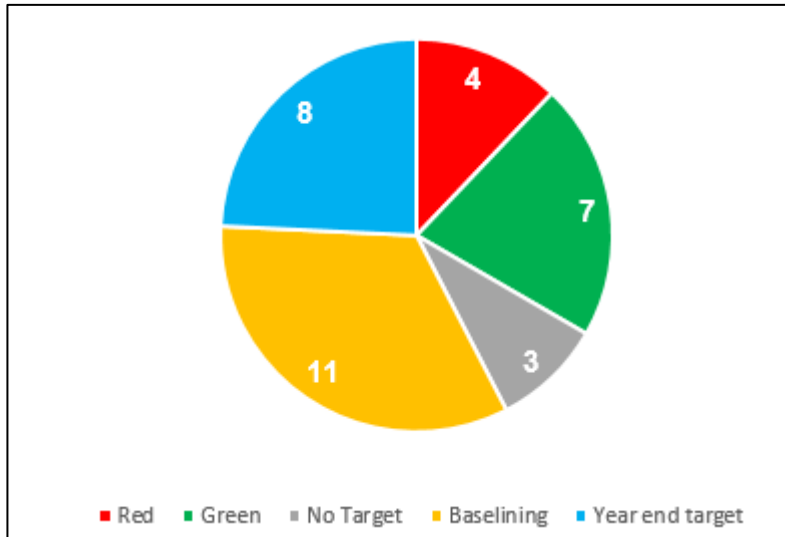
- 3.9 The following table provides details of capital spend as at end of Q2:

Scheme	Whole Year Budget including slippage	Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Variance to Date	Comment
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Approved Schemes</b>					
Disabled Facilities Grants	886	443	145	298	Spend being impacted by COVID - situation to be monitored to ensure Better Care Funding is fully committed
Minor Improvement Grants	30	15	9	6	
Warm Homes Fund	60	60	290	- 230	Whilst over budget, external funding will be claimed to cover all expenditure.
Wheeled Bin Purchases	92	46	26	20	Bins are purchased as required
IT Projects	711	356	45	311	Vast majority of budget relates to the new infrastructure project and the award of the contract is not expected to be agreed until Q4

Thorpe Lodge Refurbishment	295	148	-	148	Project is on hold whilst options are considered
Street Lighting	37	19	-	19	A decision is to be made later in the year regarding the replacement programme for street lights going forward.
Historic Buildings Grants/Buildings at Risk	33	17	-	17	
Capital Grants to Community Organisations	5	5	5	-	
Car Park Improvements	50	25	-	25	No expenditure expected in the short term
Reedham Quay	20	10	-	10	Project at early stage
Public Conveniences	50	25	-	25	No expenditure expected until Q4 at the earliest.
Bure Valley Railway	220	110	-	110	Procurement of contract ongoing; budget unlikely to be spent this financial year.
<b>Total Approved Schemes</b>	<b>2,489</b>	<b>1,277</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>757</b>	
<b>Provisional Schemes</b>					
Investment Borrowing	5,000	-	-	-	
Contribution to Food Hub Project	870	70	70	-	Only pre-construction costs have been incurred to date in line with Cabinet approval. Designs for building are currently being developed.
<b>Total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>5,870</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,359</b>	<b>1,347</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>757</b>	

## Performance Dashboard Overview

- 3.10 **Delivery Measure Status against targets:** The following chart shows the number of Delivery Measures with the associated RAG Status (where applicable). More detail is outlined in Appendix 2.



- 3.11 As part of the new Delivery Measure design, not all measures were given a specific 'target' to meet over each quarter. Where 'targets' have been provided, a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) status has been used. A RAG status signifies whether or not progress is on track. In deciding RAG ratings, data on current performance and an assessment of progress is considered.

## Performance Highlights and Areas for Improvement

- 3.12 The following section of the report provides an overview of the key performance highlights and areas for improvement for the Council.
- 3.13 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on our residents, communities, businesses and Council, with increased demands and changing priorities. The impact of Covid-19 is clearly demonstrated in the performance against the measures of Q1 and Q2, particularly in those service areas where demands have increased, or resources utilised to support the Covid-19 response.
- 3.14 The revised Council Delivery Plan agreed by Cabinet in September provides a revised platform of activity. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on performance and recommend appropriate additional resources and activities to ensure the Council continues to deliver key services and transformation projects alongside an effective local response and recovery plan to the pandemic.



## Growing the economy

### 3.15 Collection of Business Rates (Measure reference 8)

The effects of Covid-19 have continued to have an impact on the collection of Business Rates. However, the collection rate is currently holding up well in comparison to 2019. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses have benefitted from a national scheme which has awarded 100% Rate Relief. The Council will be fully compensated financially for awarding these additional reliefs.

The pandemic and the resulting downturn in the economy has had a major impact on many businesses and it is anticipated that arrear levels will be higher at the end of the year.

### 3.16 External funding to support growth (Measure reference 14)

This has been yet another strong start to the financial year with the Council securing funds of over £5m during Q1 and Q2.

£2.7m has been secured through Government's 'Getting Building Fund' to support the delivery of the Food Innovation Centre which will be split into equal contributions via Broadland District Council and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. £521,976 has been secured from MHCLG to deliver the 'Next Steps Accommodation' programme and £428,572 has been secured from the Norfolk Strategic Fund to support with Covid economic recovery initiatives.



## Supporting individuals and empowering communities

### 3.17 Numbers of vulnerable residents supported by our discretionary prevention services (Measure reference 15)

Supporting our most vulnerable residents has been one of our focus areas for Q1 and Q2 with 2,160 residents receiving support from our discretionary prevention services since April this year.

While these figures in Q2 are lower than usual, the complexity of the cases being dealt with have increased as the impact of Covid-19 has hit communities.

The end of this quarter sees us heading for a second wave of the pandemic, and significant time has been spent planning for the scenarios which may be present. We now have more established systems in place to support customers via a multi-partner and community focussed approach, though it is still expected to have a significant draw on resources.



3.18 Number of working days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefit/Council Tax benefit (Measure reference 20)

The service saw an increase in the number of new claims and changes in circumstances as a result of the impact of the pandemic. This led to an increase in the number of working days taken to process new claims in Q1 of up to 5.4 days, which was still lower than the end of year target of 7-days. However, in Q2, the service has significantly caught up with the increased workload, allowing it to return to pre-Covid levels of performance of 4.7 days which is significantly lower than the 7-day target.

3.19 % successful intervention to prevent or relieve homelessness for customers who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (Measure reference 19)

We have seen a drop in performance in Q1 and 2 due to a significant increase in work related to the Covid-19 crisis, with over twice the number of people being housed in temporary accommodation than we would normally expect.

Traditionally at point of presentation, officers are able to discuss alternative options such as friends or families while seeking future alternative accommodation. These options are not available providing the team with less time to prevent homelessness.

Housing and homelessness will continue to be monitored closely throughout this financial year as we monitor the impact of the pandemic crisis on our housing solutions service. We have already seen a 50% increase in demand, and we expect this to continue throughout the year.

A programme of work is now taking place which is looking at all aspects of Housing to work towards becoming best in class.



**Protecting and improving the  
natural and built environment,  
whilst maximising quality of life**

3.20 Number of verified missed bins for all waste per 100,000 collections (Measure reference 29)

This is the first time we have reported on this measure.

The Q1 figure of 27 missed bins per 100,000 collections was on track to meet the full year target. However, the Q2 figure of 40 missed bins shows a drop in performance. This has partially been due to a change in resident behaviour (e.g. working from home) which has resulted in an increase in missed bin reports because the bin has not been emptied at its 'usual time'. Linked with this, it may also be the case that with more vehicles parked at the roadside (rather than driven to work) there may have been a rise in those bins not being either visible or readily accessible.

Once a baseline has been established, this measure will be used as one of the performance indicators for the Veolia contract.

### 3.21 Number of confirmed incidents of fly tipping (Measure reference 31)

Covid-19 restrictions and the temporary closure of the County Council Household Waste Recycling Centres for a number of weeks has been a factor in the increase of fly tipping cases in Q2. A total of 161 confirmed fly tips shows an increase of 21 fly tips on figures for this time last year. With centres reopened, we hope to see a positive change in Q3.

We may also be seeing some behaviour change in that residents are spending more time at home, exercising in their local area and perhaps more likely to see and report incidents of fly tipping.



## **Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively**

### 3.22 Staff absence levels - working days lost to short term sickness (Measure reference 4) and Staff retention rates (Measure reference 5)

As the Council returned to business as usual activities during Q2, absence figures at 1.11 working days per employee are below average and within our target of 4.5 days. It is important that as an organisation we have a healthy staff retention level, industry norm is around the 89% mark, and the yearend success for the organisation would look to be 90%, i.e. a turnover of 10%. The staff retention level is currently 97.5% and this is thought to be this high due to the current employment market.

The Council continues to seek to engage with the workforce at every opportunity to assess engagement levels which has helped to keep both sickness and retention at a positive level through these uncertain times. The uncertainty regarding the virus continues to pose a risk in terms of the possibility of a second wave and the ongoing impact on the health and wellbeing of employees.

### 3.23 Collection rate of Council Tax (Measure reference 7)

During Q1, recovery action was put on hold. This action along with the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is leading to a reduction in amounts and percentages collected. However, engagement with our Council Taxpayers started through Q2 with soft reminders and recovery action taking place.

The resulting increase in arrears may have an adverse effect on collection rates in the forthcoming year as incomes recover for our residents and they pay other debts and reduce Council Tax arrears.

## **Strategic Risk Overview**

### 3.24 Following the agreement of Cabinet to the Risk Management Policy in August 2020, work has been underway to develop a new process for developing, monitoring and managing the strategic risks to the organisation.

- 3.25 Strategic risks are risks that are significant in size, impact and duration and could impact on the performance of the Council as a whole, and in particular on its ability to deliver its strategic priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. This may include operational risks escalated from particular services to the leadership level due to the potential scale of their impact.
- 3.26 A draft Strategic Risk Register has been developed and is being reviewed by Audit Committee in October. Each quarter, the Council will present the Strategic Register in full, alongside a summary of the key changes to the register from the previous quarter. The first report against our Strategic Risk Register will be in Q3, alongside the Finance and Performance report.

#### **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of this report and agree the recommendations.

#### **5 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 5.1 None applicable to this report.

#### **6 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** – To support the organisations Covid-19 response, the Council is currently working through what the implications may be for requiring additional resource for the ongoing response effort.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – no implications.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** – no implications.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** – no implications.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – no implications.
- 6.6 **Risks** – Following review by the Audit Committee, the Strategic Risk Register will be reviewed, updated and maintained for the next quarter. The Risk Register will be brought back to Cabinet as part of the Q3 reports.

#### **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The report has provided an overview of the position of the Council for performance and finance for Q1 and Q2 2020/21. Despite the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, performance for the Council remains relatively stable in most areas and positive trends are now being seen.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet to:

1. Note the revenue and capital position (variance details in Appendix 1).
2. Note the 2020/21 performance for Q1 and Q2 (detail in Appendix 2).

# **Appendix 1**

## **Broadland District Council – Finance for Q2 2020/21**

Appendix 1 provides an overview of the variances for the budget in Q2.



## Broadland District Council – Explanation of Variances Q2 2020/21

### MD & Resources

						000's	000's	000's	Explanation
Directorate	Service Area	Variance Level	Sub Service area	Cost Centre	CC Description	Bud YTD	Act YTD	Variance	
Managing Director	Chief Of Staff	Over £25k	Communications & Marketing	SMMPR	Communications & Marketing	£ 148	£ 121	£ 27	Promotional expenses and contracted services currently underspent, partly due to the autumn edition of Broadland News costs being met by covid budgets (£7k)
		All Other				£ 194	£ 182	£ 12	
	Chief Of Staff Total					£ 342	£ 303	£ 39	
	Managing Director	All Other				£ 130	£ 130	-£ 0	
	Managing Director Total					£ 130	£ 130	-£ 0	

						000's	000's	000's	Explanation
Directorate	Service Area	Variance Level	Sub Service area	Cost Centre	CC Description	Bud YTD	Act YTD	Variance	
Resources	Finance	Over £25k	Finance	SMFIN	Finance team	£ 212	£ 239	-£ 27	Agency Staff (£39k adverse) have covered vacancies in the team (£12k positive). Permanent roles have now been recruited.
			Revenues	SMRVG	Revenues Team	£ 259	£ 306	-£ 47	£64k overspend on agency staff and external resource to cover the vacancies in the team, offset by pay savings (£11k). Trend will continue at a reduced rate as the vacancies are filled.
		All Other				£ 40	£ 23	£ 17	
	Finance Total					£ 511	£ 568	-£ 57	
	Governance & Business Support	Over £25k	Electoral Services	ELRPG	Electoral Canvas & Registration	£ 31	-£ 4	£ 35	Delay in electoral canvas which is now underway and should return to budget by year end.
			Facilities	SMFAC	Facilities	£ 310	£ 253	£ 57	Savings due to new ways of working and corresponding reduction in site costs. Underspends in postage and stationery (£25k) and utilities (£16k)
			Human Resources	ORDEV	Organisation Development	£ 75	£ 28	£ 48	Due to Covid, the corporate training budget is underspent (£45k)
			Human Resources	SMPER	Human Resources	£ 132	£ 89	£ 43	Underspends on employee advertising (£23k), welfare & retention (£15k) and contracted services (£11k). Some recharging to be done between councils.
		All Other				£ 1,044	£ 1,026	£ 19	
	Governance & Business Support Total					£ 1,593	£ 1,392	£ 201	
	Covid-19	Over £25k	Covid-19	COVER		£ -	-£ 61	£ 61	Currently there is unspent Covid19 funding.
			Covid-19	COVID	Covid-19	£ -	-£ 1,209	£ 1,209	Currently there is unspent Covid19 funding.
	Covid-19 Total					£ -	-£ 1,271	£ 1,271	

## Place

						000's	000's	000's	Explanation
Directorate	Service Area	Variance Level	Sub Service area	Cost Cent	CC Description	Bud YTD	Act YTD	Variance	
Place	Director of Place	Over £25k	Business Support	BSADD	Business Support And Admin	£ -	£ 52	-£ 52	Correction of 19/20 SNC salaries recharge not accounted for in 19/20 in error.
		All Other				£ 124	£ 93	£ 31	
	Director of Place Total					£ 124	£ 144	-£ 21	
	Economic Growth	Over £25k	Community Assets Other	CYWDS	WOODLANDS	£ 50	£ 21	£ 29	Woodland maintenance costs are behind budget at this point, however, the budget is expected to be used by the end of 2021.
			Economic Development	EDBST	BUSINESS SUPPORT	£ 196	£ 139	£ 57	Positive variance arises because of original staff budget allocation. The variance offsets with Growth Delivery Team variance.
		All Other				£ 209	£ 194	£ 14	
	Economic Growth Total					£ 455	£ 354	£ 100	
	Planning	Over £25k	Development Management	DCAPN	APPLICATIONS	-£ 341	-£ 503	£ 161	Original budget Covid vired by £245k but planning fees have exceeded the revised budget to date by £140k.
		All Other				£ 639	£ 602	£ 36	
	Planning Total					£ 297	£ 100	£ 198	
	Regulatory	All Other				£ 211	£ 168	£ 43	
	Regulatory Total					£ 211	£ 168	£ 43	

## People & Communities

						000's	000's	000's	Explanation
Directorate	Service Area	Variance Level	Sub Service area	Cost Centre	CC Description	Bud YTD	Act YTD	Variance	
People & Communities									
	Community Service	Over £25k	Assistant Director - Community Services	LATCO	Waste LATC	£ 63	£ 28	£ 35	LATC not proceeding.
			Recycling	OPMGO	Ops Management	£ 99	£ 138	-£ 39	Virement to be completed between OPMGO, WCCSV & RGSTR
			Recycling	RGGEN	RECYCLING-GENERAL	£ 80	£ 50	£ 30	Savings on use of agency staff and temporary student cover (£8k) and also contracted services (£24k) due to delay in the Behavioural Insights Programme (£15k) and transfer of the Norfolk Waste Partnership budget to GYBC.
			Recycling	RGGRW	GREEN WASTE	-£ 473	-£ 570	£ 97	Favourable variance due to increased recycling credit income [£115k] through increased tonnage, partially offset by higher disposal costs (£12k)
			Recycling	WCCLW	WASTE COLLECTION-CLIN WASTE	£ 41	£ 0	£ 41	Savings due to delayed launch by County, now due to start in October.
		All Other				£ 1,525	£ 1,467	£ 58	
	Community Service Total					£ 1,334	£ 1,113	£ 222	
	Individuals & Families	Over £25k	Housing Standards	HRWHF	Warm Homes Fund	£ 22	£ 47	-£ 26	Grant funding to be received which will cover these costs, before year end.
	All Other				£ 755	£ 670	£ 85		
Individuals & Families Total					£ 777	£ 718	£ 59		



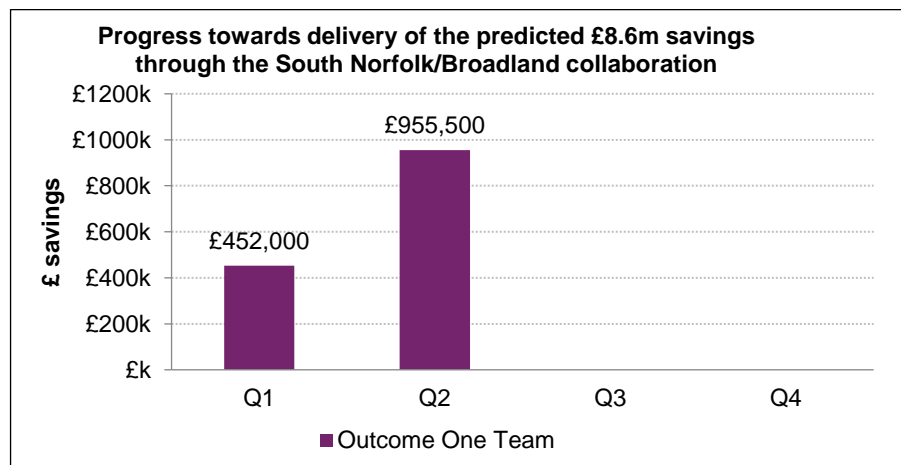
## **Appendix 2**

### **Broadland District Council – Delivery Measure Performance for Quarters 1 and 2 2020/21**

Appendix 2 provides a detailed overview of the performance of the Council against its Delivery Plan for Q1 and Q2 combined. This includes the measures which are reported quarterly. There are a number of measures outlined at the end of the appendix which are reported annually to Cabinet, which will be brought through as part of the Q4 reports.



## Progress towards delivery of the predicted £8.6m savings through the Broadland/South Norfolk collaboration (Measure reference 1)



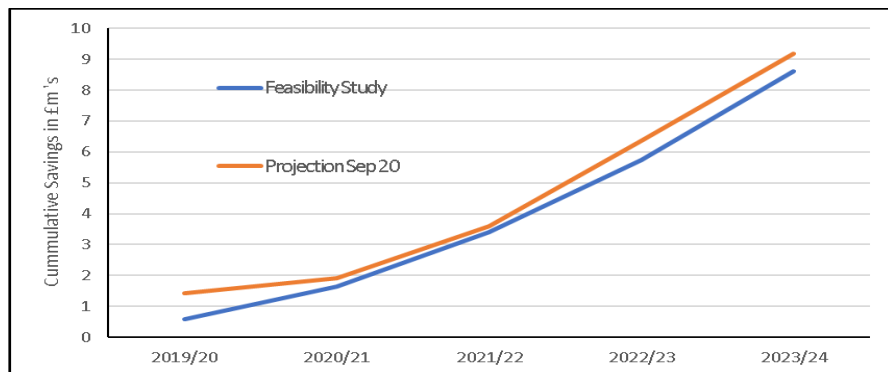
**Year End Success Target: £1,632,000**

### RISK

Officers are currently reviewing the deliverability and timeframe for some of the One Joint Officer Team savings, as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have pushed back the timeframe for delivering some of the efficiency improvements and savings anticipated.

### CONTEXT

#### Feasibility Study and current forecast net savings comparison



### COMMENT

In 2018, Broadland District Council agreed to the Feasibility Study with South Norfolk Council which began the collaboration between the two authorities. The Feasibility Study set out an indicative savings forecast of £8.6m over a five-year period.

The current five-year saving forecast for the collaboration is £9.2m. This is £0.6m better than the Feasibility Study forecast of £8.6m.

The savings delivered in 2019/20 were £1.419m and it is currently predicted that a cumulative savings of £1.911m will be achieved by the end of 2020/21.

The graph to the left shows the current net savings projection (in orange) for the coming years for the collaboration compared to the Feasibility Study forecasts (in blue) over the same period. This shows that the collaboration is currently forecasted to achieve greater savings than originally anticipated.

## Customer satisfaction survey (%) (Measure reference 2)

### COMMENT

With the exception of our customer complaints data, we do not currently have an embedded way of measuring customer satisfaction across the Council as part of our business as usual practices.

In recognition of this, a customer experience project is underway to discover where and how this is currently gathered to better understand how this can be shaped Council wide. Alongside this research will be carried out as to best practice approaches and recommendations so that we can outline how we can begin to implement this in a way that customer satisfaction can be measured consistently across our Council and its individual services

### Year End Success: Baseline

### RISK

Without confirmation of our customer satisfaction baseline we are not able to fully impact the overall results of our wider transformation programme from a customer's perspective.

Although snapshots of customer satisfaction can be taken prior to and post implementation on a case by case basis to mitigate this risk at an individual project level.

### CONTEXT

As part of the Customer Experience project we are reviewing the current mechanisms in place across the Council for the collation of customer feedback. Once we have established a consistent baseline, we will be able to seek to benchmark this against both the public and private sector data. Although it must be considered that there are multiple ways customer satisfaction can be recorded and measured and this will need to be considered in its wider context when benchmarking

## Staff satisfaction (Measure reference 3)

### COMMENTS

We actively seek staff feedback and conduct regular staff surveys to understand what's important to our team, as a result an all staff briefing focused on Wellbeing was held in Q2 . Reorientation sessions have been held with all staff including discussions regarding new ways of working and work preferences going forward. Designing and delivering a performance scheme that recognises small and large successes over the course of a year has been undertaken during Q2. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course was attended and 15 MHFA's are now in place.

All employees have the opportunity to work their hours flexibly with the aim of improving work-life balance. Regular team meetings are held to cascade and share key developments and priorities including monthly all staff briefings. Trade union and staff rep consultation and negotiation forums are in place to promote open and honest two-way dialogue and regular staff engagement in key organisational issues

### Year End Success: Baseline

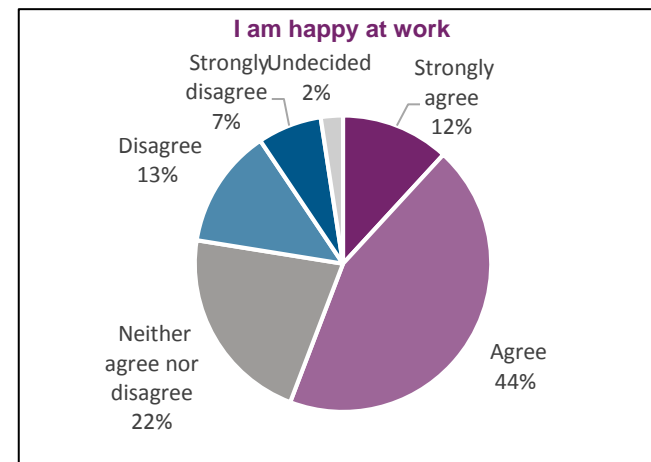
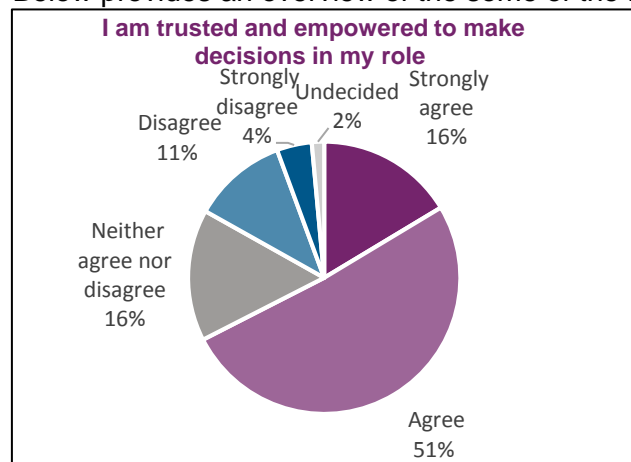
### RISK

Continuing to Work from Home as per government guidance may have an impact on employee wellbeing and create feelings of isolation, as such support is being provided to colleagues.

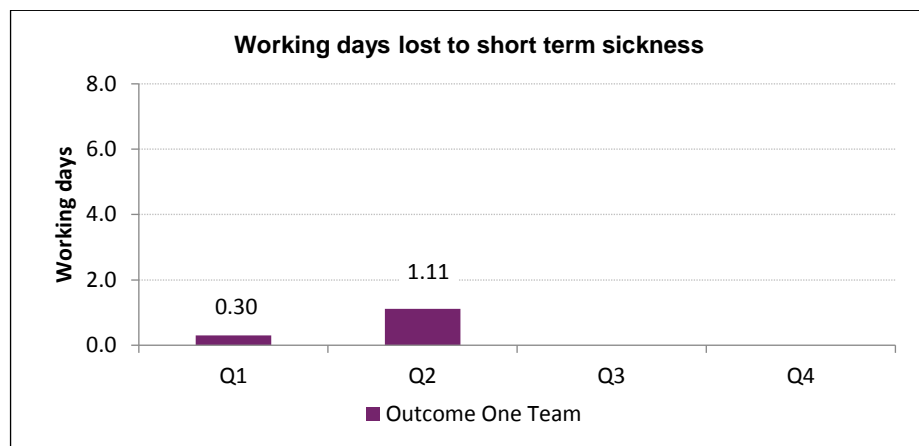
Analysis of all 3 wellbeing surveys that have taken place over Q1 and Q2 showed little variance or improvement despite easing of lockdown restrictions and wellbeing initiatives increased. Reorientation sessions are being held with all staff which includes details on how the Council work places are COVID secure to reassure staff about the measures that are in place to keep colleagues safe at work.

### CONTEXT

Below provides an overview of the some of the results from the most recent staff survey.



## Staff absence levels - working days lost to short term sickness (Measure reference 4)



### COMMENTS

These are the combined results for One Team for the two Councils.

Absence figures are below average for both Councils; however, we have seen an increase in short term sick days during Q2 as the Councils returned to business as usual activities during this quarter following the easing of lockdown measures.

Qualitative feedback from staff (and via external networking with other HR professionals) suggests that staff working from home locations are able to work more flexibly to complete their hours. Health challenges that would typically result in staff taking sick leave are able to be better managed from home because staff can be more flexible with the completion of their hours and do not have travel to work factors to consider.

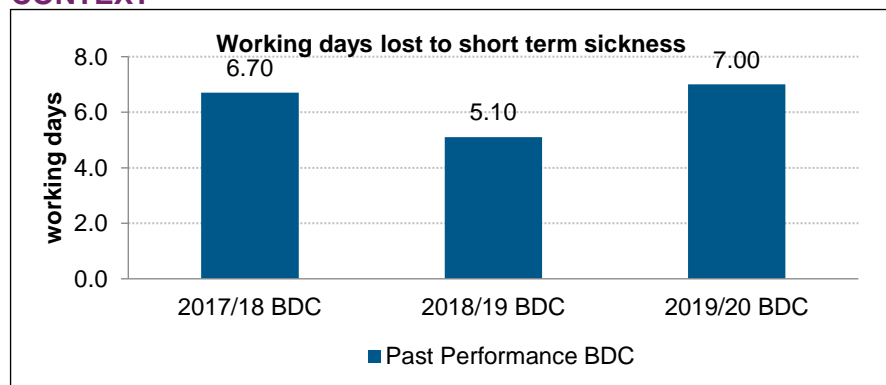
Another consideration is Covid-19 related absences (i.e. where employees or household members were displaying symptoms) which were recorded under specific codes which does not impact absence due to full pay being maintained.

**Year End Success Target : 4.5 days**

### RISK

Absence continues to be closely monitored. The uncertainty regarding the virus continues to pose a risk in terms of the possibility of a second wave and the ongoing impact on the health and wellbeing of employees. Flu vaccinations are being offered to employees that are not eligible under the NHS to assist with health and wellbeing over the winter months.

### CONTEXT

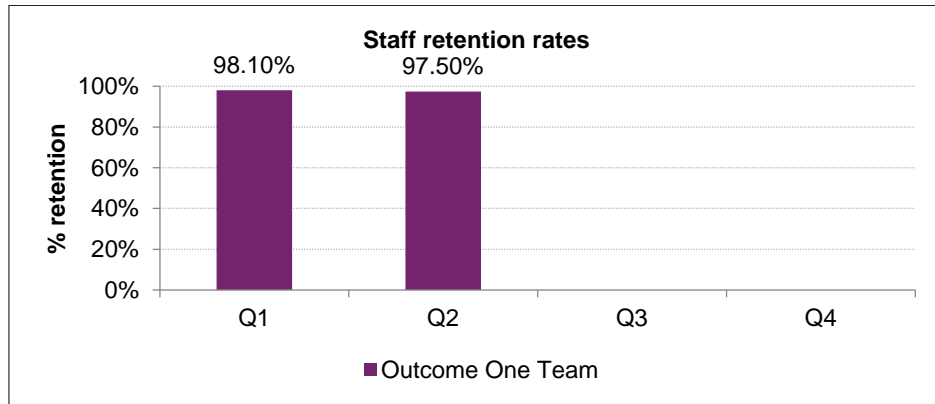


The graph to the left shows the comparison data for short term sickness days lost for previous years. This shows that the number of working days lost is lower than previous years for the One Team.

The number of working days lost to sickness in the public sector has been consistently higher than the rate for the private sector since 1995, although both sectors have seen an overall decrease in the last few years. In 2018, the number of days lost to the public sector stood at 5.6. For context, the One Team currently has a lower than average sickness rate.

Source: ONS, Labour Force Survey 2019

## Staff retention (Measure reference 5)



### COMMENTS

This is a new measure which is being reported for the first time this year.

Staff retention remains high albeit a slight increase in leavers was seen in Q2. It is likely that staff retention will remain stable while local and national unemployment is increasing.

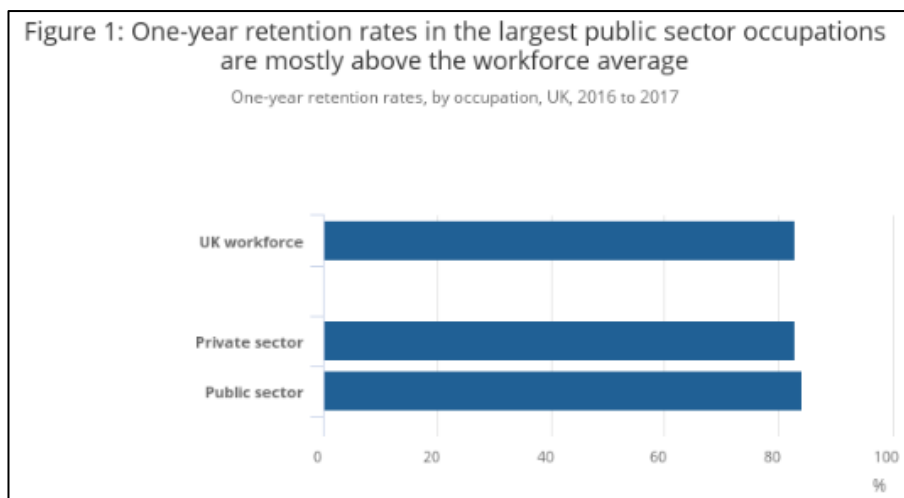
It is important that we have a healthy staff retention level, industry norm is around the 89% mark, and the yearend success for the organisation would look to be 90%, i.e. a turnover of 10%. The staff retention level is currently 97.5% and this is thought to be this high due to the current employment market. The Councils continue to seek to engage with the workforce at every opportunity to assess engagement levels.

**Year End Success: 90%**

### RISK

Staff retention rates may change later in the year depending on the level of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

### CONTEXT

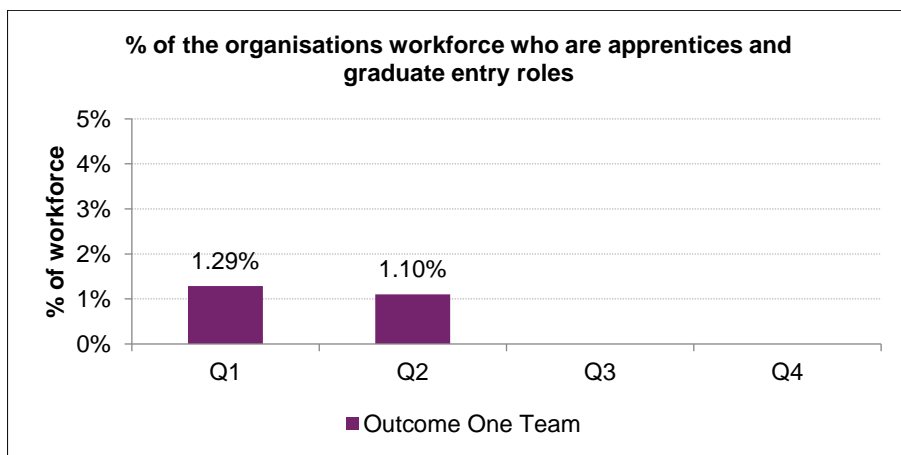


The latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that from 2016 to 2017, the UK workforce one-year retention rate was 83% and the overall public sector one-year retention rate was 84%. Similar to the trend seen across the workforce, most of the larger public sector occupations saw a fall in their one-year retention rate, between 2012 to 2013 and 2016 to 2017.

For Local and National Government, the retention rate currently sits at 89%, showing that the One Team is performing better than average.

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey 2016/17

## % of the organisations workforce who are apprentices and graduate entry roles (Measure reference 6)



### COMMENTS

It is our aim to create apprentice roles for hard to recruit to service areas in order to grow our own skills. We currently have 15 apprentices in roles such as Business Administration and Exercise and Fitness. We will create an apprenticeship network both within our organisation and with our partners to provide learning opportunities and celebrate apprenticeships through events such as the Apprenticeship challenge. We will promote apprenticeships through events such as the Norfolk Careers and Skills festival and establish third party networks such as through Armed Forces, Disability Confidence scheme, and create links with universities and local schools/colleges. We will work with local universities to identify career pathways for local graduates into the public sector and develop workforce plans with each directorate and to identify gaps and formulate plans to fill gaps with a focus on graduates / apprentices and work placement opportunities. We will also be supporting the Kickstart scheme which is a scheme supporting young people during the Covid-19 recovery by offering a minimum of 30 work placements through the Councils and partner organisations.

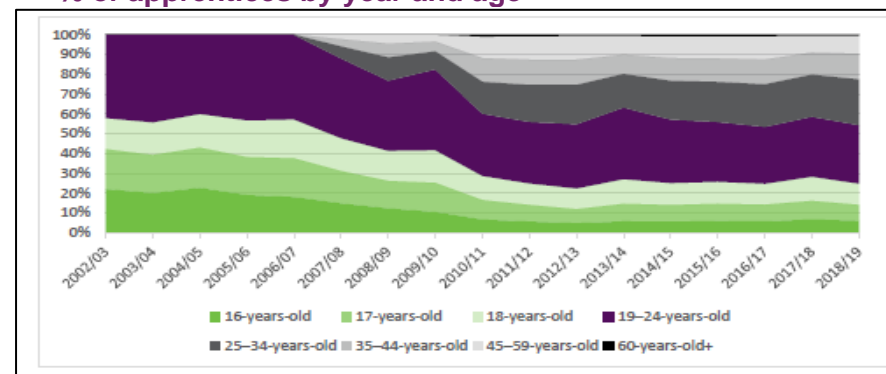
### Year End Success: Baseline RISK

There is currently limited focus on this area in the current quarter due to prioritisation of focus on elements such as Staff Wellbeing/engagement/performance management review/reorientation briefings to staff. Work will re-commence on these targeted actions in the next quarter. There is not a significant risk at this stage.

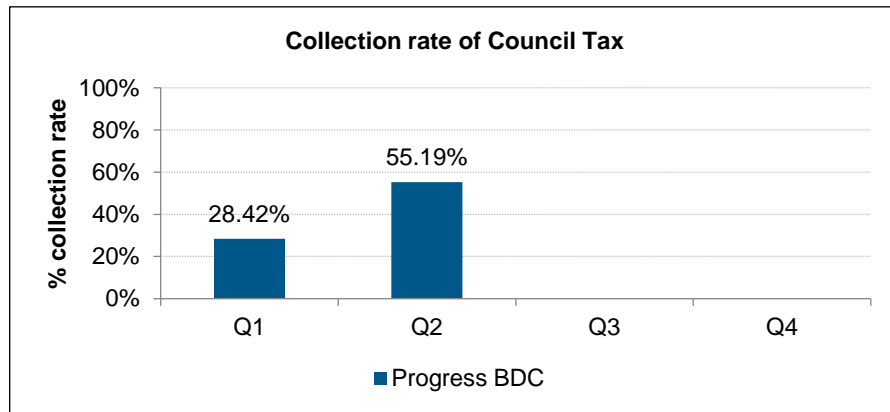
### CONTEXT

Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) July 2020 report (right) found that most apprenticeships go to existing employees rather than new labour market entrants with an increasing share of opportunities going to those aged 25 and over. Since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, employers have increasingly focused their investment in providing apprenticeship training to older and in many cases already highly experienced and qualified workers which is evidenced by the growing numbers of apprenticeships in leadership and management and other professional training. This demonstrates that the Council is in line with other businesses where apprentice and graduates starts have slowed due to the current climate however it is the aim of the Council to focus on recruiting entry level apprentices and graduates from September 2020.

### % of apprentices by year and age



## Collection rate of Council Tax (Measure reference 7)



### COMMENTS

Collection rates have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to a reduction in amounts and percentages collected. Recovery notices were not sent in Q1 due to difficulties faced across the board by residents and the national situation with Covid-19. However, engagement restarted early in Q2 with soft reminder notices followed by normal reminders and final notices. We have been unable to issue summonses since March 2020 due to courts not being open for Council Tax work. However, we are hopeful that we will be able to resume court work over the Autumn and Winter and have been in dialogue with the court over this.

Although currently on target collection rates will continue to be depressed due to the increase in number of people facing financial difficulty and claiming Council Tax Reduction/Support.

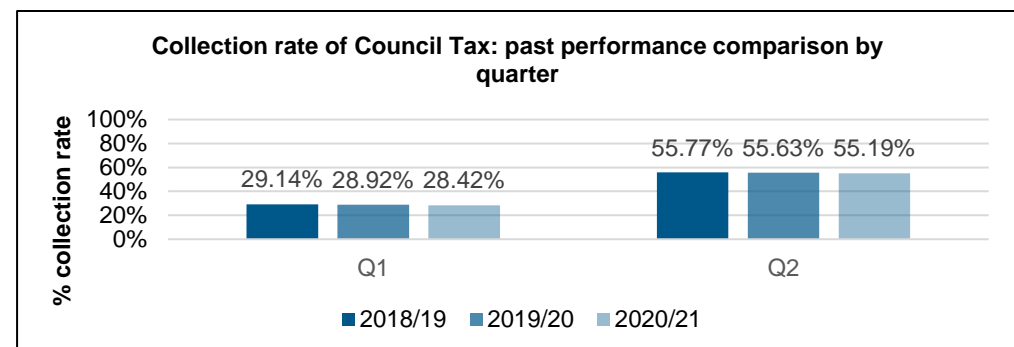
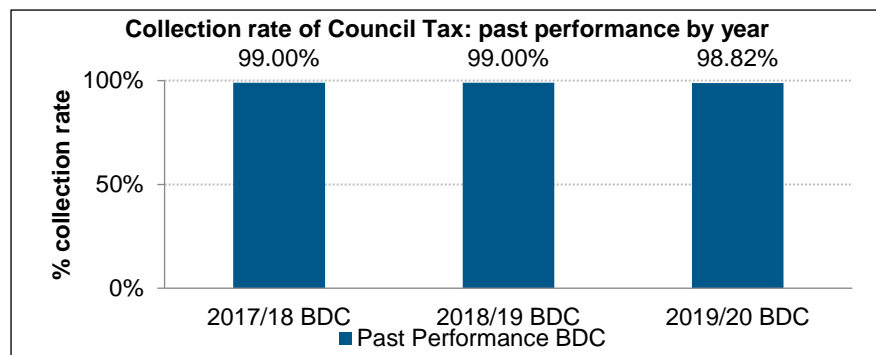
**Year End Success: 98.5%**

### RISK

Collection rates will be lower this year than in previous years. This is due to the effects of the pandemic. The resulting increase in arrears may have an adverse effect on collection rates in the forthcoming year (2021/22) as some of our residents try to balance paying the new financial year's Council Tax with other debts and Council Tax arrears for 2020/21. There is a risk that as more people come off furlough that they may become unemployed and find it difficult to pay ongoing charges. The risk of a second wave of Coronavirus could also pose a risk as it may mean that recovery action is further suspended.

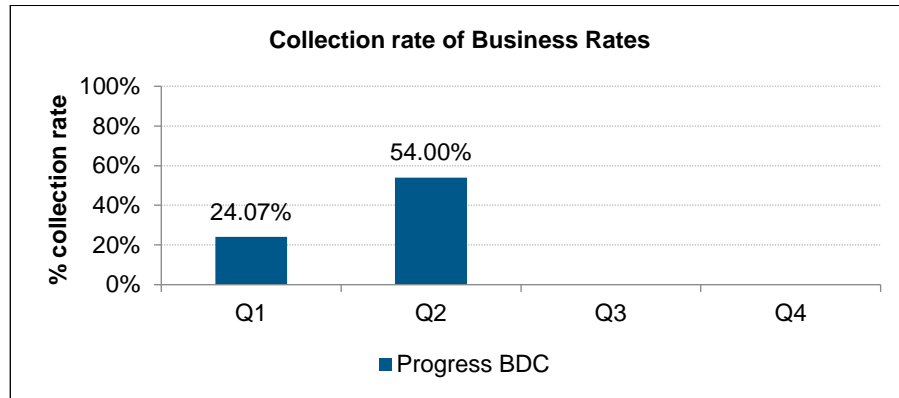
### CONTEXT

The graphs below show the Council Tax collection rates performance for previous years and quarters for comparison. Quarter 2 this year is slightly lower than previous years due to the challenges faced with the pandemic and its effect on households to pay.





## Collection of Business Rates (Measure reference 8)



### COMMENTS

Covid-19 has had a major impact on the collection performance for Business Rates locally and across the country. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses have benefitted from a national scheme which has awarded 100% Rate Relief. This has been a major help to these sectors, but many other businesses are also struggling with the effect of the pandemic. The Council will be fully compensated financially for awarding these additional reliefs. The Business rates Team has worked with businesses to offer extended and deferred payments where appropriate and to consider Hardship relief where needed. However, the effects of Covid-19 on businesses mean that collection rates will be depressed this year. Recovery action recommenced in Q2 and reminder notices have been sent and a dialogue encouraged with businesses to see how they can be assisted or signposted to our Economic Development team. Court action is still suspended until the Court Service reopens to Business Rates cases and this is also affecting our ability to recover arrears.

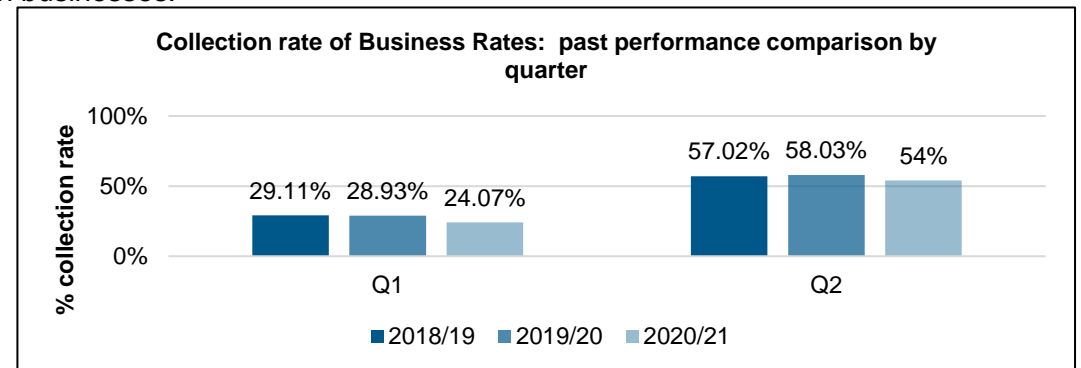
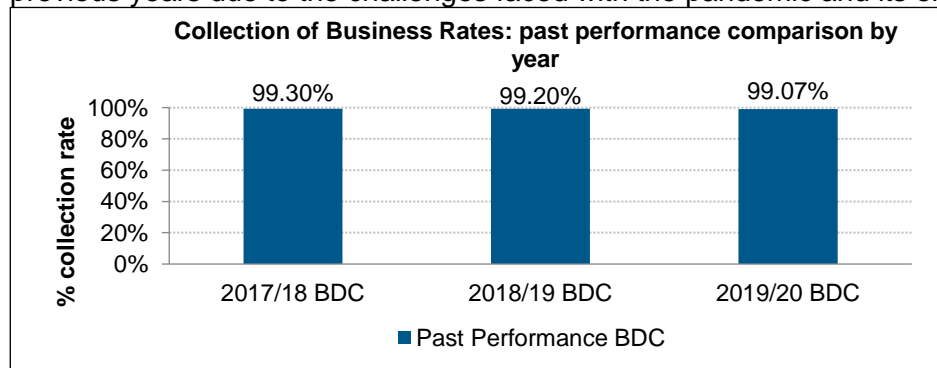
**Year End Success: 98%**

### RISK

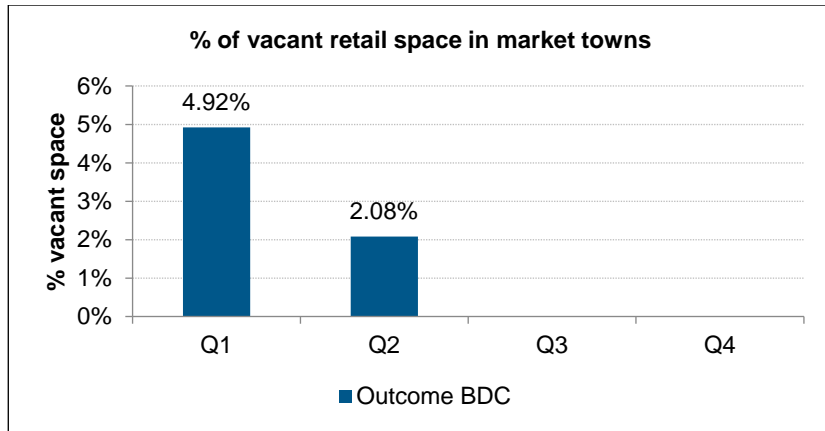
There is no doubt that collection rates will be lower this year and probably for the forthcoming year. The pandemic and the resulting downturn in the economy has had a major impact on many businesses and arrear levels will be higher at the end of the year. The risk of further local or national lockdowns mean that there is a risk of collection rates being further affected.

### CONTEXT

The graphs below show the Business Rates collection rates performance for previous years and quarters for comparison. Quarter 2 this year is slightly lower than previous years due to the challenges faced with the pandemic and its effect on businesses.



## % of vacant retail space in market towns (Measure reference 12)



### COMMENTS

Acle, Aylsham & Reepham - there has been a reduction in vacant retail units in all three market towns over the last quarter (and from the start of the calendar year). There are no vacant retail units in Reepham and only one in Acle. Three units in Aylsham were occupied in the last quarter bringing vacant units down to four. In Acle a former funeral directors opened as a vape shop in August 2020. In Reepham a former greengrocers that had been empty for over a year opened as a print and design shop.

In Aylsham a former hairdressers empty for two and a half years opened as a financial services business in September, a barbers opened in a former antiques shop in July, and a cheese shop and delicatessen is opening.

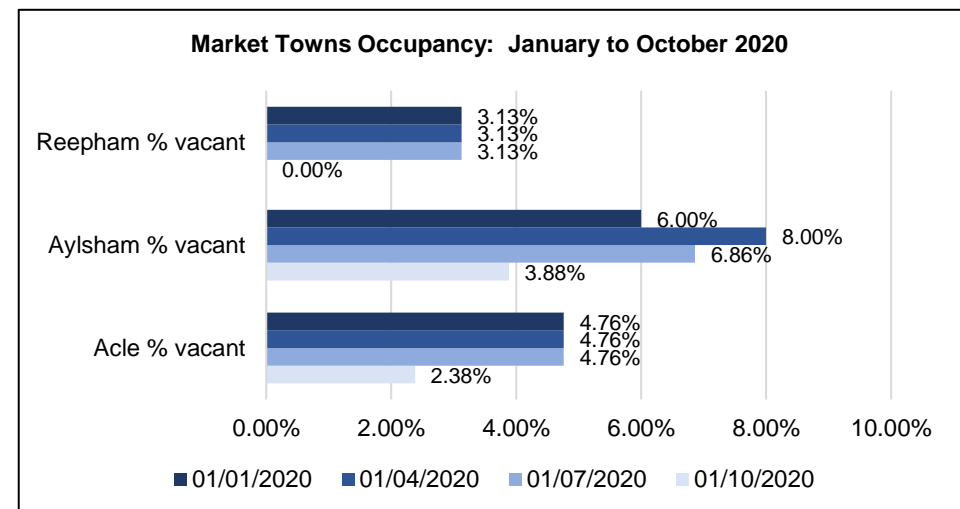
### Year End Success: Baseline

### RISK

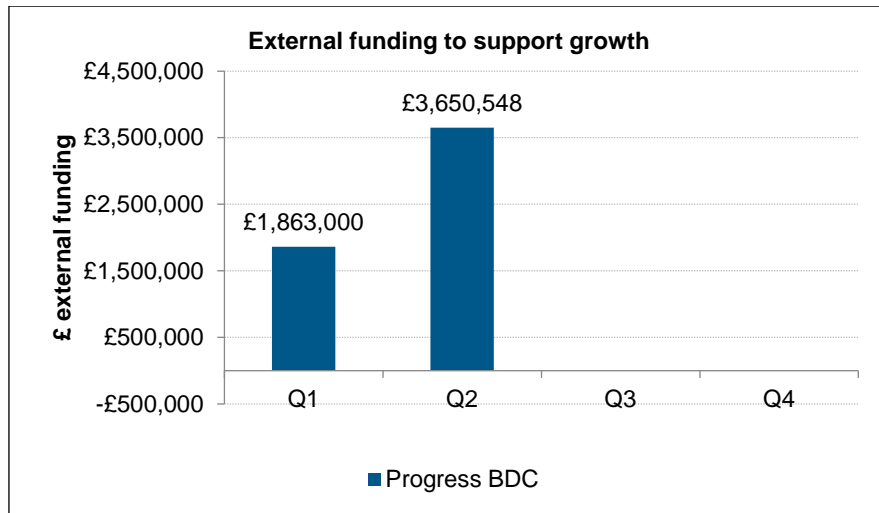
While retail vacancy rates are currently showing a reduction across the district the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our market towns remains uncertain. We are working with town teams and key stakeholders to make market town high streets more future proof post-COVID to encourage greater footfall. Work will focus on improving the streetscape and customer experience on the high street.

### CONTEXT

The chart to the right shows the occupancy vacancy rates for market towns in Broadland for 2020. This shows that in Reepham and Acle, vacancy rates remained stable from January to July and have since reduced. In Aylsham, vacancy rates increased in April and then began to decline.



## External funding to support growth (Measure reference 14)



### COMMENTS

£2.7m has been secured through Government's 'Getting Building Fund' to support the delivery of the Food Innovation Centre which will be split into equal contributions via Broadland District Council and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. This funding needs to be spent by March 2023.

£521,976 has been secured from MHCLG to deliver the 'Next Steps Accommodation' programme. Following the Govt's earlier 'Everyone In' initiative, which placed those in unsafe communal settings or at imminent risk of rough sleeping into emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Next Steps Accommodation programme makes available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent these people from returning to the streets. Funding will support the delivery of new homes in the district.

£428,572 has been secured from the Norfolk Strategic Fund to support with Covid economic recovery initiatives.

### Year End Success: Baseline

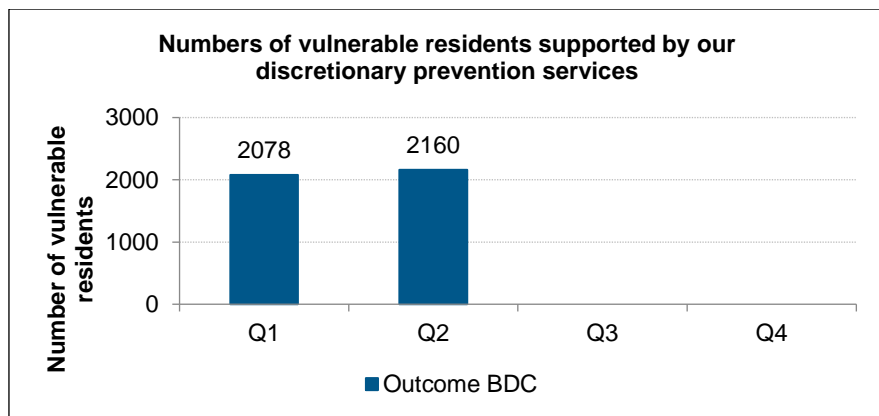
### RISK

Food Innovation Centre: The ability to secure the additional 50% of European funding needed to deliver this project remains the principle risk to the project. Work is ongoing to secure tenants for the building to ensure delivery against the business plan.

### CONTEXT

In securing £2.7m through the Government's Getting Building Fund, Broadland District Council move closer to delivery of the first dedicated Food Grade Innovation Centre facility in Norfolk and Suffolk. Located on the Food Enterprise Park near Easton, the facility will enable greater levels of innovation and growth within the food and drink processing sector, providing a dozen 1200sq ft food grade incubator units to help kick start the growth of fledgling food and drink firms in the area. It will also include a food hub offering bespoke related innovation support to businesses, as well as developing a world-leading Food and Drink Cluster to facilitate greater levels of knowledge exchange, new business and supply chain opportunities and enabling ground-breaking innovation collaborations.

## Numbers of vulnerable residents supported by our discretionary prevention services (Measure reference 15)



### COMMENTS

These figures include the number we have helped through our support of Covid-19, which has seen a significant increase as we found residents vulnerable through shielding and financial hardship. Our response has ensured we quickly put a system in place to identify and support the residents who needed us the most. As part of this response, we have to work closely with our communities to help support our most vulnerable residents. The Q2 figure includes 60 debt and welfare cases and 22 requests for support processed by the help hub.

Figures in this quarter reflect the reduced number of times the team provided Covid-19 related support. Whilst these figures are lower, the complexity of the cases increases as the impact of Covid-19 is seen.

**Year End Success: 2,000 residents (combined figure for BDC and SNC)**

### RISK

The end of this quarter sees us heading for a second wave of the pandemic, and significant time has been spent planning for the scenarios which may be present. Officers have reviewed the response during the first wave and taken best practice to apply again.

We now have more established systems in place to support customers via a multi-partner and community focussed approach, though the impact on resource is still expected to be significant.

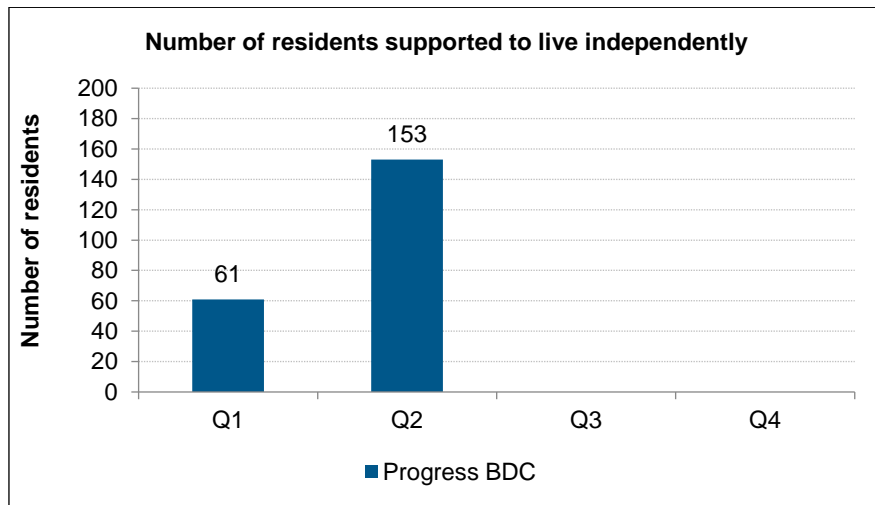
This quarter has also seen more targeted support for those who are impacted by Covid-19 in localised outbreaks - utilising 7 day working processes and supporting staff to carryout doorstep checks on our most vulnerable customers. This work is expected to increase as we go into the winter months.

### CONTEXT

Our Help Hub and communities support is based on tried and tested prevention services. By engaging early with residents, and dealing quickly with issues before they escalate, we know that not only do we improve outcomes for people, we reduce the cost of escalating issues into statutory services.

Our discretionary services provide a range of support to our communities, from debt and welfare advice, community navigation, feeling safe and secure, as well as supporting our communities to help themselves. Through our help hub approach, we work closely with partners to facilitate joint working and information sharing to prevent unnecessary delay in reaching support.

## Number of residents supported to live independently (Measure reference 17)



### COMMENTS

10 DFGs have been completed, 37 handyperson visits have taken place, 1 hospital discharge grant and 13 low level grants; a total of 61 homes supported.

All work was put on hold due to Covid-19; however, no one was left without essential facilities. The vast majority of housing standards work relates to clinically vulnerable and extremely vulnerable residents, therefore any restrictions impact massively on the delivery of the service. As restrictions have eased, work has begun to start again, initially with external works and those not shielding. 14 DFGs have been completed and 62 handyperson visits have taken place which include 17 low level grants.

As Covid restrictions eased, external works commenced first, followed by internal adaptations for those not shielding and finally adaptations for those previously shielding.

There is a waiting list of 140 people waiting for assessments for DFGs. Where possible these are being done remotely and contact time with applicants is minimised.

**Year End Success: 700 residents**

### RISK

The vast majority of housing standards work relates to clinically vulnerable and extremely vulnerable residents, therefore any restrictions impact massively on the delivery of the service. Any future restrictions imposed will affect delivery. Funding for this measure is from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government via the Better Care Fund. Budgets are monitored to ensure expenditure aligns as closely to budget as possible..

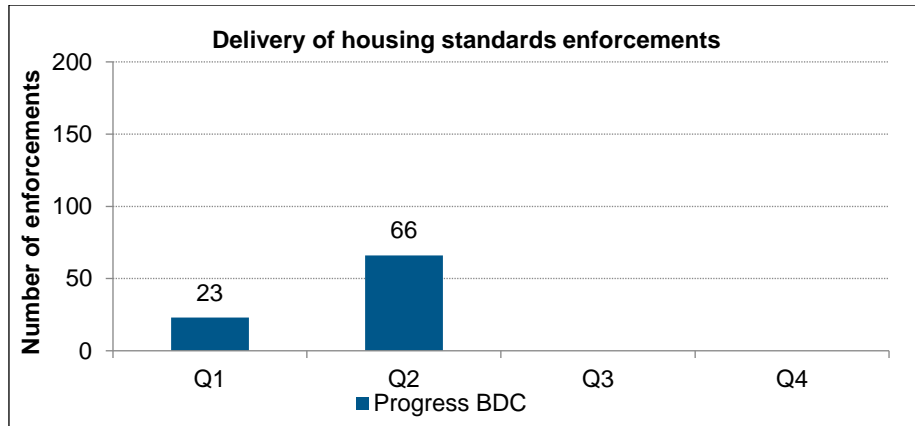
### CONTEXT

One of the key responsibilities for the Council is to support people to remain in their own home. This has the dual effect of reducing pressure on services but also enables our residents to remain independent, which is a key factor, particularly for older people.

We deploy a range of tools to help residents, the main focus is disabled facility grants which enable us to physically adapt people's property. We also have a handyperson scheme and support people to keep their homes warm.

This target enables us to judge how many people we are able to support, by assessing trends in cost, complexity, delivery levels and resource.

## Delivery of housing standards enforcement (Measure reference 18)



### COMMENTS

15 disrepair complaints have been resolved this quarter and 5 occurrences of gypsies and travellers were reported with action taken.

This compares to 22 disrepair cases and 10 reports of travellers in the same period of 2019/20. Where possible, disrepair issues are being sorted remotely with the use of photos, videos and the option of video calling.

**Year End Success: 75 enforcements**

### RISK

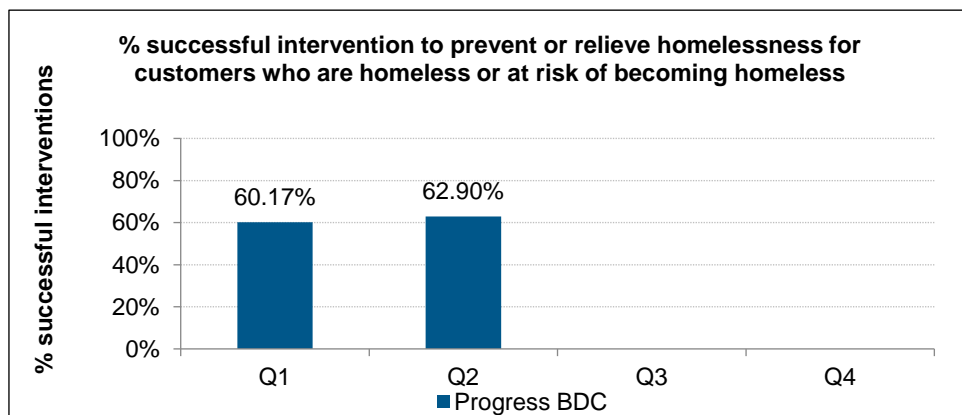
The main risk relates to complaint demand increasing in the tenanted private sector. At present the demand is within the team's capacity.

### CONTEXT

A key aim of the Council is to ensure that we deal appropriately with private sector landlords who rent their properties out. Our role is to ensure that these properties are maintained to an acceptable standard. This work includes identifying, registering and monitoring Houses of Multiple Occupation to ensure they are safe, compliant and are not used for exploitation.

We also ensure that unauthorised gypsy and traveller sites are dealt with appropriately, balancing the welfare of gypsies and travellers, with the impact on the local community.

## % successful intervention to prevent or relieve homelessness for customers who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (Measure reference 19)



### COMMENTS

This figure relates to 27 cases, with 10 being unsuccessful.

Traditionally at point of presentation, officers are able to discuss alternative options such as friends or families whilst we seek future alternative accommodation. Due to the impact of Covid-19 these options are not available providing the team with less time to prevent homelessness. We continue to work closely with those that do call to prevent homelessness at all opportunities.

We are seeing more cases move to the stage of being made homeless within the next 56 days, this is having a detrimental effect on performance indicators as previously presented cases are moving through to homelessness stage in additional to the extra pull due to Covid-19.

**Year End Success: 80% successful interventions**

### RISK

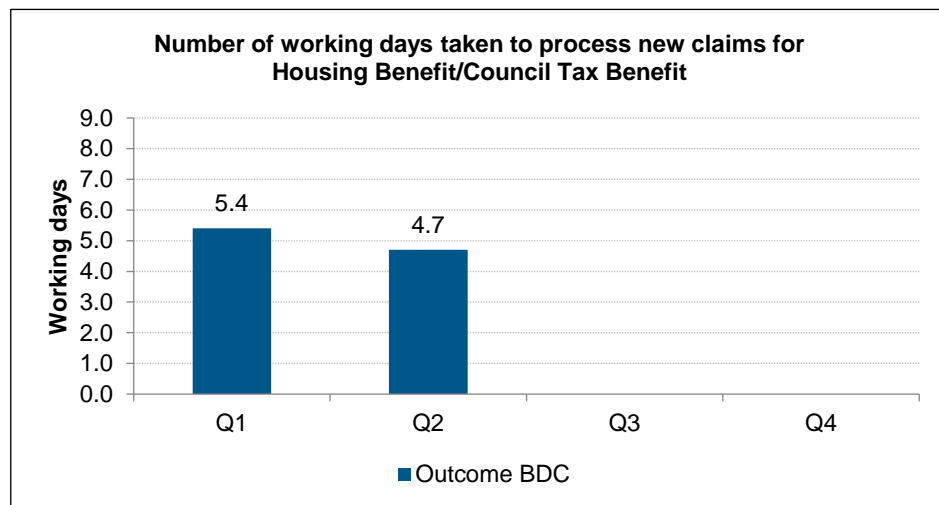
Housing and homelessness will continue to be monitored closely throughout this financial year as we monitor the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on our housing solutions service. We have already seen a 50% increase in demand, and we expect this to continue throughout the year. The team are now progressing a 'Housing Best in Class' project which will ensure we are providing the best Housing service to our residents.

### CONTEXT

Preventing and dealing with homelessness is a key legislative requirement for the Council. Under the Homelessness Reduction Action, we are required to support people if they are risk of homelessness, up to 56 days before they are made homeless. The Council has a strong advice and prevention ethos and this measure helps us to ensure we maintain this ethos.

Nationally, there has been an increasing challenge when it comes to the impact of Covid-19 on homelessness. Since the start of the coronavirus crisis, Councils across the country have faced significant challenges housing large numbers of homeless people in a short space of time. Work continues on a national scale to ensure that Councils have the right support and funding in place to deal with the increased demand and support requirements.

## Number of working days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefit/Council Tax benefit (Measure reference 20)



### COMMENTS

The team have seen a significant increase in work due to the Covid-19 crisis with residents struggling financially due to furloughing

The team were able to prioritise work during this Covid-19 period to focus in on customer claims. Whilst overall the number of contacts for hardship has increased we have been able to put systems in place to enable staff to prioritise cases.

We have seen an increase in circa 50% of change of circumstances over this quarter, as the Covid-19 crisis developed, as residents found themselves furloughed. The team have managed to significantly catch up on outstanding work allowing us to return to pre-covid performance. This combined change of circumstances and new claims Q2 results is credit to the effort the team has put in to make sure people have access to the support both with their rent and Council Tax that vulnerable residents so sorely need at this difficult time

**Year End Success: 7 working days to process new claims and change of circumstances 80% by Q4**

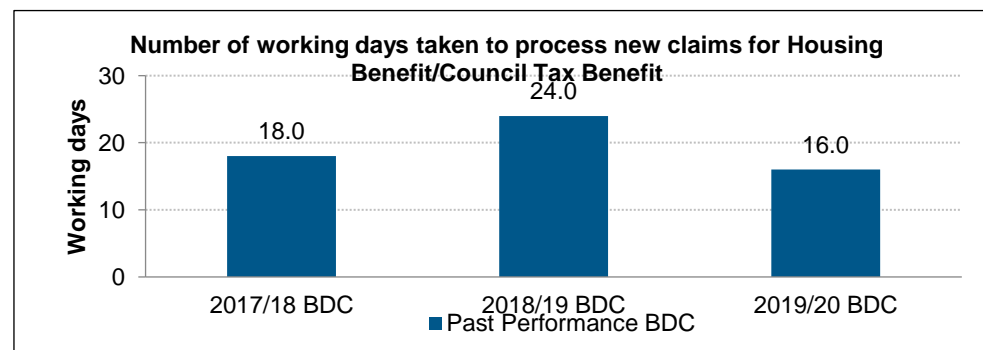
### RISK

This measure was put in place before we were aware of the impact of Covid-19 on the Council, particularly relating to hardship support. The team will continue to prioritise new claimants, but this is a measure that may continue to slip as we cope with unrepresented demand. Resources will continue to be monitored so that we are in the best position we can be to meet this demand.

### CONTEXT

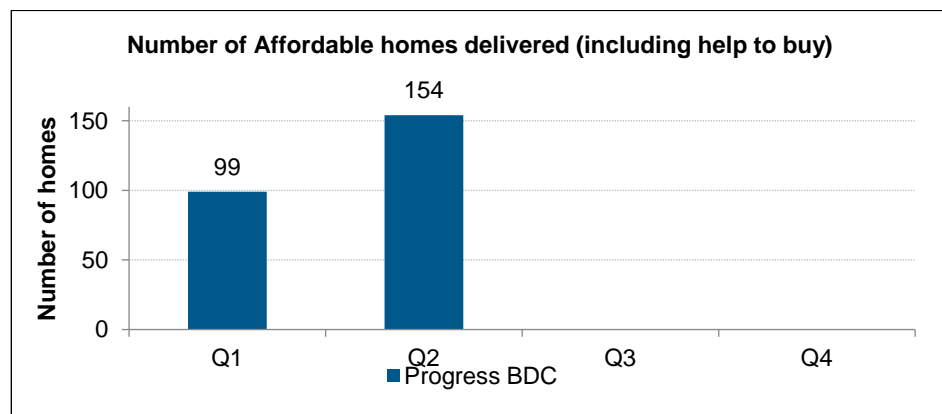
The year-end success set by the Council is an internal standard. Nationally, there are no targets set by Government. Compared to previous years, Broadland is processing new claims quicker than in the past.

Nationally the Department for Works and Pensions do not set any targets for paying claims, only that we are within authority error limits which they set. However, we maintain our own target as its important to the Council that we pay promptly to residents who are in need, and therefore help to reduce the financial pressure on our residents who need help.





## Number of affordable homes delivered (including help to buy) (Measure reference 21)



### COMMENTS

During Q2, 26 homes were completed by developers and housing associations. The predominant delivery was as Affordable Home Ownership products (as Discounted Market Sale). In addition 29 sales through Help to Buy (equity loan) were reported.

On this basis we are set to exceed the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) housing requirement by the end of the current financial year.

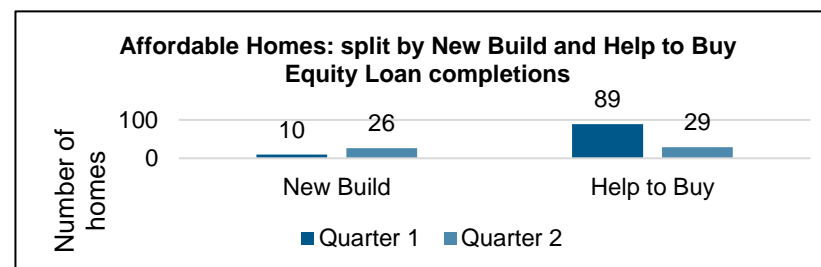
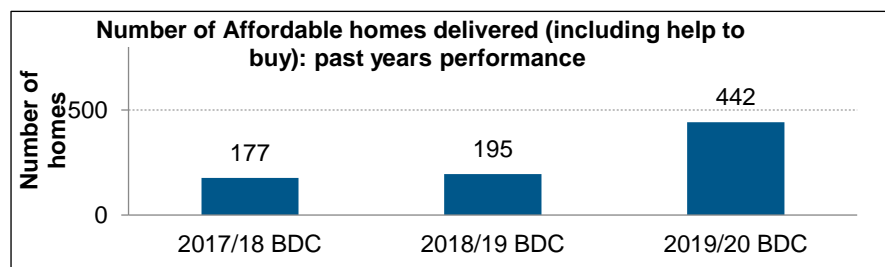
### Year End Success: Baseline

### RISK

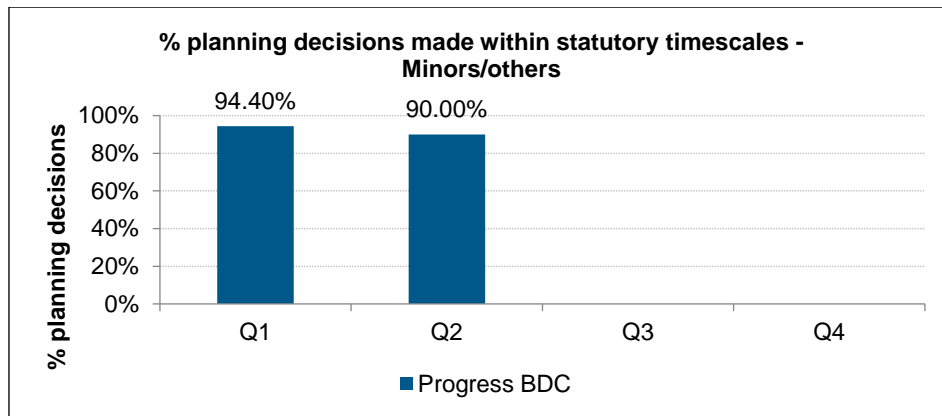
Delivery in Q2 is still significantly reduced from the same period last year. Most sites are showing a 3-6 month slippage in delivery and the assumption is that this may be for all housing delivery within the district – not just for the affordable. Delivery on the smaller sites within the district may be particularly impacted by Covid-19.

### CONTEXT

The graph below shows the number of affordable homes delivered in Broadland over the previous few years. This shows that the number has been increasing over this period. Total for 2019/20 comprises 211 new build affordable home completions and 231 Help to Buy equity loan completions. Previous years include new build affordable home completions only. On average, Broadland has consistently delivered above the Norfolk average for the delivery of affordable homes. Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



## % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – minors/others (Measure reference 23)



### COMMENTS

This relates to 183 (90%) out of 203 applications. 117 (57.6%) were determined in the statutory time period and 66 were determined in an agreed extension of time. The national average for "Other" applications determined in 8 weeks or agreed time limit for Q2 in 2019 was 89%. The rolling Broadland District Council 2 year average for the determination of "Other" applications is currently 95 % which compares to a national target of 70% and as such the Authority is not at risk of special measures.

\* "Other" applications include advertisement consent, Listed Building consent, Certificates of Lawfulness, etc

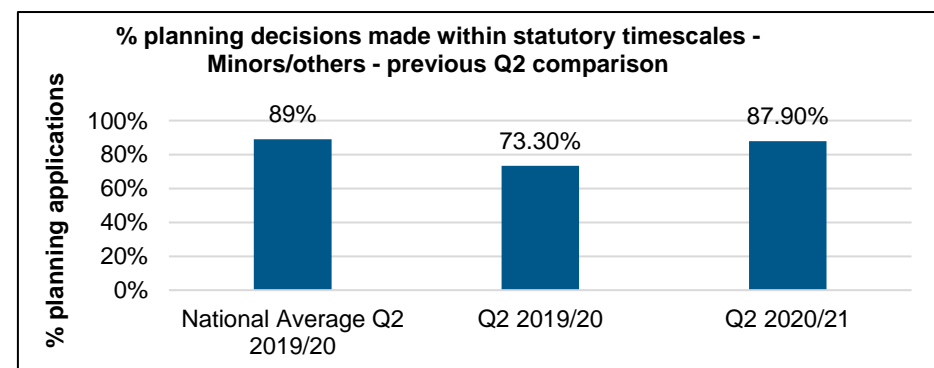
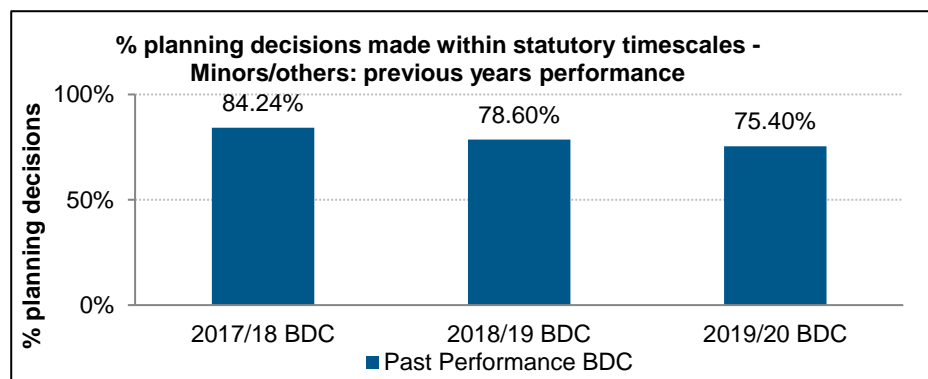
**Year End Success: 90% of decisions**

### RISK

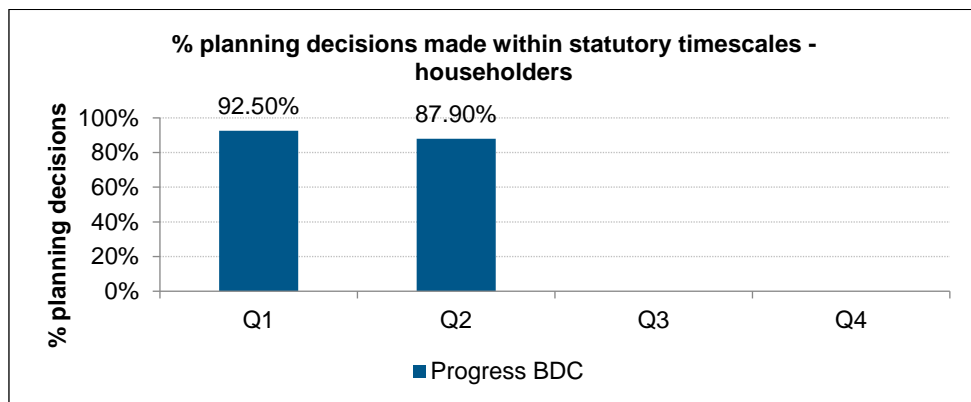
We are currently meeting our internal target, and exceeding the national target of 70%, so there is no risk.

### CONTEXT

The below graphs provide comparative data for previous years and quarters. As can be seen, we are currently performing better than previous years.



## % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – householders (Measure reference 23)



### COMMENTS

This relates to 109 (87.9%) out of 124 applications. 70 (56%) were determined within the statutory time limit and 39 were determined within an agreed extension of time. 10 (8%) were determined in 6 weeks or less.

There has been a significant increase in the number of applications submitted compared to previous years, which together with delays associated with Covid-19 restrictions such as initial challenges of home working and delays in displaying site notices has resulted in a slightly lower performance.

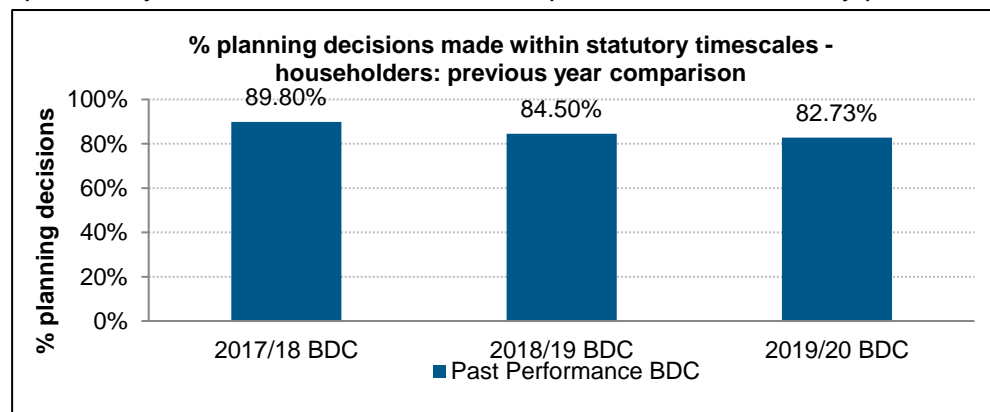
**Year End Success: 95% of decisions**

### RISK

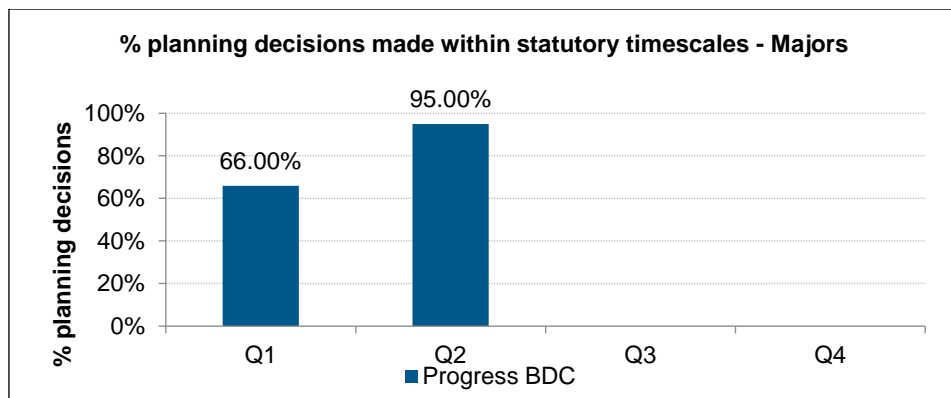
This is below our internal target of 95% which is partly due to remote working during Covid-19 and the ability to display site notices. Unlikely to be longer term risks as new working practices are developed.

### CONTEXT

The below graph provides comparative data for previous years. As can be seen for this quarter, we are currently performing better than previous years.



## % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – majors (Measure reference 23)



### COMMENTS

The figure of 95% relates to 19 applications out of 20. There were 9 applications determined within the statutory time limit of 8 weeks and 10 were determined within an agreed extension of time.

The national average for "Major" applications determined in 13 weeks or agreed time limit for Q2 in 2019 was 87%.

We are now measured as part of a national measure for a rolling 2 years performance. If we fall below the national measure of 60% we will have special measures introduced. Our current rolling 2 year performance for majors is 88 %, which means the Authority is not at risk of special measures.

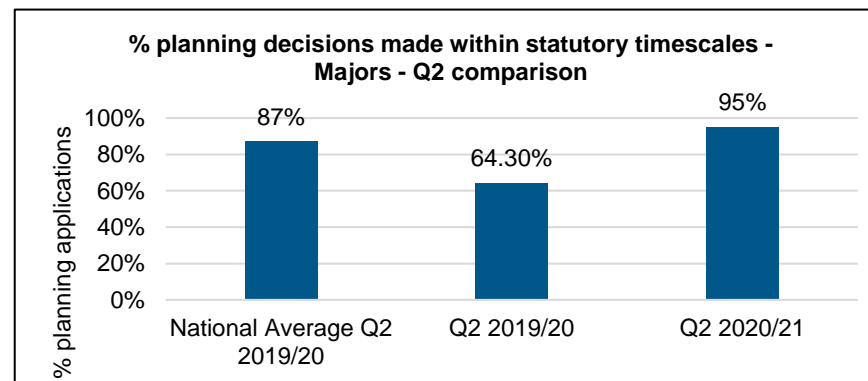
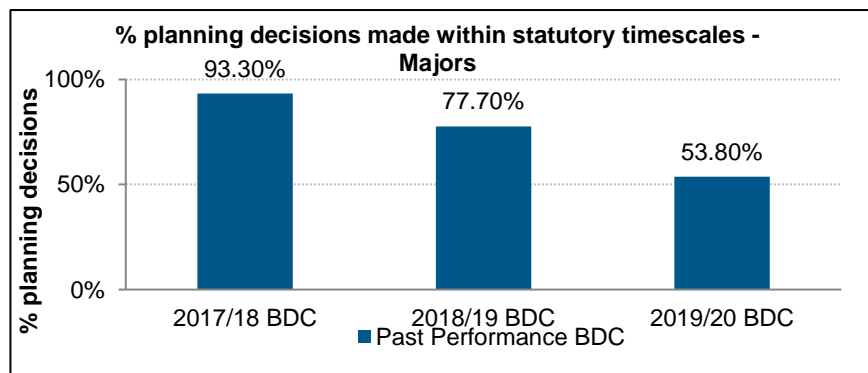
**Year End Success: 95% of majors agreed in time**

### RISK

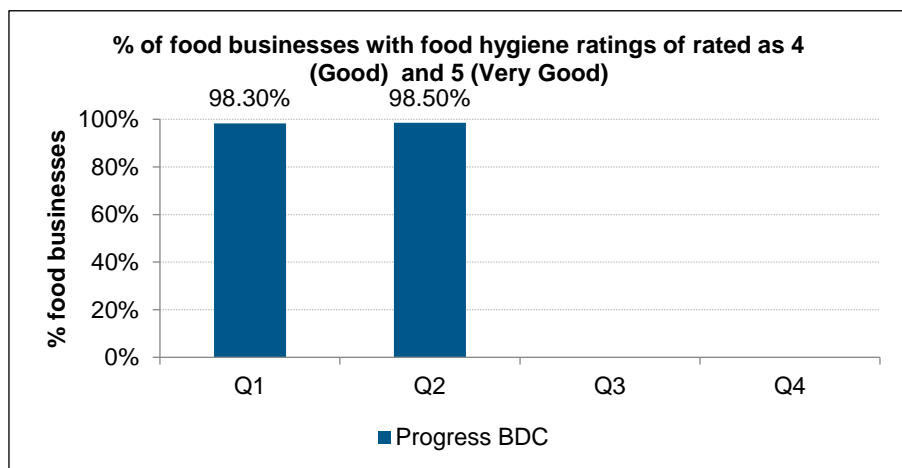
No risks or issues to report with this measure.

### CONTEXT

The below graph provides comparative data for previous years and quarters. The Council is currently performing better in Q2 compared to previous years.



## % of food businesses with food hygiene ratings of rated as 4 (Good) and 5 (Very Good) (Measure reference 24)



### COMMENTS

There is little change in the result, partly because food safety inspections leading to ratings could not be carried out between late March and mid-September 2020. During Q2 the Food, Safety and Licensing Team has continued to focus on compliance with The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 2)(England) Regulations 2020, amendments and additional Regulations enacted to control transmission of the virus. Members of the team continue to actively collaborate in a multi-agency approach across Norfolk as we look to ensure that businesses are complying with the Regulations, protecting their employees and the public, and receiving the best advice possible to support this. Particular focus has been given to larger manufacturers providing preventative support and guidance, in conjunction with Public Health for both the manufacturing environment and also guiding social factors outside of the workplace. Contracted proactive support has been provided to food businesses in particular to discuss the importance of additional checks on reopening and compliance with food safety matters for those able or required to remain open. More recently routine food safety interventions have recommenced, prioritising the higher risk businesses.

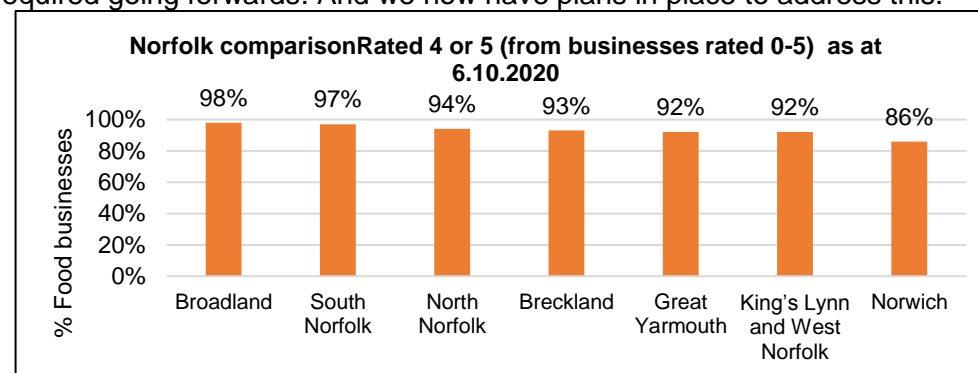
### Year End Success: Baseline

### RISK

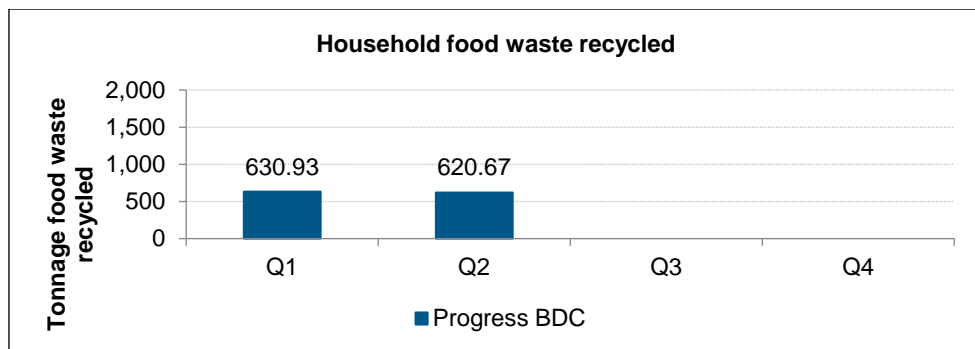
The food safety inspection programme has received attention from the Food Standards Agency, as previously reported and the subsequent additional backlog in the routine food safety inspection programme 2020/21 is being reviewed. Food, Safety and Licensing operating staffing continue to be challenged by vacancies and maternity absences. A successful internal appointment has provided a net gain of 0.2FTE towards filling these vacancies. Filling vacant posts is now critical to performance and resilience within the team, additional capacity is likely to be required going forwards. And we now have plans in place to address this.

### CONTEXT

The graph to the right provides an overview of the performance for Norfolk as a whole. This shows that the area of Broadland is currently performing well compared to other authorities.



## Household food waste recycled (Measure reference 25)



### COMMENTS

This is for household food waste only. Q2 tonnage figures are 88.37t higher than the same period in 19/20. This will partly be due to behaviour and lifestyle changes as a result of the pandemic and lockdown being introduced, resulting in more people at home.

The recycling and partnership team are currently awaiting confirmation on future workstreams, this will determine what effort is placed into the food waste service in future.

### Year End Success: Increase in overall gross tonnage

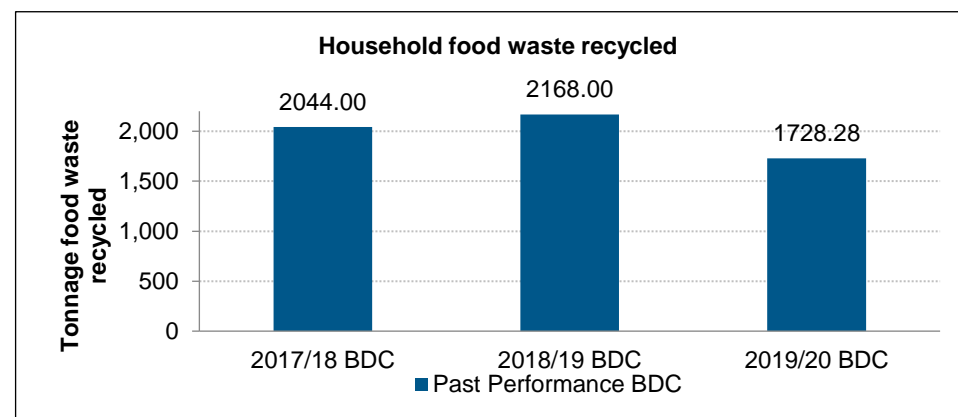
### RISK

Future workstreams are currently being discussed and what areas to focus on with the aim of maximising recycling rates. This work will determine the amount of resource placed on the food waste service. Nationally there is a drive to minimise food waste, for example WRAPs 'Wasting food is out of date' campaign that launches in October 2020. The reduction of food waste will help to reduce residual waste for householders not on the food service and may impact the tonnage of food waste collected. Potential future lockdowns will also influence behaviour and food waste tonnages placed out for collection.

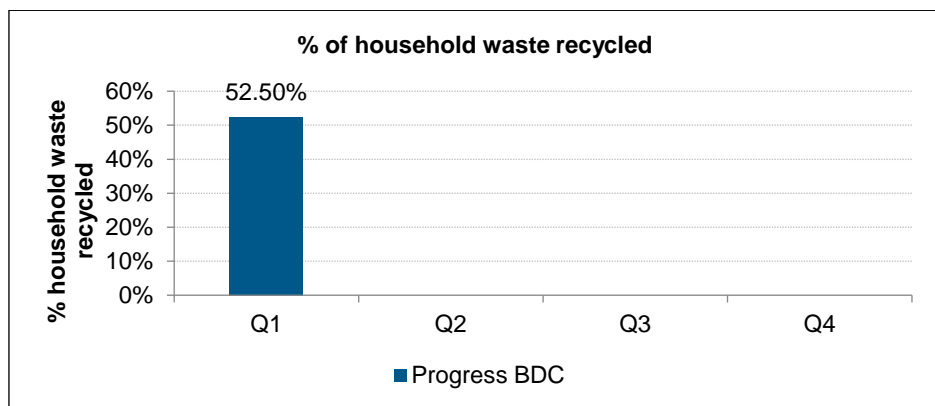
### CONTEXT

As mentioned above, there is a national drive to minimise food wastage across the UK. WRAP research has shown that in 2018, the UK throws away 6.6 million tonnes of household food waste a year in the UK, compared to 8.1 million tonnes in 2007. Of the 6.6 million tonnes thrown away, almost three quarters (70% of the total) is food we could have eaten (4.5 million tonnes). Source: Food surplus and waste in the UK, WRAP 2020

As shown in the graph to the right, the amount of food waste recycled in Broadland last year in 19/20 was slightly lower than the previous year.



## % of household waste recycled (Measure reference 26)



### COMMENTS

Q1 data is showing an increase of nearly 3% on last years recycling rates.

Q2 data will be available in January 2021 in line with waste data flow submissions. This will be reported through to Cabinets as part of Q3 reports.

The team are currently undertaking research to understand the best practice from other Councils that have the highest recycling rates in England. This will be used to create a work programme that will focus on continuing to increase recycling. The success of the programme will be dependent upon resources available to carry out the work.

**Year End Success: 2% increase**

### RISK

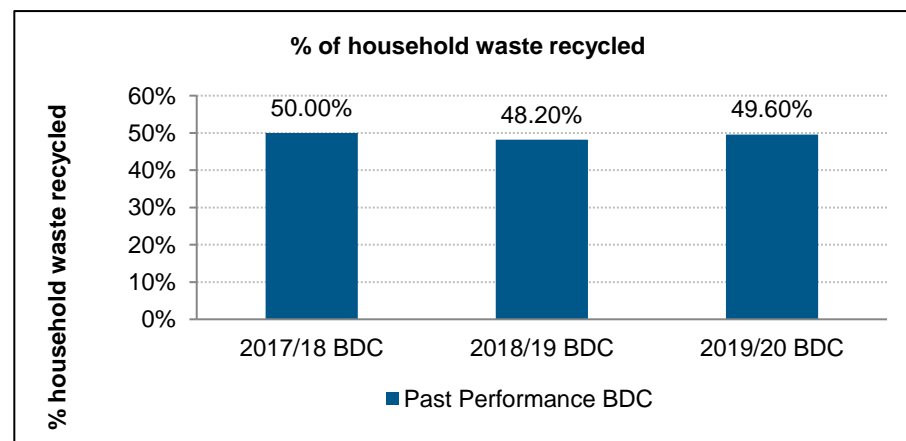
The Covid-19 pandemic has and continues to create uncertainty over future work programme of the recycling team. A large amount of work undertaken by the team involves community engagement and the monitoring of recycling bins, which has not been possible due to Covid-19. In addition, the consequences of the pandemic may in the future, impact recycling rates through increased contamination and availability of markets wanting to purchase the recycled materials. Note: the overall recycling rate includes garden waste, and this is heavily impacted by weather extremities. Potential future lockdowns may also change the waste composition collected impacting the recycling rate.

### CONTEXT

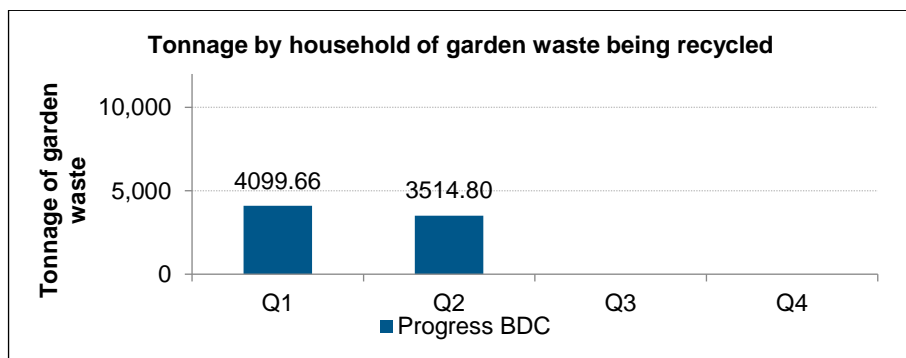
The graph to the right shows the annual % of household waste recycled in Broadland for the previous financial years.

On average across England, in 18/19, the annual recycling rate of household waste was 44.7%, showing that Broadland consistently has a higher recycling rate compared to average.

Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, ONS



## Tonnage by household of garden waste being recycled (Measure reference 27)



### COMMENTS

The 2020/2021 Q2 data is 88.37t higher than the same period for 2019/20. This will be due to more customers being on the garden waste service combined with more householders potentially still being at home due to the pandemic. The team are currently undertaking research to understand the best practice from other Councils that have the highest recycling rates in England. This will be used to create a work programme that will focus on continuing to increase recycling. The success of the programme will be dependent upon resource available to carry out the work.

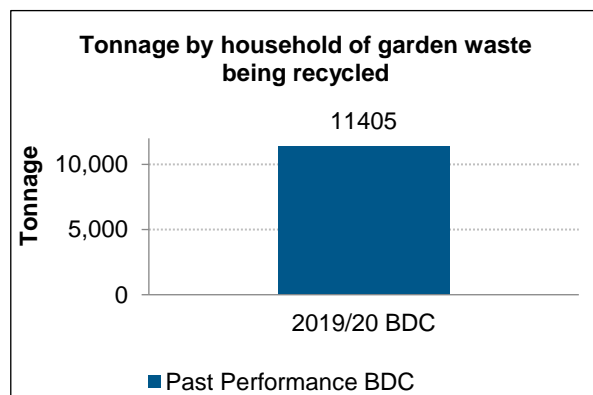
### Year End Success: Increase in tonnage

### RISK

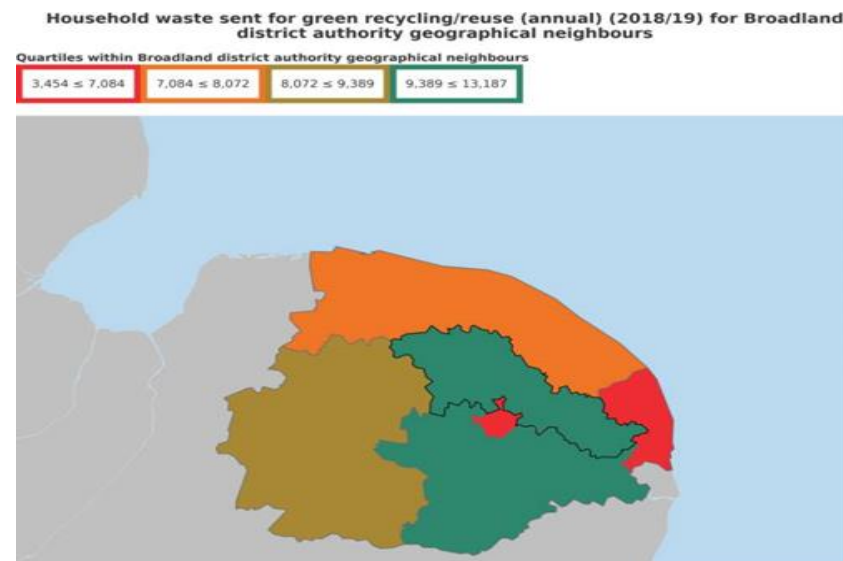
The Covid-19 pandemic has and continues to create uncertainty over future work programme of the recycling team. The team are currently working on future work streams and this will be heavily influenced by the amount of resources available and community engagement that can be undertaken. Potential future lockdowns will also impact work carried out and resident's behaviour patterns. Extremities in weather can also influence garden waste tonnage collected.

### CONTEXT

The graph below shows the past performance of Broadland for household garden waste being recycled by tonnage.

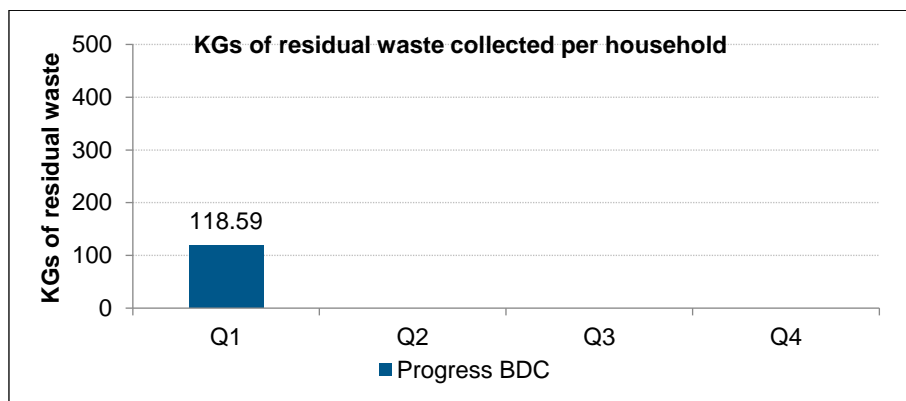


In comparison with neighbouring authorities, the latest information shows that Broadland sends a higher amount of garden waste to be recycled compared to average. This can be seen in the map to the right. Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, LG Inform





## KGs of residual waste collected per household (Measure reference 28)



### COMMENTS

The Q1 2020/2021 figure has increased by 10.11kg from 108.47kg to 118.59kg of residual waste per household. It is likely that this is due to the national lockdown and more residents being at home. The team are currently undertaking research into the Councils that have the highest recycling rates in England. It is likely that this research will highlight that many Councils with high recycling rates also have lower residual waste tonnages. This research will be used to focus on continuing to increase recycling combined with waste minimisation. This performance data is provisional until the dwelling stock number is updated for 2020/2021 in waste data flow, which will be around October 2021 when the district value figure is released. The quarter 2 data will not be available until January 2021 after it has been submitted and checked by Waste Data Flow. This data will be provisional until the dwelling stock number is updated in waste data flow. This will be around October 2021 when the district value figure is released. This will be reported through to Cabinets as part of Q3 reports.

### Year End Success: Decrease in KGs of residual waste collected per household (from 2019/20)

### RISK

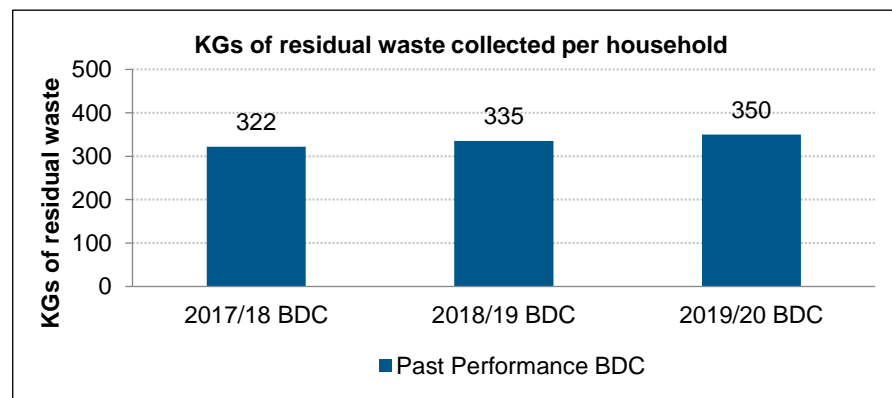
It is likely the Covid-19 pandemic and residents' behaviour will have a negative impact on this measure. The quarter 1 data 2020/2021 indicated an increase in the amount of residual waste collected per household. This could be due to residents being at home more and naturally producing more waste, additionally the lockdown resulted in some residents having more available time for potential clear outs. The current pandemic is ongoing, and the surrounding uncertainty may result in more residents staying at home throughout the year resulting in more waste being produced per household.

### CONTEXT

The graph on the right shows the previous year comparisons for the KG's of residual waste collected per household. This shows that year on year, the figure for Broadland has been increasing.

Nationally, there has been a decrease in waste from households, with England being responsible for the vast majority of waste, generating a total of 22 million tonnes (83% of the UK total) in 2018. Alongside this, there has also been a decrease in the national recycling rate.

Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



## Number of verified missed bins for all waste per 100,000 collections (Measure reference 29)



### COMMENTS

The Quarter 1 figure of 27 missed bins per 100,000 collections was on track to meet the full year target.

However, the Quarter 2 figure of 40 missed bins per 100,000 collections shows a drop in performance. This was due to a number of factors; first, our contractor experienced a combination of sickness combined with holiday which left one of the garden waste collection crews lacking knowledge of the collection round. Second, resident behaviour change (e.g. working from home) may have resulted in an increase in missed bin reports because the bin has not been emptied at its 'usual time'. Linked with this it may also be the case that with more vehicles parked at the roadside (rather than driven to work) there may have been a rise in those bins not being either visible or readily accessible. Fourth, Customer Service resource issues may have resulted in some 'missed bin' reports not being challenged.

**Year End Success: No more than 30 missed bins per 100,000 collected**

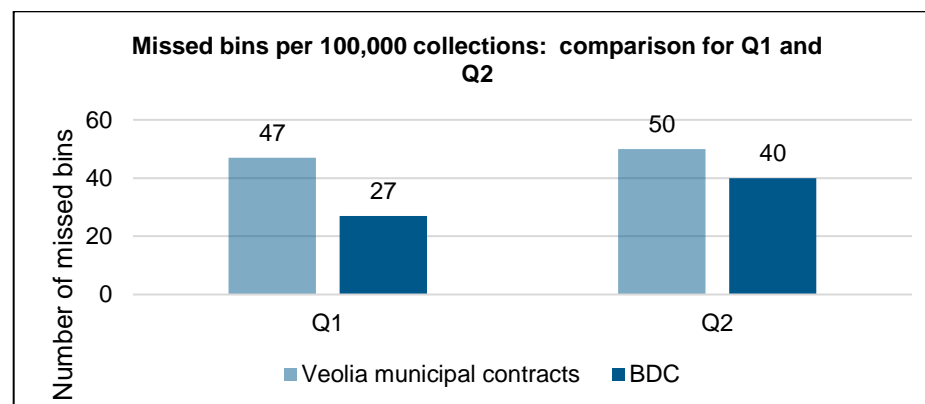
### RISK

Our contractor has addressed the 'knowledge gap' in the collection crew through additional training. The ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, with continued emphasis on working from home, may mean that resident behaviour change i.e. more time spent at home, will result in a higher incidence of perceived 'missed bins' being reported and ongoing difficulties with parked vehicles and attendant issues with access and visibility. Another possible issue associated with 'behaviour change' is that bins are not being presented for collection as residents have got out of the habit of putting their bins out as they leave the house to go to work.

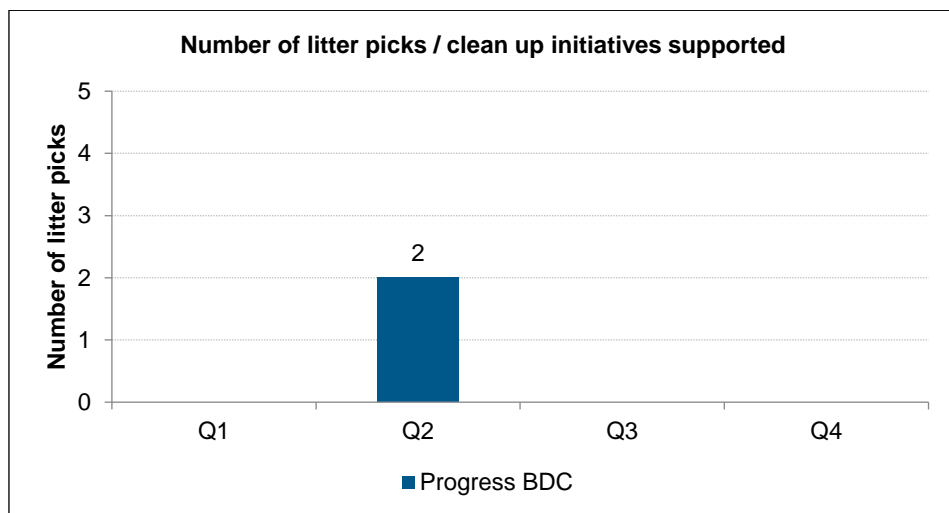
### CONTEXT

Veolia monitors the missed bins per 100,000 collections across some 35 municipal contracts held with a variety of Local Authorities in urban, semi urban and rural areas. In Quarter 1, Veolia municipal contracts averaged 47 missed bins per 100,000 collections whilst quarter 2 municipal contracts averaged 50 missed bins per 100,000 collections. So, the Broadland contract is performing ahead of the municipal average with a missed bin rate of 27 in quarter 1 and 40 in quarter 2 respectively.

We aim to do some desk research in the coming months to determine whether comparable missed bin data is available either locally (other Norfolk LA's) or nationally.



## Number of litter picks / clean up initiatives supported (Measure reference 30)



### COMMENTS

The Broadland Community Clear Up was re-started in September to coincide with the Great British September Clean initiative (Organised by the Keep Britain Tidy Group) which ran nationally from 11th to 27th September.

Due to the prevailing Covid-19 guidance on social distancing and the uncertainty around further restrictions, the scheme was not widely promoted, rather the focus was on contacting groups and parishes that have previously participated on a regular basis. The low take-up may suggest a degree of nervousness by residents towards meeting in groups and also some scepticism as to whether planned events would proceed.

### Year End Success: Baseline

### RISK

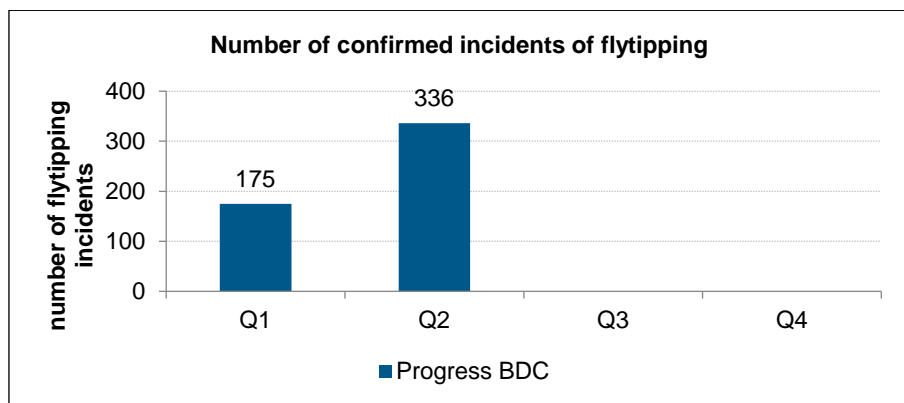
We know from previous experience that, as we move into the autumn and winter months, with shorter days and potential for adverse weather, the demand for community litter picks falls away. We will review the prevailing Covid-19 situation early in the new year with a view to deciding on how best to proceed with promoting community litter picking during 2021.

### CONTEXT

We are not aware that litter picking activity is recorded nationally. However, we aim to do some desk research in the coming months to determine whether comparable litter picking data is available either locally (other Norfolk LA's) or nationally.

Community litter picking has been a regular feature on the Broadland calendar for the past 15 years. We have a small base of some 10 to 15 well established groups who come back year in year out to do their bit to keep their local area clean and tidy. We hope to build on this solid base in the coming years.

## Number of confirmed incidents of fly tipping (Measure reference 31)



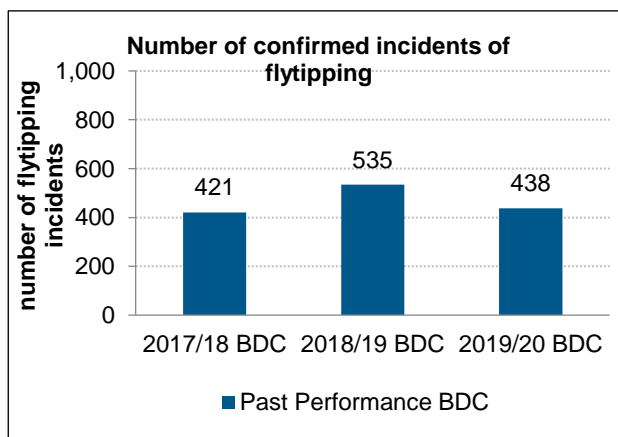
**Year End Success: Baseline**

### RISK

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic with households being at home, followed by the closure of the County Council's Household Recycling Centres, there was a risk in Q1 that the number of fly tipping incidents might increase in Broadland like other parts of the County and nationally there was a substantial increase in the numbers recorded, but this increase was effectively managed by Veolia. The risk has now reduced with the re-opening of the Household Recycling Centres. The County Council has now re-opened all 20 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) in Norfolk (there are some changes to how the sites operate), therefore residents now have the option of using the HWRC's.

### CONTEXT

The graph to the right shows the number of confirmed fly tipping incidents in Broadland for previous years.

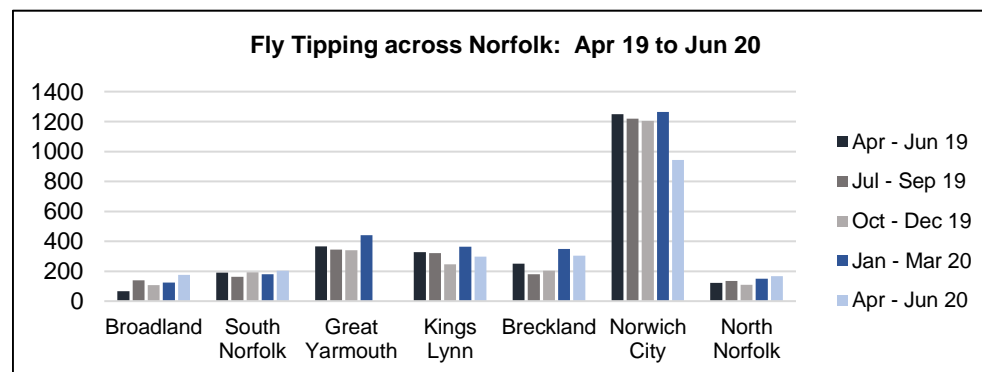


### COMMENTS

Comparing the current quarter 2 figure of 161 confirmed fly tips to the same quarter in 2019/20 shows an increase of some 21 fly tips. In part, this may be accounted for due to the temporary closure of the County Council Household Waste Recycling Centres for a number of weeks. We may also be seeing some behaviour change in that residents are spending more time at home, exercising in their local area and perhaps more likely to see and report incidents of fly tipping.

In a similar vein, residents have had more time to 'clear the clutter' and or carry out DIY and the subsequent waste may not always have been disposed of correctly.

Broadland, below, had the lowest incidence of fly tipping in Norfolk in 2019/20 with 438 fly tips, followed by North Norfolk 517 and South Norfolk with 725.



## ANNUAL DELIVERY MEASURES

There are a number of measures outlined in the Delivery Plan for 2020/21 which are reported annually to Cabinet. These measures will be brought through as part of the Q4 reports. The measures are:

- Collection rate of Council Tax (an update has been provided as part of the Q2 report, but a full update will be provided at Q4 on the annual collection rate) – measure reference 7
- Collection rate of Business Rates (an update has been provided as part of the Q2 report, but a full update will be provided at Q4 on the annual collection rate) – measure reference 8
- Number of new jobs created – measure reference 7
- Employment rate – measure reference 10
- Those in employment claiming benefits – measure reference 11
- Business survival rates – measure reference 13
- Number of new homes delivered – measure reference 22

## **APPROVAL OF UK MUNICIPAL BOND AGENCY'S FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

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**Portfolio:** Finance

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

This report seeks approval for the Council to enter into the borrowing documents prepared by the UK Municipal Bonds Agency (the "Agency"). It sets out the background of the Agency, key facets of the Framework Agreement and the advantages of entering into the Agreement.

### **Recommendations:**

To recommended to Council:

- a) to approve the Council's entry into a Framework Agreement and its accompanying schedules.

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Although the Council has no immediate need to borrow externally, entering into the Framework Agreement enables the Council to access funding from the Agency if and when required. Access to the cheapest source of finance will reduce the costs of borrowing and thus its impact on the Council's Revenue Budget. Over time, the Agency's business case suggested that the savings delivered by the Agency would be 0.2 per cent. In line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, use of the Agency for borrowing will be considered on a case by case basis along with other options, such as borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board or from other Local Authorities.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council approved the latest Treasury Management Strategy on the 11 February 2020 which included a commitment for Officers to bring a report to Cabinet in due course reviewing the success of the first bond issue by the Agency and seeking approval to include the Agency as a source of financing in the future.

## 3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

### Formation of the Agency

- 3.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) established the UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc to reduce the cost of councils' debt financing. An outline business case was prepared in 2011-12 and following a brief review in October 2013 the decision was taken to update the business case. This was published as the *Revised Business Case* in March 2014 and led to the establishment of the Agency.

### Business Case

- 3.2 The *Revised Business Case* set out a clear rationale for the establishment of a bonds agency, noting there was ample evidence from Scandinavia, Japan and New Zealand that a bonds agency would deliver ample benefits to local authorities, not least reduced borrowing costs. Most importantly, the *Revised Business Case* established a clear justification for a bonds agency on public interest grounds, primarily that it would:

- Exercise effective oversight of local authority borrowing to help ensure that local authorities would not undertake excessive and risky borrowing.
- Would act in the interests of local authorities and would not offer complicated and high-risk financial products to them.
- Would be transparent and fair in its dealings with local authorities.

A copy of the revised business case can be downloaded [here](#).

- 3.3 The Revised Business case outlined the key benefits for local authorities as:
- Savings due to lower interest rates
  - Protection from changes to the PWLB's terms and conditions and diversified funding sources

- Fully transparent pricing
- Tailored products to suit local authorities' needs
- Economies of scale thereby reducing costs

### Loans

3.4 The Agency borrows money, primarily in the capital markets, to lend to local authorities, it is not a bank and will only borrow to fund loans it has already agreed to provide. The Agency has three lending programmes:

- Proportionally guaranteed, pooled loans of £1 million or more for maturities greater than one year.
- Standalone loans to a single local authority for £250 million or more for maturities greater than one year. These loans are outside of the proportional guarantee and are guaranteed solely by the borrower, who must obtain an external credit rating from one or more of the major credit rating agencies.
- Short term, pooled loans, outside of the proportional guarantee for maturities of less than one year.

Except for standalone loans, local authorities do not need to obtain a credit rating from one of the three major credit rating agencies, Moody's, Standard & Poor's or Fitch.

For all loans with a maturity greater than one year, an authority will be required to enter into the Agency's *Framework Agreement*, although those authorities borrowing on a standalone basis are not required to enter into the proportional guarantee.

To enable local authorities to enter into short term loans without needing to follow lengthy governance processes, the Agency will use a separate loan agreement for those loans.

3.5 The Agency will use one or more Special Purpose Vehicles ("SPV") to issue its bonds. Doing so eliminates the Agency from the credit structure enabling it to operate with limited capital. All borrowing is undertaken in sterling and no maturity or interest rate risk will be undertaken by the Agency.

### The Framework Agreement

3.6 Any local authority wishing to borrow for the medium-term and long-term through the Agency is required to enter into the Agency's *Framework Agreement*. This legal document forms a contract between each local authority and the Agency. It comprises:

- The Framework Agreement itself, which lays out how the Agency will interact with local authorities including borrowing arrangements and key contractual terms.
- Schedule 1: *Form of Authority Accession Deed*, which local authorities sign to commit themselves to the Framework Agreement.
- Schedule 2: *Form of Guarantee*, which is the proportional guarantee required from local authorities.



- Schedule 3: *Loan Standard Terms*, which is the loan agreement that covers any borrowing by an authority.
- Schedule 4: *Form of Loan Confirmation*, which supplements the Loan Standard Terms and confirms details of a loan such as principal, maturity, interest rate and etc. It is signed by the Agency and a borrower.
- In most cases, it is anticipated that the executive and full council will approve an authority's entry into the Framework Agreement.

### Credit Process

- 3.7 Credit quality is at the heart of all debt financing and the interests of the Agency, local authorities and investors are all aligned towards ensuring that the Agency maintains a rigorous and smart credit process.

The Agency will undertake its own credit ratings of the borrowers and will exclude those whom it believes either do not have the necessary credit standing or whose business model, particularly level of commercial property investment and attendant debt, are deemed excessive.

The Agency uses a proprietary credit methodology that is built upon those used by the major credit rating agencies, particularly that of Moody's. The process is based on four key elements:

- Credit scoring model
- Document Review
- Cohort analysis
- Discussions with councils

These elements are combined to calculate a credit score for each borrower. The score that is required for a local authority to be eligible to borrow through the Agency is set by the Board and periodically reviewed. In addition, there are a series of "red lines" that should they be crossed by a local authority, automatically mean that a local authority will not be able to borrow e.g. if the accounts of a local authority are qualified. While the agency has confirmed that the council has passed the high-level credit check, the full credit process cannot be completed and the Agency's Board cannot take formal credit decisions until a bond is being readied. The full credit assessments are at a point in time and therefore only valid for a short period of time.

### Proportional guarantee

- 3.8 The majority of loans provided by the Agency are expected to be pooled and guaranteed collectively by borrowers. To borrow through the pooled loan programme, local authorities are required to give a guarantee to the Agency's bond holders and lenders that fund the loans. The guarantee is proportional and several:

- A guarantor is liable for a share of any default, which is proportional to its share of the total pool of loans allowing for the default e.g. if an authority's borrowing totals 1 per cent of the pool following a default, it will be liable for 1 per cent of the default.

- “Several” means an authority can only be held liable for its specific obligations, not those of others. This prevents bondholders using the guarantee to single out a council or small group of councils to cover a default by another council.
- An authority that has no outstanding loans to the Agency is not liable under the proportional guarantee.

To date no UK local authority has ever defaulted on a loan. This dates back to the granting of a Royal Charter to the Corporation of London in 1067.

The proportional guarantee is in favour of those providing finance to the Agency and its Special Purpose Vehicles. The guarantee does not cover any other expenditure of the Agency or its Special Purpose Vehicles i.e. running costs such as salaries, service charges and rents are not covered by the proportional guarantee.

The proportional guarantee is markedly different to that previously required by the Agency and as set out in its business case:

- The guarantee can be signed by a council without the council being immediately liable to pay out if the guarantee were called upon because its proportion of the loan book would be zero.
- An authority that has borrowed from the Agency and has repaid all its loans has no liability under the guarantee because a council's proportion of the loan book would be zero. No local authority needs to be concerned that it may have many years exposure under the proportional guarantee even if it has repaid its loans.
- The liability under the guarantee is subject to a cash limit equal to the total amount borrowed by a council. This puts a ceiling on the liability of a council under the guarantee if there were a significant number of defaults by local authorities. It should be noted that any liability under the proportional guarantee is in addition to the amount a local authority has borrowed from the Agency.

The proportional guarantee is “unconditional” and “irrevocable”. This means:

- A council is unable to impose additional conditions before it pays out if the Proportional Guarantee is called upon.
- A council cannot revoke its guarantee while it has loans outstanding from the Agency. This prevents a council from benefitting from a lower interest rate when it borrows and then walking away from the obligation that delivered that benefit.

#### Mitigation around defaults and triggering of the proportional guarantee

- 3.9 Concentration limits are used to cap the proportion of the pooled loans that can be lent to a single local authority. This ensures that if a local authority were to default, the exposure of other borrowers under the contributions mechanism and the proportional guarantee is capped. The limits are set as a percentage of the total loan book. The concentration limits are decided by the Board of Directors and will reduce as the volume of pooled loans grows.

Each year, for a variety of reasons, a small number of local authorities are late paying their debts and other bills. In order to prevent non-payment triggering a default and call on the proportional guarantee, the contributions mechanism provides funds to the Agency, if it cannot cover non-payment of interest or principal owed to it from its own resources or credit lines.

Under the mechanism, if a local authority fails to make a payment and it cannot be quickly rectified, the other local authority borrowers are required to lend money to the Agency pro-rata to their share of the loan pool. For example, if an authority's borrowing totals 1 per cent of the pool following non-payment by another local authority, it will be required to lend the Agency 1 per cent of the default. Interest will be payable on the loans. The amount a borrower is liable to lend under the contributions mechanism is subject to a cash limit equal to the total amount borrowed by the council. This puts a ceiling on the liability of a council if there were a significant number of defaults by local authorities.

#### Lending timescales

- 3.10 For medium- and long-term loans, it will take 6-8 weeks to complete the first three pooled bond issues from the point there is sufficient demand for loans to support a benchmark bond of £250 million. This is to allow the credit rating agencies sufficient time to confirm the credit rating of the bonds. Thereafter, the time needed to issue a pooled bond will progressively shorten.

The time necessary for a standalone bond will vary and depending upon whether or not an authority has an existing credit rating. For those authorities with a credit rating, it will take 2-4 weeks to issue a bond and for those without, 6-8 weeks because it will take the credit rating agencies up to 6 weeks to undertake their initial credit assessment.

For short term loans funded by the commercial paper programme, it is anticipated that it will initially take up to three weeks to undertake the issues due to local authorities needing to approve the loan agreement.

#### Agency Governance

- 3.11 The Agency is overseen by its Board of Directors comprising seven directors. The Board has control of all facets of the Agency including strategy and credit policy.

The Board and its individual directors are accountable to the Agency's shareholders, who are the Local Government Association ("LGA") and 56 UK local authorities. Ultimate control rests with these shareholders.

Further detail on the Classes of Share and Voting Structure, Approach to risk management, Governance Structure, Board of Directors and the Shareholders can be found in Appendix A.

#### First Bond issue

- 3.12 On 5 March 2020, the Agency issued its inaugural £350 million bond on behalf of Lancashire County Council. The bond was a 5-year floating rate note, priced at 0.8 per cent over SONIA (Sterling Overnight Interbank Average Rate). This pricing was significantly better than could be obtained from the PWLB, thereby

demonstrating that the Agency can deliver significant savings for local government, validating the key assumption that led to its creation. The interest rate was 0.81 per cent below the PWLB 3-month variable rate on the day and 1.08 per cent lower than the 5-year maturity rate.

#### **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agree to enter into the Framework Agreement with the Agency to enable the Council to access funding from the Agency as and when required. In line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, use of the Agency for borrowing will be considered on a case by case basis along with other options, such as borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board or from other Local Authorities.

#### **5 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The Council could decide not to enter into the Framework Agreement if it deemed the proportional and several guarantee an unacceptable risk, however this introduces the risk that the Council may then pay a higher level of interest in utilising an alternative source of funding.

#### **6 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 6.1 The risk is not in entering into the Framework Agreement with the agency as the proportional and several guarantee does not come into force until the Council has actually undertaken borrowing from the Agency.
- 6.2 The main risk is around default from other borrowers in the pool, Officers believe that this risk is low given that no local authority has ever defaulted before and should a default happen the Council's liability would be limited to the value of the loan it has taken out.
- 6.3 **Resource Implications** – The opportunity to borrow from the Agency could reduce the cost of borrowing with lower interest rates compared to other external sources of finance.
- 6.4 **Legal Implications** – The Council has the power to enter into the Framework Agreement under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 – the general power of competence. The power to borrow under the Framework Agreement is provided in Section 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 – the power to borrow.

#### **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The inaugural bond issue by the Agency has demonstrated that it can deliver borrowing at a competitive rate for the sector. Completing the Framework Agreement provides the Council with the opportunity to take advantage of this source of financing should the necessity arise in the future.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 To recommended to Council:

- a) to approve the Council's entry into a Framework Agreement and its accompanying schedules;

Appendix A – Agency Corporate Governance

**Background Papers - None**

### Classes of Share and Voting Structure

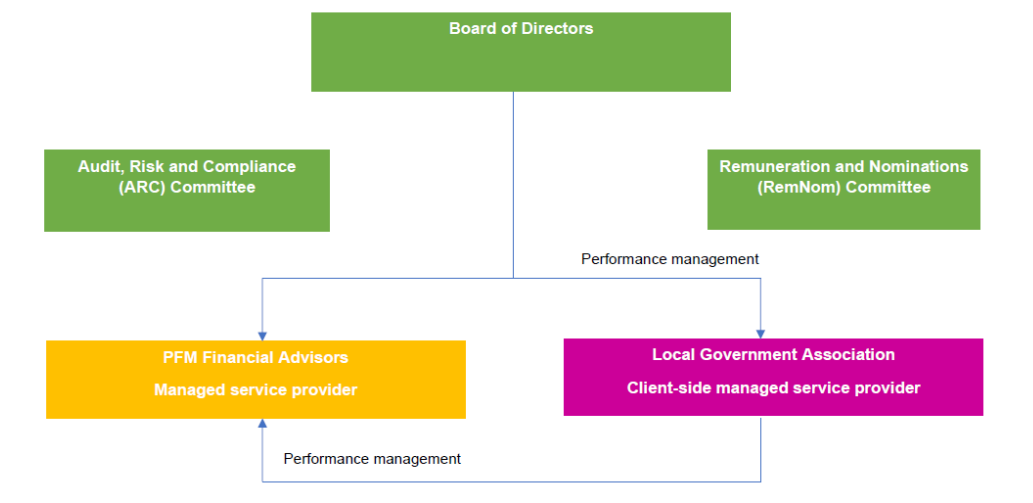
The Agency has two classes of shares in issue: “LGA Shares” and “B Shares”; the former are held by the LGA and the latter by the local authority shareholders. Both classes of share have equal economic and voting rights, but the LGA shares confer on the Local Government Association the right of veto concerning the appointment of directors and changes to the Agency’s *Articles of Association*. The rights of veto conferred on the LGA are to ensure that the ethos and operations of the company cannot be altered to the detriment of wider local government. The voting rights of any shareholder is capped at 5 per cent of total shareholders’ voting rights.

### Risk Management

The Agency has an extremely conservative approach to risk management. The Governance, Risk and Compliance Framework, together with the detailed policies and procedures that flow from that framework, set out the UK Municipal Bonds Agency’s strategy, processes and practices to ensure that its:

- governance and management is of a high standard;
- credit processes and lending policies are robust and appropriate; and
- adherence to laws and regulations is assured.

### Governance Structure



## Board of Directors

### Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman

Sir Merrick Cockell was appointed Chairman of the Agency in January 2015. He was previously Chairman of the LGA 2011-2014, Chair of London Councils 2006-2010 and Chair of the London Pension Fund Authority 2010-19. In addition, Sir Merrick is Chairman of Localis, an independent think-tank dedicated to localism and local government, and a Senior Advisor to PA Consulting.

### Adrian Bell, Vice Chairman

Adrian Bell was appointed Vice Chairman of the Agency in January 2015. He is Director of Chatham Financial, which acquired JCRA in late 2019. Adrian was at RBC for 20 years and was responsible for the bank becoming one of the largest firms in the sterling bond market, focused on raising funds for major SSA and municipal borrowers. He retired as Chair of RBC Europe in 2009.

### Sir Stephen Houghton, Senior Independent Director

Sir Steve has been an elected member of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council for 25 years and Leader of the Council for 17 years. Sir Steve holds a number of positions including Chair of the Barnsley Local Strategic Partnership; Chair of SIGOMA and Regional Peer of the LGA.

### Derrick Anderson, Non-Executive Director

Derrick Anderson, CBE, has over 25 years' senior management experience in local government and more than 30 years in the public sector. Derrick was Chief Executive of Lambeth Council from 2006-2014 and was previously Chief Executive of the City of Wolverhampton Council for 10 years prior to that. Derrick was voted Public Leader of the Year in the Guardian Public Services Awards 2012.

### Sarah Pickup, Non-Executive Director

Sarah Pickup, OBE, is Deputy Chief Executive of the Local Government Association having previously worked for Hertfordshire County Council until 2015 as Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, responsible for corporate services. Sarah was Director of Health & Community Services at the County 2003-2013. Sarah was president of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) in 2012/13, and prior to this fulfilled a number of roles for the association.

### Andrew Proctor, Non-Executive Director

Andrew Proctor was elected leader of Norfolk County Council in June 2018 having previously been leader of Broadland District Council 2011-18 and deputy leader for 8 years prior to that. He is a member of the LGA's Commercial Advisory Board and a Member Peer of the LGA. Andrew is Practice Manager of two Norfolk law firms and spent the first twenty years of his professional life in the City at a number of banks including ANZ, HSBC and Deutsche Bank.

Brian Roberts, Non-Executive Director

Brian Roberts is Associate Director of Local Government at CIPFA and Finance Commissioner at Northamptonshire County Council. He was previously Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources at Leicestershire County Council. Brian has also been President of CIPFA, President of the Society of County Treasurers, President of the Association of the Local Government Treasurers and the LGA's Core Finance Advisor.

### Shareholders

Adur District Council	London Borough of Sutton
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	North Lincolnshire Council
Bath and North East Somerset Council	North Somerset Council
Birmingham City Council	Northamptonshire County Council
Blackburn with Darwen Council	Norwich City Council
Blackpool Council	Oldham Council
Brighton & Hove City Council	Plymouth City Council
Cambridge City Council	Portsmouth City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council	Reading Borough Council
Chester West & Chester Council	Ribble Valley Borough Council
City of Westminster	Rochford District Council
City of York Council	Rugby Borough Council
City of London Corporation	Sevenoaks District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council	Slough Borough Council
Exeter City Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	South Holland District Council
Gravesham Borough Council	South Norfolk District Council
Halton Borough Council	Southampton City Council
Hertfordshire County Council	Stevenage Borough Council
Hertsmere Borough Council	Surrey County Council
Ipswich Borough Council	Warrington Borough Council
Ketteringham Borough Council	Warwickshire County Council
Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames	Watford Borough Council
Lancashire County Council	West Lindsey District Council
Local Government Association	West Sussex County Council
London Borough of Camden	Woking Borough Council
London Borough of Hackney	Worcestershire County Council
London Borough of Lewisham	Worthing Borough Council
London Borough of Southwark	



## **THE VISION FOR A BEST IN CLASS HOUSING OFFER AND DRAFT ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

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**Portfolio:**

Housing and Wellbeing

**Ward(s) Affected:**

All

**Purpose of the Report:**

- To present findings from the review of two service areas within the Housing and Benefits team; the redesign of an Interim and Temporary Accommodation pathway and developing a best in class customer journey to sustainable Social Housing tenancy
- To provide an overview of the vision for a new service model
- To seek comment from Cabinet in relation to the draft Allocations Scheme prior to presentation at full Council

**Recommendations:**

1. Cabinet to note and comment on the findings of the final project report and recommend full Council endorse that Officers work towards the Best in Class Housing model.

2. Cabinet to recommend to Council adoption of the Allocations Scheme.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In bringing together one Housing & Benefits team an opportunity arose to review the Housing and Homelessness Service, referred in the report as Housing Service. This would enable the Council to develop an efficient and consistent working approach which in turn ensures that residents receive the best possible and coordinated service. In addition to this, a review and update to the Allocations Scheme by which local authorities detail the process for determining priorities and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation was necessary as one had not been undertaken since 2015. Furthermore, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 gave an additional impetus to the review process to ensure that the Council can offer a model of a housing service that is best placed to meet the noted and expected increase in demand.
- 1.2 To provide an impartial and nationally informed viewpoint and added value to the review process, an external consultant, Campbell Tickell was engaged. These services were procured following a successful bid to the Local Government Association's (LGA) Housing Advisor Programme. As part of the review process, the consultants worked with the internal officer group and a Joint Member Working Group (JMWG).
- 1.3 The findings from the review highlighted that although the Council achieves good outcomes through the prevention or relief of homelessness, it is mainly through an offer of social housing. The findings made clear that this model is unsustainable in the future, particularly in a COVID-19 landscape. A change in approach is required, one that seeks to enable quicker actions by our residents in identifying their housing need, supports those who needs it most and secures the best possible use of resources through the alignment of the Housing Service.
- 1.4 A Best in Class Housing Offer has been developed based on those findings and is outlined at section 5 below. It should be noted that the proposals are for members to note and comment on the direction for the new Housing service at this point in time. The proposals also help to frame the context of the draft Allocations Scheme which we are seeking to take forward to full Council for approval and adoption.
- 1.5 The Allocations Scheme is the cornerstone of the Best in Class offer, it is also a document we have a statutory duty to produce and to keep up to date in line with current legislation, case law and best practice. Further detail can be found in section 5 of the report and the Draft Allocations Scheme at Appendix B. However, there are proposed changes in process for:
  - Qualification Criteria for the Housing list
  - A proposed Hybrid model for the Allocation of Social Housing
  - The Priority Bands for households on the housing list

- A single point of access to the Housing service and the schedule of allocating properties
- 1.6 Finally, the LGA funding requires that the Council prepares a project case study that will be available on the LGA website. This is an opportunity for the Council to share the learning and outcomes from the collaborative working of the JMWG and the desire to develop an innovative and sustainable approach to post COVID-19 Housing and Homelessness services.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **Housing Allocations Schemes**

- 2.1 Housing Authorities are required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities, and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. Housing Authorities must allocate in accordance with that scheme and all aspects of the allocation process must be covered.
- 2.2 The Broadland Allocations Scheme was last substantially reviewed in 2012 following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 and the systems thinking review of the Housing and Homelessness function. An update to the scheme was approved by Cabinet in June 2015.
- 2.3 Best practice dictates that allocations schemes should be reviewed every 1-2 years to take into account changes in legislation, such as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 or case law and to be reactive to any reviews, case law or complaints received. This ongoing process of review should allow for housing systems to adopt and build on local and national best practice, good policy housekeeping and remain current to the local environment.
- 2.4 The review of the allocations scheme was delayed due to the work of the Feasibility Study between Broadland and South Norfolk and the subsequent One Team restructure had been completed. However, it is vital the current allocations scheme is reviewed to ensure that the Council is offering an effective and legally compliant housing offer.
- 2.5 The Housing teams for Broadland and South Norfolk have a previous history of working collaboratively to deliver successful strategies and services to prevent homelessness, for example, through the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy (now in its 4th iteration) and the MHCLG funded First Step service dedicated to identifying, supporting and preventing rough sleeping operates across both districts.

### **The Housing Advisor Programme**

- 2.6 The Local Government Association's (LGA) Housing Advisor Programme (HAP) supports Councils seeking to explore solutions in meeting the housing needs of their communities. There is a particular focus on encouraging

learning and innovation, particularly in terms of where that learning can be shared nationally as examples of good practice.

- 2.7 The support provided by the LGA programme is through the granting of funding to procure external advisors in order for local authorities to take their projects forward. In September 2019, the Council in a joint bid with South Norfolk, were successful in their bid to the programme and secured just over £49,000 in funding. With this funding the Council had a fantastic opportunity to capitalise on the added value offered by the funded external consultants in meeting the need to update the allocations scheme and the introduction of the new staffing structure within the Housing team to develop an offer that will:
- Meet the right of all people in Broadland to realistic and expanded housing options.
  - Enable people to resolve their own housing needs where possible by promoting 'resilience', 'self-help' and emphasising their 'rights and responsibilities'
  - Ensure the protection of vulnerable individuals and households who need additional assistance in resolving their housing problems
  - Provide seamless solutions and support through cross agency working
- 2.8 In addition, a conditional requirement of the funding is for participating local authorities to prepare a case study for the end of the funding period which will be published on the LGA website. This provides an opportunity for Broadland Council to demonstrate the customer-focused and forward thinking approach displayed both during, and beyond the life the of the project and showcase the Council as an exemplar of innovative practice.
- 2.9 Following a robust procurement process in early 2020, officers were pleased to appoint Campbell Tickell as our consultants of choice. They have extensive experience working across a variety of housing and homelessness related projects and their bid demonstrated real innovation in securing solutions.
- 2.10 As external advisors, Campbell Tickell were key to the project and provided an impartial and nationally informed viewpoint coupled with a background of innovative thinking when developing customer solutions, partnership working and operating across public/private sectors. Additionally, as part of the project team, they engaged with a number of stakeholders including customers, staff, members and housing providers,
- 2.11 To achieve this, Campbell Tickell worked with the Council in two key areas:

## **Exploring the redesign of an Interim and Temporary Accommodation (TA) Pathway**

- 2.12 The Council has a well-developed TA offer which includes the provision of support to those in TA. This support ensures that those in TA are able to not only sustain their current accommodation but also to access wider support such as benefits/employment support and health services so that they are ready to enter and sustain more permanent accommodation.
- 2.13 The review process explored the TA offers at Broadland and South Norfolk Councils and opportunities for alignment. This would enable the Council to increase capacity to place people in TA only when necessary, ensuring it is right for their needs and offers the right support necessary. It was also felt that there was scope to go much, much further and in this respect, the LGA funded consultants worked with the Council and consulted key stakeholders including other Norfolk Local Authorities to identify innovative solutions, including the potential to work across boundaries to secure scale, efficiency and positive outcomes for vulnerable residents. The TA review considered the following areas:
- Exploring opportunities within the Council's current offers which will enable officers to best manage voids and risk while offering further options to customers at times of need, including the alignment of procedures, budget management and universal access to all eligible residents to our collective offer.
  - Investigating funding options to ensure the Council can achieve best value for money and develop a sustainable growth model to ensure income can be reinvested into support provision
  - Explore how the project can develop solutions with partners beyond the boundaries of the two Councils to deliver a ground-breaking and exceptional TA pathway.
  - Embedding within the Council's offers, the provision of accommodation for those who are rough sleeping as part of the First Step service.

## **Redesign of a Social Housing System**

- 2.14 A desire of the project was to create a social housing system that simplifies and improves the customer journey through the housing list, but also ensures that whatever form of housing is offered, that this is the most appropriate and sustainable housing option for them. The review explored the following areas:
- A comprehensive review of current policy and processes

- Created understanding around customer demand, need, aspirations, responsibilities and resilience
- Barriers to accessing and maintaining the right housing at the right time
- The delivery of recommendations for a pathway that increases choice for the customer and creates the best opportunities for sustainable tenancies

### **A Joint Member Working Group (JMWG)**

- 2.15 In addition to Campbell Tickell, an internal project team was assembled to take this work forwards to a point of being able to offer a preferred model for both housing allocations and temporary accommodation. However, active Member involvement was vital to the success of the project not only in terms of engagement and providing input into the review but also knowledge of issues at ward level. An informal JMWG, while having no decision making capacity, was the preferred means of ensuring good member engagement and challenge in the project
- 2.16 The Broadland cohort of the JMWG consisted of one Liberal Democrat and three Conservative members to ensure cross-party representation and including the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing
- 2.17 The group attended a series of workshops enabling them to engage with the different stages of the project and to build a shared consensus of the principles and structure of the new housing offer. The group:
- Reviewed and agreed the overarching design principles
  - Highlighted strengths and weaknesses of current service access pathways
  - Helped to scope and agree key elements of the target pathway definition
  - Reviewed key aspects of the proposed service model as a precursor to formal consideration within the committee structure.

### **Design Principles**

- 2.18 At the beginning of the project, the overarching design principles, the values that act as the benchmarking steer towards achieving the desired outcomes of the project, were reviewed and agreed by Campbell Tickell, the internal project team and the JMWG:
- To provide tailored accommodation solutions based on insight and evidence needs
  - Offer choice to our customers to meet individual needs

- Promote self-reliance, enabling people to move-on and add value to people's lives
  - Be sustainable and free resources to fund housing objectives
  - Be compliant, with robust business processes and systems.
- 2.19 The review completed by Campbell Tickell provided invaluable feedback regarding the housing service. It was great to see the positive feedback regarding the service however the constructive feedback has provided the Council with an opportunity to relook at the service, especially from an allocations point of view but also from a customer interaction.
- 2.20 Campbell Tickell have produced a comprehensive final report which can be found at Appendix A. Key aspects of the report including the findings of the Baseline review and the proposals to take the service forward are considered in the sections below.

### **COVID-19**

- 2.21 The outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 and the subsequent lockdown measures brought about a significant step change in the operational aspect of the Housing Team, where working from home and offering video and telephone appointments became the new normal. At the same time demand on the service rose to unprecedented numbers. The team have risen quickly to the challenge and have worked at a level above and beyond. Further information on this demand can be found at 3.3.
- 2.22 From a long term perspective, the uncertainty around the future due to the COVID-19 outbreak means that the review of the housing service had come at the worst but also the most opportunistic time. The impact of COVID-19 and how we will meet demand is explored further throughout this report.

## **3 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 The diagram below provides details of the current housing list for Broadland District Council. As at 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020, there were an estimated total of 1399 households seeking an allocation of social housing. The average time spent on the list is approximately 9-12 months dependant on an applicant's circumstances and housing need.

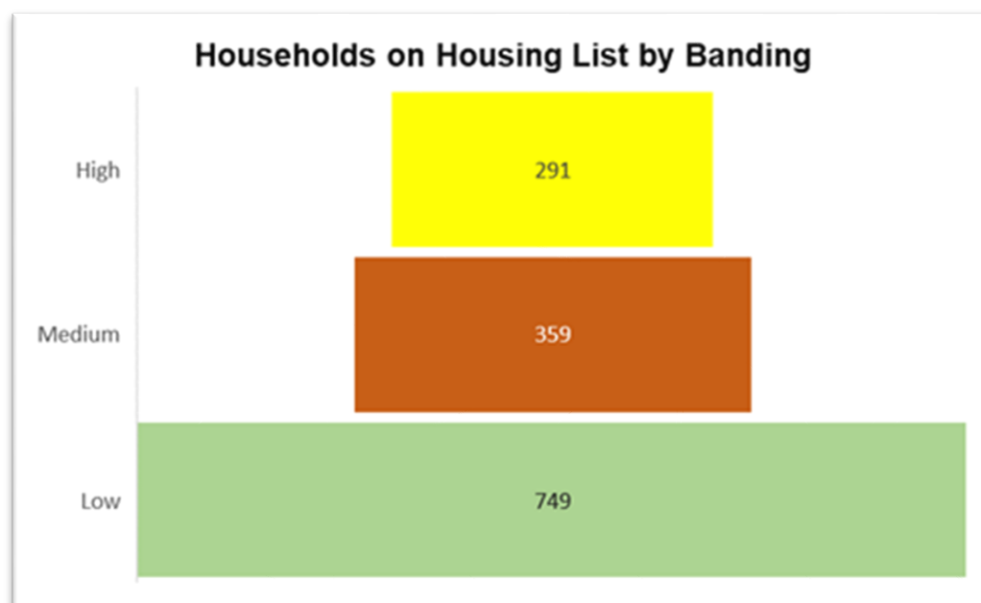


Figure 1: Households on Housing List

- 3.2 It should be noted that this is a significant reduction to the approx. 2300 prior to April 2020 when a review of households in the low band of the housing list commenced. The review was necessary due to the length of time observed of some households placed on the list, including some incidences of acceptances in the 1990's. It is highly likely that the reviewed households would have experienced a change in circumstances or would not in their current circumstances receive a nomination to a property.

### COVID-19 Impact on Demand

- 3.3 COVID-19 has presented the team with unprecedented challenges, far greater than that experienced during the economic recession in 2008. COVID-19 has impacted people from all socio-economic groups meaning each and every call differs in nature with some requiring support to downsize within the private sector, some needing advice regarding mortgage payments and others no longer being able to sustain within the private sector and so requiring assistance within the social housing sector. To add to this a far greater number of the people accessing the service have not required this kind of assistance before meaning their knowledge of the sector, time constraints and requirements are not understood making many phone-calls and in turn case management far longer than usual.
- 3.4 The demand on the service has been relatively wide-reaching however but can be focussed on three key elements
- 3.5 Temporary Accommodation demand increased with immediate effect during lock down. Those requiring TA were also those with higher support needs than usual. The team worked closely with Landlords, Housing Associations and supported accommodation providers to restart the housing sector and utilise existing stock to



realise the necessary throughput required. This has paid dividends with occupancy returning to near normal levels.

- 3.6 The diagram at figure 2 below demonstrates the increase in TA occupancy rates during the lockdown and continued pandemic period.

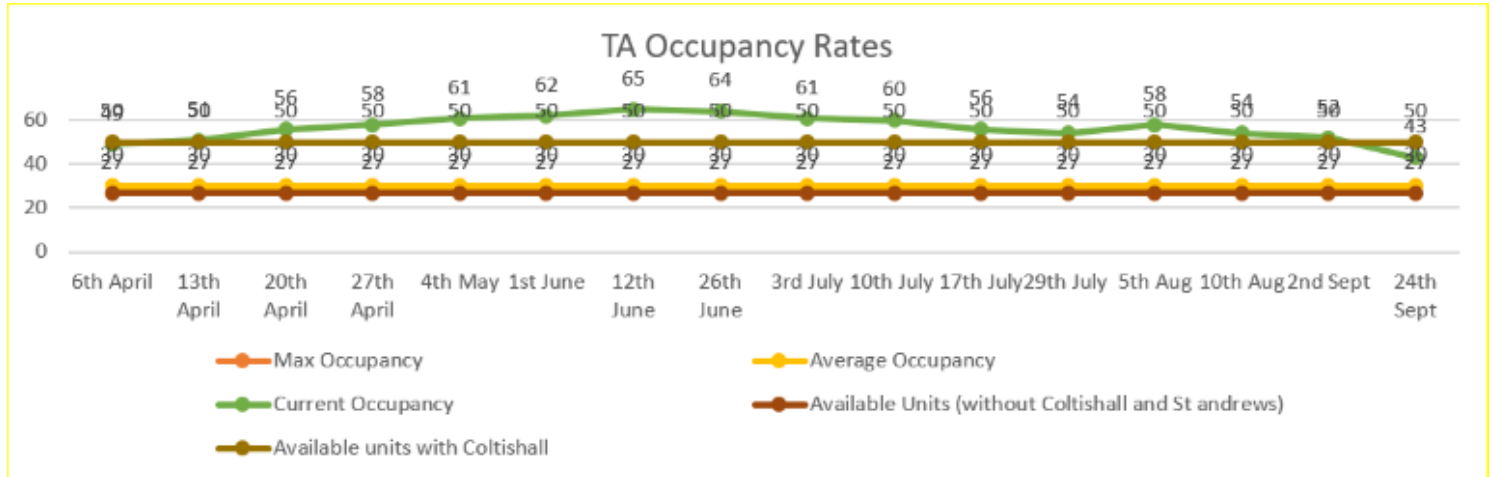


Figure 2: TA Occupancy Rates

- 3.7 Incoming calls have steadily increased and the Council is not seeing any reduction. Although the below only shows incoming calls the overall income and ongoing calls combined is circa 2000 a week showing the proactive nature of the team to work through their cases. We anticipate that this will continue and to support the teams call handlers who can assist with basic call questions have been put into place thus allowing the specialist HSO s to act on their case work and avoid people facing homelessness. The diagram at figure 3 demonstrates the increase in customer contacts during the pandemic period.

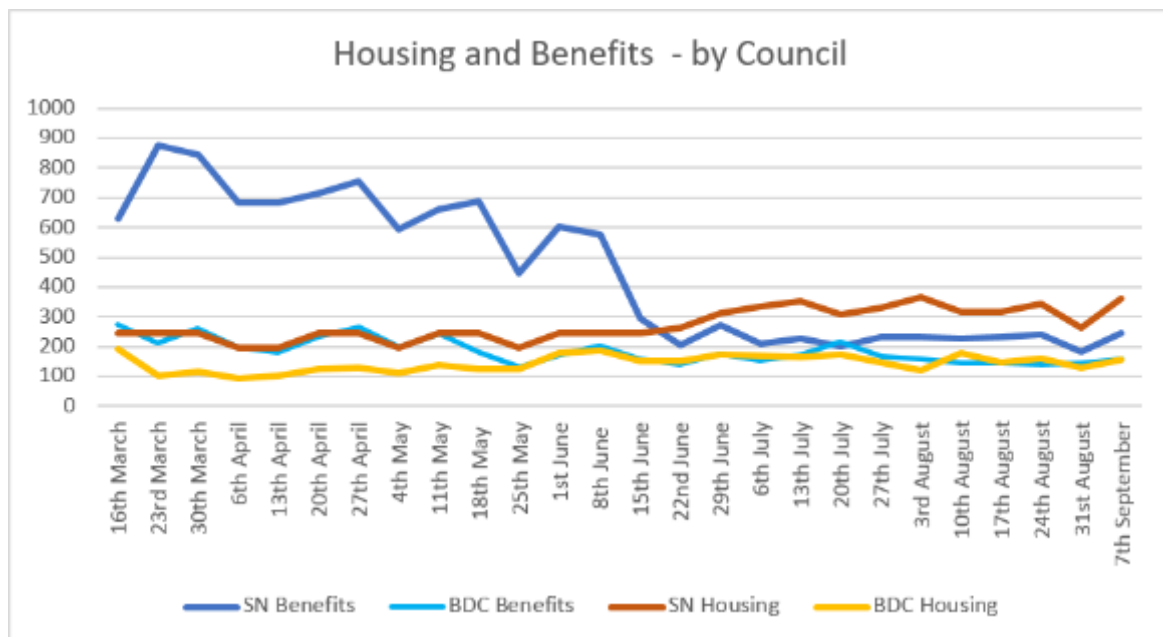


Figure 3: Customer Contacts to the Housing & Benefits Team

- 3.8 At present the team are not having to accept increased homelessness cases than usual however this is only due to the restriction on evictions that was put into place by central government. The fact that numbers remained sustained despite this is very concerning, especially when considering the phone stats evidence the number of those worried re their current housing situation. We anticipate that this number will continue to rise, figure 4 below shows that there was a marked increase in August, before the ending of the freeze on court eviction hearings. The team have done all they can to negotiate with landlords and find people alternative accommodation during the hold provided by the eviction freeze in order to mitigate this impact. However we do anticipate demand to be sustained on at an increased level, circa 30% for the next few years.

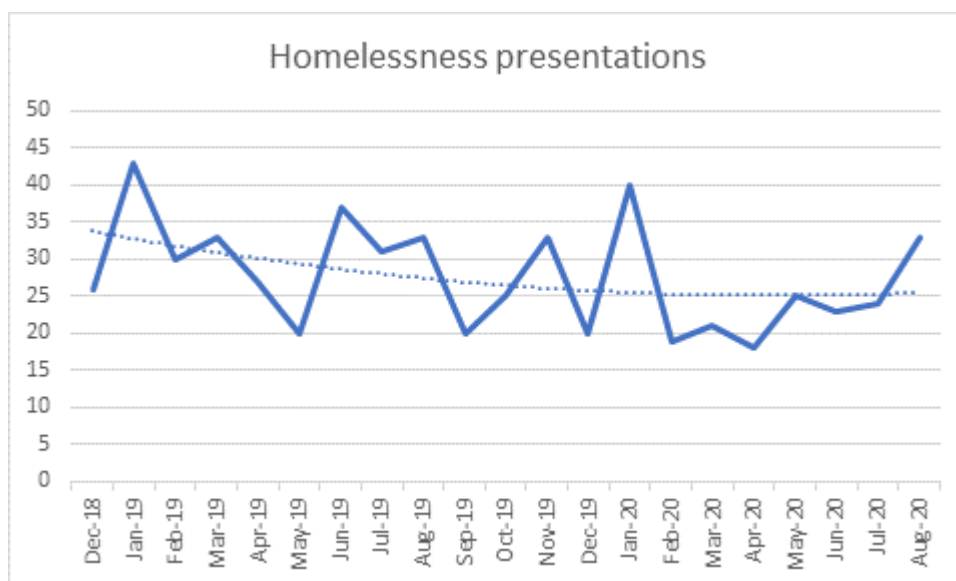


Figure 4: Homelessness Presentations

### **The Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy and the South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement**

- 3.9 The documents above were approved for adoption and publication in September and take a person centred, preventative approach to increase resilience and offer wrap around support for those who might need extra assistance when tackling homelessness. This feeds well into the proposed direction for the housing service outlined in section 5 below.
- 3.10 The priorities contained within the documents are:
- Domestic Abuse
  - Preventing Homelessness

- Single and Youth Homelessness
- Financial Inclusion, Welfare Reform and Economic Growth
- Early Intervention and reducing the incidence of rough sleeping

3.11 These priorities were reviewed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak with the findings that the identified priorities were still highly relevant and the details of demand above reflect this.

## 4 ESTABLISHING A SERVICE BASELINE

4.1 In drawing together a baseline from which an innovative and customer focused housing model can be built, Campbell Tickell undertook a number of activities. This was achieved through working closely with the project team and the wider Housing and Benefits team in addition to desk top research and data analysis. These include:

- Approach: A review of the current access and delivery model for managing homelessness and the allocation of social housing
- Insight: A review of demand, demographics and support needs, drawn from statutory returns and data held on the housing management systems of both Councils
- TA provision review: A review of demand, an assessment of the Council's TA portfolios, cost effectiveness and effectiveness of procurement strategies
- Social Housing provision: A review of access arrangements, registration and assessment processes, housing register management, allocations and lettings processes, and tenancy sustainment support provision.
- Service user perspectives: Drawn from a digital survey of recently housed tenants, highlighting the experience of the customer journey
- Partnership perspectives: Drawn from interviews with senior and frontline staff from partner landlords, neighbouring District Councils, people focussed service functions of the County Council, and other service providers.

4.2 A full analysis of the findings can be found at Appendix A, however they have been summarised in tables 1 and 2 below.

Theme	Baseline Review Findings	
	Areas of good practice	Areas for consideration
Approach and Demand		Can be a cliff-edge service. Despite the Councils best effort customers only seek support when in crisis. Can be passive, not proactive service

Baseline Review Findings		
Theme	Areas of good practice	Areas for consideration
	Prevention and relief of homelessness is good (above England average) Numbers of households in TA are low.	Building resilience is not a front loaded activity Can be viewed as 'a race to the bottom' as customers see the higher bands as the only means to gain a property Low numbers of customers are able to stay in their current home at point of presentation, high numbers of households diverted in alternative accommodation, mainly social housing. Not sustainable long-term and does not promote a mixed economy of solutions.
<b>Data</b>		BDC - Collection of data to build insight is difficult owing to two IT systems covering different aspects of the service, one of which is about to be de-supported. Use of data to take a proactive approach in anticipating and meeting demand
<b>Temporary Accommodation (TA)</b>	BDC – Low use of B&B accommodation  Provision of support for those in TA Work is underway to implement a single, fully resourced TA team with clear responsibilities Good mix of TA offer available throughout	BDC – Private Sector Leased scheme is costly following changes to DWP subsidy rules and more suited to longer term placements SNC – Portfolio is too small and could see increased reliance on costly B&B accommodation. This was particularly evidenced during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic  Work needs to be completed Operational documents to be standardised and adopted
<b>Social Housing Provision</b>	SNC – Offer online qualification of applications  Safeguarding of vulnerable residents is strong. Good coordination with Help Hubs	Processes to maximise online applications and provision of proof by applicants. BDC – 3 band system for Housing List is not broad or transparent enough SNC – 5 band system for Housing List is too complex. Straightforward and transparent banding system required to standardise banding decisions and remove risk of challenge. Application/Housing List reviews to have a consistent review schedule Introduction of accompanied viewings for vulnerable residents

Baseline Review Findings		
Theme	Areas of good practice	Areas for consideration
	and support partners and open and compliant service for sensitive and local lets. Transparent approach to shortlisting applicants	BDC - Manual approach to shortlisting can be time consuming. Landlords need to give 4 weeks' notice of voids to allow for effective matching. Landlords to provide timely lettings paperwork. A self-service digital portal for landlords would make this simpler.
<b>Compliance and Performance</b>	Teams are compliant, however this is not backed up by policy as per section 1 of this report.	A legal offer of housing. This needs to be in writing to complete audit trail Policy needs to be updated

Table 1: Baseline review findings

Baseline Review Findings		
Theme	Areas of good practice	Areas for consideration
<b>Service User Perspectives</b>	<p>Assessment letters were felt to be accurate</p> <p>A high proportion of respondents were aware of the Council's allocations scheme and banding system. Half of respondents were housed within 6 months of being placed on the housing list. 85% of services users felt that their views had been taken into account when they had been made an offer of housing.</p>	<p>21% of respondents asked for a review of their application with two-thirds having their banding decision adjusted. Special circumstances could be better reflected</p> <p>45% of respondents contacted the housing service once they had been placed on the register. 68% of these contacts were to request information, check their status on the list or query their banding. Indicating a self-service portal would be beneficial.</p>
<b>Partnership Perspectives</b>	Positive day to day working relationship reported Nominations and CBL processes each felt to have strengths and weaknesses	Nominations and CBL processes each felt to have strengths and weaknesses Ensuring up to date customer data and sufficient team resource is important to avoid void delays

Baseline Review Findings		
Theme	Areas of good practice	Areas for consideration
	Partners in favour of this	Review of formal arrangements and Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
	Partners in favour of this	Exploring options for continued support for new tenants to ensure sustainment

Table 2: Baseline review findings: Stakeholder engagement

## 5 DEFINING A BEST IN CLASS HOUSING OFFER

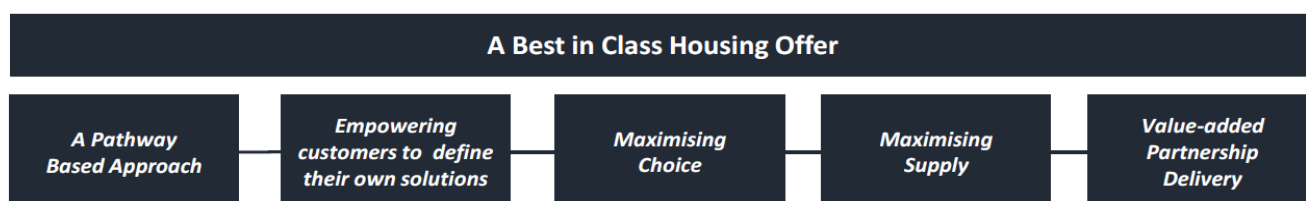


Figure 5: A Best in Class Housing Offer

- 5.1 It is imperative that the Council gives due deliberation to the areas of consideration given above in order to; deliver a compliant housing service; effectively meet challenges of COVID-19 as we stand the precipice of severe economic recession; and to facilitate households to think sooner about their housing situation, to avoid the circle of housing crisis and re-presentation to housing service. To achieve this, Campbell Tickell in working with the internal officer team and the Joint Member Working Group, have co-designed a Best in Class Housing Offer.
- 5.2 The offer applies new thinking to the way housing advice, homelessness and social housing provision is delivered by the Council. The focus is on enabling customers to consider their housing options from an as early stage as possible, to increase customer resilience, avoid housing crisis and to support those where needed. Ensuring that households are in the right accommodation and homes at the right time means that there is less pull on resources, both staffing and financial and that the solutions offered are sustainable. The components of this offer are:
- 5.3 A Pathway based approach: To shape a holistic response to all residents in housing need, particularly as the full impact of COVID-19 becomes apparent and the Councils have to respond to a severe economic recession and its impact on housing and homelessness. The accommodation pathway model will deliver substantially more accommodation options over and above the combined statutory TA needs and will feature; suitable TA accommodation; short-term 6-12 month supported accommodation to help prepare households for longer term solutions and; long term housing through Social Housing or the Private Rent Sector (PRS). This would reduce the incidence of re-presentations from households experiencing a cycle of housing crisis and homelessness.

- 5.4 Empowering customers to define their own solutions: The new essential public service for residents in housing need regardless of whether they meet the statutory means tested categories of housing need. A Marketplace will help residents access a far wider range of accommodation solutions, including remaining in their own homes where possible, facilitated through the actions of the Council. Interventions would consist of light touch enabling or direct intervention.
- 5.5 Maximising choice: It is recommended that accommodation services, such as the PSL scheme and First Step service, are brought together to maximise the pool of accommodation options available for the Council to meet or end its statutory duties as well as providing an alternative accommodation option that can be used for TA.
- 5.6 Maximising supply: The Accommodation Pool could consist of private rented accommodation, supported housing units where the Council has nomination rights, third sector hostel accommodation, accommodation secured through new initiatives either by the Council or registered providers and developers. Strategies to maximise access the private rented sector can also be developed. This will reduced pressure on the social housing sector and minimise the need for temporary accommodation.
- 5.7 Value-added partnership delivery: The commitment of staff with the One Team structure to deliver an effective housing-led response to COVID-19 is recognised as a potential key to unlocking a holistic service model with a wider shared service vision across the wider public sphere. Landlords are keen to review and formalise working arrangements that better reflect the post COVID-19 operating environment. In addition, commissioners and providers recognise that COVID-19 can act as a catalyst for joining up service elements around an individual at the centre and a housing and early intervention approach as a key driver. A strategic and coordinated response is imperative.

### **The Interim and Temporary Accommodation Pathway**

- 5.8 The Council notes the report recommendations concerning new models of TA provision, the Accommodation Pool model and opportunities to expand on a wider Norfolk footprint. This pool aligns the current TA provision available across Broadland and South Norfolk making use of the different types of accommodation to best match need with the customer and the type of accommodation required at that time. This approach ensures an effective and consistent use of current provision and minimises voids and avoids. Further options for wider commercial opportunities that will allow the Council to reinvest in the housing offer can be explored.
- 5.9 These recommendations will be worked up into more detailed business case/proposals and where required brought forward for member approval. In line with current agreed measures, the Portfolio Holder will be briefed during the process.

## The Accommodation Pathway Model

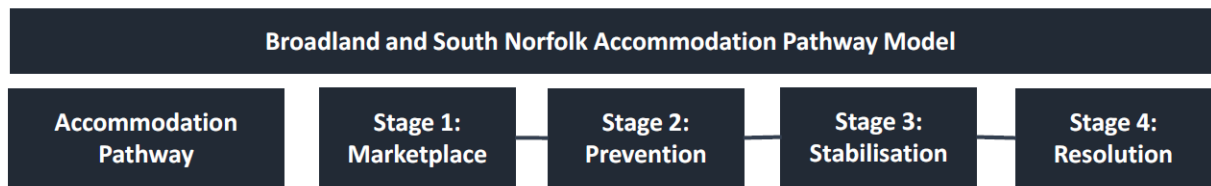


Figure 6: The Accommodation Pathway Model

- 5.10 The proposed Accommodation Pathway Model will provide a universal service open to all those with a housing need, through the provision of a one-stop housing advice platform on a wider basis than that of social housing. This could include options for young people moving away from the family home, affordable home ownership and entering the PRS. The model will offer:
- 5.11 **Marketplace:** Will provide digital self-help for the majority in housing need, and with early intervention for residents who may require additional support. Residents are encouraged to self-identify their housing need and begin to plan their housing future based on a Personal Accommodation Pathway. Housing need risk factors will be identified and effective help delivered based on the principles of self-help and resilience for those able to help themselves and proactive help for those who are more vulnerable.
- 5.12 **Prevention:** Proactive service intervention to prevent homelessness at the point of crisis to maximise positive outcomes.
- 5.13 **Stabilisation:** Provide excellent TA for those owed a statutory duty and additionally provide support and stabilisation for those who require more help to resolve problems that are more than just the need for a roof over their heads.
- 5.14 **Resolution:** Permanent resolution of the housing needs of households whether they are receiving formal interventions or owed a statutory TA duty, by delivering realistic, and suitable accommodation options across all tenures, and to break the cycle of the revolving door of eviction and homelessness by helping them build resilience and skills to sustain long-term accommodation solutions.
- 5.15 As with the Temporary Accommodation pathway, the findings from the project have made a number of recommendations in relation to the Social housing accommodation pathway which, in conjunction with the bringing together of the One Team Housing & Benefits Team, form part of a longer-term programme of works. These recommendations will also be developed into more detailed proposals.
- 5.16 Underpinning the proposed Accommodation Pathway model is the Allocations Scheme adopted by the Council. As detailed in section one, the current Allocations Scheme is in need of updating, however in adopting the proposed



model, which is detailed below, it allows the Council to set out its intention to deliver a truly transformative housing offer.

### **The Draft Allocations Scheme**

- 5.17 The Allocations Scheme which sets out the process for determining priorities, and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation needs to be implemented as soon as possible and is being brought forward through the member process for consideration and approval. This is necessary to ensure the Council can provide the most effective housing service for our customers through an up to date and legally compliant scheme
- 5.18 The draft scheme has been co-produced between the internal officer team, the JMWG and Campbell Tickell and checked for legal compliance by NPLaw. The section below outlines the aims of the scheme and some of the key areas of variation with the previous scheme. The full draft Allocations Scheme document can be found at Appendix B.

### **Aims of the Allocations Scheme**

- 5.19 Through the aims of the Allocations Scheme the Council seeks to:
- Improve the means by which local people gain access to social rented housing through a system that allows choice and is fair, transparent and accountable.
  - Ensures the lettings service embraces equality and diversity by being open and fully accessible to all individuals and to provide support to customers where needed
  - Meets the legal obligation of the Council in respect of giving appropriate priority to customers with a 'reasonable preference' category
  - Makes the best use of housing stock, including areas of low demand and 'hard to let' properties.
  - Assists customers with understanding their housing options
  - Increases opportunities for tenant mobility
  - Formalises partner working arrangements

### **Qualification for the Housing List**

- 5.20 Criteria for the Housing List will ensure that local and, in some cases, people from outside the area in genuine difficulty are supported. The full criteria can be found at Section 3.2 of the draft Allocations Scheme.

- 5.21 The Council has some discretion in how it applies some qualification criteria where it is not prescribed under current legislation. For example, in applying a specific length of residency criteria. Within the draft Allocations Scheme length of residency has been changed from two years to either six out of the previous twelve months or three out of the previous ten years. This provides greater transparency for households applying for the list and for the Housing team in applying that criteria. Significantly it reduces the opportunity for households to request qualification on the former grounds of exceptional circumstance and enables the local connection residency criteria to be applied consistently. In addition, the criteria enables former residents to return to their home district where they can be close to family, and contribute to the community and local economy.

### **The Allocation of Social Housing**

- 5.22 The process by which it is proposed that the Council allocates a social housing property has given been careful consideration as part of the review and redesign process. In this, Campbell Tickell have been invaluable in understanding current practice, and identifying where changes can be made. The Council currently operates a nominations system whereby void properties are matched to household's dependant on housing need, bedroom size and desired areas.
- 5.23 While the current process has benefits in that specific properties are matched to household need and there is less administrative burden for landlords, the review has found that the matching process can be time consuming with households having little say in the properties they are nominated for, barring at the point of acceptance or refusal. In addition, as the process is a closed 'system' households are unable to see what properties are becoming available and what they may be eligible if they amended their choices slightly. In this way households are dependent on the Council to allocate their property and this is less likely to improve resilience.
- 5.24 Taking these considerations into account, a Hybrid Allocations Process is proposed. For the majority of applicants this would provide the opportunity to have choice in bidding for available properties through an online system. At the end of the bidding cycle, the list of bidders is shortlisted and the highest priority applicants, determined by priority and length of time on the housing list are put through to the partner landlord. This hybrid system would also provide transparency and expectation management in that applicants will see what properties are available, in what location and what they are likely to be successful in bidding for. In this respect, applicants play a more active role in resolving their housing need. For those who need additional support, assisted bidding can be requested and there can be targeted advertising for certain properties such as those restricted under a local letting plan or s106 agreement.
- 5.25 Additionally, the Council needs to ensure that, where existing social housing properties with adaptations become void, they are managed so that the

adaptations don't have to be removed. This is not a good use of housing stock to meet the needs of applicants on the housing list, nor is it a good use of the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Funding which may have been used to install the adaptation. In these circumstances, working with the Landlord and adopting targeted advertising or Direct Lets may be implemented to ensure a better use of stock and an appropriate and long-term housing solution for the applicant.

- 5.26 Direct Lets and Nominations will be available in other circumstances, which are outlined in full in the draft Allocations Scheme at Appendix B. However, in summary they will be apply where:
- There is an urgent rehousing requirement
  - Where there has been failure to bid or a number of refusals
  - Where the applicant is vulnerable
- 5.27 In addition, where there is a delivery completion of more than five houses on a particular development, a nominations process will take place to review all applicants circumstances within the banding criteria (including s106 requirements) and allocate the most suitable properties to each successful individual to make sure those in most need gain access

### **Housing Priority Bands**

- 5.28 Applications to the Housing List are assessed to determine the level of housing need of the household and are placed into a banding system. During the review process it was felt that the Broadland Council three banded system was too narrow, did not provide transparency for applicants and encouraged a race to the bottom to be allocated a 'High' banded status. In this instance a four banded model is proposed with only the most urgent allocated a Band One status. Figure 7 below details the criteria applicable to each banding and illustrates the refiguring of the current housing list. As can be seen, there is a more equal distribution of households based on priority and provides greater transparency to applicants in terms of their position on the list.

Band 1 – homeless - within Temporary Accommodation and/or property no longer suitable

Band 2 – Threatened with Homelessness (next 12 weeks), High Medical Need, High Welfare, Disrepair/Unsafe Home/lacking essential amenities Overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms, Someone needing an adapted property

Band 3 - Threatened with Homelessness (next 12 weeks)(no priority need), Medium Medical Need, Medium Welfare Need, Lack of Amenities, Overcrowded by 1 or more bedrooms, Tenant under occupying by 1 or more bedroom, Move On, Care Leavers, Intentionally Homeless

Band 4 – Everyone else, s193 Duty (not ready to move), TA (assessment in progress), Meet eligibility/qualification, No housing priority Need

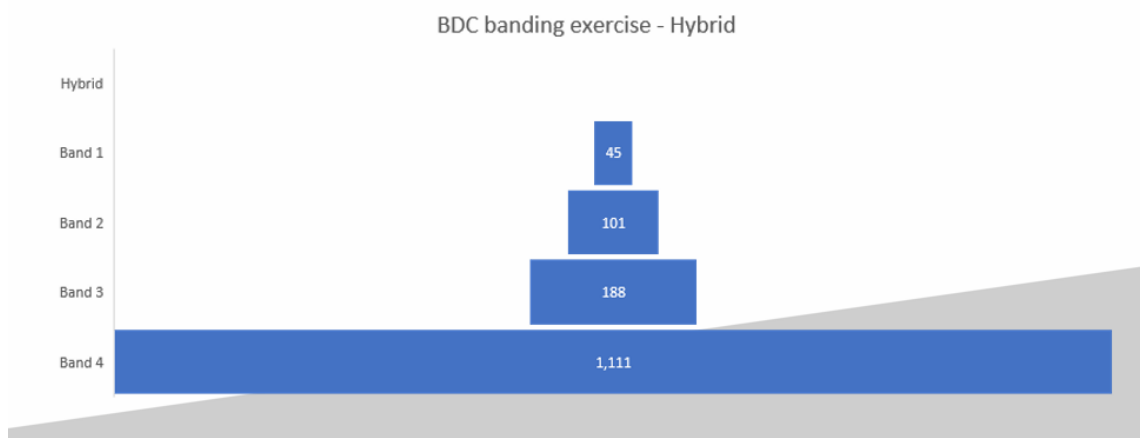


Figure 7: Broadland Housing Priority Bands

- 5.29 Where applicants would normally be allocated a reduced preference banding, generally a low priority banding because they would not normally meet the qualification criteria due to, for example, rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, it is proposed instead to operate a suspension of bidding arrangement. In this respect, applicants would be awarded banding based on their needs but they would be suspended from bidding on any properties until a suitable period of stabilisation has been completed. This could include seeking support for anti-social behaviour or paying down rent arrears. In this way good tenant behaviour is promoted and there is increased likelihood of future sustainable tenancies. It should be noted that all suspension of bidding cases will be assessed carefully on their circumstances, for example where rent arrears arose due to the applicant being a victim of domestic abuse, we would not seek to apply a suspension of bidding but would ensure the applicant was able to fully access appropriate support through the housing team, help hub and wider partners.

### **Single point of access to Housing service and subsequent allocation of properties**

- 5.30 In line with the One Team Housing & Benefits team approach, where a customer approaches the Council for help with their housing issue this will be through a single point of access with a single system to manage each applicant's case, enabling the application of consistency and efficiency for the team. At the point in which applicants can place their bid for properties, they

will be able to see and bid on all relevant properties available across the Broadland and South Norfolk Districts.

- 5.31 Following feedback from officers and the JMWG, the diagram at figure 8 below demonstrates how the available properties will be allocated to applicants. Where the property is in the Broadland district, the properties will be allocated to applicants from that area in order of priority banding. If no suitable applicant is found from Broadland the allocations are then opened to applicants from South Norfolk again prioritised by banding.
- 5.32 This approach allows for an effective use of the housing stock, minimises void times and encourages use of hard to let properties. It also provides opportunities for mobility for residents of the two districts but only where properties cannot be allocated to households with an existing connection. It should also be noted that where properties are subject to an s.106 cascade, that will always supersede the arrangements below.

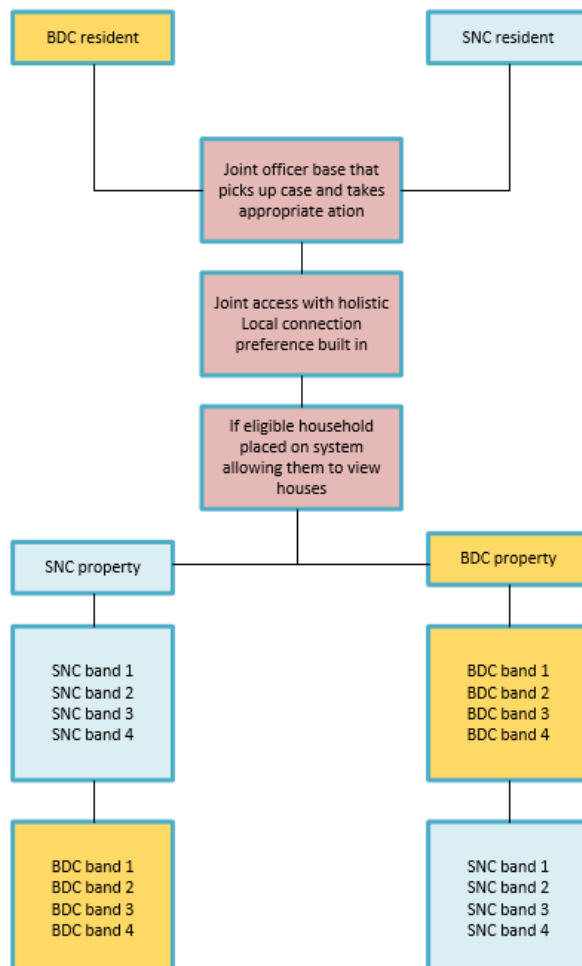


Figure 8: Allocation of properties by Priority Band and Council

## 6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The findings from the project have made several recommendations which, in conjunction with the bringing together of the One Team Housing & Benefits Team, form part of a much longer-term programme of works. The Allocations Scheme which we are bringing forward for member approval now is a vital aspect of this.
- 6.2 A project implantation team is being put together linking with the Internal Consultancy team, the Housing & Benefits team and the Policy & Partnerships team to see take this work forward. Detailed implementation plans including delivery timescales, resource requirements and interdependencies with wider SPARK projects such as the shared website are to be developed fully. In addition, project progression will be updated via the regular Portfolio Holder briefings.
- 6.3 However, to an overview of the current resource requirements has been provided below:
- Project oversight – this will be needed for the 6 months running up to April 2021. This work will be done by the internal consultancy team. There may be a further financial pull if the internal consultant is unable to facilitate this role, this will be capped at £20k
  - System upgrade – over a four year period the upgrade will provide a saving for both Councils. As annual maintenance/licence charges differ for each Council (SNC 22500.00p/a, BDC £35167.00p/a) the level of savings are different for each Council. The total contract change are being shared within the standard 45/55 split. Further information can be found at Appendix C.
  - Data configuration – to facilitate implementation of the new Allocations Scheme there will be a need to manually check, update and input particular residents. There will be the possibility to automatically port a large majority however this will create an additional pull on the team resource. This is however a great opportunity to gain experience in Housing and the Council as a whole. The team are therefore utilising the Kickstart programme. This will create a small cost to the Council, however, by utilising the programme this will be heavily mitigated whilst also providing a great opportunity to someone who might otherwise not be given the chance to widen their skillset and employability.
  - Engaging with stakeholders and the private sector to facilitate the TA pathway – the Council has sufficient skillset within the team to improve the way we work with the private sector. The aforementioned project oversight will take the role of co-ordinating this work to make sure it is delivered on time.

- 6.4 As other aspects of delivering the housing service come forwards, resources will be considered as part of business cases, and subject to appropriate decision making forums.
- 6.5 A period of consultation is required to seek the views of the public and stakeholders for the draft Allocations Scheme. This consultation will run for two weeks from Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. As of 20<sup>th</sup> October, 146 complete survey responses have been received.
- 6.6 A requirement of the LGA funding is that the Councils prepares a project case study that will be available on the LGA website and form part of the learning package for future Housing Advisor Programme funded authorities. It is proposed that the case study focus on the successful collaborative working of the JMWG and the desire to develop an innovative approach to Housing and Homelessness services in a COVID-19 landscape. This case study will be completed by December 2020.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 7.1 Cabinet may wish to suggest alternative options for consideration in terms of the draft Allocations Scheme. However, it would not be feasible to continue with the current scheme as it is in urgent need of updating to ensure legal compliance and prevent the risk of challenge.

## **8 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 8.1 **Resource Implications** – There is resource requirement to implement the new offer and an overview is given at 6.3 above.
- 8.2 The Allocations Scheme was developed in partnership between officers and members of Broadland and South Norfolk Councils and Campbell Tickell. Although individual documents have been created for each Council, the content is the same. This will enable an equal approach for residents and ensure a consistent and transparent service delivered by the one officer team. If the Council chooses to pursue different versions of the scheme, there is a risk that transparency could be lost, in addition to decreasing resilience within the housing team. Furthermore, separate methods of administering the scheme would result in increased costs in delivery of the IT systems.
- 8.3 In terms of the Best in Class Housing Offer, as has been indicated above, demand for the housing service has increased during the COVID-19 outbreak. Although the housing team has continued to deliver a high performing service, the findings of the review indicate that the model has to be changed in order to continue to meet that demand. In this respect a do nothing option would not provide an efficient or sustainable offer.
- 8.4 **Legal Implications** – A Housing Allocations Scheme is a requirement of the Housing Act 1996. Failure to have an up to date and relevant Allocations Scheme

means the Council may be at risk of not meeting its statutory duty. It could also lead to an increased risk of challenge from applicants on the housing list.

- 8.5 **Equality Implications** – As individual elements of the Housing Offer are brought forward they will be assessed for a potential equalities impact, although the overall aim is for the service to have a positive impact on those with a protected characteristic. As the draft Allocations Scheme is being presented for adoption, an Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found at Appendix D
- 8.6 **Environmental Impact** – There are no known impacts
- 8.7 **Crime and Disorder** – In working to offer sustainable housing solutions, and prevent housing crisis and homelessness including for those who have had contact with either side of the criminal justice system, it is hoped to assist victims and prevent instances of offending and reoffending.
- 8.8 **Affordable Housing Delivery** – Although out of scope of the project work, it is important to note that the delivery and provision of affordable housing is a key aspect in resolving a person's housing need, whether this is through Affordable Rent Tenure (ART) properties or Affordable Home Ownership Products. The next iteration of the Housing Needs Assessment, formerly the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is under development and expected to report in the spring 2021. This assessment provides the evidence base for affordable housing up until 2041 and will feed into the policy work for the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).
- 8.9 The outcomes of the current central government consultation on the planning White Paper *Planning for the Future* will also need to be given careful consideration as the project plans for implementation of the housing offer are brought forward. Contained within the white paper are proposals to; abolish the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 obligations, to become instead a simplified nationally set, value-based flat rate charge; to amend the development threshold for affordable housing from 10 units to 40 or 50; and for First Homes, homes sold with a discount of at least 30%, to make up at 25% of that affordable housing provision.
- 8.10 **Interdependencies** – There are a number of interdependencies both internal, through the corporate change projects that are underway, such as the Councils' economic recovery work and an example has been given above of using the Kickstart programme to provide support to the implementation process of the Allocation Scheme. There are also external interdependencies such as the local and national considerations to be given to affordable housing provision such as that detailed at 8.8 and 8.9 above. Close working with the owners of these projects and careful consideration of impacts will need to be given as the Allocations Scheme and overall Housing offer work is developed.

## 9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council's work with Campbell Tickell, through the LGA's Housing Advisor Programme funding has given the opportunity to develop a world class housing



service that will change the culture and approach for supporting residents in housing need to find solutions. It will also enable the Council to take a proactive approach to housing need during this time of COVID-19 uncertainty and for the long-term ramifications of the pandemic

- 9.2 The innovative vision presented in this report is not something that can be achieved in a short space of time and instead we are asking for members to note the findings of the Best in Class Housing Offer project. However, there is a pressing need for a new Allocations Scheme to be approved and embedded. This will not only enable the Council to meet its statutory duty but will form the cornerstone of the Housing Service as it seeks to deliver a truly innovative and preventative service for residents.

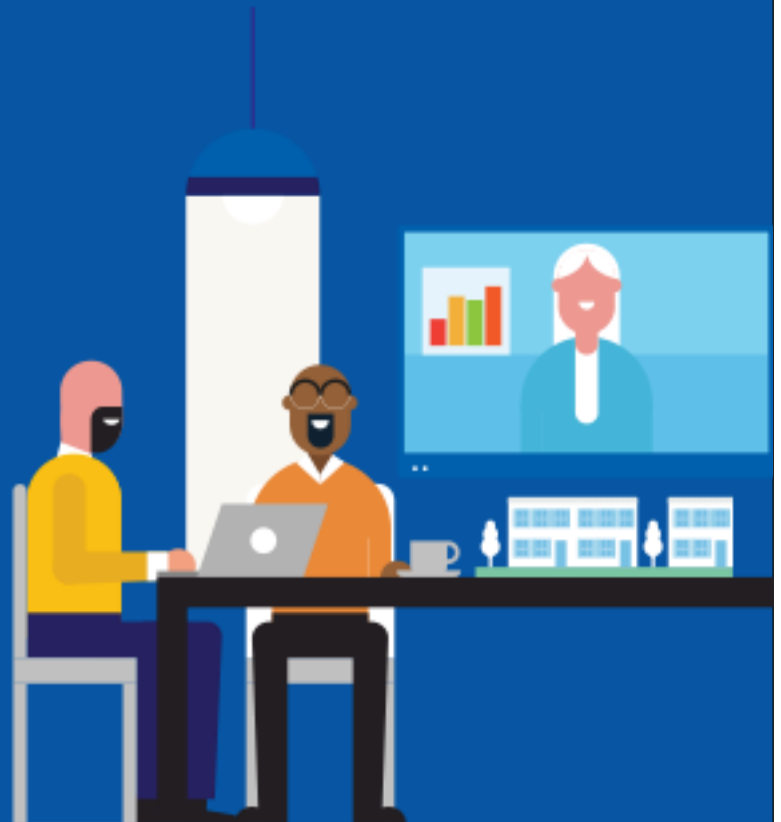
## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Cabinet to note and comment on the findings of the final project report and recommend full Council endorse that Officers work towards the Best in Class Housing Offer.
- 10.2 Cabinet to recommend to Council adoption of the Allocations Scheme

# Best in Class Housing Offer

Final Report

August 2020



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ***Ambition***

- 1.1 This report sets out the vision for creating an ambitious *Best in Class* housing service for Broadland and South Norfolk, enabling anyone in housing need to resolve their own accommodation needs, whilst focusing scarce resource on households in housing crisis to avoid homelessness and secure sustainable accommodation options, delivered within a sustainable service delivery model and an extensive partnership framework.
- 1.2 An *Accommodation Pathway Model* will be a first of its kind in the UK to deliver a holistic housing service to the whole community regardless of their immediate need.

### ***Approach***

- 1.3 The aim of the project is to enable Broadland and South Norfolk to create a flexible service offer that meets the individual needs of each sovereign council, but delivered through a single policy framework, operating model and social housing system.
- 1.4 The project has been delivered in partnership with Campbell Tickell (CT) and has been funded through the Local Government Association (LGA) Housing Advisor Programme (HAP), which has the aim of supporting transformation partnerships that enable services to meet their local housing need. This collaboration will allow Broadland and South Norfolk to project both the ground-breaking approach and the eventual service outcomes onto the national stage
- 1.5 A Members Working Group drawn from both Councils has been instrumental in acting as a sounding board throughout the project and sense-checking solutions, before they enter the governance cycles of each council.

### ***Pulling back from the cliff-edge***

- 1.6 Housing delivery models delivered by councils across the country are without exception passive in nature, delivered at the point of crisis to a relatively small cohort of households. They fail to deliver practical housing advice and solutions for the vast majority of residents that have a housing need, who are filtered-away from receiving support of any kind. This approach also fails to deliver resilience amongst residents in housing need by expecting them to be proactive, adapting their behaviour to increase their chances of obtaining a solution.
- 1.7 As a consequence, many residents end-up in housing crisis, resulting in homelessness and an application under statutory homelessness legislation. This situation is compounded by a lack of strategic alignment between Councils and landlords, resulting in a transfer of risk and responsibility for those placed in social housing, which increases the risk of tenancy failure, often resulting in a life-limiting and costly unbroken cycle of homelessness and eviction.

### ***Forming a Service Baseline***

- 1.8 Despite a significant increase (162%) in homelessness across in Broadland and South both councils since the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), both Councils have been particularly successful in preventing homelessness through upstream interventions,

which has relieved the pressure on Temporary Accommodation (TA) provision. However, this has been achieved almost exclusively by placing households in social housing, whilst there are no examples of an individual or household avoiding homelessness by remaining in their current accommodation, whereby avoiding an intensive service intervention altogether. This is not a fair or sustainable strategy.

1.9 A significant percentage of individuals approaching the service do so from what had been a stable home or sustainable tenancy, or from a position of relative financial stability, highlighting the need for supporting individuals to plan their own accommodation pathway before a point of crisis is reached. It is also clear that future demand and the need for structured interventions will be increasingly driven by younger people with less well developed life-skills, single person households who have very limited options, people leaving care settings with complex needs (particularly mental health conditions), and older-people requiring accessible housing solutions.

1.10 The demand for TA has remained fairly constant. However, the introduction of two new prevention and relief duties means that a balance between the need for short term emergency accommodation needs to be struck. Based on the analysis undertaken, Broadland and South Norfolk require additional short-term emergency accommodation and less long-term temporary accommodation moving forward. There is also an urgent need to implement a new TA structure from one location to ensure consistency, control and continuity.

1.11 CT has sought the view of recent service users and stakeholder landlords, to understand the effectiveness of the current service and future priorities:

**Service users:** Whilst generally happy with service they received from their Council, however the number of re-banding decisions upheld on appeal and level of contact made to chase progress, demonstrates that there is considerable scope to digitise (change of circumstances), automate and streamline (bidding and lettings) many aspects of the service.

**Partner landlords:** View the combined service in a positive light and would like to see the adoption of a joint, a blended approach to allocations moving forward that combines both approaches would be welcomed. They would also welcome the establishment of more formal, partnership-based relationships moving forward, centred on sharing risk and the needs of the individual.

1.12 The creation of the new One Team operating model provides a unique opportunity to completely overhaul the current model of social housing provision, building on upon the strengths of the combining services in identifying needs and providing supporting services through their respective Support Hubs.

### ***Facing the future***

1.13 In the Covid-19 operating environment, a sit back and wait approach is not an option. A demand spike driven by unemployment, tenancy and mortgage default, mental health and domestic violence driven household failures, could result in such financial pressure that the viability of the Councils is at risk.

- 1.14 New thinking is required to meet the legal responsibility to deliver housing advice, to help all residents in housing need to avoid homelessness. Existing service offers based on intervention at the point of crisis and delivery models based on disjointed service elements have been made irrelevant almost overnight. Only a holistic Pathway model can deliver an effective response on a sustainable basis.
- 1.15 Broadland and South Norfolk are at a natural point of reinvention and have the opportunity to be bold and create a *Best in Class* solution based in the Covid-19 world, which provides universal on-line access to support all residents and empower them to resolve their own housing issues. To support households along a supported pathway that keeps them away from or move successfully away from homelessness, with wider accommodation choices based on their circumstance, and to work in partnership with landlords and support providers to help individuals build a level of resilience that reduce future reliance on the system.

### ***The Accommodation Pathway Model***

- 1.16 The *Accommodation Pathway Model* will enable individuals to plan for their long-term accommodation needs with a realist set of options, whilst supporting those who reach a point of crisis to re-establish and sustain a suitable home.
- 1.17 The *Accommodation Pathway Model* has four clearly defined and outcomes focused stages:



- 1.18 **Marketplace:** Will present a single digital access pathway into the housing service for anyone needing help to assess their housing needs and options, with the objective of delivering self-help solutions to the majority of those in housing need. Equally however, it will identify at an early stage, individuals approaching a point of housing crisis, risk factors that may trigger a formal intervention, and residents who may be too vulnerable to support themselves through the process unsupported.
- 1.19 Marketplace will provide access all available housing products in one place with the intention that it would become the first place to go for all residents in housing need. Residents would be able to register electronically their housing need and explore accommodation options. A personalised *Accommodation Options Plan*, would outline accommodation options over time, applicable to their personal and financial circumstance
- 1.20 **Prevention:** Will provide options for people at imminent risk of becoming homeless. However, if the Marketplace fulfils its role, households seeking support, should be fewer in number and hopefully already in the system and their circumstances known.
- 1.21 Enabling families to remain at home and wait for social housing rather than become homeless is the best outcome for both a household and each Councils. As part of a new allocations policy framework, homeless households could be incentivised to wait for a social housing outcome

and have more choice over where that offer is, rather than becoming homeless and being offered a short-term private rented solution.

- 1.22 **Stabilisation:** Will provide a tailored package of suitable, high quality temporary accommodation and personalised support to a household with the space to stabilise their situation before taking the next step towards self-reliance. Additional wraparound support may be provided to those who need support beyond finding suitable accommodation.
- 1.23 **Resolution:** Will enable households to resolve their housing need through access to permanent accommodation solutions, regardless of whether they are owed a statutory temporary accommodation duty, by delivering realistic, and suitable accommodation options.

### ***Enabling the Accommodation Pathway Model***

- 1.24 To enable the *Accommodation Pathway Model*, the disparate components of the homelessness, TA, and allocations services, their service offers, operating models, business systems and partnership relationships need to be re-thought and re-aligned to create a holistic Best in Class solution envisaged.



### ***Best in Class TA Provision***

- 1.25 A new model for the provision of TA is a necessity if the right type of TA is to be provided to meet demand at a sustainable cost. The target model for the provision of TA is a closed cycle that will ensure statutory requirements are met, whilst optimising quality of product and operational performance through accurate demand forecasting and utilisation modelling.
- 1.26 Broadland and South Norfolk should adopt a joint approach to TA procurement, based on an accurate mapping of need. Reliance on expensive private rental sector accommodation should be reduced in favour of developing accommodation solutions through landlord partnerships. There also needs to be a shift in the type of accommodation procured from longer-term move-on to shorter-term emergency accommodation.
- 1.27 A dedicated TA management function is required, that is properly resourced and located in one place. An Operations Manual has been developed as part of this project and needs to be embedded, with staff trained in the preventative case-working methods provided.

### ***Best in Class Housing Services***

- 1.28 Similarly, housing service provision needs reframing around a joint Allocations Policy, that will blend the approaches currently adopted by both Councils into a compliant, flexible tool for allocating homes fairly and transparently. A combined Choice Based Lettings and direct offer-based approach will best meet the objectives of both Councils and landlords, in recognising local connection, prioritising the homeless and those most in need, whilst still filling hard to let stock and attracting new customer into areas of low demand.



- 1.29 The customer journey for social housing provision must be standardised, automated and performance managed. There is scope to significantly reduce contact demand through smart self-service registration and application self-management and to embed decision making within the business system to drive consistency and ensure transparency.

***Best in Class Partnership Solutions***

- 1.30 Formalising the management arrangements between the Councils and partner landlords will elevate what are currently little more than transactional relationships into strategic partnership relationships. Landlords would welcome the formalisation of obsolete service level agreements, to share system and data to join-up end to end processes. They would also welcome a strategic approach to helping households establish and sustain their tenancies, by jointly sharing and managing risk of failure, through the provision of wraparound support.
- 1.31 The Covid-19 crisis is focusing the minds of all stakeholders across the County. Neighbouring Districts, core service commissioners within the County Council and service providers all recognise the need for opening-up strategic service partnerships that create whole system approach, delivering wider and lasting outcomes at reduced costs and ongoing levels of dependency. This impetus must be harnessed and channelled quickly into ready-to-go solutions such as *the Accommodation Pathway Model*.

***Best in Class Performance Management***

- 1.32 A comprehensive Performance Framework will ensure compliance of the whole system, drive-up performance and demonstrate the value of the *Accommodation Pathways Model* in delivering key objectives. Specific objectives should be to measure the quality customer experience and outcomes achieved, the impact of self-service and process efficiency in managing demand, and the realisation of wider service outcomes delivered in partnership.

***Delivering the Accommodation Pathway Model***

- 1.33 The next step in making the *Accommodation Pathway Model* a reality is to develop a Blueprint that will set-out the characteristics and components of the Pathway and target operating model for the *One Team* housing service. Underpinning the Blueprint must be a robust Business Case that sets out the investment needed to deliver the Pathway, the operational efficiency savings and tangible customer benefits it will deliver. A Transformation Roadmap will enable the service to deliver the change programme quickly and efficiently, with effective governance and resource planning, and to ensure strategic goals are realised through ongoing benefits tracking.
- 1.34 Broadland and South Norfolk are well placed to become the exemplar *Best in Class* solution provider within the sector. This may in turn open up a range of business development opportunities that could generate income and cover investment costs made in the Model.
- 1.35 Finally, the drive of the Broadland and South Norfolk team to complete this project at a time of intense operational change and unprecedented service demand, coupled with the shared vision of Members of both Councils, proves that the *Accommodation Pathway Model* can quickly be made a highly successful reality.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### ***Strategic Context***

- 2.1 On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 Broadland and South Norfolk Councils came together operationally as *One Team*, to reshape the future of the two districts, through an innovative transformation of local authority collaborative working.
- 2.2 *Our Plan* (2020-24) sets out a radical agenda for supporting individuals and empowering communities, reshaping services around the needs of the most vulnerable, whilst enabling individuals to become more resilient and less reliant on core service interventions.
- 2.3 Core to this ambition is to undertake a radical reimagining of how to deliver a *Best in Class Housing Offer* that will meet the needs of communities across both districts. A new service offer and operating model is required that will provide a dynamic service for customers with broader choice, coupled with a framework of support services. Operating as a single service and underpinned by digital access pathways and service delivery processes, a new model will enable the service to operate more efficiently.
- 2.4 Campbell Tickell (CT) has been engaged to work collaboratively with the Housing Team to review, research and define a *Best in Class Housing Offer* for housing services.
- 2.5 However, the Covid-19 epidemic has thrown the fragility of long-term planning and aspirational thinking into sharp relief, as robust emergency plans must now deal with the immediate crisis and plot a course back to relative normality. Whilst every service will be in reset mode for the next six months or so, and it is too early to predict the enduring impact over the next three to five years, it is clear that all services will need to fundamentally rethink the way they engage with customers, flexing service offers to meet spikes in demand and changes in needs, to both offer service differently and operate differently.
- 2.6 Necessity is the mother of invention and by driving forward with this project during the lockdown period, it has served to focus and create a sense of real urgency in defining a housing solution that will respond to both immediate needs and meet longer-term aspirations of Broadland and South Norfolk.

### ***Project Scope***

- 2.7 The project scope is to:
  - Reduce the need for temporary accommodation in the first instance and exploring options for offering reasonable long-term accommodation options to households;
  - Align current offers to optimise efficiency and minimise risk, offering further options to customers at times of need, whilst respecting the sovereignty of each Council;
  - Investigate funding options to achieve best value for money whilst developing a sustainable model that enables reinvestment of income into support provision;
  - Explore how partnership solutions beyond the boundaries of the two councils to deliver a ground-breaking and exceptional housing pathway.

***Expected Outcomes***

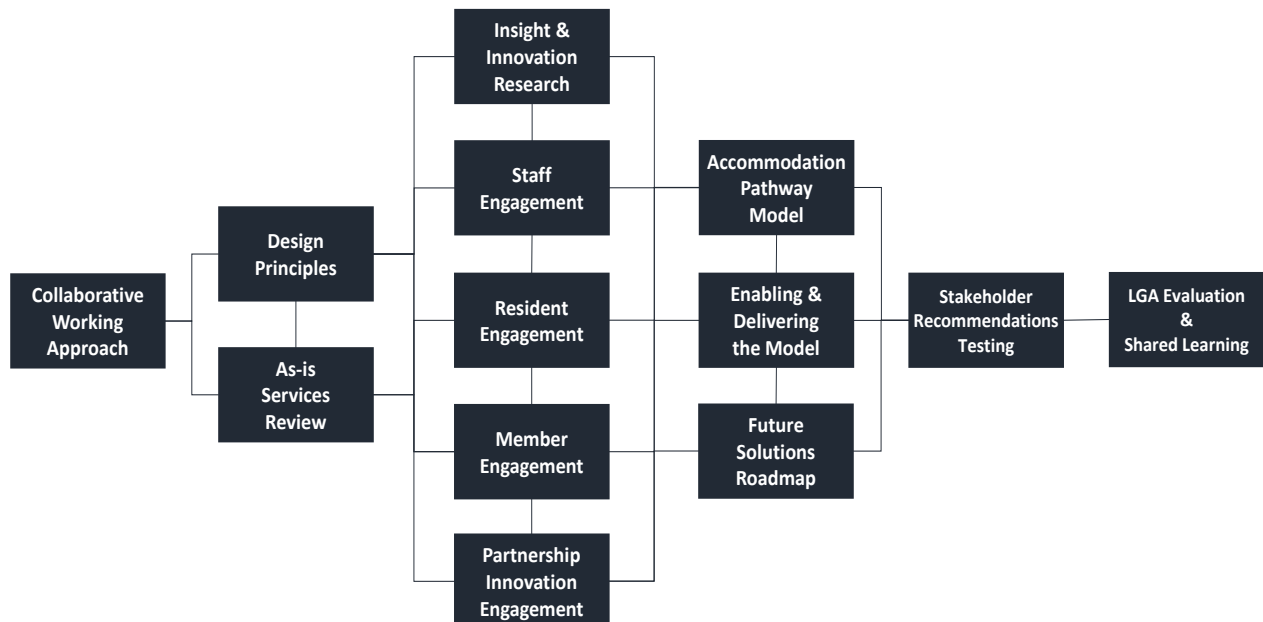
- 2.8 The project is designed to enable Broadland and South Norfolk to create a flexible service offer that meets the individual needs of both, delivered through a single social housing system that can provide a realistic set of largely self-managed housing options for anyone in need of support, whilst supporting those most in need to avoid crisis and to sustain a long-term home.
- 2.9 Specifically, the project will define a model that will support:
- A customer-centred housing offer that will enable people to take responsibility for meeting their own housing needs;
  - A prevention led, boundary-less approach to achieve sustainable outcomes;
  - A convergent policy frameworks;
  - A sustainable operating model;
  - A digital service pathway with support for the vulnerable;
  - Digital processes that support flexible service delivery; and
  - Seamless housing provider and support agency partnerships.

***Transformational Partnerships***

- 2.10 The project is funded through the Local Government Association (LGA) Housing Advisor Programme (HAP), which has the aim of supporting transformation partnerships that enable services to meet their local housing need.
- 2.11 To this end, Broadland and South Norfolk Council's recognise that there is a significant and timely opportunity to explore what local government can achieve by working together to achieve wholesale redesign of Temporary Accommodation (TA) pathways on a larger footprint. Two other local authorities have given agreement to explore this work further with the councils as part of the review process.
- 2.12 Additionally, at a County level, reviews are underway to explore demand and resource of housing and homelessness services. Based on the outcomes of this review, there is potential to create a cross-boundary, customer focussed and fair approach to seeking housing assistance including a combined temporary accommodation pathway using collective resources.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 This project has been delivered to a predefined CT methodology, tempered by the limitations of working within Covid-19 lockdown.



#### ***Collaborative Working Approach***

- 3.2 A collaborate working approach has been adopted from the outset, with the CT team working closely with the newly formed internal consultancy team, with frontline managers and delivery teams, and with a Members Working Group drawn from both Councils.

#### ***Design principles***

- 3.3 To ensure everyone involved with the project has a shared vision for what constitutes a *Best in Class* approach and to stay focused on that outcome when defining the detail of the new *Offer*, a set of *Design Principles* has been agreed to crystallise key outcomes and deliverables:

- Deliver a Best in Class housing solution, exceeding our statutory duties;
- Provide tailored accommodation solutions based on insight and evidence needs;
- Offer choice to our customers to meet individual needs;
- Promote self-reliance, enabling people to move-on and add value to their lives;
- Be sustainable and free resources to fund housing objectives;
- Be compliant, with robust business processes and systems; and
- Be an extendable or replicable offer to other Local Authorities.

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***Analysis of current service offer and delivery model***

- 3.4 A review of the as-is service offer, operating and delivery models has been undertaken to provide both insight and to serve as a benchmark from which to define and measure the value-add of a target model. This has been achieved through:
- A desktop review of the current policy frameworks, operating procedures, and organisational design;
  - A review of the end-to-end customer journeys of service users approaching the service of both councils;
  - A review of operational processes and systems; and
  - A data and business intelligence review (waiting Lists, performance reports etc.).

***Stakeholder engagement***

- 3.5 Working with a spectrum of stakeholders has been central to establishing the nature of the need and demand for housing services, in how best to address those needs within a single model, and in shaping a new partnership-based service offer and partnership-based operating model.
- 3.6 **Staff engagement:** One-to-one interviews have been conducted with frontline managers and workshops held with frontline staff, to understand local context and service demand drivers, the strengths and weaknesses of the current operating models, and to establish the key business requirements of the target model.
- 3.7 **Members Working Group:** A series of remote workshops with Members from both districts has enabled the project to test thinking from the outset and to drive the definition of the new model forward based on negotiated consensus. This group has:
- Reviewed and agreed the overarching design principles;
  - Highlighted strengths and weaknesses of current service access pathways;
  - Helped to scope and agree key elements of the target pathway definition; and,
  - Reviewed key aspects of the proposed service model as a precursor to the formal governance review of each Council.

- 3.8 **Service User Engagement:** A digital survey of recent housing service users of both Councils has provided valuable insight into their experience of the service and the outcomes secured.

***Partnership Innovation Engagement***

- 3.9 A series of interviews with external stakeholders (somewhat curtailed by the Covid-19) has provided insight into the current operating models at Broadland and South Norfolk, how other Districts deliver similar services across the County, and the priorities of key service commissioners within the County Council. This exercise has been invaluable in assessing the appetite for forging new partnership arrangements in response to Covid-19 and to plan and act more strategically:

- 3.10 **Registered Providers:** To review current arrangements for delivering TA and social housing; potential approaches to increasing the pool of accommodation, for developing seamless partnership arrangement and streamlining processes.
- 3.11 **Private rental providers:** To explore current issues and constraints in the system and barriers to extending and developing provision and recommendations for development, particularly of private sector leased properties and self-contained properties for short-term TA.
- 3.12 **Adult and Children's Social Care commissioners:** To explore the responsiveness and effectiveness of the current systems in meeting the needs of vulnerable service users.
- 3.13 **Voluntary and community sector providers:** To explore current support for those in TA and social rental accommodation to develop recommendations for improving support to vulnerable groups in mitigating refusals and failed tenancies.
- 3.14 A full list of stakeholders interviewed is presented in Appendix 1.

### ***Project Outputs***

- 3.15 The core output of the project is an *Accommodation Pathway Model*, a highly innovative solution to help individuals meet their own housing needs, whilst supporting the more vulnerable to avoid homelessness, and if not, to stabilise and secure and sustain a lasting home.
- 3.16 To support the *Model* a set of supporting products has also been provided by CT:
- Homelessness prevention and statutory assessment toolkits;
  - TA procurement policy;
  - TA predictive model and a TA control framework;
  - TA operating manual;
  - TA casework resources pack;
  - Allocations policy;
  - Business requirements for a Housing system;

### ***LGA Evaluation and shared Learning***

- 3.17 Upon completion of the project an approach will be agreed between Broadland and South Norfolk stakeholders, CT and the LGA for disseminating the findings of the project and proposed model more widely. As with other Housing Advisors Programme projects this could include providing masterclasses to support dissemination of both the method and model.

## 4. SERVICE BASELINE

### *Approach*

- 4.1 This section draws together the findings of the fieldwork undertaken by CT (desktop document review, data analysis and stakeholder consultation) to understand current service pathways and how they meet current need, and the operating models and delivery processes that are currently converging within the *One Team* model. This analysis will form a baseline from which a *Best in Class* and highly innovative model can be built.



- 4.2 The *Service Baseline* comprises:

**Approach:** A review of the current access and delivery model for managing homelessness and the allocation of social housing;

**Insight:** A review of demand, causation, demographics and support needs, drawn from statutory returns and data held on the housing management systems of both Councils;

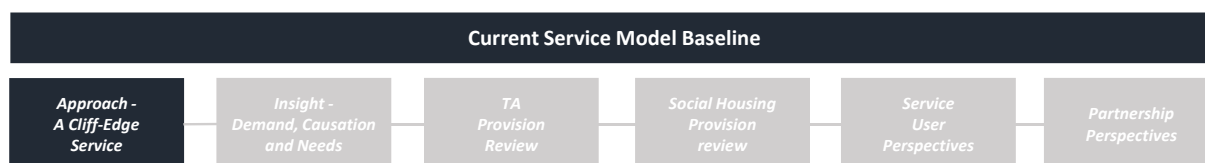
**TA provision review:** A review of TA demand in response to the Homelessness Reduction Act, and an assessment of both Council's TA portfolios, their configuration and cost-effectiveness, and the effectiveness of current procurement strategies in delivering the right TA at the right cost.

**Social housing provision:** A review of current access arrangements, registration and assessment processes, Housing Register management, allocations and lettings processes, and tenancy sustainment support provision;

**Service user perspectives:** Drawn from a digital survey of recently housed tenants of both Councils, highlighting their experience of the current customer journey;

**Partnership perspectives:** Drawn from interviews with senior and frontline staff from partner landlords, neighbouring District Councils, people-focused service functions of the County Council, and other service providers.

## Approach – A Cliff-Edge Service



- 4.3 Under the current models operated by both councils (and by all Council) most residents in housing need initially to seek help through joining the housing register. A traditional housing register model only delivers housing solutions for a relatively small percentage of those registered. In addition, there is evidence nationally that many residents in housing need fail to register, having taken the view that they are unlikely to obtain social housing.
- 4.4 Others bypass the housing register route and present directly as homeless. Put simply the current housing register/statutory homeless service model, which is common to all local authorities, that people fail to access the service before needing housing help, and therefore fails to deliver practical housing help, advice and solutions for the vast majority of residents that have a housing need and this results in more residents approaching the council in crisis.
- 4.5 The table below demonstrates the cliff-edge nature of the service at both Councils, with the majority of individuals not seeking help until a point of crisis is near or has been reached:

Applicant Status When Accessing Housing Team		
Status	Broadland	South Norfolk
Not at Risk (housing Advice Only)	8%	17%
At Risk (Relief Duty)	50%	33%
Homeless (Main Duty)	42%	50%

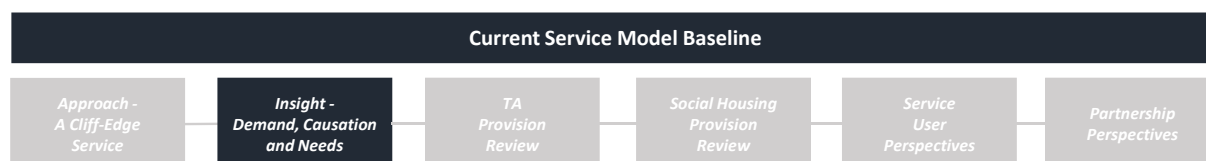
- 4.6 The current model is passive not proactive. The service waits for residents to approach the Councils and then filter help through a legislative focused lettings and homelessness system, built on rationing and means testing. This filter results in only a small percentage of the overall number of residents in housing need achieving a solution through the help of either Council, even though the Help Hub approach provides tailored support.
- 4.7 Furthermore, the model does little to encourage residents in housing need to be proactive, to adapt their behaviour to increase their chances of obtaining a solution. Many drift towards an inevitable housing crisis resulting in homelessness and an application under the statutory homelessness legislation. Each homelessness application might be viewed as a failure, caused by a system that all Councils have come to see as the norm.
- 4.8 The current model fails to promote and deliver resilience and self-help amongst residents in housing need. Common behaviours include:
- Many residents are unwilling to consider accommodation solutions outside of their immediate area because of family and social networks;
  - Few in housing need explore their housing options and plan their housing future



- There is, for many, a lack of resilience and lack of understanding of the principle of self-help. The Council is seen by many newly formed families as the solution to their housing problem, and that solution is only considered acceptable if it is social housing. If some are aware of the limited availability of social housing it is still considered obtainable through the route of becoming homelessness;
- National insight, but confirmed by housing officers locally, suggests that residents in housing need qualify for social housing on the basis of being able to demonstrate extreme housing need circumstances such as homelessness. There is no reward for residents in housing need who are proactive and try to help themselves. Academics have called the system "a race to the bottom" in order to receive help.

4.9 Those that try to be proactive face significant problems. All Councils largely focus on delivering help at the point of a housing crisis. There is little help available pre-crisis to support people to plan their housing future, or to overcome the challenges of securing accommodation in the private rented sector. Many can't afford a deposit and there is reluctance by many landlords and agents to accept tenants in receipt of benefits, or with small children.

## Insight - Understanding Service Demand



- 4.10 To predict future accommodation needs across the two Councils, an understanding of the factors that influence demand is required, in particular the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2018 on homelessness applications and the demand for temporary accommodation. Logically, higher homelessness applications would normally evidence a need to plan for more cases requiring temporary accommodation.

### **Current Demand**

- 4.11 Analysis of the Government's *Local Authority Homelessness Returns (2018 to September 2020)*, both Broadland and South Norfolk Councils have experienced a significant rise in homeless applications since the Homelessness Reduction Act was enacted in April 2018 is presented in the table below:

Total Homelessness Applications			
Council	Pre HRA: April 2017-March 2018	HRA Year 1: April 2018– March 2019	HRA Year 2: April 2019- Sept. 2019
Broadland	126	193	278 (120% increase)
South Norfolk	71	292	240 (238% increase)
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>518</b> (162% increase)

- 4.12 Combining the figures for Broadland and South Norfolk, homeless applications have risen by 162% since the HRA was enacted, well above the 140% national increase for England.

### **Preventing and relieving homelessness**

- 4.13 Where preventative casework is successful, fewer cases will require TA and, where relief casework is successful, more of the cases being accommodated in TA will leave at a faster rate. In contrast however, poor performance in preventing and relieving homelessness will result in higher numbers in temporary accommodation. This is an important issue to analyse for understanding how upstream solutions can result in better outcomes and to help predict how much Temporary Accommodation will Broadland and South Norfolk will need over the next 3 years
- 4.14 For both Broadland and South Norfolk performance is good. In respect of a successful outcome to the 'prevention of homelessness duty' is above the 'Eastern Region' and all England average based on the (MHCLG end of September 2019 HCLIC returns).

- 4.15 Performance for a successful outcome to the relief of homelessness duty is above the 'Eastern Region' average but, combining the figures for both Councils, is slightly below the all England average, as shown in the table below:

Successful Prevention Duty and Outcomes		
Council	Successful Prevention Duty Outcome %	Successful Relief Duty Outcome %
Broadland	69%	36%
South Norfolk	63%	41%
Easter Region average	56%	33%
England average	58%	40%

- 4.16 Taking the baseline figures, this is undoubtedly a strong performance by both Councils and this will have relieved pressure on TA. However, analysing the figures more closely there is evidence that raises concern regarding the sustainability of the current performance. The concern is that prevention and relief success has largely been achieved by diverting households into social housing rather than keeping people in the properties they have presented from and this may not be sustainable looking to the future.
- 4.17 Of the households recorded with a successful prevention outcome in South Norfolk in 100% of cases this was achieved through a move to alternative accommodation before the household became homeless, with 93% of that accommodation being a move into social housing. Put simply no cases were recorded as prevented through actions to help the household remain in their home and 93% were diverted into social housing before they became homeless. The '100% alternative accommodation prevention figure' is the highest recorded figure in England.
- 4.18 For Broadland the figures are a little better but still a concern. Of the households recorded as having a successful prevention outcome, in 76% of cases this was achieved through a move to alternative accommodation, with 64% of the alternative accommodation being social housing.
- 4.19 Both councils are fortunate in that social housing has to date taken the strain. So far, this approach has not had a negative impact on TA numbers, but there must be considerable doubt that this is a sustainable long-term strategy.
- 4.20 It may be possible to rely on social housing as the solution for another year or possibly 2, but this is not a sustainable strategy for suppressing numbers in TA indefinitely. Nor is it fair to other applicants in urgent housing need on the housing register who require social housing.
- 4.21 A failure to take action here may eventually see higher numbers in TA and higher costs.

## Insight - Understanding Causation and Support Needs

- 4.22 Systematically recording and correctly interpreting the reasons why individuals and households approach the service, their demographic characteristics, and the support issues they may have, will provide the depth of insight from which the objectives and resources of the service can be focused to maximise outcomes.

### ***Causation***

- 4.23 The table below demonstrates that a significant percentage of households approaching the service do so from what had been a potentially stable home or sustainable tenancy, highlighting the need for supporting individuals to plan their own accommodation pathway, and to provide access to accommodation solutions that avoid a crisis intervention:

Main Causes of Homelessness	
Reason	Combined Councils
End of Private Rental Sector tenancy	25%
Friends or family unable to accommodate	20%
Relationship breakdown	15%
Domestic abuse or harassment	10%
End of Social Rental Sector tenancy	10%

### ***Household characteristics***

- 4.24 An increasing percentage of young and single people approach the service, for whom there is limited access to core interventions. To supporting the whole community to meet their housing needs, an understanding of how household form or remain hidden is needed. For example, nationally, there has been a 28% increase in 20-34 year olds living with their parents over the last 10 years, which will drive future demand. The table below demonstrates the demand on the service from single person and younger households:

Age Profile		Household Composition	
Age	Combined Councils	Household	Combined Councils
Under 26	22%	Single or couple	60%
Aged 27 to 56	63%	Family with 1 child	20%
57 and over	15%	Family with 2 children	10%
		Family with 3 or more children	10%

**Economic Status**

- 4.25 Currently, a significant proportion of individuals access the service from a position of relative economic stability (40% in work and 50% receiving no benefits). However, the impact of Covid-19 crisis on employment in the area, and in particular its impact on the gig economy and lower-paid seasonal jobs, may significantly increasing the urgency of need and level of financial hardship of those approaching the housing service.

Economic and State Support Status			
Economic Status	Combined Councils	State Support	Combined Councils
Full or part-time work	40%	No support	50%
Seeking work	15%	Housing Benefit	25%
Not seeking work (education or retired)	20%	Universal Credit	15%
Cannot work (long-term sick or disabled)	20%	Other benefits	10%

**Primary Household Support Needs**

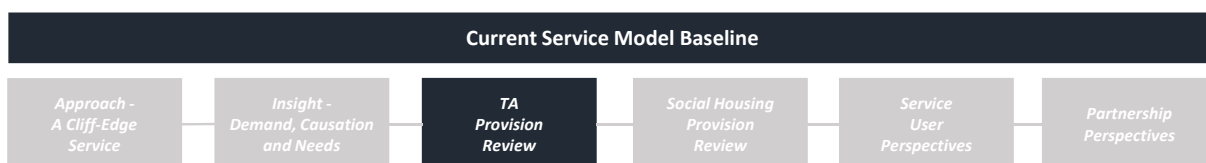
- 4.26 Currently, 40% of individuals approaching the service (across both Councils) identify a support need when they register, and again, in the wake of Covid-19, there will undoubtedly be a lasting legacy of mental health support needs and for building life skill amongst younger people who will be living at home for longer.

Primary Household Support Needs (of those needing support)	
Support Need	Combined Councils
Physical support	50%
Mental health support	25%
Younger person support (life skills, leaving care)	8%
Older person support (independent living)	7%

**Building Insight**

- 4.27 The level of insight gained through data collected by either service is limited at present and it is not clear how it drives planning and provision of the service, beyond the provision of statutory returns. The insight and experience of service users and service partners presented below helps to build out a more rounded picture of emerging need, particularly of younger people and those living with a mental health condition and finding it difficult to access support services.
- 4.28 Moving forward however, it is imperative to build a base of high quality insight to drive the new service model, providing the foresight needed to meet changes in demand and complexity of needs, rather than simply reacting to them.

## TA Provision



### Current demand

- 4.29 At the beginning of April 2020 there were 51 households placed in temporary accommodation across both Councils. Just over 30% were placed in accommodation outside of the Council area where they had presented as homeless from.
- 4.30 Despite the rise in homeless applications there has not been a corresponding rise for the number of households in temporary accommodation. In fact, numbers in TA have fallen in Broadland and have risen only marginally in South Norfolk, as shown in the table below:

People in Temporary Accommodation (provided to meet statutory)		
Council	March 2018 (last quarter before HRA)	September 2019
Broadland	59	29 (of which 15 are single people without children)
South Norfolk	11	20 (of which 12 are single people without children)

- 4.31 The analysis that the increase in homeless applications has not resulted in a significant rise in temporary accommodation would appear to go against the logic that higher applications must surely result in higher numbers in temporary accommodation. The explanation for why this is not the case is that prior to the HRA implementation, both Councils offered advice and prevention of homelessness help to customers without being required by the legislation to record this help through the means of a statutory homeless application.
- 4.32 What we can conclude on this question is:
- Homelessness applications have risen by 162% across the combined authorities and this is above the regional and national average;
  - However, the increased figure does not represent a 162% increase in presentations to both Councils as the rules for recording homeless applications have changed;
  - Nevertheless, there have undoubtedly been more people presenting as homeless in 2019/20 than in 2018/19 though it is difficult to accurately quantify what the real increase is. The figures recorded locally for new cases presenting for help are not sufficiently robust to be able to compare like-with-like with the figures for 2017/18;
  - Despite the fact that homeless applications have risen this has not fed through to a corresponding rise in temporary accommodation for either Council.

***Predicting future demand***

4.33 On the evidence set-out above, it is possible to conclude that despite the introduction of the HRA and the increase in homelessness applications, demand for temporary accommodation remains stable (rising from 11 to 20 in South Norfolk and falling significantly in Broadland) with a relatively small numbers accommodated by both Councils in comparison with Councils of a similar size and demography.

4.34 The specific reasons why the rise in homeless applications has not resulted in higher TA placements can be put down to the fact that:

Firstly, the recorded rise in applications is mainly for single people who have not been assessed as priority need and therefore are not owed a temporary accommodation duty and

Secondly, as is highlighted in the analysis above, both Councils are recording higher than the regional and national average figures for preventing homelessness which means households who would have required temporary accommodation have their threat of homelessness resolved before they become homeless and require TA.

***Temporary Accommodation Portfolio Assessment***

4.35 The current TA portfolio consists of accommodation that is Council owned, leased from private landlords or provided by Registered Providers. In addition, both Councils use *bed and breakfast* accommodation on a regular basis to provide emergency accommodation.

4.36 The TA portfolio at the 1st April 2020 consisted of the following stock:

<b>Broadland Council TA Portfolio</b>	
<b>Council Owned</b>	2 x 3 bed properties
<b>Private Sector Leased</b>	41 properties of various size including 2 x 4 bed
	1 x PSL leased 5 bed House of Multiple Occupancy
	Tustings: 5 x units leased from Clarion Housing
<b>South Norfolk TA Portfolio</b>	
<b>Council Owned</b>	Kestrel House: 6 x self-contained studio apartments for families, (all ground floor with wet room showers)
	St Andrews: 1 semi-detached 3-bed house, used for either for 3 x singles/couples (1 box room only suitable for a single person). 1 bathroom, 1 kitchen, 1 living room or can be used for 1 x large family
<b>Private Sector Leased</b>	The Manse: 6 x shared rooms, 3 bathrooms 1 large kitchen for singles or couples – 2 ground floor rooms, 4 upstairs, 1 communal lounge, leased from the Church

- 4.37 The large Private Sector Leased (PSL) portfolio (over 40 units) in Broadland is having a significant negative cost impact on the Council, with the net annual cost estimated at between £200 and £250k. Except for two Council-owned properties, PSL makes up the rest of the TA portfolio with bed and breakfast the emergency accommodation resource. Taken together Broadland is reliant on the type of TA that has the biggest negative cost impact. In comparison PSL accounts for 20% of the total TA portfolio on average for the rest of England.
- 4.38 The portfolio is more suited to longer-term TA placements. This is having a negative cost impact on the Council compared to the position before the introduction of the HRA. There are higher than budgeted for turnover rates and increasing levels of voids impacting on costs.
- 4.39 The business case behind the PSL procurement scheme for Broadland was based on a cost comparison with bed and breakfast costs. However, given the changes to DWP subsidy rules (2017) have had a negative impact on PSL schemes, there is a need to consider alternative models.
- 4.40 The two main forms of TA currently used to meet Broadland's emergency accommodation and second stage accommodation needs are forms of accommodation that have the biggest net financial cost to the Council.
- 4.41 For South Norfolk Council it can be argued that the TA portfolio is too small. There are only seven Council owned properties and six rooms/units leased, leaving the Council at risk of having to rely on costly bed and breakfast if there is an upturn in homelessness presentations. However, this is to some extent mitigated by the combined service model where TA resources can be shared across both Councils.
- 4.42 For both Councils there is a strong financial and operational case to suggest that the type and stock profile for the TA currently procured needs to change to respond to the impact that the HRA has had which is the need to procure more short term accommodation and less long term TA.
- 4.43 The balance between the need for short term emergency accommodation pending a decision on a homeless application, and longer term largely self-contained accommodation required to meet a full statutory homeless duty once accepted, has been impacted by the introduction of the two new prevention and relief duties and the flexible way these duties can be ended through 6 month accommodation lets of any tenure offered. Broadland and South Norfolk Council require additional short-term emergency accommodation and less long-term temporary accommodation.

### ***TA Service Delivery***

- 4.44 This section examines the current resource allocation models of the TA functions within the two Councils to assess how they can be best configured as a single service to meet future demand:

### **South Norfolk Council**

- 4.45 There is no dedicated TA manager or team, with the function delivered across a number of resources, as follows:



**Housing Solutions officers:** Responsible for contacting Bed and Breakfast providers, completing risk assessments, charging sheets, and agreeing placements;

**Administrative officer:** responsible for some TA work (approximately 10 hours per week) along with a wide range of other administrative and support work. The TA administrative tasks include arranging contractors, cleaning rooms, and some maintenance functions;

**Housing and Benefit Advisors (1.6 FTE):** Provide intensive housing management and support for TA occupants, signposting mental health, social services, CAB, debt advice;

**Housing Benefit Assessors (1.4 FTE):** Process TA claims and assess housing benefit for other specialist accommodation including exempt and supported accommodation and Gypsy and Traveller site claims;

**IT Systems officer (7.5 hours a week):** Complete TA placement forms and set-up TA charges on the Abritas IT system.

#### 4.46 **Broadland Council**

4.47 There is no dedicated TA manager, with the function delivered by:

**Private Sector Leasing Officer (1 FTE):** Responsible for most aspects of the Council's PSL scheme including management, sign ups, and managing contractors;

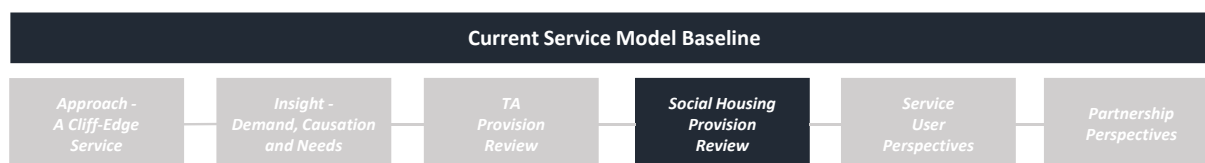
**Housing officers (1.4 FTE):** Responsible for TA placements, contacting bed and breakfast providers, set-up of charges and to record placements on the Jigsaw system.

4.48 Staff resources for the temporary accommodation function are not sufficient to deliver this critically important statutory function. Current structures are 'haphazard' and have evolved over time.

4.49 There is a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities for TA, and gaps at both strategic and operational level. This is compounded by out-of-date operating procedures and working documents at both councils.

4.50 There is an urgent need to implement a new TA structure for the combined authorities and to operate from one location to ensure consistency, control and continuity. Any additional growth in TA staff resources can likely be met through increased MHCLG Government funding for 2020/21. This funding case is set-out in Appendix 2.

## Social Housing Provision



### Review of current model

- 4.51 The principles underpinning housing service provision and delivery currently followed by both Councils have shortcomings that work against the core principle of effectively and efficiently matching the right person and their needs with the right accommodation:
- From a service user perspective, the service is complicated and encourage *band chasing* and a *race to the bottom* to evidence urgent housing need whether it exists or not;
  - *Housing Need* is a relative concept and the Government's statutory definition of housing need as defined by the reasonable preference groups are outdated and do not fit with the market or supply position in Norfolk in 2020;
  - Dependency is encouraged and resilience is not promoted, with applicants being responsible for making tough decisions about their options and taking responsibility for solutions where they are able;
  - They do not sufficiently recognise the changing circumstances of applicants registering with many more in part time or full time work.

### Allocations Policy

- 4.52 An Allocations Policy is the keystone of any housing service and dictates the operability and level of outcomes achievable, as it is delivered on the ground. key aspects of the Broadland and South Norfolk policies and delivery models are reviewed below to assess how a common allocations policy and delivery model might be constructed:

**Qualification of applications:** Only South Norfolk currently offer any on-line qualification of applications. The processes of both Councils need overhauling to maximise the level of on-line pre-qualification and provision of proof by applicants;

**Assessment of need:** In South Norfolk assessment is undertaken within the on-line CBL process, whilst in Broadland, this is a manual process undertaken against the homeless and allocations policies. Moving forward, a common approach is needed that removes any officer interpretation from the process, as it will be prescribed within the business system, which will guarantee transparency, but still permit auditable management discretion;

**Banding:** in our view, the banding models of both Councils have weaknesses, in common with many other local authorities, the Broadland Model (3 bands) is not broad or transparent enough and the South Norfolk model (5 bands) is too complex. Moving forward, a straightforward, transparent banding is required that will reduce the level of incorrect banding decisions and resultant level of challenge;

**Notification of banding decisions:** Formal, correctly justified written notifications of banding decisions must be consistently produced;

**Local connection:** Is problematic for both Councils, as evidencing connection in relation to an application is not granular enough and specific nuances are not recorded or considered;

**Allocations by bed size:** Whilst both services appear to operate in a compliant way, there is potential for missing rules, such as when a child turns 16 and is entitled to their own bedroom;

**Medical assessment:** Decisions are made in-house at both Councils, which puts pressure on non-medically qualified staff. Moving forward, if this arrangement is continued, an electronic medical triage form is needed to capture circumstances accurately, and a medical assessment script that will ensure the consistency and integrity of assessment decision making.

4.53 Both Councils are strong in safeguarding vulnerable residents, needs are identified early and coordinated through the respective *Service Hubs*. Both Councils are also strong in conducting home visits and also engaging appropriate support partners in supporting vulnerable residents (sourcing mental health support provision is however cited as being extremely difficult).

4.54 However, neither Council regularly arranges accompanied viewing for vulnerable residents. Also, the support status flags on systems used by either Councils are not clear, moving forward there needs to be clear distinction and consistency of use.

4.55 The management of the housing register is a problem for both Councils, with limited maintenance of individual applications or scheduled reviews:

**Changes of circumstances:** A manual process is followed at Broadland, whilst there is some self-service automation in South Norfolk. Self-service capability must be expanded and strengthened moving forward, as the gateway to any new service pathway;

**Application reviews:** Neither Council currently does no more than to review the homelessness cases on their lists there is no consistent approach or schedule for reviewing other cases. Housing registers are not therefore being maintained correctly and have significant numbers of obsolete cases. A definitive and audited review path is required going forward.

4.56 The approach to allocations and lettings in both Councils is generally robust, but needs strengthening in several areas:

**Shortlisting:** Both Councils can demonstrate a transparent, auditable approach to shortlisting;

**Viewings:** Neither Council uses multiple viewings, which may impact landlord void turnaround;

**Sensitive lets:** Both councils operate open and compliant processes;

**Local lettings:** Both councils operate open and compliant processes;

**Offers:** Both Councils rely on a verbal offer process, which may be open to re/mis-interpretation by applicants;

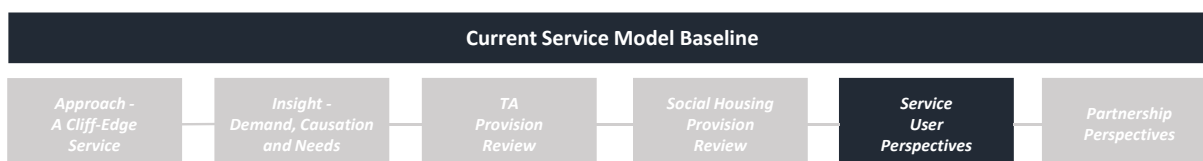
**Reasons for refusal:** Are recorded consistently by both Councils. However, greater consistency is needed when recording process bypass reasons.

- 4.57 Working with landlords to coordinate the letting of homes to those in most need, whilst minimising voids loss is challenging:
- The manual, nominations-based approach at Broadland means staff can often struggle to match applicants against a void quickly, which can lead to critical information such as sensitivities (witness protection for example) being missed. It is critical that landlords give 4 weeks' notice of new voids to allow a candidate to be matched;
  - Landlords can be guilty of slippage in meeting expected hand-back dates, which can result in unfulfilled offers, particularly in homeless cases;
  - The provision of lettings paperwork by landlords can also be slow, particularly in Broadland. A digital self-service portal for landlords will automate this process.
- 4.58 From a compliance and performance perspective, a number of critical weaknesses have emerged, that must be addressed by any new service model:
- The audit trail as to what constitutes a legal *offer* is not complete, as processes were streamlined as part of *lean-thinking* reviews – a full audit trail must be re-instated;
  - Similarly, the audit trail of a customer's journey through the system is incomplete and is therefore not compliant;
  - Extracting business information to drive performance reviews and to gain insight can be difficult, meaning services may not be performing or responding to changes in demand and needs appropriately;
  - The configuration of the ICT solution at Broadland means that the reason recorded for an agreed banding is not transparent, a critical audit trail parameter.

### ***Review of current working practices***

- 4.59 Current working practices have been assessed through a desktop review of policy and operational documentation and observations provided by frontline managers and staff. Many of the issues outlined below are already being addressed within the new *One Team* service model, but are recorded to enable the completion of the baseline analysis.
- 4.60 Frontline managers and staff recognise the need to rethink the operational and organisational design and converge policies, processes and working practices, to refresh business systems and review partnership working arrangements. Specific aspects of the current operating models that require rethinking are therefore to:
- Introduce a single way of working and to implement an organisational design that balances the number of specialist and non-specialist roles, to maintain service levels whilst focusing support on the most vulnerable;
  - Reduce the number and increase the inter-operability of business systems and the processes they support, to reduce duplication and eliminate re-keying of information;
  - Increase the scope of self-service functionality and eliminate manual processes.

## Service User Perspectives



4.61 A web survey of 62 recent users of the housing service (out of 200 recently housed households contacted) has provided feedback on their experience of the service they received from Broadland and South Norfolk.

4.62 The primary reasons given for being on the register were:

Main Reasons Given When Applying For Housing	
Reason Given	% Respondents
Overcrowding	24%
Health and disability	18%
End of private sector tenancy agreement	13%
Homeless	11%
Affordability	8%
Family break-up	8%
Unable to continue in family home	5%
Downsizing	5%
Change of accommodation need	3%
Safeguarding issues	3%
End of social housing tenancy	1%
Disrepair of current home	1%

4.63 70% of respondents said they were familiar with the Allocations Policy of their Council and almost 80% said they were familiar with the banding system operated.

4.64 Over half of respondents were housed within six month of being placed on the Housing Register, with a further quarter placed in under a year. Only 6% of respondents said they had to wait for more than 18 months to be offered accommodation.

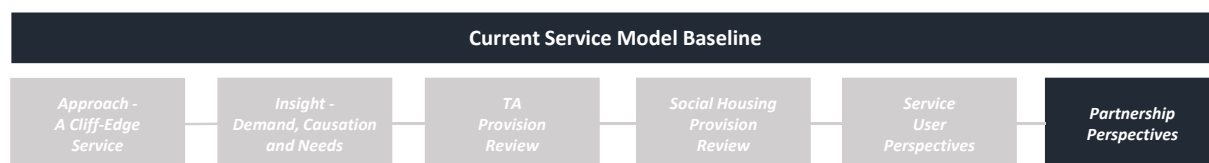
4.65 Assessment letters sent to respondents were universally viewed as being accurate and reflective of their circumstances, however special circumstances could have been better reflected. 21% of respondents asked for a review of their application, mostly because the applicant didn't agree with the banding allocated to them. Upon review, two-thirds of the original banding decisions were adjusted, which suggests weaknesses and inconsistencies in the assessment and banding process.

- 4.66 45% of respondents said they had to contact the housing service whilst they were on the Housing Register and of those that did, 28% did so once, 50% did so up to 5 times, 15% did so 5 to 10 times and 6% over 10 times. The main reasons for contacting the service were:

Main Reasons for Contacting Housing	
Reason	% Respondents
Information	23%
Status check	23%
Banding query	22%
Change of circumstance	18%
Bidding query	11%
Support need	3%

- 4.67 The effectiveness of the service response to an enquiry was mixed, with only 46% of enquiries resolved at the first point of contact.
- 4.68 Just over half of respondents (54%) accepted the first offer they received and a further 38% accepted the second. Reasons for refusal vary, from the property being unsuitable, not in a preferred location, or not ready. Almost 85% of respondents agreed that their Council had taken their views into account when making an offer.
- 4.69 Most respondents felt that the bidding and lettings process was well supported, but 20% were unaware of the need for an affordability check. Sign-ups were generally completed within a week.
- 4.70 Overall, most respondents were happy with their new home and the service they received from the Council and the landlord. However, the level of decisions upheld on re-banding enquiries and the number of contact made to chase progress, demonstrates that there is considerable scope to digitise (change of circumstances) and streamline (bidding and lettings) many aspects of the service.

## Partnership Perspectives



- 4.71 Through a set of one-to-one interviews, partner landlords report a positive day-to-day working relationship with the two Districts, particularly when combined with regular co-working. They also report good access to and support from the wider housing and benefits services.
- 4.72 Landlords perceive that both services have sought to seek a balance between applicants in priority need and those who are not, and exercising fairness on a case-by-case basis. Both the nominations and choice-based lettings allocation policy approaches are perceived as having strengths and weaknesses (the former allowing for the placement of sensitive lets and the latter for enabling choice and driving greater efficiency), the adoption of a joint, a blended approach moving forward that combines both approaches would be welcomed.
- 4.73 Whilst the delivery of the service is seen as good overall, specific operational issues were raised that need to be considered in designing and operating the new housing service model. When working as individual services, the small support teams could struggle to maintain service levels and continuity during periods of staff absence, particularly when processing a release of new-build homes. Customer data and insight can sometimes be of poor quality or out of date, which can result in refusals and consequently increase void turnaround times. Waiting lists do not appear to be not refreshed or applications reviewed on a regular basis.
- 4.74 Most formal arrangements and service levels date back to the original stock transfer agreements or to when the stock was released by the developer and landlords recognise that they no longer provide a framework to manage the relationship. For example, processes for the disposal of hard to let or unsuitable properties are slow and do not allow landlords to react quickly to changes in accommodation demand or need.
- 4.75 Landlords recognise that their relationship with the Councils is primarily transactional at present, operating on a case-by-case basis, with risk transferred wholesale from one party to the other as a letting is made, with little follow-up or continuity of caseworking to support more vulnerable tenants, this leaves landlords with few options but to evict where tenancies fail, perpetuating the *revolving door* of homelessness. To this end, defining more holistic, partnership-based relationships, centred on sharing risk and the needs of the individual would be welcome.
- 4.76 More widely across Norfolk there is a recognition that whilst local authorities and providers have sought to do the right thing, this has often been without coordination or within an overarching governance framework, and consequently, previous partnership approaches have often broken down.

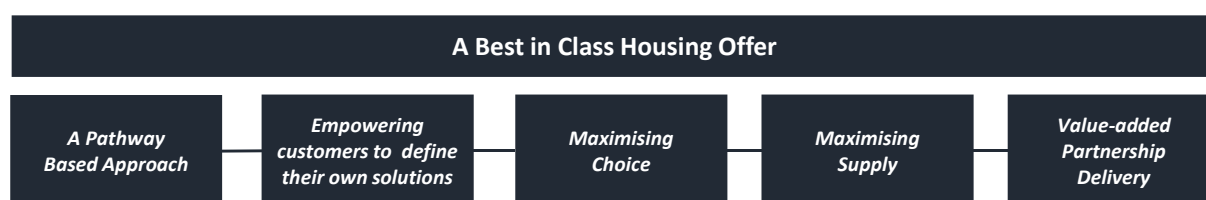
## 5. FACING THE FUTURE

### New Thinking Needed

- 5.1 The impact of Covid-19 will undoubtedly drive additional demand and reduce income across all Council services. Specifically, a significant rise in unemployment could cause homelessness as residents' default on their rent and mortgage payments. There is already evidence of increased levels of domestic abuse and more people experiencing mental health problems. All of these factors may result in more homelessness for families and individuals.
- 5.2 The financial costs of delivering the homelessness service for significantly more households will increase the cost of temporary accommodation to a level unknown in both Districts. A large increase in temporary accommodation costs has the potential to place the Councils at risk of a section 114 notice if funds run out, unless the Government provides substantial additional financial support.
- 5.3 It may not therefore be an exaggeration to state that without applying new thinking in regard to the way housing advice, homelessness and social housing provision is delivered in Broadland and South Norfolk, the financial impact could put financial viability at risk. A sit back and wait approach is not an option. There remains a legal responsibility to deliver housing advice but there is also a financial imperative for the two Councils working together to deliver more effective housing help to all residents in housing need if we are to avoid the inevitable journey many residents will make towards a housing crisis and homelessness with the calamitous financial impact this will have on Council finances.

### Defining a Best in Class Housing Offer

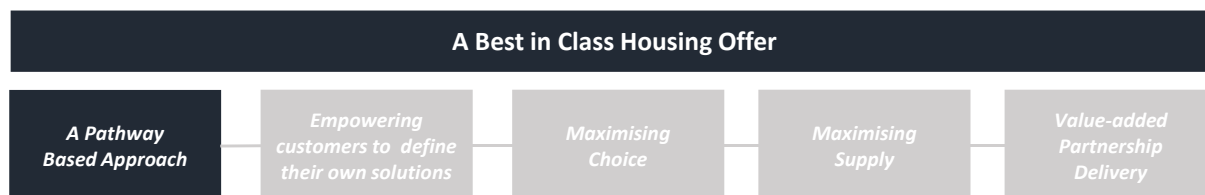
- 5.4 Broadland and South Norfolk have a unique opportunity to build a ground-breaking *Best in Class Housing Offer* that would be transformational, changing the culture and approach for supporting residents in housing need to find solutions, based on a *Pathway* based approach.



- 5.5 The components of a *Best in Class* Housing Offer for Broadland and South Norfolk are:
- A Pathway based approach:** With housing options defined along a pathway open to all;
- Empowering customers:** To define their own solutions through self-service and self-referral;
- Maximising choice:** Providing a *marketplace* of housing options to anyone in housing need;
- Maximising supply:** By creating a single, extended pool of available accommodation;
- Value-added partnerships:** Focused on the early intervention and provision of wraparound support that remains with a household until they can sustain a long-term tenancy option.

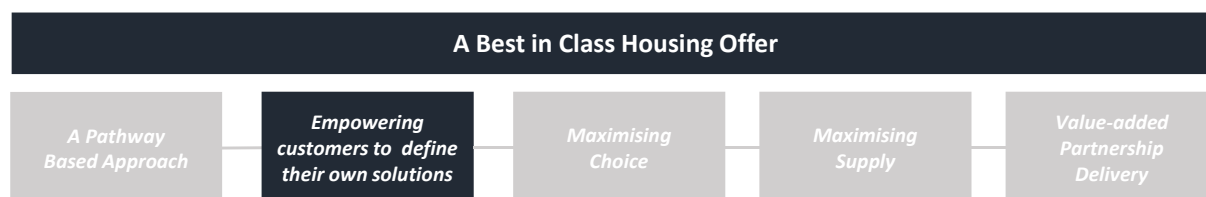


## A Pathway Based Approach



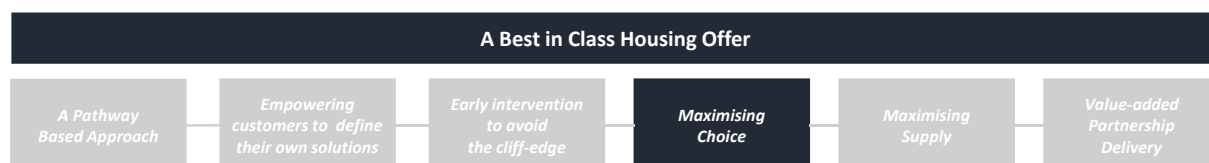
- 5.6 A *Pathway* based approach will shape a holistic response to help all residents in housing need, as the full impact of Covid-19 becomes apparent and Councils have to respond to the impact on housing and homelessness of the most severe economic recession in living memory.
- 5.7 A new innovative *Accommodation Pathway Model* will not only meet the combined council's TA statutory needs but also delivers substantially more accommodation options. Built around three core components it would provide:
- Suitable emergency accommodation to meet statutory TA duties;
  - Short term, 6-12 months, second stage accommodation providing support and stabilisation where required to help prepare households for longer term housing solutions;
  - Longer term settled housing either into Social Housing, the PRS, or property purchase products such as Rent to Buy, that provides long -term sustainable accommodation that reduces the chances of households representing as homeless and with support provided where needed to minimise the chance of eviction.
- 5.8 Some households would not require second stage accommodation as they would not have any vulnerabilities that require support and stabilisation before they were ready to move onto long term settled housing. The *Pathway Model* is intended to reduce the likelihood of more vulnerable households representing as homeless.

## Empowering customers to define their own solutions



- 5.9 Housing supply should no longer be structured to focusing on one product only - social housing, recognising that this traditional model fails to respond to the reality of limited supply. Continuing to deliver a traditional housing register model focused on social housing alone reinforces the behaviour whereby residents are unwilling to consider other housing solutions.
- 5.10 The intention would be for the *Accommodation Pathway* to become accepted as a new essential public service for all residents in housing need in Broadland and South Norfolk regardless of whether they meet the statutory means tested categories of housing need.
- 5.11 Unlike the current register, it would proactively encourage residents in housing need to apply in order to capture as many of the families, couples and individuals living in the Districts who have a self-assessed housing need now, or are likely to have a housing need in the near future.
- 5.12 Having captured the real housing need across the two Councils the aim is to deliver a self-service *Marketplace* to help residents access a far wider range of accommodation solutions facilitated through the actions of the two Councils. Interventions would consist of light touch *enabling*, or direct *intervention*. The overall objective is to prevent as many residents as possible needing to present as homeless and in crisis. This will ensure that Broadland and South Norfolk are able to manage the costs of homelessness despite the impact of Covid-19.
- 5.13 The solution will seek to implement a comprehensive strategy for preventing homelessness through helping far more households to remain in the home where they have presented from where this is safe. This also reflects the Greater Norfolk housing strategy.

## Maximising choice



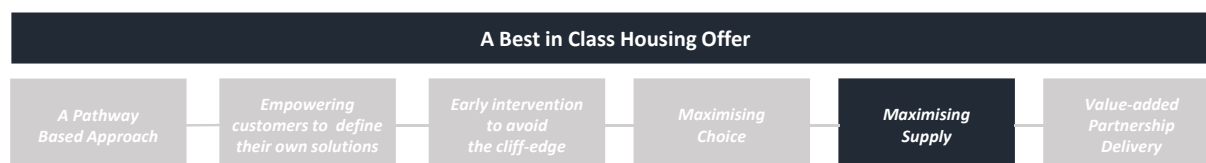
- 5.14 There is a need to maximise the pool of accommodation available to the Councils to meet or end its statutory duties. At present there may be a risk of a silo approach with units of accommodation designated as TA and other work streams seeking to develop schemes to increase PRS move on options such as developing a social letting agency.
- 5.15 The objective would be achieved by developing the concept of a *Marketplace* creating a pool of accommodation maximising the number and type of PRS accommodation units available to the Council to meet or end any of the statutory prevention and relief duties as well as providing an alternative accommodation option that can be used for TA.



The *Marketplace* property pool could be administered through a newly restructured Accommodation Pathway Team, property would be sourced and used flexibly:

- To end the new HRA duty to prevent homelessness and thereby preventing the need for a household in priority need to require TA;
- To contribute to the TA portfolio to meet any interim TA duties;
- To end the new HRA duty to relieve homelessness for any household in priority need who has been placed in TA and owed the new 'relief of homelessness duty';
- To end the final main duty for any household where the relief duty has come to an end and a full final homelessness duty has been accepted on the basis that the applicant is in priority need and not intentionally homeless.

## Maximising Supply



5.16 An *Accommodation Pool* could consist of:

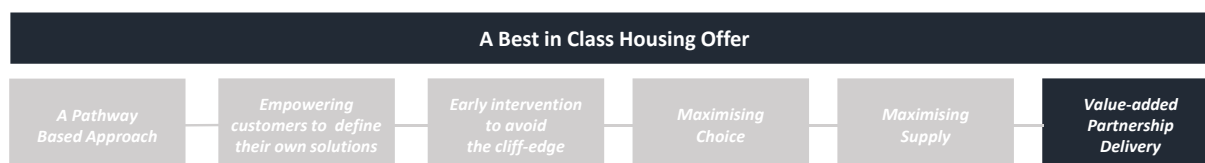
- All private rented sector accommodation sourced by the Accommodation Pathway Team
- Supported Housing Units where the Council is able to control access
- Any third sector hostel provision where it has been negotiated that this accommodation should form part of the marketplace.
- New initiatives such as accommodation procured through a Social Letting Agency
- New initiatives delivered by Registered Providers and Developers such as build for market rent.

5.17 The use of properties in the pool would be flexible so that properties can be switched from one use to another to meet the operational needs at any given time. So for example, a hostel space available through the pool could be used to end the new prevention duty for applicant A and when that unit became vacant again through the move on component of the accommodation pathway, it could be used to meet an interim TA duty for applicant B, or to end a relief of homelessness duty for applicant C who may be in TA.

5.18 A strategy is needed to open-up the private rented sector for households that cannot remain in their home. For households where this is not possible and homelessness cannot be prevented there is a need to develop an accommodation pathway that not only meets the temporary accommodation needs for both Councils, but also delivers far more private rented sector solutions and properties that can be used to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness. This will take the pressure off social housing and minimise the risk of temporary accommodation rising.

5.19 The new model will have the additional benefit of providing a more comprehensive picture of total housing need in both Councils, allowing Registered Providers and the Council to strategically plan housing provision.

## Value-added partnership delivery



- 5.20 The commitment of Staff and Members of Broadland and South Norfolk to delivering a housing-led response to the COVID crisis within the new *One Team* structure is recognised as a potential key to unlocking a new holistic service vehicle with a wider shared service vision across the public realm.
- 5.21 Landlords are keen to review and formalise working arrangements that better reflect the post-Covid-19 operating environment, make better use of resources and deliver enduring outcomes:
- Work within a flexible policy framework that accommodate the needs of the Districts and the landlords;
  - Enables landlords to model accommodation portfolios and manage stock disposals to ensure the supply of accommodation can meet demand and type of need;
  - Facilitates an end-to-end customer journey underpinned by streamlined digital processes;
  - Better manage risk and pressures across the whole system;
  - Achieves better and longer lasting outcomes for people by providing tailored support offers and coordinated caseworking;
  - Makes people less reliant on service interventions and support.
- 5.22 More widely across Norfolk, commissioners and providers recognise that Covid-19 must act as a catalyst for joining-up disparate service elements around an individual, with a housing-centred approach and coordinated early intervention as key drivers. They also see the imperative of acting more strategically when planning and coordinating the delivery of services, to optimise resources, plan more coherently, and create lasting outcomes for individuals that ultimately reduce demand over time, as their resilience increases and reliance on core services decreases.

## 6. THE ACCOMMODATION PATHWAY MODEL

### A housing first

- 6.1 The Broadland and South Norfolk *Accommodation Pathway Model* will be a first of its kind in the UK to deliver a holistic housing service to the whole community regardless of their immediate need, with the aim of enabling them to plan for their long-term accommodation needs with a realist set of options, whilst supporting those who reach a point of crisis to re-establish and sustain a suitable home.
- 6.2 The objectives set for the *Accommodation Pathway Model* might sensibly be to:
- Deliver an essential new service for all residents in housing need with no resident excluded and to ensure support is available through *assisted choice* for vulnerable applicants who cannot help themselves;
  - Deliver solutions based on greater transparency, simplicity and fairness, and that delivers solutions for the majority in housing need not the minority;
  - End the race to the bottom whereby the system encourages people's behaviour and actions to make or present their housing situation in the worst circumstances in order to obtain help;
  - Increase mobility across and outside of the Broadland and South Norfolk area;
  - Deliver cost savings that can be re-invested in support solutions.
  - Deliver innovation that places Broadland and South Norfolk at the forefront of new thinking for delivering housing advice, homelessness and social housing provision;

### *Service Promise*

- 6.3 A suggested set of core principles to underpin the model would be enshrined in a *Service Promise*:
- Provide clear information to enable residents to make informed choices, covering housing products they do or may qualify for in the social, market and private rented sectors and realistic estimated waiting time for each product;
  - Provide details on where in the areas covered by the two Council's they have the most realistic chance of obtaining housing including facts on the type of tenure or tenures they have the best chance on obtaining;
  - Promote resilience through emphasising *rights and responsibilities*. This means everyone in housing need in Broadland and South Norfolk should have a right to realistic housing help and a level of choice, but must be prepared to take more responsibility for resolving their housing problems, with the facilitation and support of the Council acting as an enabler rather than as a constant provider;
  - Protect vulnerable individuals and households who cannot take any responsibility for resolving their own housing problems.

## The Accommodation Pathway Model

- 6.4 The *Accommodation Pathway* will provide a universal service open to all with a housing need. A self-service *Marketplace* will enable the majority of households to resolve their accommodation needs before reaching a point of crisis and requiring service intervention. Where this is not possible the service will proactively work to prevent homelessness and where this cannot be avoided provide suitable emergency accommodation, with support provided to enable individuals to build resilience, and secure and sustain long-term accommodation solutions and to break cycles of homelessness or eviction.

Broadland and South Norfolk Accommodation Pathway Model				
Accommodation Pathway	Stage 1: Marketplace	Stage 2: Prevention	Stage 3: Stabilisation	Stage 4: Resolution
Stage Objectives	Self-identification of Needs & Homelessness Risk	Prevent Crisis & Maximise Outcomes	Provide High Quality TA & Support	<i>Break the Cycle</i> Tenancy Sustainment
Service Offer	Service Promise	Enabling Solutions	Direct Intervention Solutions	Wraparound Support
Accommodation Pool	Emergency Accommodation (Statutory TA)	Short-term Accommodation (Follow-on Support)	Private Rented Home (Sustainable)	Social Rented Home (Sustainable)

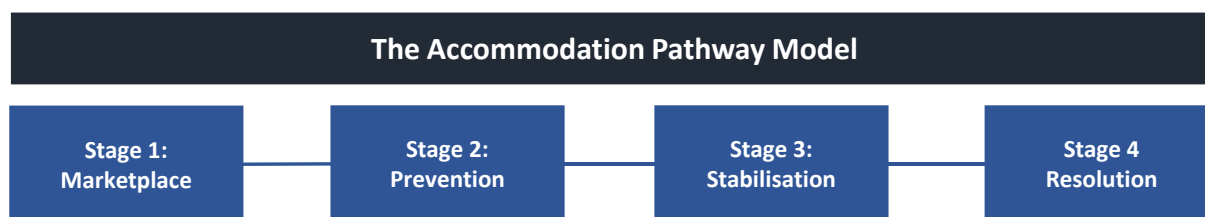
**Stage 1 Marketplace:** Provide digital self-help for the majority in housing need, and with early intervention for residents to remain in their homes, or who may be too vulnerable to help themselves. There are two components to Stage 1. Firstly, to encourage residents to self-identify their housing need and begin to plan their housing future based on a *Personal Accommodation Pathway*. Secondly to Identify housing need risk factors that may precipitate housing crisis or homelessness and deliver effective help based on the principle of self-help and resilience for those able to help themselves and proactive help for those more vulnerable.

**Stage 2 Prevention:** Prevent homelessness at the point of crisis to maximise positive outcomes for those who present at the crisis point of being at risk of imminent homelessness.

**Stage 3 Stabilisation:** Provide excellent temporary accommodation for those owed a statutory duty and additionally provide support and stabilisation for those who require more help to resolve problems that are more than just the need for a roof over their heads.

**Stage 4 Resolution:** To permanently resolve the housing needs of individual and households whether they are receiving formal interventions or owed a statutory temporary accommodation duty, by delivering realistic, and suitable accommodation options across all tenures, and to break the cycle of the revolving door of eviction and homelessness by helping them build resilience and skills to sustain long term accommodation solutions.

## Stage 1: Marketplace



- 6.5 *Marketplace* will enable self-service exploration of available housing options, support self-registration to access an available option, with early targeted access support for the more vulnerable.

### ***Marketplace - objectives***

- 6.6 *Marketplace* has three primary objectives:
- To deliver effective and practical housing options and advice to all residents in housing need to help them to make timely and realistic decisions about their housing options and to plan their housing future. Help based on the principle of self-help for those who are able to help themselves and early intervention actions for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.
  - To identify those most at risk and take proactive action to protect the most vulnerable individuals and households who are not able to take responsibility for resolving their housing problems. This will involve early identification of housing need 'risk factors' that may result in a housing crisis, or homelessness.
  - To encouraging residents to self-identify their housing need and plan their housing future through the support provided by the service through its enabling role.
- 6.7 Delivering the practical help in stage 1 would be framed around an interactive website where residents could register their housing need and explore accommodation options for meeting their accommodation needs both now and in the future. Residents would be able to build an *Accommodation Options Plan*. This might contain several accommodation phases applicable to their personal and financial circumstances.
- 6.8 *Marketplace* would best be delivered through remodelling of the housing application and housing register website so there is one point of access for residents wishing to register their housing need. It would need to be rebranded to give the clear message that a resident is registering not just for the social housing register but also to gain access to a wider marketplace of accommodation options and solutions across all tenures.
- 6.9 Key messages to deliver to all residents in housing need through Stage 1 are to:
- Remain at home as long as possible and save-up to move;
  - Understand the costs of living independently and not leave home too soon before a) they can afford to live independently, and b) they can manage living independently;
  - Always to plan a housing move rather than move.



***Marketplace – digital service offer***

- 6.10 Residents will be expected and be able to service their own needs through accessing through their on-line account all the information they need to answer any queries they may have and to make adjustments to their choices. The information would include their position in the queue and housing prospects for any housing product they have opted for and the estimated waiting time for all the housing products qualified for on self-registration.
- 6.11 Texts and emails would be automatically to inform applicants of their prospects based on the choices they have made and whether their prospects would be improved if they amended their choice
- 6.12 New and emerging social housing products such as rent to buy, market rented social housing and shared ownership would be promoted by direct marketing information (text, email, social media, written posted) sent directly from the housing team and the Registered Social Housing providers themselves.

***Marketplace - enabling roles***

- 6.13 The enabling role of Broadland and South Norfolk at Stage 1 could be fulfilled through a range of low cost help and support options, avoiding the need for interventions that are likely to be higher cost, as they involve significant time input from specialist officers.
- 6.14 Based on the information provided by an individual, Marketplace will personalise self-help housing advice and downloadable resources that address problems such as tensions at home, negotiating rent with a landlord, and how to find a room as a lodging.
- 6.15 Self-service software will enable residents to produce their own bespoke *Accommodation Options Plan*. This would cover social housing prospects, renting, sharing, shared ownership, extended family, or moving in or together with friends.
- 6.16 *Marketplace* will also deliver relevant complementary service information, sign-posting and service access, reflecting the face-to-face and telephone services currently delivered by the *Support Hubs*. This would include a wide range of services such as debt and money advice, adult social care and could be expanded to include services enabling residents to save for a rent deposit through a credit union or similar schemes.
- 6.17 A range of pre-tenancy courses could also be delivered digitally (through or in partnership with housing associations), with certificate upon completion to demonstrate the core knowledge, skills and commitment needed to manage a tenancy. This would improve their chances of being accepted by a private or social landlord.
- 6.18 *Marketplace* could also deliver Interactive functions to encourage people to think more realistically about where they wish to live and type of tenure based on behavioural psychology. The aim is to encourage people to think of housing solutions that are not all about social housing and help residents to think about the advantages of mobility across the Districts and Norfolk as a whole.

6.19 *Marketplace* would provide access all available housing products in one place with the intention that it would become the first place to go for all residents in housing need:

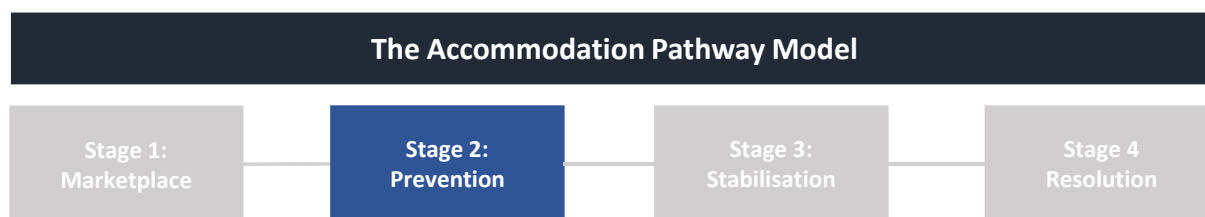
- Social rented housing in each Districts and elsewhere;
- Older person housing;
- Affordable rented housing;
- Intermediate rental homes, potential resale and shared ownership schemes
- For sale housing including private sector landlords who have been encouraged to let through the portal, and shared ownership opportunities and criteria to qualify;
- New rural development schemes and section 106 criteria Renting - sharing together;
- Moving in with family and friends;
- Lodging with a resident landlord schemes.

***Marketplace – direct intervention role***

6.20 Examples of direct interventions that could be adopted by Broadland and South Norfolk at Stage 1 are explored below' including their cost implications:

- Rent deposits could be offered at this early help stage when residents are largely planning their housing future and for the majority their circumstances could be described as a 'wish to move' rather than a need to move. However, a universal promise of a rent deposit or rent in advance would be unaffordable. Residents instead should be encouraged to save up for a rent deposit or rent in advance.
- The affordable housing 'pot' funded through section 106 planning gain could be re-prioritised deliver more semi-independent living schemes such as YMCA/Foyers type schemes, alongside new traditional social housing;
- There is a strong case for using analytics to create a data warehouse that combines council-wide business intelligence (housing, benefits, council tax, ASB, troubled families etc) to produce predictive models identifying households most likely to be at risk of homelessness and enable early intervention. This raises several questions:
  - How does this fit in with the objective of encouraging resilience and self-help?
  - If over-used it removes any responsibility for residents to take action to help themselves
  - It could potentially 'overrun' the service with cases at risk of homelessness sometime in the future, but if targeted at residents who cannot help themselves it could be a useful tool in preventing a future homelessness crisis;
  - A compromise might be to use predictive modelling to deliver signposting help for residents who are assessed as being able to help themselves, with more direct interventions for those assessed as more vulnerable.

## Stage 2: Prevention



### ***Prevention - objectives***

- 6.21 *Prevention* will seek to keep high risk households who have self-identified in *Marketplace* from reaching the point of crisis and to maximise positive outcomes for those who present to the service as being at risk of imminent homelessness.

### ***Prevention – enabling role***

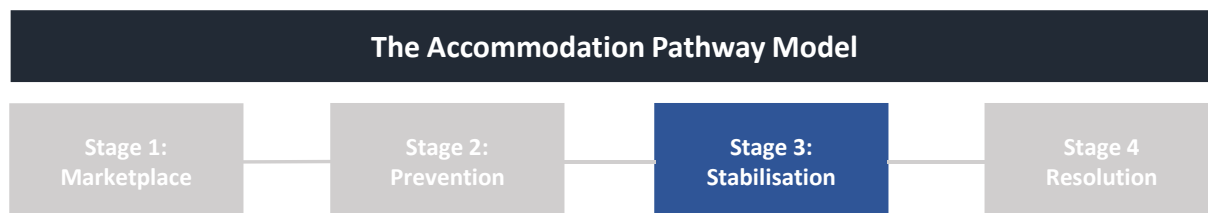
- 6.22 Much of the package of enabling activity outlined in Stage 1 will still be relevant to households at Stage 2. However, given the imminent risk of homelessness, caseworkers would need to be more proactive and directive when working with residents in order to prevent them losing their home, or to support them to find something else before they reached the point of becoming homeless. For example, residents would be not only be encouraged but expected to consider housing solutions that are not all about social housing.
- 6.23 Enabling families to remain at home and wait for social housing rather than become homeless is an option that could be delivered as part of the review of the allocation policy. The aim would be to remove the majority of family exclusion cases from the homelessness and temporary accommodation process through granting priority under a *new generation housing need category* on the housing register. This *deal* is a more honest approach and removes the need for some residents to collude to claim to be homeless. It involves a longer wait but a social housing outcome at the end of that wait and more choice over where that offer is. In contrast becoming homeless is likely to result in a private rented solution as opposed to social housing and limited choice over location.

### ***Prevention – direct intervention role***

- 6.24 The accommodation offer that is best for Broadland and South Norfolk and for residents, is to support people to remain at home for the longer term or long enough for the resident to plan their accommodation move. There will be direct costs in order to achieve a successful prevention outcome and decisions will be needed on who should be able to access direct financial support. The Support Hub role would be expanded to provide this support.
- 6.25 For example, a *Prevention of Homelessness Fund* could help resolve the trigger cause, that is the reason for the threat of exclusion, which could either be a grant or a loan. A decision would be required as to whether such payments would only be available to residents in priority need (and therefore would require temporary accommodation (TA) if homelessness cannot be prevented), or whether funding would be available to all residents at risk of homelessness regardless of whether there would be a TA duty if homelessness cannot be prevented.

- 6.26 Taking a specific common presenting problem, where private rented tenancy and social housing cases at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears. How much financial responsibility would Broadland and South Norfolk take to resolve the rent arrears, to pay off all or part of the arrears, arrears in full, or brokering a negotiated solution between landlord and tenant but not offering any payments to resolve the problem.
- 6.27 Where homelessness cannot be prevented an accommodation offer could be based on providing financial support to pay for rent deposits or rent in advance, either through a grant or a loan. Funding could be made available to priority need cases only or all to applicants owed a prevention duty including all single people. The *Discretionary Housing Payment Fund* could be 'top sliced' so that an agreed proportion is targeted for deposits and rent in advance payments.
- 6.28 Ultimately, a balance needs to be struck between funding accommodation at the prevention stage against placing the onus on the individual to find accommodation.

### Stage 3: Stabilisation



#### ***Stabilisation - objectives***

- 6.29 *Stabilisation* will deliver excellent temporary accommodation for those owed a statutory duty plus the provision of wraparound support for those who require more help where problems are more than just the need for a roof.

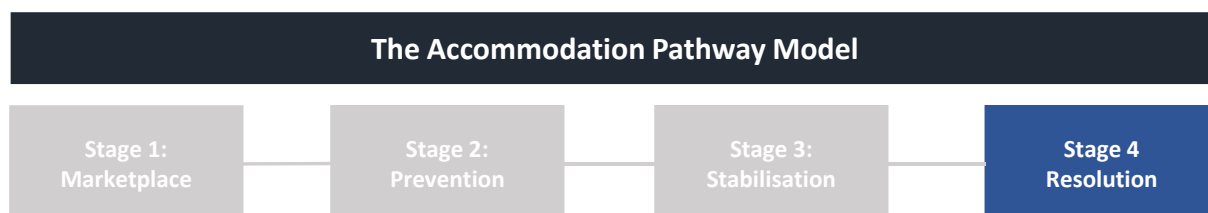
#### ***Accommodation offer – enabling role***

- 6.30 Given that Stage 3 covers accommodation provided under a statutory duty in the form of temporary accommodation, many of the actions will come under the direct intervention rather than enabling. Caseworkers will need to be directive when working with residents in order support them to find accommodation. Homeless residents would be expected as well as encouraged to consider housing solutions that are not all about social housing.

#### ***Accommodation offer – direct intervention role***

- 6.31 The TA offer at Stage 3 should aim to achieve the following key objectives:
- The accommodation provided should be of excellent quality and meet the needs of the household being housed;
  - The use of bed and breakfast should be minimised;
  - Procurement should be targeted at the locations from where most households present as homeless;
  - TA should include access to support where required.
- 6.32 TA Provision is covered in detail in the following section.

## Stage 4: Resolution



### ***Resolution - objectives***

6.33 *Resolution* has two objectives:

**Resolving homelessness** for all applicants regardless of whether they are owed a statutory temporary accommodation duty through delivering realistic, and suitable accommodation options across all tenures;

**Breaking the cycle** of the revolving door of homelessness and of short-lived, broken tenancies by ensuring that solutions are sustainable and long term;

6.34 These actions are underpinned by the following key principles:

- Solutions to homelessness will be realistic and suitable, but not every solution can be accommodation that is long term;
- Some solutions will be short term with the applicant using the time in such accommodation to plan what their realistic next move should be;
- Unless someone is vulnerable and unable to help themselves, all applicants should be expected to make the same decisions as other B and SN residents about where they can realistically afford to live and the type of tenure available to them.

### ***Resolving homelessness***

6.35 The approach will largely be through direct interventions given the legal duty to help resolve homelessness but there will still be enabling principles that underpin the approach.

6.36 The aim would be to deliver an *Accommodation Finding Model* tailored to find a solution based on a homeless resident's informed choice. Sticking to the principles of resilience residents would access *Assisted Support* to deliver solutions. This would be based on a far more structured accommodation solution focused interview than currently delivered through the personal housing plan interview process.

6.37 It might be best described as a personal shopper type model linking to a social lettings agency (outlined in the following section) tasked with securing private rented accommodation in any area that the caseworker and the resident agree is realistic and affordable. This may include areas elsewhere in Norfolk or beyond.

6.38 The new approach would be based on the following core principles:

- Residents should be given all the information available to freely identify what accommodation options are realistic and affordable;

- The service will be based on working with applicants and not initially forcing them to take accommodation options. However, if applicants fail to engage through choice Broadland and South Norfolk could discharge any statutory accommodation duty under the final offer legal process if no solution can be agreed or, if agreed, found;
- Residents will be offered the new service and supported to secure any accommodation options in whatever area that is affordable based on a clear discussion and at this stage acceptance by the client;
- They will receive bespoke practical help and materials to help them secure including information on any guarantees re deposit, rent in advance, landlord incentive package, etc.;
- Residents would be given self-help tools and provided guarantees backed by the council to achieve resolution. For example, a rent deposit or rent in advance scheme.

6.39 The casework team would be fully trained in motivational interviewing. Among the techniques to be applied would be:

- Emotional resilience for staff and customers;
- Applying psychological principles and approaches such as, CBT, and motivational interviewing;
- Creating an enabling environment where applicants see the realistic housing options offered as an opportunity and not second best or options of last resort;
- Bringing about a cycle of change in client behaviour.

### ***Breaking the cycle***

6.40 A focused support and enabling role played by the service will ensure a positive exit from the Homeless Service for all individuals to minimise the risk of the revolving door of homelessness. At the point homelessness is relieved every applicant would receive a bespoke *Accommodation Sustainment Plan*.

6.41 For all applicants whose homelessness has been resolved their sustainment plan would include information on how and who to contact if they encounter any further housing problems and the need to act quickly and not to leave a problem too late so that it results in a crisis.

6.42 For applicants where their housing problem was assessed as more than just needing a roof, they will receive ongoing support. Support could be short term whilst they manage the transition from homelessness to settled housing or longer term where they require more intensive support to maintain their tenancy. This would be set out in a formal support plan in collaboration with partners, with a clear timescale for how long support will be provided.

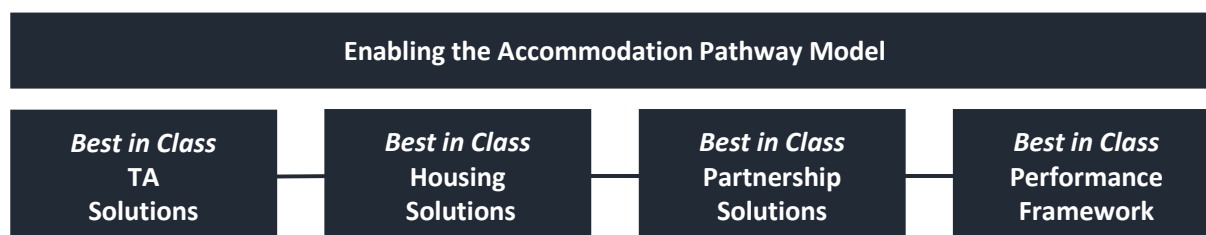
6.43 For applicants where the homelessness duty has been ended with short term accommodation of only 6 months, they will receive a plan on how through their own actions they should

continue to secure the accommodation provided and if this is not possible to use the 6 months to obtain a move on.

- 6.44 This will mean that those households that only need a light touch sustainment plan know what they should do if they were to experience further problems. In contrast those vulnerable families and individuals where their needs are significantly more than just needing accommodation will be supported through a 'hub and spoke partner model, as they exit homelessness with a more detailed sustainment plan.
- 6.45 On-going support would be through a hub-and-spoke model. The model would promote more effective partnerships to deliver the wraparound services that some residents will need to sustain their accommodation targeting a resident's mental health, general health, and employment needs and ensure these are addressed in a joined up holistic way.



## 7. ENABLING THE ACCOMMODATION PATHWAY MODEL



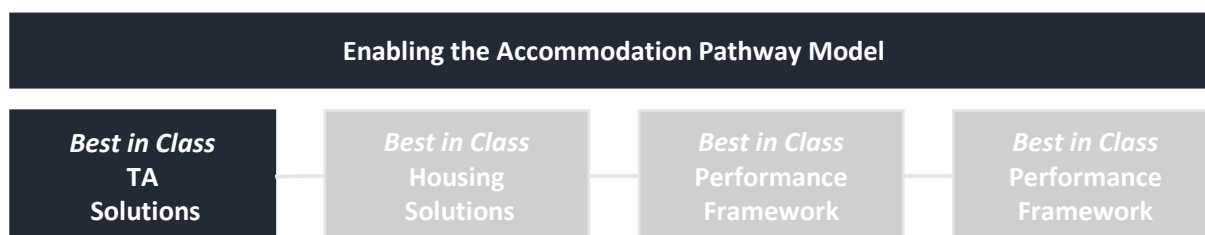
- 7.1 To make the *Accommodation Pathway Model* a reality, existing service offers, operating models, supporting business systems and partnership relationships need to be re-thought and re-aligned to create a holistic housing solution that can best address future demand and changing needs, operate flexibly and sustainably, making the most from cross-organisational partnerships. These key components are:

**Best in Class TA Solutions:** That where a household does reach the point of crisis, the statutory obligations of the councils are met, through accommodation of the right quality, available on sustainable terms to meet changing levels of demand;

**Best in Class Housing Solutions:** That provides the policy framework and operating model for managing the allocation of social housing stock across both Districts in a fair and efficient way, ensuring the right person finds the right home, and that they are provided a level of support to maximise the chances of them sustaining that tenancy;

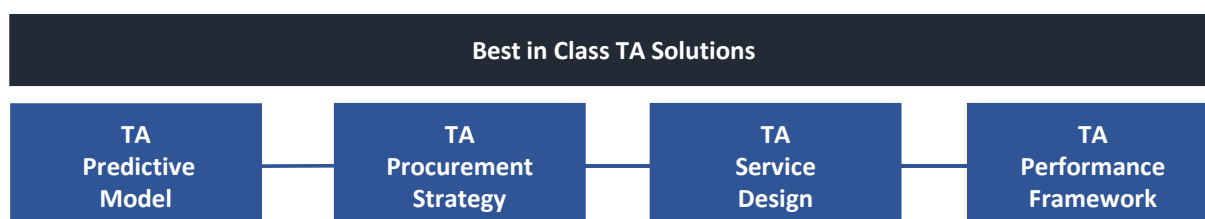
**Innovative Partnership Solutions:** That formalise arrangements between the Councils and their landlords to create a single pool of homes that can be configured and managed flexibly, and nurture broader partnerships across Norfolk (public health, Police and Crime Commissioner for example) that focus on supporting people with specific needs to access and sustain enduring accommodation options;

**Best in Class Performance Framework:** That provides the assurance that the model is fully compliant and that the Councils are correctly discharging their statutory duties, the shape and nature of future demand is being modelled, the performance of the service is optimised and is sustainable, and that the key outcomes of the service are being realised through partnership working.

**Best in Class TA Solutions**

7.3 As set-out above, the baseline for the combined service is a mixed picture of strengths and weaknesses:

- The introduction of the HRA has not increased the requirement for temporary accommodation, despite a substantial increase in the number of homeless cases presenting to the service, as prevention work has been particularly effective;
- The combined TA portfolio is correctly sized (however the impact of Covid-19 is yet to be fully felt), however the portfolio is not cost effective and needs refocusing;
- Current delivery models and processes are not fit for purpose and need properly resourcing and re-equipping;
- There is no effective modelling of service demands and tracking of outcomes.



7.4 The components of the *Best in Class* TA model are:

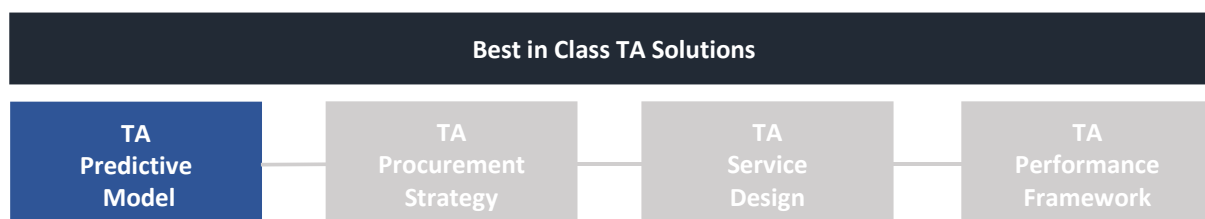
**TA Predictive Demand Model:** That will enable the service to predict the correct level of TA moving forward, based on modelling of current throughput;

**TA Procurement Strategy:** That will maximise the quality of TA and its match to needs, whilst minimising the cost of provision;

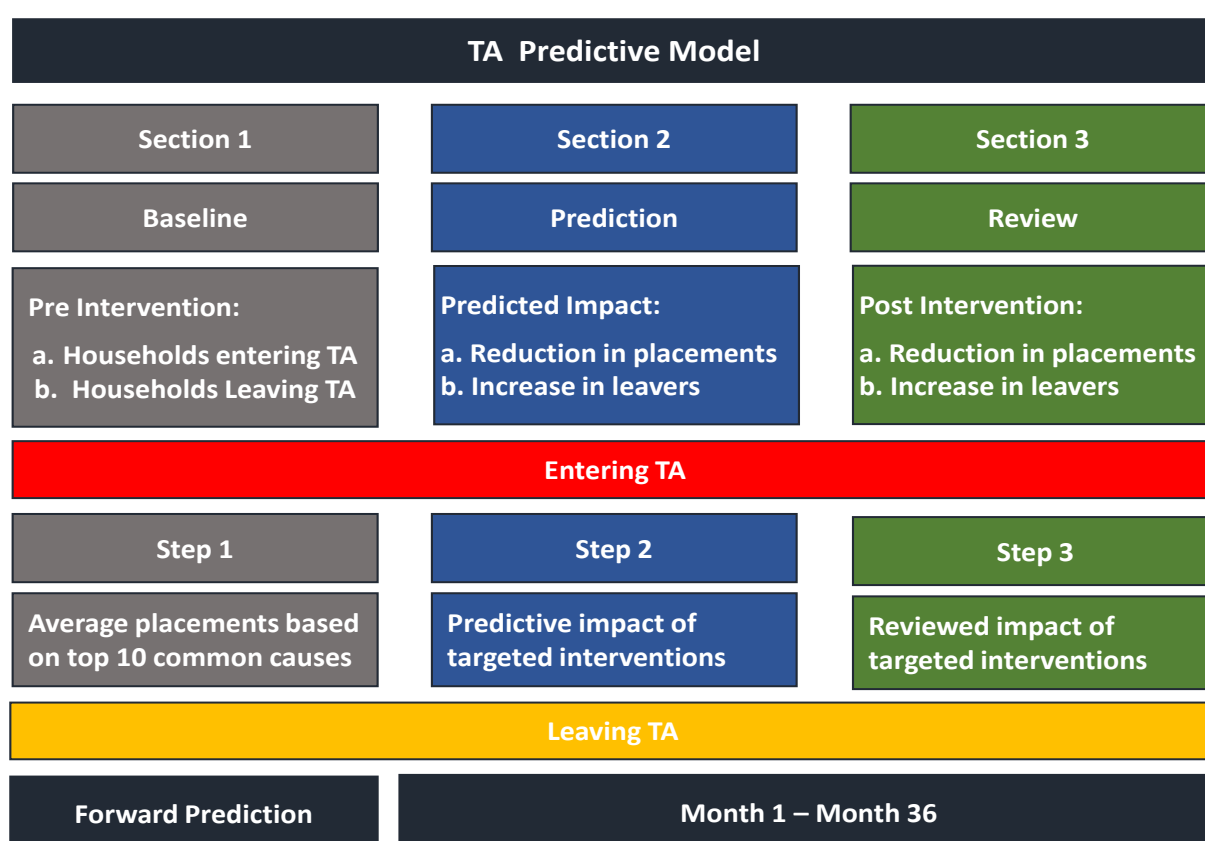
**TA Service Design Model:** That will restructure the service, the policy framework and operational model, with a focus on risk-based caseworking;

**TA Performance Framework:** That will use a control and monitoring model to reduce the number of households entering TA and proactively manage their exit to more secure forms of accommodation.

## TA Predictive Model

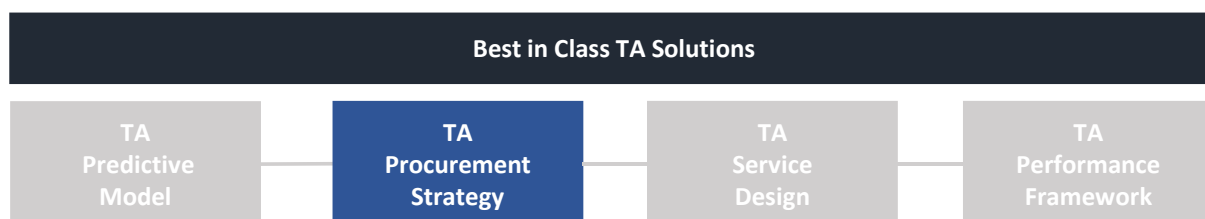


- 7.5 To enable the Broadland and South Norfolk to optimise TA requirements and costs, a *predictive modelling tool* has been developed to calculate the demand for TA over a rolling three-year period, producing a TA *Demand* (into TA) and *Supply* (out of TA) model that will support day-to-day procurement and forecast future temporary accommodation needs.



- 7.6 The model predicts TA demand on a rolling monthly cycle by analysing the potential impact of 14 key interventions that both reduce households entering TA and speed up their exit from it. It models the requirements of the HRA and assists in determining TA procurement needs and in meeting TA reduction targets and realising cost savings.
- 7.7 The model assesses supply and demand indicators in real-time, as well as monitoring performance, which allows for early action to be taken when demand increases or decreases outside of the assumptions made. It predicts with far greater accuracy than at present TA procurement needs and will support more accurate budgetary predictions and intervention when underperforming prevention or supply interventions are identified.

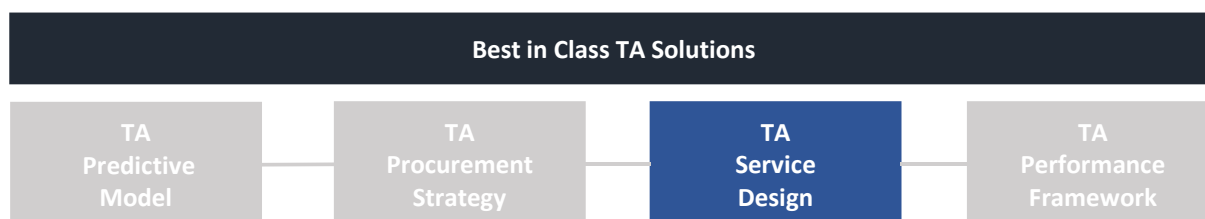
## TA Procurement Strategy



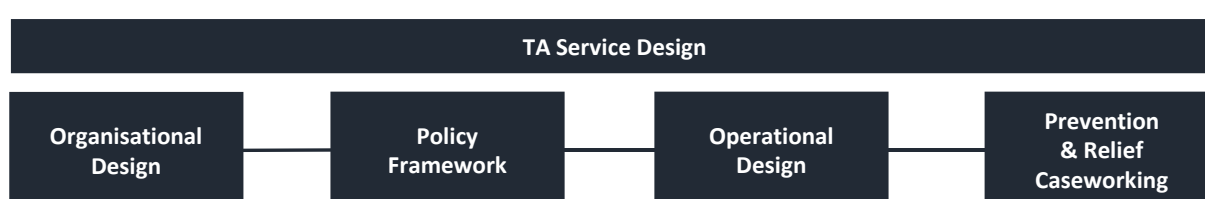
- 7.8 As part of this project a TA procurement Strategy has been drafted based on the baseline analysis, to support Broadland and South Norfolk's procurement decisions in respect of the type of temporary accommodation that would enable the councils to meet their legal duties and to also deliver TA at the lowest possible cost. The full strategy is presented in Appendix 3.
- 7.9 There is a need to make procurement decisions that seeks to minimise the financial costs and reduce financial risk for both Councils. Procurement decisions should be guided by analysing the net cost impact of for each TA type option. This will ensure there is a sufficient portfolio of low cost longer-term TA. The number of units needing to be procured will be guided by the supply and demand model and will need to fully reflect the changes brought about by the HRA in the need for longer-term TA.
- 7.10 There are a number of recommendations concerning the future temporary accommodation procurement model for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils. These are:
- TA procurement decisions should be taken jointly and based on the evidence and recommendations from this temporary accommodation strategy;
  - A mapping exercise is required to inform the TA procurement strategy in respect of the locations where TA needs to be procured;
  - Both Councils the aim should be to develop more units of low/nil cost emergency/short term temporary accommodation to the portfolio by exploring alternative options.
  - Both Councils should explore the option of procuring more short term emergency TA hostel type accommodation through converting multiple use shared accommodation such as low demand sheltered housing or purchasing any former multiple use home. This will provide 'nil net cost' emergency accommodation and will be more relevant to the post HRA legal framework.
  - Neither Broadland nor South Norfolk Councils have a low-cost emergency accommodation option in the form of a local authority owned hostel. This means emergency placements are more likely to be accommodated in bed and breakfast. For single people placed this may have a low net cost whereas for families this will be a far higher net cost. The current profile of the emergency accommodation is almost entirely weighted towards more costly bed and breakfast and nightly let arrangements (see Appendix 4).

- Procurement decisions should include seeking to develop more TA through using social housing stock held by Housing Association partners. This can deliver low cost or no net cost temporary accommodation that can be used for move-on from emergency accommodation or a half-way house between TA and a more settled solution. This option will be especially beneficial to reduce the need to place larger families into high cost Bed and Breakfast or nightly let accommodation.
- Set a target to cut the number of leased properties in half within 12/18 months. The target and exact timescale should be based on an exercise to consider all exiting leases should be completed within 6 months allowing decisions to be made for how many of the existing leases need to be handed back because of the condition of the property, or due to the landlord being unwilling to accept new lease terms. Once this is known the service will be able to plan how many properties need to be leased.
- Given that new procurement decisions will take some time to implement the recommendation is for Broadland Council to continue to maintain a Private Sector Leasing portfolio but not to over commit to this form of accommodation given its potential net cost and risk of further costs for voids if there is not the demand to fill the accommodation.
- Broadland should only renew existing leases, or replace with new units procured, through more beneficial lease terms. This will ensure that lease terms are more favourable to the Council re repairing obligations and rent levels.

## TA Service Design



- 7.11 Within the *One Team* operating model, Broadland and South Norfolk have the opportunity to create both a customer focused and sustainable Temporary Accommodation service that will deliver both Councils legal obligations in respect of temporary accommodation.



### **Organisational Design**

- 7.12 It is recommended that a single TA team be established operating from one location. The team must be responsible for the administration of all TA statutory duties, including procurement, placement, process management, charging policy, referral arrangements, checking of standards, receipt and payment of invoices, and the management of benefit payments and rent accounts, in time it could fulfil a broader remit. Specific responsibilities will include:

- Administering placements including performing the critical legal test for assessing suitability, formally offering TA and dealing with refusals and discharge of duty, and administering licences, risk assessments, referrals, housing benefit and rent accounts;
- Commissioning and procurement of temporary accommodation;
- Managing and inspecting TA units;
- Rent collection and managing rent arrears;
- Intensive management and support to tenants.

### **Policy Framework**

A set of legally compliant policies has been drafted as part of this review to reflect the circumstances and meet the needs of both Councils:

- Out of Area Placement Policy;
- Charging Policy;
- Occupation Charge Arrears Policy.

**Operational Design**

- 7.13 A *TA Operations Manual* has been produced as part of this project to provide a compliant, best-practice based framework to support staff in delivering legal obligations in respect of temporary accommodation, it contains:

**Operational procedures:** Working processes, guidance notes and forms for the day-to-day management of temporary accommodation;

**Occupancy agreements:** Used by the Councils for letting temporary accommodation:

- Bed and breakfast or nightly let placements;
- Licence agreement for all forms of interim accommodation leased or owned by the Councils. (for shared facility units and for self-contained units);
- The non-secure tenancy agreement for main duty self-contained accommodation leased or owned by the Councils.

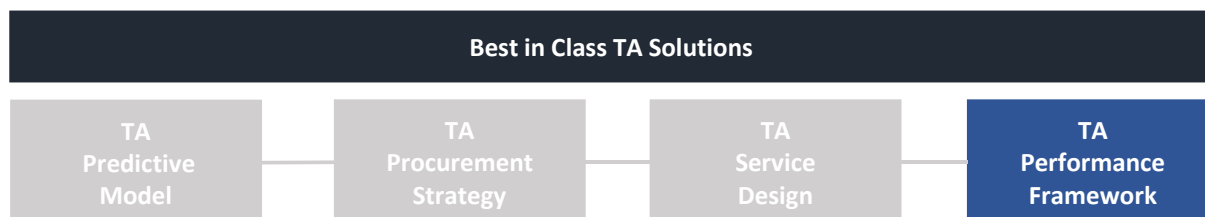
**Letter templates:** Covering every aspect of licence and tenure management.

**Prevention and Relief Caseworking**

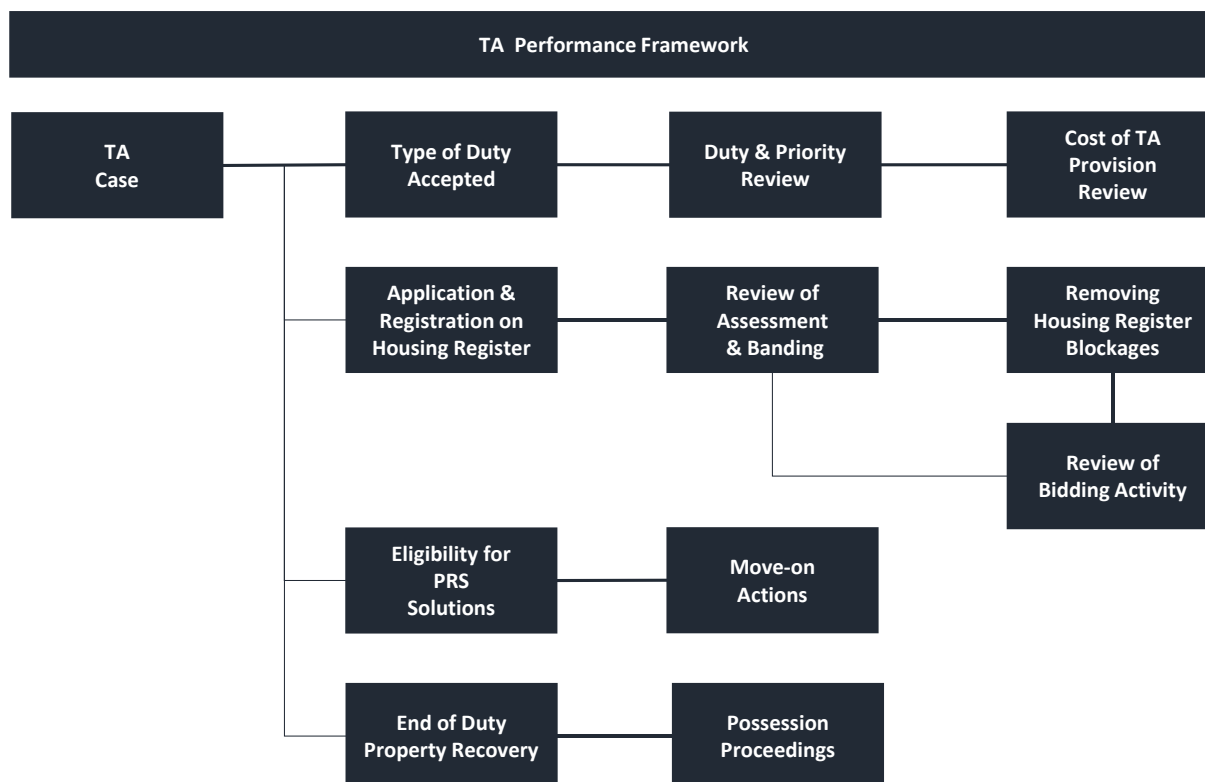
- 7.14 To support a core deliverable of the *Accommodation Pathway Model* of keeping applicants in the home they have presented from where it is safe to do so, a consistent approach to prevention and relief of homelessness casework is required. A pack of casework resources has been provided as part of this project, which will help the new service to implement the actions required. Specific recommended actions are:

- For each presenting risk of homelessness case, the team will structure their casework around *Prevention Casework Action Sheets* that cover practical casework actions to be taken for each presenting risk of homelessness problem;
- These *Action Sheets* will direct all prevention and relief work to improve the chances of a successful outcome. They will guide officers on the actions to take, and will provide an audit trail to record casework allowing quality assurance that officers are taking the right prevention actions. Caseworkers will use the *Action Sheets* to record their casework notes;
- Caseworkers will be trained and coached ongoing on the new prevention casework processes and interview skills;
- Caseworkers will conduct excluder focused home visits for all family exclusion cases and if not possible, conduct office based structured prevention focused interviews with the parent/person who wishes to exclude the applicant;
- Intervention/solution interviews will be conducted with landlords/managing agents face-to-face rather than just over the phone. This will increase success rates.
- The case officer will make a written 'formal offer to resolve' to any parent, landlord or agent where there is a threat of homelessness.

## TA Performance Framework



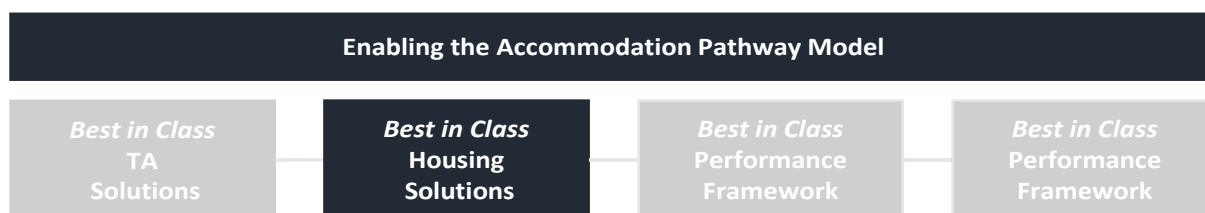
- 7.15 An effective control process is critical in auditing a customer journey and throughput of all residents in TA, this applies to everyone either owed a Relief or Main Duty, where that duty has been brought to an end, and where action is needed to evict the occupant. It is essential to review and audit cases to ensure that applications are determined quickly and there are no blockages preventing cases from moving on from TA.
- 7.16 To this end, a *TA Control and Monitoring Sheet* has been developed as part of the project to deliver this objective. It is comprehensive, with every case in TA monitored against a possible 35 case status questions (summarised below). This simple control process will reduce numbers in TA by up to 20%, if reviews result in timely action to resolve the issue identified.



- 7.17 This is an essential tool for reducing the numbers in temporary accommodation and thereby reducing costs and pressures on the service. It will also allow the Councils to accurately predict how much TA they need going forward. It will ensure that the right people are placed into the right accommodation and only occupy that accommodation for the shortest period of time they need it.



## Best in Class Housing Solutions



7.18 The characteristics of a *Best in Class* Housing Solution model is that it:

- Has an allocations policy framework tailored to meeting local housing needs;
- Is customer focused, is easy to access and navigate, and is fair and transparent;
- Has a clear view of demand and the ability to supply meet that demand;
- Builds partnerships with landlords through a Common Housing Register to ensure the successful establishment of a home and long-term sustainment outcomes.

## Housing Solutions Model



7.19 The core components of this *Best in Class* Housing Solutions model are:

**Allocations Policy:** With a common approach adopted by the two Councils that will be flexible enough to meet the sovereign local needs of each council, and to maximise outcomes for both, whilst being complaint and sustainable;

**Supply and Demand Model:** Published to all delivery partners that predicts demand based on service data, that will inform year-ahead planning and longer-term accommodation build and reconfiguration programmes;

**A Structured Customer Journey:** That will support self-service registration (*Marketplace*), automated application processing and decision making, self-service housing register management and support efficient and transparent allocation processes that will maximise the choice open to a housing applicant;

**Formalised partnership arrangements :** With fully integrated Council and landlord processes, which will streamline the lettings and tenancy start-up, providing continuity of support for those who are more vulnerable or less experienced, to enable them to establish and sustain their tenancies.

## Allocations Policy



7.20 Broadland and South Norfolk staff and Members are currently drafting a joint Allocations Policy facilitated by CT. key aspects of the policy are described below.

### *Aims*

- 7.21 The aims of the policy must be clear and legally complaint:
- Improve the means by which local people gain access to social rented housing by providing a modern and easy to understand allocation system, which allows choice and is fair, transparent and accountable;
  - Ensure the lettings service embraces equality and diversity by being open and fully accessible to all individuals and to provide support to customers where needed;
  - Meet the legal obligations of the Council by giving appropriate priority to customers who fall within the Housing Act “reasonable preference” categories;
  - Make the best use of the housing stock within the scheme and to increase the availability of move-on accommodation to prevent blockages in supported housing schemes;
  - Reduce the use of housing stock as temporary accommodation for homeless applicants and to assist with prevention by making customers aware of their potential housing choices and the alternative options available to them e.g. private sector, low cost home ownership;
  - Increase opportunities for tenant mobility between the region and other areas of the country. In accordance with the Right to Move statutory guidance on housing allocations for local housing authorities in England (issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2015) a target of at least 5% of allocations has been set for people moving to a different District for employment purposes;
  - Attract new customers to areas of low demand and reduce void times on ‘hard to let’ properties;
  - Formalise partnership working with landlords within a Common Housing Register (CHR) arrangement, creating an equal partnership between stock holding and non-stock holding partners that will accommodate both landlord and applicant issues.

**Qualification**

7.22 Criteria for acceptance onto the Housing Register will ensure that local and in some cases people from outside the area in genuine difficulty are supported. Criteria will be based on:

- Homeless Prevention/Relief Duty as defined by the Homelessness Code of Guidance;
- Care leavers owed a duty;
- Supported housing placements in and out of the region;
- Current or former member of the armed forces and civil ex partners of armed forces personnel vacating MOD property;
- Victims of violence/abuse from and outside the region;
- Gypsy/traveller as defined Caravan Sites Act 1968 and habitually resided in region.

**Local Connection**

7.23 Local connection is defined as being where residency or connection is:

- Resided in the area for 6 out of the last 12 months;
- Previously resident for 3 out of the last 10 years;
- Regular work in the region dependent on residency within the region;
- Existing social tenancy plus ongoing employment or training in the region for the last 6 months and expected to continue beyond 12 months.

**Medical Assessment**

7.24 A two tier health priority is being promoted. Urgent Health Priority (Band 2) where long term illness and mobility issues are being significantly impacted by the housing and Band 1 emergency health priority where they meet the Urgent Health Priority but cannot live in their home now. Occupational Therapy (OT) assessments will be made through the council's independent OT service. This will enable non-medical professionals to make fair and transparent health assessments.

**Allocation by Bedsize**

7.25 Allocation by bedsize is determined by People, Children and Property driven circumstances:

People Driven:	Single Person	Couple	Carer	Medical
<b>Policy:</b>	1 bed property or 2 bed above ground	1 bed property or 2 bed above ground	Residency requirement	Provision for extra bedroom
Child Driven:	Child Residency	Unborn Child	16+	Sex Separation
<b>Policy:</b>	4 nights pw + Formal Evidence	MATB1*	Own bedroom	10 Years+

Property Driven:	Under-occupation	Ground Floor or Mobility Needs	* Used by NHS to confirm pregnancy
<b>Policy:</b>	4 nights pw + Formal Evidence	Provide choice and make best use of adapted stock	

### ***Banding and Priority***

- 7.27 Banding and priority allocation will be based on housing need, local connection and time waited.
- 7.28 Broadland and South Norfolk have been introduced to three potential banded systems:
- A 5 banded system containing a reduced preference band and cumulative need; this is an adaptation of South Norfolk's existing banded system. Named "Home Options";
  - A 4 banded system without a reduced preference band, no cumulative need and band prioritisation by local connection. Named "Rural";
  - A 4 banded system which is a hybrid of the two, has no cumulative need or a reduced preference band and no band prioritisation by local connection. Named "Hybrid".
- 7.29 An Equality & Communities Impact Assessments has been completed for each district, with the most positive impacts being seen with the 4 banded systems. The Rural banded system demonstrates more positive impacts than the Hybrid. The districts need to make their selection.

### ***Reduced preferences***

- 7.30 Where an intervention is needed in the case of unacceptable behaviour (ASB or non-payment of rent for example), the banding of the applicant will not be lowered as is the case now, but they will be prevented from bidding for properties at a lower band, and expected to take responsibility for addressing the problem. This incentivised approach will help enforce good behaviours and foster tenancy sustainment, and in turn supporting positive partnership working.

### ***Allocation Choices***

- 7.31 A blended approach will be adopted which will have clear criteria for circumstances where a direct let is appropriate, the bulk of the lettings being undertaken via choice based lettings and lets to the inactive list only where the active list has been exhausted and the household is deemed able to sustain their tenancy.. Reduced preferences will be managed via the Housing Register; households will need to undertake a mandatory period of stabilisation to ensure they acquire the skills to sustain a tenancy, during this time they will be inactive.

#### **Direct lets:**

- Homeless and in TA under s189B(2) Relief Duty or Main Duty;

- Urgent rehousing requirement: property, health, personal safety, discharge of homelessness duty, and MARAC where CBL would take too long;
- Emergency rehousing due to flood, fire etc and property requires work/uninhabitable or cannot be done with them in situ;
- Duty to house under s39 land compensation act 1973;
- Where number of offers or refusal already made is deemed unreasonable;
- Adapted units;
- Vulnerable applicants where Choice Based Lettings is deemed inappropriate;
- Sensitive lets;
- Local letting provisions such as s108, rural parish schemes and local lettings policies.

**Choice Based Lettings:**

- For all other circumstances, but with restrictions for:
  - Number of offers made and unreasonable refusals;
  - Weighting to local need/demand in shortlisting;
  - Restricted advertising around s106m;
  - Homeless applicants where they exceed local demand in the top priority group;
  - Local Partnership Agreements/Local Lettings Plans.

***Housing Register Review***

7.32 The Housing Registers will be reviewed to an agreed schedule:

- A 4 week review cycle for *Urgent* applications, aligned with the TA performance framework;
- A 12 month review cycle for all other applications.

## Supply and Demand Model



7.33 A robust *Supply and Demand Model* is an essential tool in enabling the two Councils to commission and landlords to plan the volume, type, configuration and location that is needed over the short term (year ahead) and the longer term (three to five years):

- The accuracy and usefulness of the model will be dependent on the quality of data output from the Housing Register;
- The model will underpin the creation of *Annual Lettings Plans*. It will provide a baseline for all partners to track demand and needs trends accurately over longer planning horizons and to build, acquire or reconfigure stock holding with a higher level of confidence.



7.34 The elements that form the *Supply and Demand Model* are:

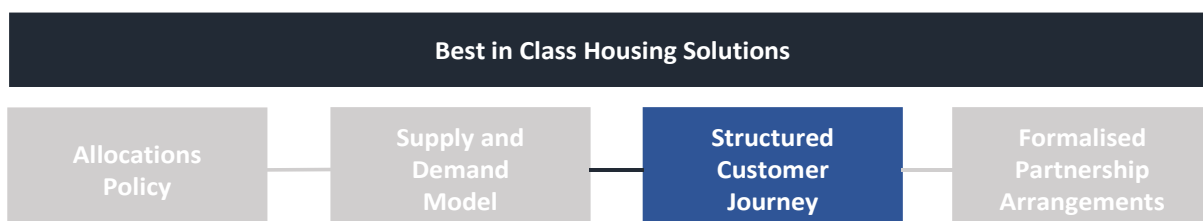
**Annual Register Review:** The discipline of undertaking an annual review of a well-maintained Housing Register will provide an accurate view of applications within the system and build a picture of demand and needs trends over time;

**Annual Lettings Plan:** Predicts for any one year the type of accommodation needed, the areas where it is most needed, its configuration and specialist requirement needs;

**Informed build programme:** Provides a detailed level of analysis to support capital investment decisions as to when and where to build new homes, to cluster and sustain communities;

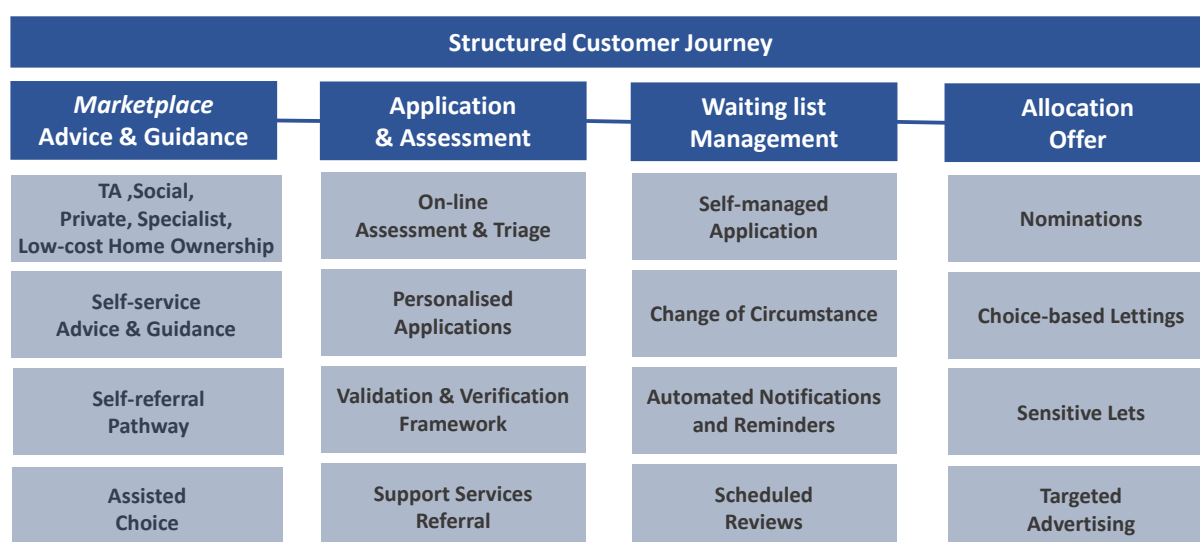
**Published model:** The *Model* will be published to all service partners to provide a common partnership and understand of strategy direction and working model

## Structured Customer Journey



7.35 High quality on-line advice and guidance, self-referral and self-service pathways, with assistance provided, will enable every customer to access an available housing solution:

- Structure high quality advice and support that leads customers towards the applicable self-referral access pathway;
- Identify and provide additional support (Assisted Choice) throughout to those who will find it difficult to navigate the customer journey;
- Support self-service and personalisation throughout the registration, waiting list management and lettings process.



7.36 This key components of the structured customer journey will be:

**Marketplace: Advice and Guidance:** Enabling customers to explore available housing options and to self-refer for social housing registration, with assisted support available for people who will need help to navigate the process;

**Application and Assessment:** Combining customer self-service and tailored registration processes with rules-driven process automation to improve accuracy and reduce risk of challenge, whilst triggering support referrals for people in need early in the process;

**Housing Register Management:** Supporting customer self-service, automated status updates to reduce enquiries, and scheduled reviews to keep the Register current;

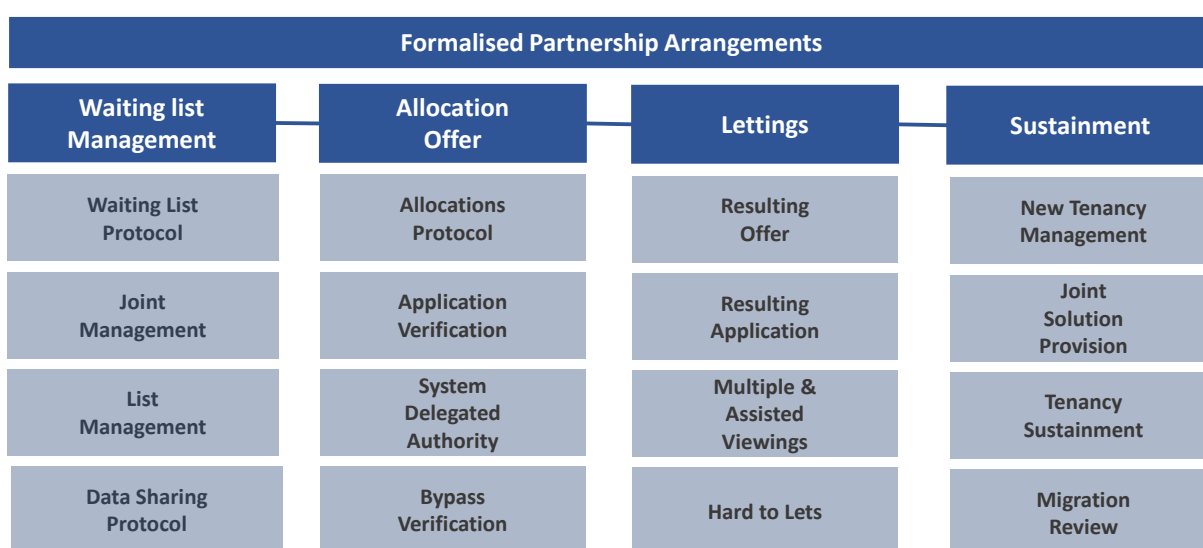
**Allocation Offer:** Applying the nominations and CBL offer rules fairly and transparently, whilst ensuring ensure that homes are let quickly.

## Formalised Partnership Framework



7.37 Formalising the management arrangements between the Councils and partner landlords will elevate what is currently in the main a case-by-case into strategic partnership relationships, they will:

- Ensure the Allocations Policy is correctly and fairly applied, whilst providing flexibility to landlords through Local Lettings Agreements;
- Optimise the lettings process by making it largely self-service via a *Partnership Hub*;
- Turn what is currently largely a hand-off process into a hand-holding relationship that will support more vulnerable customers to establish their new home (particularly younger people), enabling them to build capacity in home management and consequently be less likely to fail in their tenancy and to present as homeless.



7.38 The key elements of the new arrangements will be:

**Waiting List Management:** Adopting a joint management and deeper data sharing approach that will support a better matching of applicant to potential new home;

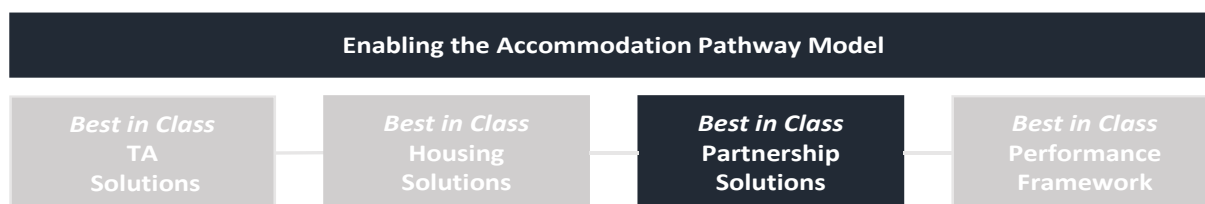
**Allocation Offer:** Enabling landlords to verify applicants quickly and to resolve their own tenancy management issues within the allocations policy;

**Lettings:** Optimising the process to minimise void loss (multiple viewings, hard to lets) whilst ensuring the most vulnerable are supported;

**Sustainment:** Providing wrap-around support that reduces risk over time and tracks move-on outcomes.



## Best in Class Partnership Solutions



- 7.39 The Covid-19 epidemic has already forced service commissioners and service providers to work together in a very different way, with the usual demarcations and protocols pushed to one side. The legacy of this crisis may be that long discussed goals of wider strategic alignment and integration of service across the public realm may become a reality. The *Accommodation Pathway Model* is an ideal vehicle to help achieve this.



- 7.40 The elements of a *Best in Class* partnership solutions approach are:

**Landlord partnerships:** Building on the strong transaction-based relationships currently operated to develop strategic partnerships that both release resources and realise new value-added outcomes for all parties, in particular service users and tenants.

**Support partnerships:** Breaking-down the walls between different types of service and service providers, to deliver person-centred services that will reduce dependency over time;

**Supply partnerships:** Using a Social Lettings Agency model to unlock the supply of private sector accommodation into the available housing pool;

**Business development partnerships:** leveraging both the skills developed and investment made in the Pathway model, across Norfolk and beyond.

## Landlord Partnership Arrangements



### *Working within a strategic framework*

7.41 Partner landlords work within a range of social housing models and policy frameworks, both locally across Norfolk and nationally, they are keen to work with Broadland and South Norfolk to help shape an integrated housing pathway. Specifically, the features of a new model would from their perspective include:

- Adopting a common Allocations Policy that streamlines approach and process;
- Adopting a Common Housing Register (widely and successfully adopted elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk) that delivers a pool of accommodation that meets local needs whilst underpinning and sustaining the operating models of accommodation providers
- Adopting a CBL-based approach but with the added flexibility of direct nominations for certain groups of applicants or for specific types of accommodation;
- Building a holistic view of needs (Council Tax debt threshold) which doesn't penalise those with a chequered history of tenure sustainment or debt;
- Defining a shared approach to risk and to provide the best solution for an individual on a case by case bases, by jointly understanding the real pressures within the system;
- Undertaking affordability checks as standard, particularly for the under 25s, where costs such as heating and transport are critical additional factors in sustaining a tenancy;
- Adopting a flexible approach to homeless applicants who have one chance who then get penalised and or lose position on the housing register;
- Applying flexibility when assessing the local connection of hostel residents who may have originated in other parts of the country and need to escape their areas to prevent reoffending or substance abuse;
- Being attuned to the needs of individuals and to match the accommodation offer more closely (ruralness, support network etc.) to reduce downstream tenancy failure.

### *Digital by design*

7.42 Landlords are confident that the majority of service applicants are perfectly capable of navigating a self-service access pathway and to manage their own applications, however,

more vulnerable residents would require appropriate levels of access support. Specific requirement identified for any new business system are to support:

- Seamless digital processes with shared access to core data and core processes;
- Provision and verification of proofs requested before an application is made live to minimise delay during the offer process;
- Data entry for vulnerable client groups who struggle with providing mandatory information within on-line forms;
- Affordability checks on all applicants and lettings reviews, to stop people bidding inappropriately;
- Landlord checks or references from current or past landlords;
- Provision of sensitive information (beyond contact alerts) to enable landlords to conduct their own interviews;
- Internal tenant transfers and management moves;
- Greater visibility of new build releases and support processes.

### ***Reducing the risk of tenancy failure***

7.43 Landlords would welcome a broader partnership-based approach to helping households establish and sustain their tenancies, by sharing and jointly managing risk of failure, by providing wraparound support that enables an individual to build capacity and self-reliance as they move through emergency, short-term and starter lets into secure longer-term accommodation solutions. Building on the frontloaded model of advice and signposting, approaches outlined are to:

- Share financial risk through rent deposit or guarantee schemes, that will enable individuals with a history of debt problems to get restarted;
- Build support packages sensitive to an individual's needs and provide continuity of caseworking support through the letting, start-up and probationary period of a tenancy, building a level of trust with the most vulnerable and hard to communicate with;
- Agree criteria and triggers levels for wider interventions (level of debt, seriousness of ASB etc.) so that support can be provided, within the capacity of the broader system to do so;
- Develop tracking mechanisms that enable individuals to demonstrate skills and capacity building over a period of time;
- Share systems and sensitive information more widely between supporting parties to ensure issues are spotted and tackled quickly;
- Develop a flexible hierarchy of accommodation that support move-on from short-term licences to start tenancies, including the use of *training house* settings.

## Support Partnerships



- 7.44 Commissioners of core services at County level such as Adults and Children's services, and other specialist support providers are interested in developing housing-led solutions that are person-centred and that enable an individual to avoid or move away from a point of crisis to one of self-sufficiency. With front-loaded advice services regarded as essential tools to cross-signpost benefits, employment, education, housing, and other support in relation to the nature of an individual's needs.
- 7.45 Opportunities for Jointly commissioning housing-based solutions in which people can receive care (mental health and learning difficulties support for example) need to be explored, as do the development of Joint protocols with social services, mental health units and prisons.
- 7.46 Similarly, there is considerable scope for jointly undertaking strategic planning, share insight and operational data at a much more level than at present, for joining-up capital resources. assets and moving beyond individual organisational budgets to agree whole system funding envelopes.
- 7.47 More broadly there is the potential to unlock a wealth community assets and volunteering initiatives within a collaborative framework accessed through social prescribing (the level of community response to supporting the vulnerable during COVID-19 lockdown has been inspiring and needs to be continued).
- 7.48 Commissioners and service partners identify a wide range of vulnerable groups to whom tailored accommodation and support solutions could be targeted:
- Street homeless with the aim of providing alternatives to a return to sleeping rough;
  - Single people with limited access to core homelessness interventions who are now disproportionately presenting as homeless;
  - People being released from prison and on ex-offender programmes;
  - People living with mental health conditions, with autism or with learning difficulties;
  - Young people, particularly care leavers who lack life-skills and who are not well equipped to sustain a first home;
  - People leaving hospital or acute mental health wards discharged into care settings;
  - Survivors of domestic abuse (large increase in number of presentations during lockdown, in an area with a higher than average incidence);
  - People with no recourse to public funds.

## Supply Partnerships



### ***Social lettings Agency***

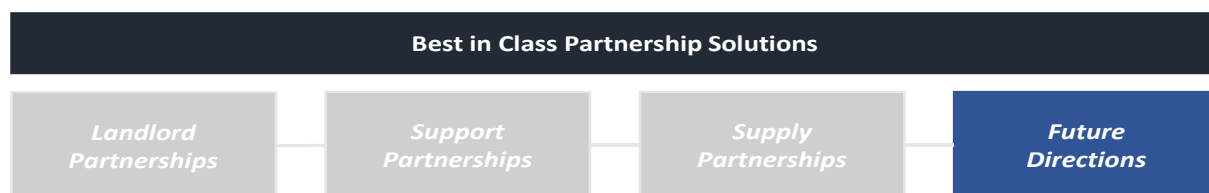
- 7.50 There is a strong business case for developing a Social Lettings Agency for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils. The aim would be to deliver private rented properties in far larger numbers reducing the need to place households into TA and speeding up move on for households in TA. Two distinct products could be offered by the new service:

**'Direct let' tenant finder product:** The landlord would not be charged a fee and properties would be accessed through a sensible incentive package which would include a menu of incentives that could be offered on a mix and match basis according to the landlords needs. These could be:

- Rent in advance (Could be a grant, a loan or can depending on tenant circumstances be financed from a Discretionary Housing payment)
- Rent Deposit (Could be a grant, a loan or can depending on tenant circumstances be financed from a Discretionary Housing payment)
- Guaranteed rent (risk assessed)
- Payment of insurance against loss or rent, damage and legal costs
- Small incentive payment to a landlord or letting agent (Councils are still able to make such payments under the Tenant Fees Act 2019 exemptions)

**Management service:** in addition to the letting service charging landlords between 5% and 8% of the rent as a management fee. This could include a repairs service at cost.

## Future Directions



### ***Providing Accommodation Services***

- 7.52 There is a clear business opportunity to provide an accommodation finding and management service to meet any statutory duties owed under Children Act, or Adult Social Care legislation. This could be delivered through the expansion of the Social Letting Agency.
- 7.53 For Children's Services this could be:
- Providing accommodation and management services to meet any section 20 duties for 16/17 year olds or finding accommodation to meet any care or leaving care duty and running accommodation projects such as supported lodgings;
  - Placements under section 20 of the Children Act can be upwards of £1000 - £2000 a week and no housing benefit is recoverable on these placements. The procurement of high costs accommodation by Children's Services is often due to the lack of expertise in how to procure more cost effective accommodation;
  - Placements under section 17 of the Children Act can be upwards of £500 a week. These are often placements where a negative homelessness decision has been made and the case referred to Children Services because there are dependent children in a household.
- 7.54 The aim would be to source and procure accommodation placements at a far lower cost to the local authority with the savings offset against the new service's core budget as income.
- 7.55 The same could apply to adult social care placements in small group homes or for individual placements for people with learning difficulties.
- 7.56 The new service would receive a placement fee and the weekly rent with administration costs covered to cover the cost of running these schemes, which would yield cost benefits for . Norfolk County Council in respect of their looked-after costs.

### ***Sharing the model with Norfolk and Suffolk Local Authorities***

- 7.57 On-going financial restrictions on local authorities in England will require new approaches to delivering homelessness services and in particular the provision of private rented sector accommodation to prevent homelessness or to meet a temporary accommodation duty or indeed to end that duty with a private sector offer. Services must be more efficient and achieve more with a substantially reduced budget. Inevitably Norfolk wide local authorities will need to look to new ways of delivering their services and reducing any financial risk. The option to 'buy in' a successful private sector accommodation model will reduce the financial

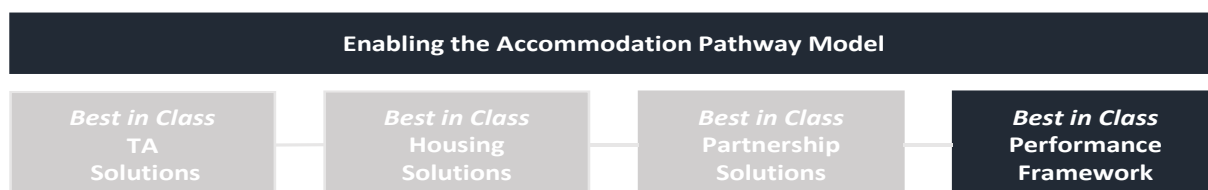
risk of higher homelessness and bed and breakfast costs, as a ready supply of private rented accommodation is the key component for any council to manage the costs of its statutory homeless duties.

- 7.58 Realistically the delivery of the new service model for other local authorities is likely to be only feasible where that authority is geographically close. There may however be an opportunity to franchise the model but this will depend on a number of factors including any intellectual property rights. Regardless of this opportunity, providing consultancy support to local authorities looking to develop a similar combined service will again generate income.
- 7.59 There may also be an income generating opportunity from offering a letting and management service to private sector landlords.

***Selling the model to support payment by results payments***

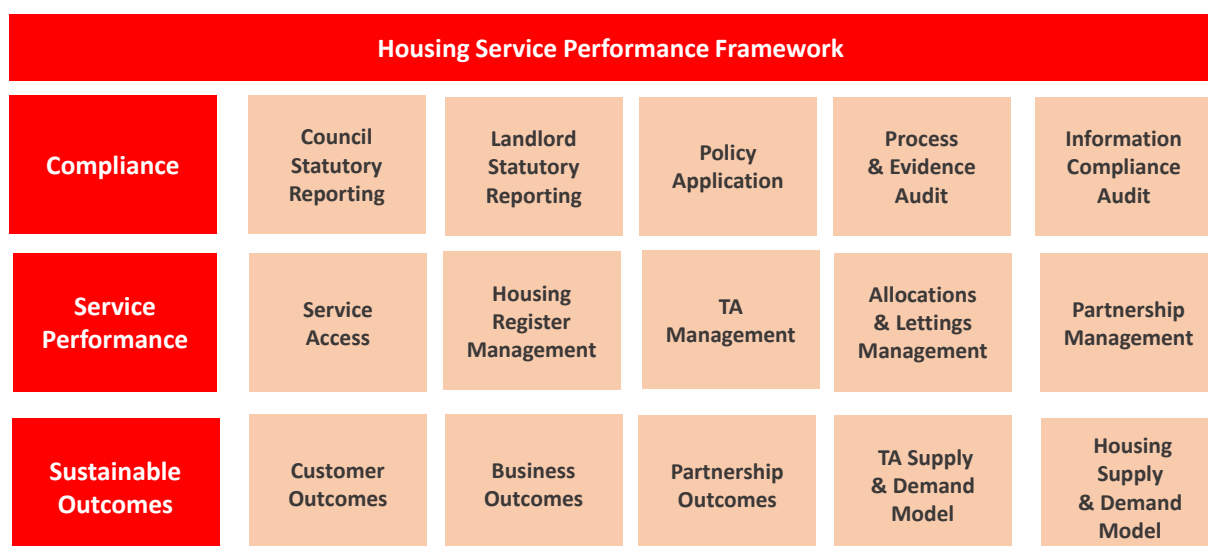
- 7.60 Soundings from MHCLG indicate that they may be intending to base a proportion of future homelessness funding to some extent on the basis of payment by results. Payment by results could conceivably be applied in the future to areas such as an authority's performance in preventing homelessness, eliminating bed and breakfast or reducing temporary accommodation. These all have an implication re higher costs if performance is poor.
- 7.61 A tried and tested model that works could be sold on a consultancy basis or through a partnership arrangement with the aim of ensuring that any Norfolk local authority is able to remain in the top quartile for the performance framework set by MHCLG and is able therefore to maximise any payment by results performance funding.

## Best in Class Performance Framework



7.62 A comprehensive *Performance Framework* will ensure compliance, drive-up performance and demonstrate the value of the *Accommodation Pathways Model* in delivering key objectives:

- Customers receive a compliant, high quality service that enables them to resolve their housing needs in a fair and transparent manner;
- Self-service solutions and process automation are reducing demand and increasing efficiency, optimising the supply and cost of short term accommodation solutions;
- Driving wider service outcomes in partnership that are reducing future dependency on core services.



7.63 The *Performance Model* will consist of a suite of performance indicators that measure:

**Compliance:** The level of assurance that housing services are compliant and meet statutory obligations, are delivered to the terms of core policies, and that full audit trails are in place that will withstand challenge and scrutiny;

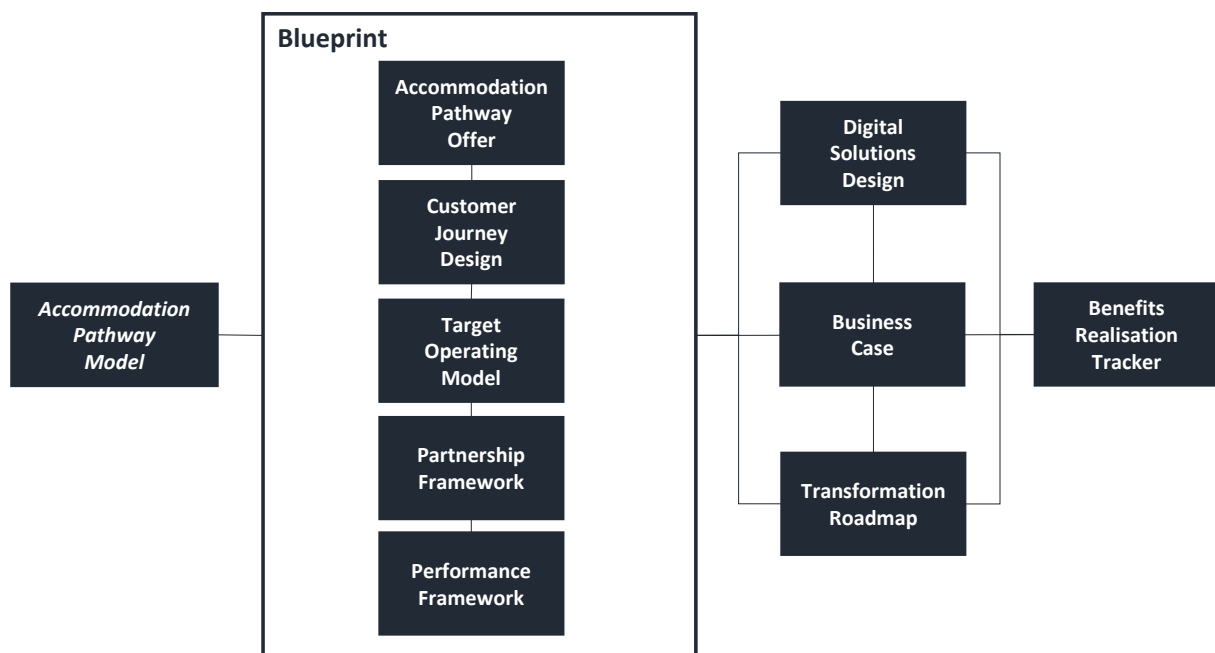
**Service Performance:** The quality of service delivered to customers and level of contentment with their experience, the efficiency of processes, the effective utilisation of resources, and the performance of partner relationships;

**Sustainable Outcomes:** The impact and value-add the *Accommodation Pathway Model* will deliver to customers lives, in meeting the business objectives of both Councils, landlords and service partners. Also ensuring the long-term sustainability of the model through evidenced-based demand and supply models.



## 8. DELIVERING THE ACCOMMODATION PATHWAY MODEL

- 8.1 The next step in making the Accommodation Pathway Model a reality is to develop a *Blueprint* that will specify the detail of the *Accommodation Model*. This must be supported by a detailed *Business Case* and *Transformation Roadmap* for delivering the model. A *Benefits Realisation Tracker* will ensure that the model delivers the anticipated outcomes and return on investment made.



- 8.2 A *Blueprint* will work through and resolve the detailed design of the *Pathway Model*:

**Accommodation Pathway:** Specifying the detailed service offer at each of the four Stages of the Pathway and the enabling *Best in Class* service elements;

**Customer Journey Design:** Mapping the customer pathways from first access through to sustained accommodation solutions;

**Target Operating Model:** Specifying detailed the operational and organisational design for aligning the combined with the *Pathway Model*;

**Partnership Framework:** Setting out the approach for formalising arrangements with landlords and service partners. focused on co-production, balanced risk management and fostering innovative new solutions.

**Performance Framework:** Defining the insight, supply and demand models, compliance and service KPIs, and customer outcomes that will ensure the model is *Best in Class*.

### ***Digital Solutions Design***

- 8.3 The *Accommodation Pathway Model* will require investment in a sophisticated digital business platform that will deliver both customer and delivery partner self-service capability, as well as an integrated digital platform for the service. The platform solution must support:

- The *Marketplace* portal with high quality, interactive content, context driven product registration and personalised applications;
- *Assisted Choice*, enabling people in need of support in accessing the pathway to self-identify and be supported on-line or through other channels;
- Digital workflow and rules-based processes that deliver the Allocations Policy, with caseworking functionality to support an individual over through the entirety of their relationship with the service;
- Portal access for landlords and service partners to complete self-service processes and to share data;

8.4 A set of business requirements for the core system is provided in Appendix 5.

#### ***Business Case***

8.5 A detailed Business Case will enable stakeholders to assess the merits of the *Accommodation Pathway Model* based on a balanced view of costs set against the benefits and anticipated outcomes, including.

- Project costs including internal and external resources, software procurement and implementation;
- Operational efficiencies, savings and refocussing opportunities, based on implementing a single, flexible operating model and ongoing operating efficiencies delivered through self-service and process digitisation;
- Return on investment (ROI) in over a 3-year period;
- Estimates of potential opportunity costs, income generated and the associated risks of future business development opportunities.

#### ***Transformation Roadmap***

8.6 Delivering the *Accommodation Pathway Model* represents a *whole system* change, requiring a coordinated transformational change programme, embedded within the business, with the momentum and resources to focus delivery over a 9-12 month timeframe. Specifically:

- A governance structure with Executive sponsorship and buy-in from Members and stakeholders to provide oversight of the delivery, to identify and mitigate risk, and ensure benefits are realised;
- A single prioritised resource plan that will maximise the capacity of the service (and core support services such as ICT) to deliver and embed change on top of a business as usual workload;
- A *Benefits Realisation Tracker* will ensure ensures strategic objectives are realised over the next three years.

## 9. SUMMARY

### ***Scope***

- 9.1 To deliver the goals of *Our Plan* (2020-2024) within the context of the newly formed *One Team* operating model, CT has worked in collaboration with Broadland and South Norfolk staff, Members and stakeholders to define a *Best in Class Housing Offer*. The project scope is to:
- Reduce the demand for TA and expand accommodation options open to households;
  - Create a *One Team* housing service that minimises risk whilst maximising customer support;
  - Develop a sustainable model that reinvests income into support provision;
  - Outline partnership solutions that deliver a ground-breaking housing pathway.
- 9.2 The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic during the early stages of project delivery has delivered a salutary lesson in focusing on what really matters, and has helped set the level of ambition of the project in enabling Broadland and South Norfolk to tackle the aftermath of the crisis with the focus to achieve *Best in Class* at the same time.

### ***Pulling back from the cliff-edge***

- 9.3 Local authority housing delivery models are characteristically passive, and delivered at the point of crisis to a relatively small cohort of households. They fail to deliver practical housing help, advice, and solutions for the vast majority of residents that have a housing need, who are filtered-away from receiving support of any kind.
- 9.4 Furthermore, they fail to promote and deliver resilience amongst residents in housing need by expecting them to be proactive, to adapt their behaviour to increase their chances of obtaining a solution.
- 9.5 As a consequence, many residents end-up in housing crisis, resulting in homelessness and an application under statutory homelessness legislation. This situation is compounded by a lack of strategic alignment between Councils and landlords, resulting in a transfer of risk and responsibility for those placed in social housing, which increases the risk of tenancy failure, often resulting in a life-limiting and costly unbroken cycle of homelessness and eviction.

### ***Forming a Service Baseline***

- 9.6 Since the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018, both Broadland and South Norfolk Councils have experienced a 162% increase in homeless applications (142% in the rest of England).
- 9.7 However, both Councils have been particularly successful in preventing homelessness through upstream interventions, which has relieved the pressure on TA provision (51 households housed in TA – April 2020). This has been achieved almost exclusively by placing households in social housing, whilst there are no examples of an individual or household avoiding homelessness by remaining in their current accommodation, whereby avoiding an intensive service intervention altogether. This is not a fair or sustainable strategy.

- 9.8 A significant percentage of individuals approaching the service do so from what had been a stable home or sustainable tenancy, or from a position of relative financial stability, highlighting the need for supporting individuals to plan their own accommodation pathway before a point of crisis is reached.
- 9.9 Whilst the level of insight available from current business systems is limited, it is clear from interviews within the service and with delivery partners that future demand and the need for structured interventions will be increasingly driven by younger people with less well developed life-skills, single person households who have very limited options, people leaving care settings with complex needs (particularly mental health conditions), and older-people requiring accessible housing solutions.
- 9.10 The demand for TA has remained fairly constant, despite the introduction of the HRA (however with the full impact Covid-19 still unclear). The TA portfolio across the Districts is a mixture of council owned and privately let units. The level of PRS provision at Broadland is having a significant negative cost impact, estimated at between £200 and £250k p.a., as the accommodation is more suited to longer term occupation. TA provision in South Norfolk (7 units) is too small and risks reliance on expensive bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 9.11 The introduction of two new prevention and relief duties means that a balance between the need for short term emergency accommodation needs to be struck. Based on the analysis undertaken, Broadland and South Norfolk require additional short-term emergency accommodation and less long-term temporary accommodation moving forward.
- 9.12 There are weaknesses in the way TA is currently managed in both Councils and there is an urgent need to implement a new TA structure from one location to ensure consistency, control and continuity. The combined service needs to be correctly resourced, and to this end a business case to access Government funding from 2021 is presented.
- 9.13 The creation of the new *One Team* operating model provides a unique opportunity to completely overhaul the current model of social housing provision. This must transform the underpinning principles that currently encourage band chasing to evidence *urgent* need, the weaknesses of allocations policies that render them potentially non-compliant, the high level of manual and inefficient business processes, and relationships with landlords many of which have not been reviewed or enhanced since stock transfer. The new model must build upon the strengths of the combining services in identifying needs and providing supporting services through their respective *Support Hubs*.
- 9.14 Service users surveyed were generally happy with service they received from their Council, however the number of re-banding decisions upheld on appeal and level of contact made to chase progress, demonstrates that there is considerable scope to digitise (change of circumstances), automate and streamline (bidding and lettings) many aspects of the service.
- 9.15 Partner landlords interviewed view the combined service in a positive light and would like to see the adoption of a joint, a blended approach to allocations moving forward that combines both approaches would be welcomed. They would also welcome the establishment of more

formal, partnership-based relationships moving forward, centred on sharing risk and the needs of the individual.

### ***Facing the future***

- 9.16 In the post Covid-19 operating environment, a sit back and wait approach is not an option. A demand spike driven by unemployment, tenancy and mortgage default, mental health and domestic violence driven household failures, could result in such financial pressure that the viability of the Councils is at risk.
- 9.17 New thinking is required to meet the legal responsibility to deliver housing advice, to help all residents in housing need to avoid homelessness. Existing service offers based on intervention at the point of crisis and delivery models based on disjointed service elements have been made irrelevant almost overnight. Only a holistic Pathway model can deliver an effective response on a sustainable basis.
- 9.18 Broadland and South Norfolk are at a natural point of reinvention and have the opportunity to be bold and create a *Best in Class* solution based in the Covid-19 world, which provides universal on-line access to support all residents and empower them to resolve their own housing issues. To support households along a supported pathway that keeps them away from or move successfully away from homelessness, with wider accommodation choices based on their circumstance, and to work in partnership with landlords and support providers to help individuals build a level of resilience that reduce future reliance on the system.

### ***The Accommodation Pathway Model***

- 9.19 The Accommodation Pathway Model will be a first of its kind in the UK to deliver a holistic housing service to the whole community regardless of their immediate need, with the aim of enabling them to plan for their long-term accommodation needs with a realist set of options, whilst supporting those who reach a point of crisis to re-establish and sustain a suitable home.
- 9.20 The *Accommodation Pathway Model* has four clearly defined and outcomes focused stages:
- 9.21 **Stage 1 - Marketplace:** Will present a single digital access pathway into the housing service for anyone needing help to assess their housing needs and options, with the objective of delivering self-help solutions to the majority of those in housing need. Equally however, it will identify at an early stage, individuals approaching a point of housing crisis, risk factors that may trigger a formal intervention, and residents who may be too vulnerable to support themselves through the process unsupported.
- 9.22 *Marketplace* would provide access all available housing products in one place with the intention that it would become the first place to go for all residents in housing need. Residents would be able to register electronically their housing need and explore accommodation options. A personalised *Accommodation Options Plan*, would outline accommodation options over time, applicable to their personal and financial circumstance

- 9.23 Low-cost, self-service *enabling* packages could include pre-tenancy courses, access to complementary service and community resources, a digital extension of the Support Hub services already in place.
- 9.24 The extent of any *direct intervention role* at this point will need to be examined in terms of how such intervention can directly influence downstream costs and outcomes though out the system, such as providing a rent deposit scheme to help someone secure a tenancy, or a support scheme to help someone avoid eviction.
- 9.25 *Marketplace* will absorb a considerable volume of enquiry-based demand, structure, route and triage formal applications for accommodation and support, and build a picture of demand.
- 9.26 **Stage 2 - Prevention:** Will provide options for people at imminent risk of becoming homeless. However, if the *Marketplace* fulfils its role, households seeking support, should be fewer in number and hopefully already in the system and their circumstances known.
- 9.27 The *enabling* package set out in *Marketplace* would still be relevant, however, given the imminent risk of homelessness, caseworkers would need to be more proactive and directive when working with residents in order to prevent them losing their home, or to support them to find something else before they reached the point of becoming homeless.
- 9.28 Enabling families to remain at home and wait for social housing rather than become homeless is the best outcome for both a household and the two Councils. As part of a new allocations policy framework, homeless households could be incentivised to wait for a social housing outcome and have more choice over where that offer is, rather than becoming homeless and being offered a short-term private rented solution.
- 9.29 Direct interventions could include making financial payments through a *Prevention of Homelessness Fund* or the *Discretionary Housing Payment Fund*, which whilst enabling households to remain in place, has a direct cost and may not change behaviours, whilst brokering solutions to rent arrears between tenants and landlords may do.
- 9.30 **Stage 3 - Stabilisation:** Will provide a tailored package of suitable, high quality temporary accommodation and personalised support to an individual or household with the space to stabilise their situation before taking the next step towards self-reliance. Additional wraparound support will be provided to those who need support beyond finding suitable accommodation.
- 9.31 **Stage 4 - Resolution:** Will enable households to *resolve* their housing need though access to permanent accommodation solutions, regardless of whether they are owed a statutory temporary accommodation duty, by delivering realistic, and suitable accommodation options across all tenures.
- 9.32 Ongoing sustainment and support services will enable a household to set-up and manage a home successfully and to sustain a tenancy, supported by a bespoke *Accommodation Sustainment Plan*. This approach break the cycle of the revolving door of homelessness and of short-lived, broken tenancies by ensuring that solutions are sustainable and long term. On-

going support would be provided through a hub and spoke partnerships and enable access to wraparound services such as health and employment, to deliver joined-up outcomes.

### ***Enabling the Accommodation Pathway Model***

- 9.33 To enable the *Accommodation Pathway Model*, the disparate components of the homelessness, TA, and allocations services, their service offers, operating models, business systems and partnership relationships need to be re-thought and re-aligned to create a holistic Best in Class solution envisaged.

### ***Best in Class TA Provision***

- 9.34 Moving from the current model for the provision of TA is a necessity if the right type of TA is to be provided to meet demand at a sustainable cost. The target model for the provision of TA is a closed cycle that will ensure statutory requirements are met, whilst optimising quality of product and operational performance through accurate demand forecasting and utilisation modelling.
- 9.35 Broadland and South Norfolk should adopt a joint approach to TA procurement, based on an accurate mapping of need. Reliance on expensive PRS accommodation should be reduced in favour of developing accommodation solutions through RSL partnerships. There also needs to be a shift in the type of accommodation procured from longer-term move-on to shorter-term emergency accommodation.
- 9.36 A dedicated TA management function is required, that is properly resourced and located in one place. The Operations Manual developed as part of this project needs to be embedded, with staff trained in the preventative caseworking methods provided.

### ***Best in Class Housing Service Provision***

- 9.37 Similarly, housing service provision needs reframing around a joint Allocations Policy, that will blend the approaches currently adopted by both Councils into a compliant, flexible tool for allocating homes fairly and transparently. A combined CBL and direct offer-based approach will best meet the objectives of both Councils and landlords, in recognising local connection, prioritising the homeless and those most in need, whilst still filling hard to let stock and attracting new customer into areas of low demand.
- 9.38 The customer journey for social housing provision must be standardised, automated and performance managed. There is scope to significantly reduce contact demand through smart self-service registration and application self-management and to embed decision making within the business system to drive consistency and ensure transparency.

### ***Best in Class Partnership Solutions***

- 9.39 Formalising the management arrangements between the Councils and partner landlords will elevate what are currently little more than transactional relationships into strategic partnership relationships. Landlords would welcome the formalisation of obsolete service level agreements, to share system and data to join-up end to end processes. They would also



welcome a strategic approach to helping households establish and sustain their tenancies, by jointly sharing and managing risk of failure, through the provision of wraparound support.

- 9.40 The Covid-19 crisis is focusing the minds of all stakeholders across the County. Neighbouring Districts, core service commissioners within the County Council and service providers all recognise the need for opening-up strategic service partnerships that create whole system approach, delivering wider and lasting outcomes at reduced costs and ongoing levels of dependency. This impetus must be harnessed and channelled quickly into ready-to-go solutions such as the *Accommodation Pathway*.
- 9.41 The funding brief of the LGA Housing Advisor Programme has been fulfilled by this project as it has identified significant scope for supporting transformation partnerships that enable services to meet their local housing need.
- 9.42 Broadland and South Norfolk are well placed to become the exemplar *Best in Class* solution provider within the sector. This may in turn open up a range of business development opportunities that could generate income and cover the cost of investment made in the *Model*.

### ***Best in Class Performance Management***

- 9.43 A comprehensive *Performance Framework* will ensure compliance of the whole system, drive-up performance and demonstrate the value of the *Accommodation Pathways Model* in delivering key objectives. Specific objectives should be to measure the quality customer experience and outcomes achieved, the impact of self-service and process efficiency in managing demand, and the realisation of wider service outcomes delivered in partnership.

### ***Delivering the Accommodation Pathway Model***

- 9.44 The next step in making the *Accommodation Pathway Model* a reality is to develop a *Blueprint* that will set-out the characteristics and components of the *Pathway* and target operating model for the *One Team* housing service.
- 9.45 Underpinning the *Blueprint* must be a robust *Business Case* that sets out the investment needed to deliver the *Pathway*, the operational efficiency savings and tangible customer benefits it will deliver, ensuring its enduring sustainability.
- 9.46 A *Transformation Roadmap* will enable the service to deliver the change programme quickly and efficiently, with effective governance and resource planning, and to ensure strategic goals are realised through ongoing benefits tracking.
- 9.47 Finally, the drive and emerging culture of *One Team* to complete this project at a time of intense operational change and unprecedented service demand, coupled with the shared vision of Members of both Councils, proves that the *Accommodation Pathway Model* can quickly be made a highly successful reality.



**APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

Landlord Consultation List	
Landlord	Key Contact and Role
<b>Registered Provider</b>	
Clarion Housing	Nina Burton – Available Homes Manager Sally Greetham – Housing Services Manager Sue Stavers CIHCM - Head of Operations (East)
Flagship Housing Group	Michael Tanner – Housing Manager Simon Carr – Housing Manager Jay Furner – Housing Manager
Saffron Housing Trust	Tracey Dowse – Neighbourhood Manager Karen Benton-Warboys – Lettings and Support Manager Andrea Curson – Neighbourhood Manager
Victory Housing	Jackie Finnegan
<b>Supported Housing Provider</b>	
House of Genesis – BDC	Alan Barker

Key Agency Consultation List	
Landlord	Key Contact and Role
<b>Local Authority</b>	
Children Services – Norfolk County Council	Amanda King
Adult Social Care – Norfolk County Council	Rob Cooper – Commissioning Programme Manager Mental Health
North Norfolk District Council	Lisa Grice – Housing Options Manager
Norwich City Council	Chris Hancock, Chris Haystead
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk BC	Ross Hefford – Housing Manager

## APPENDIX 2: FUNDING CASE FOR ADDITIONAL TA RESOURCES

### Context

- 0.1 Additional TA resources can be delivered through Government grant funding for homelessness which includes funding for delivering the temporary accommodation function.
- 0.2 The funding from the Government is set out in the table below. This does not include the funding that the Council has already committed through its core Council Tax funding of homelessness as a statutory service.

Funding Source	Broadland 2019/2020	Broadland 2020/21	South N 2019/20	South N 2020/21
<b>FHSG</b>	£216,977	£165,094	£48,192	£69,287
<b>NB/HRG</b>	£33,616	£82,962	£41,248	£99,676
<b>RSG Named HPG</b>	£111,000	£111,000	£194,000	£194,000
<b>Total</b>	£361,593	£359,056	£283,440	£362,963

\*Terms defined

FHSG = Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (Ring fenced funding for tackling homelessness)

New Burdens/Homelessness Reduction Grant = A grant to support Councils in implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act. Called 'New Burdens' in 2019/20 and renamed Homelessness Reduction Grant from 20102/21

Homelessness Prevention Grant = A named line in the Councils Revenue Support Grant settlement from MHCLG

\*Note the MHCLG Grants above exclude grants specifically for tackling rough sleeping

- 0.3 Based on the funding table set out above, MHCLG Government grant funding for tackling homelessness is at approximately the same level for Broadland but has increased by nearly £80,000 for South Norfolk. Across the 2 Councils therefore there is £80,000 of additional funding some of which should be prioritised to set up a dedicated TA team.
- 0.4 In addition by taking the actions set out in section 3 of this strategy regarding future procurement decisions based on best value this should realise net savings across the combined Councils of at least £100k and possibly up to £200k based on reduced levels of bed and breakfast usage and savings to the PSL budget.
- 0.5 A mixture of additional MHCLG grant funding and TA cost savings should be used to fund the increase in resources required to establish the Accommodation/TA Team
- 0.6 It is critical that an evidence base can support the decisions in respect to the type of TA, a balance of short and longer term accommodation, that will be needed to enable both councils to meet their legal duties and to deliver high quality accommodation at the lowest possible cost.

## APPENDIX 3: TA PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

### **Context**

- 0.1 It is critical that an evidence base can support the decisions in respect to the type of TA, a balance of short and longer term accommodation, that will be needed to enable both councils to meet their legal duties and to deliver high quality accommodation at the lowest possible cost.
- 0.2 The HRA brought into the legal framework for homelessness two new duties, that an applicant can receive before a local authority is required to assess whether a final 'Temporary Accommodation Main Duty' is owed. The two duties are:
1. A duty on local housing authorities to prevent a household from becoming homelessness by helping any eligible homeless applicant to stay in the accommodation they have presented from, or to help them to move to alternative suitable accommodation before they reach the point where they become physically homeless.
  2. A new duty is placed on local authorities for applicants who are owed the new prevention duty but subsequently become homeless, or who present to the Council at the stage when they are physically homeless. This duty is to take reasonable steps to relieve the applicant's homelessness by helping them to find suitable accommodation.
- 0.3 Importantly these 2 new duties can be ended successfully through a new flexibility in the legislation that recognises that many local authorities have limited social housing resources to be able to provide everyone with a long-term social housing solution.
- 0.4 The new legislative 'flexibility' is that the prevention and relief duties can be brought to an end through any suitable accommodation offered, or secured by the authority or the applicant that has a 'reasonable prospect' of being available for at least 6 months. The current main statutory duty in contrast can only be brought to a successful end through social housing or a 12-month fixed term tenancy.
- 0.5 The flexibility the HRA gives local authorities to tackle homelessness and successfully end the 2 new duties has altered the balance between the numbers of short term and long term TA units that a Council needs to procure.
- 0.6 Fewer units of longer term TA are needed because far fewer applicants progress to a 'final Main duty' as the prevention or relief duties can be ended with any accommodation of a minimum 6 month duration.
- 0.7 The focus for TA and its procurement going forward will be on the need to procure more short-term 'quick turnover' type temporary accommodation to accommodate applicants in priority need owed the relief of homelessness duty whilst they wait in TA for an accommodation solution that can be social housing, but equally can be a private rented offer of a minimum 6 month period.
- 0.8 Councils have a relatively 'long window' of 56 days to procure or arrange that offer of 6 months accommodation. There are important recommendations in this strategy aimed at opening up

the private rented sector to deliver far more private sector lettings to supplement the current level of social housing lettings.

- 0.9 It is anticipated therefore that in the future the vast majority of applicants in Broadland and South Norfolk that are in priority need and are owed a prevention duty because they are threatened with homelessness, or are in TA under a relief duty will be able to be offered an accommodation solution at the prevention duty stage or, if they become homeless, before the end of the 56 day period of the 'relief duty'.
- 0.10 The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) has impacted significantly in Broadland and South Norfolk regarding the 'balance' between short-term emergency accommodation need and longer-term TA need. More short-term TA units are required and fewer long-term PSL type units are needed.
- 0.11 Failure to adapt to this changing picture is already having a negative financial impact on Broadland Council in particular, as outlined above.

***Evidenced-based procurement***

- 0.12 TA procurement decisions must be taken after analyzing the evidence for the geographical areas that account for most homelessness demand.
- 0.13 Broadland District Council covers an area of 211 square miles and consists of 65 parishes. South Norfolk Council covers an area of 350 square feet and consists of 119 Parishes. It is inevitable that it will not be logistically possible to place households into temporary accommodation that is located in the area where an applicant became homeless from given the large geographical spread of both Councils. For practical, administrative and financial reasons temporary accommodation cannot be procured that is easily accessible from any Parish across the two Council geographical areas. Therefore, sufficient temporary accommodation has been procured in the larger areas that have reasonable road and public transport links.
- 0.14 It will not be possible to match every household requiring TA to a property that is physically located in the area they have become homeless from or wish to be temporarily housed. The procurement of TA has had to reflect the reality of the housing market in Broadland and South Norfolk. More TA has been procured in areas with lower rents with access limited in areas where the rented market is targeted at tourism.
- 0.15 However, a new TA procurement strategy must be guided by the locations where households are presenting as homeless from.
- 0.16 A strategic approach is required to ensure that the procurement of new TA whether as emergency or longer-term accommodation is able to provide a suitable geographical spread based on the locations people are presenting as homeless from.
- 0.17 A mapping exercise needs to be undertaken by both Councils and used to inform the procurement strategy. This should involve:

- 0.18 The two Councils analysing for the last 12 months all placements into TA to capture the location they have presented as homeless from and then to match this to the location of the TA portfolio as of 1st April 2020.
- 0.19 It is accepted (and would be likely to be accepted by the Courts in any legal challenge) that the Council cannot match every household requiring TA to the exact parish they have presented from. However, both Councils require a Policy for deciding placements where an applicant may need to be placed some distance away from an area where they may work, have children in school or have family support or other connections. This is the model placement Policy set out in the Operational Manual and legally needs to be adopted by Members for both Councils.
- 0.20 The aim should be to use the information for the locations people are presenting from to help shape the new TA procurement strategy for where procurement should be targeted at in terms of geographical locations

***Increasing the TA Portfolio***

- 0.21 There are potential options to purchase accommodation to increase the TA portfolio. Some caution should be exercised here.
- 0.22 It is not recommended that the Councils look to develop modular housing units such as 'Snoozebox' or similar low cost modular unit schemes. These are becoming common in areas of high demand such as in London where off the shelf units can be purchased specifically to increase temporary accommodation. However, these schemes are not very cost effective, can be controversial in terms of their visual impact and most importantly the homelessness position in the 2 Councils does not at present justify this option being explored.
- 0.23 However, a case for borrowing can be made to deliver a number of properties that can be used as TA.
- 0.24 This includes the purchase of accommodation that can be used as a hostel or individual ex right to buy properties that could replace the more costly PSL units. Alternatively, the option could be explored to enter into partnerships with Registered Providers to purchase some nits of new build designated for market rent.
- 0.25 However, this option does need a full options appraisal business case and comparison to the costs of alternative TA schemes set out in the costs table above. The business case would need to consider what rent rules could be applied, the cost where applicable of purchasing accommodation if purchased by the Council or a Registered Provider.
- 0.26 This option should be considered in the context of improving the quality, longevity and certainty of the TA portfolio. It would also help the Councils to develop a balanced portfolio of TA. However, there may be a higher cost impact certainly initially compared to other forms of TA.
- 0.27 The Councils therefore need to proceed with caution and undertake a full cost benefit analysis of any options to purchase. The findings should then be fed into the overall temporary accommodation strategy to influence the strategic decisions that are needed regarding the

number, type and cost of the TA portfolio that should be procured to meet the Council's TA needs over the lifetime of this strategy and beyond.

***Procuring cost-effective temporary Accommodation***

- 0.28 One of the key objectives of this TA Strategy is to guide decisions on the type of TA that should be procured based on the lowest net cost to the Councils.
- 0.29 Some types of TA have a greater financial net cost. This is largely down to the 'rules' set by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding the payment of subsidy for any housing benefit paid out a Council for occupants in TA who claim housing benefit.
- 0.30 DWP rules continue to financially penalize Councils that use of bed and breakfast type accommodation and nightly let type accommodation both of which are used on a regular basis by Broadland and South Norfolk. It is therefore important to analyse the financial costs for the type of temporary accommodation currently procured across the Councils, and looks at other forms of accommodation to guide the Councils in making future procurement decisions based on minimising costs.
- 0.31 The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) sets the funding rules for temporary accommodation through the 'Non-HRA Rent Rebate Subsidy System'. The rules are communicated to local authorities through a series of subsidy circulars. The most recent change by DWP was the decision to keep temporary accommodation within the housing benefit system thereby reversing the intention to pay housing costs for TA through Universal Credit.
- 0.32 However, the change that impacted significantly on Broadland Council was the decision taken by the DWP that from April 1st 2017 no management fee of £60 would be payable for accommodation held under a lease by a local authority. Instead the 'management fee' was to be paid through a new grant called the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG). This grant was 'ring fenced' to tackling homelessness and positively provided increased funding and flexibility for Councils to manage homelessness pressures.
- 0.33 However, a negative factor of the new funding system was that from April 2017 private sector leasing schemes (PSL) were no longer 'cost neutral'. Councils such as Broadland who had procured a large leasing portfolio saw a negative financial impact and this cost has increasing in 2019/20.
- 0.34 There is a need going forward to develop new TA initiatives to substitute for the more costly private sector leasing portfolio. This includes new TA schemes and reducing the need for TA through better access to the private rented market.
- 0.35 There is also the potential to combine the FHSG funding for both Councils with other funding such as the Homelessness Reduction Grant, Capital resources such as right to buy receipts and Core General Fund to create a larger commissioning pot to assist in the procurement of accommodation for both TA and enable access to 'move on' accommodation to end the prevention, relief or main homelessness duties.

- 0.36 The table in Appendix 4 sets out the estimated net cost to the Councils of TA. This includes the forms of TA currently used and the forms of TA that could be used. This is based on the current 'rules' as set by the TA funding circular issued by the DWP at the end of March 2017: S5/2017.
- 0.37 The DWP made a decision in 2017 to remove temporary accommodation from Universal Credit from 11 April 2018. Claimants making a new claim to UC and living in temporary accommodation cannot receive their housing costs through UC and would need to claim HB for help with temporary accommodation housing costs whilst still receiving the personal element of UC. This decision was helpful to Councils bringing more certainty to the rules for temporary accommodation subsidy and costs.

***TA procurement strategy recommendations***

- 0.38 These are the conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the evidence, to support Broadland and South Norfolk's procurement decisions in respect of the type of temporary accommodation that would enable the councils to meet their legal duties and to also deliver TA at the lowest possible cost.
- 0.39 There is a need to make procurement decisions that seeks to minimize the financial costs and reduce financial risk for both Councils. Procurement decisions should be guided by analyzing the net cost impact of for each TA type option.
- 0.40 This will ensure there is a sufficient portfolio of low cost longer-term TA. The number of units needing to be procured will be guided by the supply and demand model and will need to fully reflect the changes brought about by the HRA in the need for longer-term TA.
- 0.41 There are a number of recommendations concerning the future temporary accommodation procurement model for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils. These are:
- 0.42 Going forward TA procurement decisions should be taken jointly by both Councils in the spirit of closer working and based on the evidence and recommendations from this temporary accommodation strategy.
- 0.43 Both Councils need to undertake the mapping exercise to inform the TA procurement strategy in respect of the locations where TA needs to be procured.
- 0.44 Both Councils the aim should be to develop more units of low/nil cost emergency/short term temporary accommodation to the portfolio by exploring alternative options. Therefore, both Councils should explore the option of procuring more short term emergency TA hostel type accommodation through converting multiple use shared accommodation such as low demand sheltered housing or purchasing any former multiple use home. This will provide 'nil net cost' emergency accommodation and will be more relevant to the post HRA legal framework.
- 0.45 Neither Broadland nor South Norfolk Councils have a low cost emergency accommodation option in the form of a local authority owned hostel. This means emergency placements are more likely to be accommodated in bed and breakfast. For single people placed this may have a low net cost whereas for families this will be a far higher net cost. The current profile of the emergency accommodation is almost entirely weighted towards more costly bed and breakfast and nightly let arrangements.

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- 0.46 Procurement decisions should include seeking to develop more TA through using social housing stock held by Housing Association partners. This can deliver low cost or 'no net cost' temporary accommodation that can be used for move-on from emergency accommodation or a half-way house between TA and a more settled solution. This option will be especially beneficial to reduce the need to place larger families into high cost B and B or nightly let accommodation.
- 0.47 Set a target to cut the number of leased properties in half within 12/18 months. The target and exact timescale should be based on an exercise to consider all exiting leases should be completed within 6 months allowing decisions to be made for how many of the existing leases need to be handed back because of the condition of the property, or due to the landlord being unwilling to accept new lease terms. Once this is known the Council will be able to plan how many properties need to be leased.
- 0.48 Given that new procurement decisions will take some time to implement the recommendation is for Broadland Council to continue to maintain a 'Private Sector Leasing' portfolio but not to over commit to this form of accommodation given its potential net cost and risk of further costs for voids if there is not the demand to fill the accommodation.
- 0.49 In addition, Broadland should only renew existing leases, or replace with new units procured, through more beneficial lease terms. This will ensure that lease terms are more favourable to the Council re repairing obligations and rent levels.
- 0.50 Develop a social letting agency to open up access to the private rented sector in Broadland and South Norfolk.



## APPENDIX 4: TA SUBSIDY ANALYSIS

Table 5: Subsidy Analysis		
Type of TA	DWP Subsidy to the Council for any HB paid	Impact on Broadland and South Norfolk Councils
Costs <b>'Nightly Paid' including Bed and Breakfast accommodation Used by both Broadland and South Norfolk</b>	100% up to 1 bedroom LHA rate of £98.08 and no subsidy payable to the Council above that rate (rate at Jan 2011 for Central Norfolk and Norwich BMRA)	<p>Net loss to Councils per week based on current nightly rates</p> <p>B and B, or non self contained</p> <p>£30 a night = net loss £112(w) £5824 (y)</p> <p>£40 a night = net loss £182(w) £9464 (y)</p> <p>£50 a night = net loss £252 (w) £13,104 (y)</p> <p>£80 a night = (when only non budget hotel available or 2 rooms needed for a family) = net loss 462 (w) £24,024 (y)</p> <p>£100 a night (when 2 rooms needed for a family) = £602(w) £31,304 (y)</p> <p>Large families requiring more than 1 room the loss can be very large, plus risk of a family being impacted by the benefit cap with a further financial impact on the authority).</p>
Pros and Cons <b>'Nightly Paid' / B and B</b>	<p><b>For</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No 'block booking' contractual costs</li> <li>➤ Only need to use when required</li> <li>➤ Let on a commercial licence so no responsibility for the authority re removal of residents</li> <li>➤ Quick turnaround upon vacating</li> <li>➤ Management provided as part of the costs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Against</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Very expensive net costs for anything more than single person placement or 1 plus 1 in 1 room.</li> <li>➤ Larger families requiring more than 1 room result will result in exceptionally high unit cost</li> <li>➤ If not self-contained legislation restricts the use for families with children to an emergency, and then for no more than 6 weeks.</li> <li>➤ Shared facilities for cooking in any non self contained unit provides poor quality accommodation in terms of facilities</li> <li>➤ Availability not consistent and can be impacted by seasonal variances in Broadland and South Norfolk due to supply issues during the holiday period. This potentially results in higher rates during the summer period especially when spot purchase is required</li> </ul>
PSL 'Private Sector Leased' Includes the Broadland PSL portfolio and the properties leased from Clarion plus	The Council receives in subsidy on the HB paid 90% of the LHA rate for the property size (not the family size) but this is based on the lower LHA rate set for January 2011	<p><b>Issue 1: Net cost of the PSL scheme for Broadland Council</b></p> <p>Note: The figures below need to be firmed up once there is a clear set of figures for the PSL scheme costs re rent paid to the landlord, HB, HB subsidy, repairs, hand back and management costs</p>

<p>(Tustings) the property leased from the Church in SN</p>		<p>Draft conclusions are: Costs for 2019/20</p> <p>Rents to landlords: £261,000</p> <p>Maintenance: £68,000</p> <p>Hand Back Costs = unknown but can be up to £1000 per property</p> <p>Bad debt costs = Unknown but reported to be high £50,000 est for the scheme?</p> <p>Staffing costs = 1 FTE PSL officer and other staff costs proportioned for PSL work = £50,000</p> <p>Total estimated cost per year circa = £430,000</p> <p>Income = £184,000 estimate (includes HB income and working households income)</p> <p>Assumption is that rents are set at the 90% LHA 2011 rates. This needs confirming</p> <p>Loss for the PSL scheme = £246k estimated for the year</p> <p><b>Issue 2: Further risk going forward</b></p> <p>The assumption is that PSL rents are at the LHA rates. If in future the Council has to pay market rents this will have a further impact.</p> <p>For example the financial loss to the Council of would be using a 3 Bedroom example for North Broadland and South Norfolk LHA rate</p> <p>90% of the 2011 rate = 90% of £124 = £111</p> <p>Average 3 bedroom Market rent rate = £160</p> <p>Cost to the Council where a lease has to be taken on at the market rent will be £49 a week or an additional £2,548 per year</p> <p><b>Issue 3: The increasing risk of higher costs through reduced income due to higher void levels due to higher rates of turnover post HRA legislative framework. Voids are increasing in the PSL stock.</b></p> <p>Example: average of 10 weeks voids per property x 40 properties 10 x £124 x 52 = £64,000 per year</p> <p>Total estimated cost per PSL unit £5780 per year rising to £6780 for year of hand back to the landlord</p>
<p><b>Private sector leased LA or RP</b></p>	<p><b>For</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good quality self contained homes</li> <li>➤ Certainty of length of use under lease</li> </ul>	<p><b>Against</b></p> <p>Net cost to the Council of leasing will be higher than many other forms of TA under the post April 2017 TA subsidy rules (albeit the subsidy for the £60 management a week has been paid through the Council's FHSG grant but this funding is likely to have been used elsewhere on homelessness?)</p> <p>Hand back, repairs, bad debt rent arrears and loss of rent through increased void levels result in significant additional costs</p>

		<p><i>Fewer households will require longer term TA with a risk that properties remain void for longer periods with no rental income</i></p> <p><i>For households in PSL owed a 'Main homeless Duty' a court order is required to evict meaning cases can be left in TA for up to 6 months whilst possession action is progressed</i></p>
<b>Local Authority owned properties accounted for in the general fund</b>	Both Broadland and South Norfolk Councils own General Fund TA	<p>100% subsidy can be recovered on HB payable. These properties should be able to be administered at nil net cost to the Councils. Rents can be set to recover the full costs including an amount built into the rent for management and voids and are not restricted by the DWP 'Non HRA rent rebate subsidy system'.</p> <p>A service charge can be levied on top of the rent charged. Eligible service charges for HB can be recovered through HB and 'non eligible' for HB service charges can be charged to the occupant</p>
	<b>For</b> <i>Nil cost temporary accommodation</i>	<b>Against</b> <i>May require capital funding to purchase units</i>

<p><b>Alternative TA Procurement Cost analysis and pros and cons</b></p> <p><b>1) Procure a Hostel (General Fund)</b></p> <p><b><i>For and Against points to be considered for the TA Strategy</i></b></p>	<p>100% of the rent and eligible service charge charged will be eligible for full subsidy with no subsidy limit applied regardless of the family being accommodated in one room</p> <p>Once UC comes in LHA rate will be set by the size of the family occupying the accommodation and not the household size, which will ensure that the Council will continue to be able to recover all of its costs.</p> <p><b>For</b></p> <p><i>Maximum flexibility to use accommodation unit or more than one unit as required.</i></p> <p><i>Fast placement and fast 'turnover' and 'turnaround' TA</i></p> <p><i>Very suitable TA for the Homelessness Reduction Act legal framework where short term accommodation is needed whilst 6 months accommodation to end the new prevention or relief duties is sourced</i></p> <p><i>As a hostel no court order is needed to remove the occupant regardless of whether or what homelessness duty is owed.</i></p>	<p>No net loss to the Council as long as all costs are accounted for in the budget used to set the weekly rent and service charge to be levied to the occupant</p> <p><b>Against</b></p> <p><i>There are no financial disadvantages of using a Council owned Hostel</i></p> <p><i>Shared facilities for cooking in any non self contained TA provides more limited facilities for occupants</i></p>
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<p><b>Alternative TA Procurement</b> <b>2) Registered Provider (Housing Association) own mainstream Housing Stock</b></p>	<p><b>For</b></p> <p><i>Potentially all costs are covered so no net cost to the Council</i></p> <p><i>No restriction on the type of mainstream accommodation that could be used so lower demand older person ex sheltered blocks could be used</i></p> <p><i>The rent plus a service charge can be levied to cover additional management costs</i></p> <p><i>Provides good quality self contained accommodation</i></p> <p><i>Can be used for TA in the long term or short term and supply turned off and on according to demand</i></p> <p><i>No additional cost to the Councils or RP unless the RP charges the Councils for the service or any additional costs but even if this is the case the net cost is likely to be low</i></p>	<p><b>Against</b></p> <p><i>It removes some units that otherwise could be used for mainstream social housing</i></p>
<p><b>Alternative to TA</b> <b>3) Direct let with a Private Sector Landlord</b></p>	<p><b>For</b></p> <p><i>This would not be TA but an alternative to TA</i></p> <p><i>Would be able to discharge duty therefore reducing need for TA</i></p> <p><i>No lease arrangement so no management, repair, rent collection or hand back costs</i></p> <p><i>The only cost would be the cost of the financial incentive to persuade the landlord to let at LHA rate or close to LHA rate</i></p>	<p><b>Against</b></p> <p><i>No negative impacts</i></p>

**APPENDIX 5: BUSINESS SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS****Scope of requirement**

Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, operating within a joint operating model are seeking to develop and implement innovative new temporary accommodation and allocations pathways, that will enable customers to best address their housing needs, whilst implementing a sustainable operating model that optimises the allocation of assets and resources.

To underpin these strategic aims, an integrated business system is required that will fully support interactive digital customer access and self-service, seamless process delivery with a high degree of automation, oversight and compliance, and partnership working:

- Customer access portal
- Housing options management functionality
- Temporary accommodation management functionality
- Allocations and lettings management functionality
- Management oversight, compliance, business and statutory reporting
- Accommodation solution partner access portal

**Key objectives**

<b>Customer focused</b>	<p>Provide a digital marketplace for accommodation solutions that enable customers to take ownership of resolving their housing needs, to be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The early identification of people facing homelessness and its prevention</li> <li>• An interactive customer portal that draws together advice and guidance, accommodation options and funding solutions into one place</li> <li>• Self-service applications and management with assistance for those who need support</li> <li>• Personalised high-quality advice and guidance on available housing options within the public and private sectors</li> <li>• Sign-posting and routing to employment, health and other support services</li> <li>• Delivering a consistent level of service and a high quality customer experience</li> </ul>
<b>Business focused</b>	<p>Develop a joint, compliant, sustainable operating model for meeting housing needs across the Councils, that adds most value for the resources available, to be achieved through:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new flexible allocations policy, that best matches accommodation with priority needs and circumstances</li> <li>• Rationalising the temporary accommodation portfolio to deliver best value and best meet needs</li> <li>• Reducing demand through the provision of high quality advice and guidance on-line, on-boarding and self-service, and reducing failure demand through</li> <li>• Significantly reducing the level of staff intervention in straightforward processes</li> <li>• Productivity gains through process automation and the elimination of paperwork</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership working</b>	<p>Offer a digital hub through which partners are able to dovetail processes and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide digital support of the Duty to Refer requirement by partner agencies</li> <li>• Enable accommodation and manage the lettings and pre-tenancy process in a seamless way</li> <li>• Enable digital referral and commissioning of support services from external agencies</li> <li>• Track move-on and permanent accommodations outcomes with providers</li> <li>• Ability to support potential future service alignment with other Local Authorities within Norfolk</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Options</b>	
<b>Customer access</b>	Portal with self-service password management, providing the customer with a real-time case status, timeline of current actions, their Personalised Housing Plan, supporting records and communications
<b>S213 Referral</b>	Portal access and digital forms (statutory, non-statutory and self-referral) to support partner agencies to meet s213b Duty to Refer requirements
<b>Onboarding</b>	<p>Easily maintained content (including embedded video) will provide the customer with an <i>onboarding</i> style experience which supports a personalised journey through the housing options process, tailored to the need and circumstance information provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is my priority?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are <i>my</i> specific options?</li> <li>• How do I apply and what do I have to provide?</li> <li>• What is the timeline?</li> <li>• Am I entitled to supporting funds?</li> <li>• What happens next?</li> </ul>
<b>On-line assessment and triage</b>	<p>An intuitive digital questionnaire will enable the customer to describe their needs and circumstances, upload supporting evidence and proofs, and where routed by the process, complete a more detailed medical questionnaire</p> <p>Dependent on the whether the customer reaches the <i>risk of homeless</i> threshold, they will be either routed to a personalised set of advice outcomes and referral options will be provided, otherwise a detail assessment appointment will be triggered</p>
<b>Detailed assessment by officer</b>	<p>Complaint, rules-based workflow will guide the officer through the assessment and ensure they consistently apply statutory requirements correctly to each customer, based upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circumstances</li> <li>• Accommodation</li> <li>• Needs</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul> <p>A Personalised Housing Plan will be automatically created to capture the outcomes of the assessment, agreed actions for the customer, the service and any support service provider, becoming a real-time, jointly-managed case file and enduring history.</p>
<b>Challenge of decisions</b>	<p>Provide a clear audit trail of actions and decisions made to demonstrate fairness and application of policy, in response to challenges of decisions, appeals, Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests</p>
<b>Third party support services</b>	<p>Enable housing related support service providers to access assigned support tasks through a portal, to report progress and completion of tasks and outcomes</p>
<b>Temporary Accommodation</b>	
<b>TA portfolio management</b>	<p>Maintain a portfolio of temporary accommodation and property data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ownership, contracts and letting arrangements</li> <li>• Asset details, compliance certification</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size, inventory and letting suitability</li> <li>• Local amenities and facilities</li> <li>• Placement history</li> </ul> <p>Support ongoing portfolio review to ensure sustainable investment decisions are made based on operating cost, charge and utilisation data</p>
<b>TA rent accounting and arrears management</b>	<p>Provide comprehensive rent account management functionality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect payments made through HB, UC or directly by customers</li> <li>• Make rent statements available to customers</li> <li>• Automated suggested actions list production, escalation processes, standard letter and Notice production</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Register</b>	
<b>Allocations policy</b>	<p>Manage the Register in accordance with the allocations policy, with the flexibility to meet local needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible banding and pointing</li> <li>• Local connection</li> <li>• Hard to let properties</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Access</b>	<p>Portal (as per housing options) with self-service password management, providing the customer with a real-time application status, timeline of current actions, their application and supporting records, communications and contacts</p>
<b>Change of circumstance</b>	<p>Enable customers to manage their application and reflect change of circumstances such as household composition or needs</p>
<b>Application processing</b>	<p>Support automated banding and points award to create prioritised lists</p>
<b>Challenge of decisions</b>	<p>Provide a clear audit trail of actions and decisions made to demonstrate fairness and application of policy, in response to challenges of decisions, appeals, Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests</p>
<b>Renewal</b>	<p>Trigger a periodic review process (annual), with an automated communication inviting customers to renew their application and to schedule follow-up actions for officer attention</p>
<b>Allocations and Lettings</b>	

<b>Accommodation marketplace</b>	Provide a highly automated and integrated solution that can facilitate the marketing of tenure-neutral accommodation by partner landlords, providing a high-quality customer experience, that empowers applicants, ensures the best match with the accommodation offer and reduces the rate of refusal
<b>Approach to lettings</b>	Support multiple letting processes and scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice Based Lettings</li> <li>• Nominations and direct lets</li> <li>• Temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Management transfers</li> <li>• Supported housing</li> <li>• Private sector letting</li> </ul>
<b>Partner integration</b>	Portal access to accommodation providers for the marketing of properties, a seamless lettings process and feedback on the establishment of the tenancy
<b>CBL</b>	Support a high quality digital lettings process that effectively markets each property to reduce refusals and void loss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property characteristics (360 video)</li> <li>• Scheduled works and a realistic move-in data</li> <li>• Local facilities and amenities</li> <li>• Key tenancy terms and conditions</li> </ul> Track and manage the process in accordance with the allocations policy – bids per cycle, non-bids, refusals etc.
<b>Shortlisting</b>	Automated production, provision and maintenance of shortlists
<b>Proxy-bidding</b>	Support proxy bidding to assist vulnerable customers
<b>Pre-tenancy checks</b>	Support providers in undertaking pre-tenancy checks and ensuring tenancies are not set-up to fail
<b>Outcomes tracking</b>	Report on accommodation letting, move-on, commissioning and support provision outcomes
<b>Cross-cutting requirements</b>	
<b>Customer relationship management</b>	Integrated customer relationship management system that provides a holistic view of the customer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully digital customer record and supporting documentation</li> <li>• Customer Journal of activities and contacts</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer communications preferences</li> <li>• Customer needs and vulnerability flags</li> </ul>
<b>Communications management</b>	<p>Manage communications with customers across multiple channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate standard communications</li> <li>• Generate bulk communications (emails, SMS, letters)</li> <li>• Generate customer satisfaction surveys</li> </ul>
<b>Workflow and case Management</b>	<p>Business configurable workflow and case management that optimises and automates business processes wherever possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications processing</li> <li>• Decision making and appeals</li> </ul>
<b>Management oversight</b>	<p>Customisable dashboard that enables real-time oversight of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case and task status tracking</li> <li>• Decision reviews and audit</li> <li>• Resource and workload allocation</li> <li>• Key performance indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Business reporting</b>	<p>Customisable reports and data exports that allow the tracking of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service access and referral demand</li> <li>• Caseload performance management</li> <li>• Outcomes and value-add</li> <li>• Customer experience and contentment</li> <li>• Partner performance</li> </ul>
<b>Statutory reporting</b>	Automated provision of H-CLIC reporting
<b>Non-functional requirements</b>	
<b>Solution provision</b>	Solution to be provided on a Software as a Service (SaaS) basis
<b>Access</b>	Fully browser-based, mobile responsive and available to staff and delivery partners from anywhere, and WC3A (WCAG 2.1) compliant
<b>Hosting</b>	Secure cloud hosting options (G-Cloud) with demonstrably high levels of availability and resilience

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<b>Licensing</b>	licensing model flex to reflect business needs, help realise efficiency savings and support any future cross-Authority partnerships
<b>Delivery and operating charges</b>	Transparent pricing structures for software and implementation services, annual maintenance fees, periodic upgrades, support and consultancy services
<b>Support</b>	Help Desk facility available during office hours with access to appropriate levels of specialist expertise
<b>Compliance</b>	The solution must be capable of underpinning GDS and GDPR compliance
<b>Integration</b>	Standardised API integrations available for core business applications supporting benefits management and finance
<b>Data conversion</b>	Templated approach for loading data from legacy applications

## APPENDIX 6: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

There are a number of abbreviations used in this report. These are:

HRA – Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

MHCLG – Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

FHSG – Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

PSL – Private Sector Leasing

PRS – Private Rented Sector

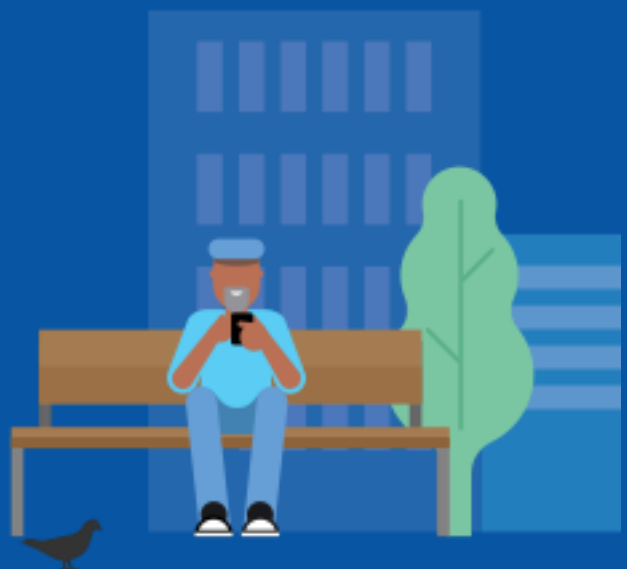
UC – Universal Credit

HCLIC – The Government's MHCLGs homelessness statistical reporting system There is a need to develop an innovative accommodation pathway that not only meets the combined council's TA statutory needs but also delivers substantially more accommodation options.

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**Broadland District Council**  
**Allocations Scheme**

With effect from ***[insert final Council date]***

Document Control		
Document reference	[Insert Corporate Reference Number]	
Document title	Broadland District Council Allocations Scheme	
Document status	Draft 2 [28 July 2020] – Major Change	
Document approval route	Internal Management	27 July 2020
	Major changes only beyond this point	
	CMLT	29 September 2020
	Legal Check	07 September 2020
	Wellbeing Panel	7 October 2020
	Overview & Scrutiny	27 October 2020
	BDC Cabinet	3 November 2020
	BDC Council	19 November 2020
Effective from (Date)	[Approval Date – (later one)] or [Next Review Date]	
Policy Author	Campbell Tickell Ltd	
Policy Owner	Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager	
Consultation: internal	Housing and Wellbeing Service People and Communities Directorate	
Consultation: external	Key Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members</li><li>• Partner Landlords</li><li>• Partner Agencies</li><li>• Housing Register Applicants</li></ul>	
Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment (EqCIAs)	Date completed	In progress
	Partial/ Full EqCIAs	In progress
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Date completed	Recommended - see client brief
	DPIA	
Review	Date due	Annual while you transform
	Reason	
	Review Date due	
	Reason	



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### 1.1 The Allocation Scheme

Broadland District Council operates a Housing Register known as the Allocations Scheme.

This document outlines how affordable housing, which is a limited resource in both districts, is allocated to those who need it. Broadland District Council does not have properties of its own. We work in close partnership with a number of social housing landlords who we refer to as our partner landlords. The partner landlords own and manage properties in both districts. Broadland District Council will be seeking to formally review its partnership arrangements. It is anticipated that a Common Housing Register approach will be considered the way forward in order to embrace the Allocations Pathway Model. **See Part 2**

We work with:

- Broadland Housing Group
- Clarion Housing Group (Broadland District Council's Stock Transfer partner)
- Cotman Housing Association with Places for People
- Flagship Housing Group
- Orbit Housing Association
- Saffron Housing Trust
- Sage Housing
- Victory Housing

We also work with a range of supported and specialist housing providers:

- House of Genesis
- Benjamin Foundation
- Emmaus
- Homegroup
- Solo Housing
- YMCA
- Leeway
- Evolve East Anglia
- St Martins Housing
- Stonham

### 1.2 The Legal Framework

The Allocation Scheme is a requirement of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. Applicants are able to apply for housing and all applications will be fully assessed. The Allocations Scheme has been framed in accordance with the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy and the South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeping Statement and the Council's Housing and Tenancy Strategies. It has also been styled in accordance with the LGA funded work to develop an Accommodation Pathway Model with South Norfolk Council **see 2.2**. In developing the Scheme; the Council has followed and fully considered the following housing legislation, regulations, and statutory guidance:

- The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 as amended by Localism Act 2011 (England)
- The Housing Act 1996, Part 7 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local housing Authorities in England (2012, DCLG) "the Code"

- Providing social housing for local people: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England (DCLG, December 2013) “Supplementary Code”
- Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997, SI 1997/483
- Allocation of Housing (England) Regulations 2002, SI 2002/3264
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294 and all subsequent amendments
- Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/1869
- Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/2989
- The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015
- ‘The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861)’
- Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and contained within the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR).
- Care Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998

### 1.3 Right to Move

In accordance with the Right to Move statutory guidance on housing allocations for local housing authorities in England (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2015) the Scheme sets a limit of no more than 2% of lettings per annum will be allocated to social housing tenants from outside of Broadland who need to move for employment purposes.

### 1.4 Allocation of a Tenancy

The allocation of housing by a housing authority is defined in s.159 of the 1996 Housing Act as:

- a) Selecting a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by them (i.e. by that housing authority)
- b) Nominating a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by another person (i.e. another housing authority)
- c) Nominating a person to be an assured tenant of housing accommodation held by a Private Registered Provider (Housing Association)

Lettings outside of the Allocation Schemes are those essentially where the allocation is for a tenant by their own partner landlord. These are summarised in **Appendix 1: Lettings outside of the Allocation Scheme**.

### 1.5 Data Protection

Broadland District Council will ensure personal information of all applicants (new, existing and deleted) is:

- Stored lawfully
- Processed in a fair and transparent manner
- Collected for specific, explicit and legitimate for the purpose
- The data will be kept up to date and not held only until it is no longer required.
- Shared only with other organisations for legitimate processing, the prevention of fraud or with the person’s explicit consent.

An applicant's permission to share their personal information is a qualification condition of being accepted onto the housing register. The Council has a Privacy Notice which can be located at: [URL to be supplied](#)

## 1.6 Equalities, Access and Monitoring

Broadland District Council is committed to ensuring that the Scheme is non-discriminatory and that all applicants are able to access the service, especially taking account of any vulnerability or other specific needs, and also the needs of different groups protected by the Equality Act 2010; the Human Rights Act 1998; and for Children, Section 11 of the Children Act. To identify the needs of our applicants the application contains specific questions relating to vulnerability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability and other relevant criteria. The information obtained will be used to monitor the impact of the policy on minority and specific needs groups and to evidence the need for amendments, as may be required.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular section 149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty, Councils are required to give due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, when exercising a public function such as their legal Housing Allocation Policy. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The new policy has been subject to a full, detailed Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment (EqCIA) before it has been adopted. The impact will continue to be monitored throughout the administration of the Scheme. Should evidence of discrimination occur; it will trigger a "Change to the Allocation Scheme".

## 1.7 Force Majeure

The Council will not be liable for any delay in performing its obligations under this policy if the delay is caused by a Force Majeure (chance occurrence or unavoidable accident for example), provided that reasonable action and notification to customers is taken by the Council. More fully, this means, circumstances beyond reasonable control of that party, including without limitation, strikes, lock outs, acts of God, the act or omission of any governmental or other competent authority, war or national emergency.

## 1.8 Changes to the Allocations Scheme

The Council reserves the right to expand, change or alter any element of the scheme, as and when required, to meet changes in housing need, capacity, resources and legislation. The routes to enable the amendments would depend on whether the change is major or minor. The EqCIA will define whether the changes and their impact constitute a major or minor change.

Major		Minor
I.	Internal management	Internal management only
II.	Stakeholders including partner landlords and members	
III.	Corporate Management Leadership Team (CMTL)	
IV.	Legal Check	
V.	BDC Wellbeing Panel	

- VI. Overview and Scrutiny
- VII. BDC Cabinet
- VIII. BDC Council

The Council will ensure the changed scheme is then made available to the public through its website at [URL to be supplied](#)

## **1.9 Statement on Choice**

This Allocations Scheme is fully committed to enabling customers to play an active role in choosing where, and in what property type and tenure they live, while continuing to house those people in the greatest housing need and complying with all relevant legislation. However, to minimise the risk of further incidents of anti-social behaviour an applicant may be restricted in their choice of area.

It is important to realise that the demand for accommodation is higher in some areas than others. In making a decision about the choices available, applicants need to consider their housing need priority against the availability of properties in any given area.

In order to meet our statutory duties, an applicant in the emergency band may be made a direct let of suitable accommodation anywhere within the district.

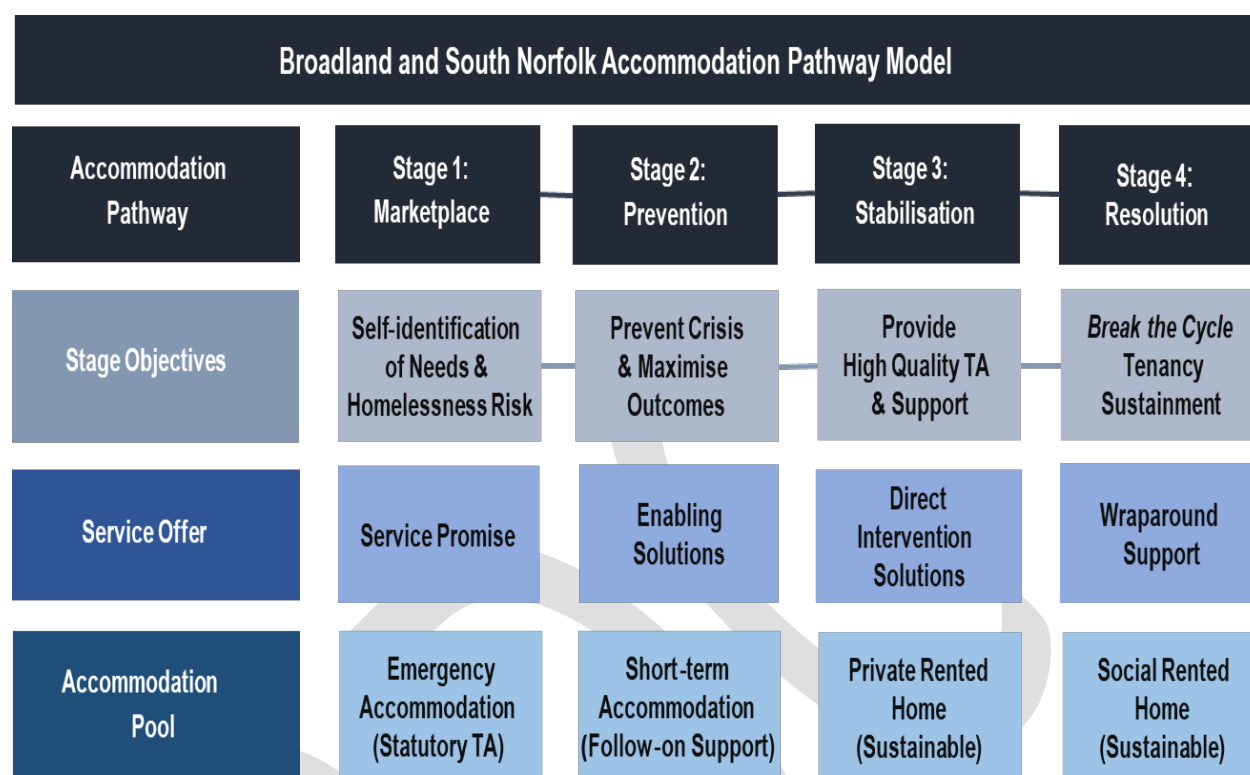
### 2.1 Aims of the Allocation Scheme

In order to deliver this Allocations Scheme, Broadland District Council aims to:

- To reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless applicants and to assist with prevention by making customers aware of their potential housing choices and the alternative options available to them e.g. private sector, low cost home ownership.
- To increase the availability of move-on accommodation to prevent 'blockages' in supported housing schemes. Careful consideration will be given to cases referred by other authorities to ensure they fall in line with the intentions under the Right to Move legislation. Also, that it takes into account households who have been placed in Broadland in short term housing projects, but where the longer-term responsibility lies with the referring authority.
- To ensure a lettings service that embraces equality and diversity by being open and fully accessible to all individuals and to provide support to customers where needed.
- To improve the means by which local people in the region gain access to social rented housing by providing a modern and easy to understand allocation system which allows choice and is fair, transparent and accountable.
- To encourage residents to access employment and to recognise residents who make a contribution to a local community.
- To make the best use of the housing stock within the scheme.
- To increase opportunities for tenant mobility between the region and other areas of the country. In accordance with the Right to Move statutory guidance on housing allocations for local housing authorities in England (issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2015) the Scheme sets a limit of no more than 2% of lettings will be allocated to social housing tenants from outside of Broadland who need to move for employment purposes.
- To attract new customers from the existing housing register to areas of low demand and reduce void times on 'hard to let' properties
- To meet the legal obligations of the Council by giving appropriate priority to customers who fall within the Housing Act "reasonable preference" categories.
- To contribute to the creation of balanced and sustainable communities; ensuring local need is given sufficient weighting.



## 2.2 Accommodation Pathway Model



The model relies on investment of resources at the front end of our service by looking at how we work with households when they first approach the Council.

### Marketplace

This would involve:

- A self-service portal for exploring options available to the household
- Providing it is relatively inexpensive once it is set up on our website as it enables individuals to solve their own need by exploring the support available to them.
- Where necessary, direct intervention will be undertaken to prevent homelessness
- The market place will give each household a bespoke Accommodation Options Plan
- Assistance will be available who find the website difficult to use.

### Prevention

This would involve:

- Help to high risk households to avoid a point of crisis
- Prevention-based case work
- Support to enable people to remain in their home where this is feasible
- Investment of resources to prepare people to take control of their Accommodation Options Plan and ultimately the solutions necessary to prevent the homelessness risk reoccurring
- Target services to homeless families.

## Stabilisation

This would provide:

- Sustainable discharge of Statutory Duties
- Excellent quality Temporary Accommodation that meets needs
- Directive casework to help find a longer-term home
- Wraparound support for those who need more than just a roof

## Resolution

Undertaken by:

- Resolving homelessness for all applicants
- Exploring social and private sector options
- Building resilience and tenancy management skills
- Coordinating partnership support to break the cycle of homelessness, eviction and short-term solutions

## 2.3 Enabling the Model

The model relies on key components being in place to work.

Enabling the Accommodation Pathway Model			
<i>Best in Class</i> TA Solutions	<i>Best in Class</i> Housing Solutions	<i>Best in Class</i> Partnership Solutions	<i>Best in Class</i> Performance Framework
Right provision in the right place at the right price	Fair and efficient allocations and sustained tenancies	Strategic, holistic, delivering value-add outcomes	Compliance, performance, sustainable outcomes. <b>See Table 3</b>
Predictive Model to predict demand	Allocations Policy which is common to all partners and is flexible and fair	Landlord and Council risk sharing to jointly sustain tenancies	
Procurement Strategy based on sustainable costs	Supply and Demand modelling	Jointly commissioned support services	
Focused, performance driven service	Structured Customer Journey. See <i>Table 1</i>	Unlock PRS supply through a Social Lettings Agency	
Performance framework which optimises demand and throughput	Partnership Agreements. See <i>Table 2</i>	Identification and management of accommodation solutions	

**Table 1**

Structured Customer Journey			
Marketplace Advice & Guidance	Application & Assessment	Waiting list Management	Allocation Offer
TA ,Social, Private, Specialist, Low-cost Home Ownership	On-line Assessment & Triage	Self-managed Application	Nominations
Self-service Advice & Guidance	Personalised Applications	Change of Circumstance	Choice-based Lettings
Self-referral Pathway	Validation & Verification Framework	Automated Notifications and Reminders	Sensitive Lets
Assisted Choice	Support Services Referral	Scheduled Reviews	Targeted Advertising

**Table 2**

Formalised Partnership Arrangements			
Waiting list Management	Allocation Offer	Lettings	Sustainment
Waiting List Protocol	Allocations Protocol	Resulting Offer	New Tenancy Management
Joint Management	Application Verification	Resulting Application	Joint Solution Provision
List Management	System Delegated Authority	Multiple & Assisted Viewings	Tenancy Sustainment
Data Sharing Protocol	Bypass Verification	Hard to Lets	Migration Review

**Table 3**

Housing Service Performance Framework					
Compliance	Council Statutory Reporting	Landlord Statutory Reporting	Policy Application	Process & Evidence Audit	Policy Application
Service Performance	Service Access	Housing Register Management	TA Management	Allocations & Lettings Management	Partnership Management
Sustainable Outcomes	Customer Outcomes	Business Outcomes	Partnership Outcomes	TA Supply & Demand Modelling	Housing Supply & Demand Modelling

### 3.1 Eligibility

The Broadland District Council Housing Register is a list of applicants who qualify for inclusion on the list. It will include homeless applicants owed a duty, applicants with a priority need owed a duty and existing social housing tenants residing in the region and seeking a transfer.

#### 3.1.1 Special arrangements for 16 – 18- year old

- Anyone over the age of 16 is eligible to join the Housing Register if their current address is their only home, or sole residence, and they are not already registered through someone else's housing application.
- Applicants under 18 cannot legally hold a tenancy. If they are under the jurisdiction of social services and owed a duty under the Children Act, social services will act as a guarantor for those within 6 months of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday under an existing protocol. This is subject to their ability to live independently and manage their tenancy. Social services will need to provide a support package to prevent the risk of losing the tenancy. The tenancy will be held in trust until they reach 18.
- Those not owed a duty under the Children Act, may still be granted a tenancy provided they can provide a suitable person to act as a guarantor such as a parent, legal guardian or relative. They will accept responsibility for the tenancy whilst the tenancy is held in trust until the applicant reaches 18.

#### 3.1.2 Persons from Abroad

Some persons from abroad may not be eligible to join the housing register. These include:

- Under sections 160ZA (1), (2) and (4) of the Housing Act 1996 Broadland cannot allocate a tenancy, or nominate a person for housing, if they are a person who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of being a person subject to immigration control or a person from abroad who is prescribed as ineligible.
- Do not live habitually in the Common Travel Area (UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland);
- Do not have the right to live in the UK;
- Other categories of people who the Government may in the future, decide are not eligible for housing assistance.

The relevant regulations that apply to eligibility are:

- ❖ Regulations 3 and 4 Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294
- ❖ All subsequent amendments including 'The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861)

The rules are complicated and anyone who is impacted or believes they may be impacted can approach the Council for advice or seek independent legal advice.

The rules will change from 2021 due to the UK's exit from the EU and new regulations regarding eligibility for housing based on the EU settlement scheme. This policy will be amended to take into account any new rules.

### 3.2 Qualification Rules

Section 160ZA (7)) allows Broadland District Council to define who will be regarded as qualifying and non-qualifying persons. Applicants, who are eligible for an allocation, must meet one or more of the following qualification rules in order to join the Housing Register:

- a) Have a recognised housing need (please refer to 4.4.11 Housing Priority Band)
- b) Have a Broadland local connection through one or more of the following:
  - Have lived in Broadland for 6 of the previous 12 months
  - Have lived in Broadland for 3 of the previous 10 years
  - Have a current contract of permanent employment where the job requires residency in Broadland
  - Have a family member (parent, adult child or adult sibling) who lives in and has lived in Broadland for a continuous period of at least five years.
  - Have an existing social tenancy and been in employment or training in Broadland for a minimum of six months and there is a reasonable expectation that the employment or training will continue for a further 12 months.
  - If they are residing in a supported housing project and approaching the Councils via a Move On arrangement, they will have to have resided at the project at least 6 months before submitting an application. If the specialist provider has a move on arrangement with the Council this will provide the local connection.
- c) Be homeless or threatened with homelessness (within 12 weeks and who are assessed as probably having a priority need) when the local connection criteria as laid down in the homelessness code of guidance would apply
- d) Be owed a Relief duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act, when the local connection criteria as laid down in the homelessness code of guidance would apply.
- e) Have been 'placed' or relocated outside the district due to illness, military service or other exceptional circumstances such as violence and lived in Broadland for at least 6 months prior to the placement.
- f) A young homeless care leaver under 25 years who has been looked after by Norfolk County Council for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16, under section 22A of the Children Act 1989.

- g) A care leaver age under 25 years, placed in accommodation in Broadland by another authority for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16, under section 22A of the Children Act 1989.
  - h) Are living in accommodation-based support services outside the district to which they were referred by or with the agreement of the Council and they lived in Broadland for 6 months immediately prior to the placement.
  - i) Be a current or former member of the British Armed Forces, having left service within the preceding 5 years, as defined by s.374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006.
  - j) Be a civil ex-partner of armed forces personnel and required to vacate a Ministry of Defence property.
- The spouse or civil partner of a deceased member of the regular forces where their death was attributable to that service
  - Current or former members of the reserve forces who suffer from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to that service.
  - Victims of domestic abuse who are residing in a refuge or other safe temporary accommodation in Broadland as they have fled abuse from another area.
  - Applicants who have a connection to Broadland as a result of other special circumstances as set out in S199 of the Housing Act 1996 to be determined based on the individual facts of the case and in reference to statutory guidance on allocation schemes and homelessness.

Evidence of a connection to Broadland may be required to be provided. Where a connection to Broadland is through work (and in relation to the exemption for applicants through the Right to Move) employment must be physically located in the boroughs, not be short term or marginal or ancillary to work in another area or voluntary. Evidence of current employment or the offer of employment will be required.

Applicants who are disqualified as they meet one of the disqualification criteria can re-apply when their circumstances change so they would qualify.

- k) Be a gypsy (as defined in the Caravan Sites Act 1968) who has habitually resorted to the Broadland area.

All applications accepted onto the Housing Register will be subject to a review. **See Part 6**

### 3.3 The Armed Forces Covenant



Broadland District Council is a signatory of the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant. It is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and the local armed forces community.

Broadland District Council has created a Covenant Pledge to demonstrate its support, as an employer of choice, to the armed forces community. We believe that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

In undertaking this covenant, we:

- ❖ Disregarding injury and disability payments; whether these are periodic or a lump sum
- ❖ Overlooking lack of connection for current and former members instead, we allow up to 5 years for divorced and separated spouses.
- ❖ All applications qualify from current or former members (having left service within the preceding 5 years, as defined by s.374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006)
- ❖ If they are divorced, separated or a civil partner of service personnel required and are required to move out of Ministry of Defence accommodation, they will qualify
- ❖ If they have to move from an unsuitable property as a result of injuries sustained while in the Armed Forces, they will be awarded the highest priority band.
- ❖ If they have a Housing Need Priority and they meet the local connection qualification they will also be placed in the highest priority band.

### **3.4 Non-Qualification Rules**

An applicant will not qualify for an allocation where:

- a) They have been housed by a scheme landlord, through a partner landlord within the preceding year, unless there has been a change in circumstances resulting in a priority need.
- b) They have been housed through the Council's Rent Advance & Deposit Scheme within the preceding year, unless there has been a change in circumstances resulting in a priority need.
- c) They are under 18 and do not have a guarantor and cannot show they will be supported in a tenancy where the Council assesses that support is needed to sustain a tenancy.
- d) They, or a member of their household, have been evicted from a tenancy and has neither had a settled period of a minimum of six months nor met the criteria for reassessment, since the eviction.

- e) They, or a member of their household, have been evicted from a property for mortgage arrears and has neither had a settled period of a minimum of six months nor met the criteria for reassessment, since the eviction.
- f) They, or a member of their household, is/was responsible for paying rent and they have rent arrears and/or court costs greater than 16 weeks rent, if the rent is charged weekly or greater than 4 months if the rent is charged monthly **and** they have not met the criteria for reassessment. This will apply equally whether they pay the rent in full, are on partial housing benefit and they pay the shortfall or are in receipt of full housing benefit where the arrears are solely the responsibility of the tenant. In respect of housing benefit an exception may be made if they have provided the information required and the claim is being reassessed.
- g) They have made a fraudulent claim for housing and/or housing benefit or provided false information.
- h) They, or a member of their household, has caused damage to a property and been charged for damages and/or recharges and/or court costs of over £1000.
- i) They, or a member of their household, has been evicted for anti-social behaviour or unacceptable behaviour and there has been no demonstrable evidence of behaviour change in settled accommodation.
- j) They, or a member of their household, own a residential property and have the financial means to find their own housing solution. Exceptions may be made where there is demonstrable hardship and the applicants would qualify for sheltered accommodation or housing with care. An exception may also be made if a court order is in place rendering their property is not suitable for habitual residence.
- k) Failure to bid. Exceptions may be made around s106 properties or properties which are hard to let and the applicants can demonstrate they can afford the unit.
- l) Applicants who are considered to have sufficient financial resources to secure accommodation within the private sector
  - a. 'Sufficient financial resources' includes any assets or investments even if they are not immediately available to the applicant, such as any residential or non-residential property that they own, or part own anywhere in the UK or abroad.
    - Any lump sum received by a member of the armed forces as compensation for an injury or disability on active service will be disregarded.
    - They will not be awarded a priority housing need.
    - They will be advised on low cost home ownership schemes, such as rent to buy, shared ownership/equity, discounted market sale and starter homes, sheltered accommodation and housing with care, or lower demand properties.

### 3.5 Exceptional or Mitigating Circumstances



Each application will be assessed individually. Exceptional and/or mitigating circumstances will be considered and the council will be able to exercise its discretion. If it can be shown that they now qualify they will be placed in a suitable band. However, if there is still concern in relation to their behaviour or ability to pay the rent, their application may be suspended or made inactive for bidding until a suitable pattern of behaviour has been demonstrated over a period of 6 months or more. The factors will be assessed against the Accommodation Pathway Model. **See Part 2**

The following are factors to be taken into account in determining non-qualification or reduction of preference and subsequent management of their application to either suspend or prevent from bidding.

- Physical disability
- Mental illness and/or severe depression
- Physical illness or frailty
- Special educational needs
- Learning disabilities
- Financial resources or substantial debt problems
- Low income/benefit recipient
- Support or floating support needs
- Rooflessness/homelessness
- Inability to find alternative accommodation
- Size of family (including young children)
- Known forms of violence have occurred including domestic abuse and neighbour disputes.

This list is not exhaustive and could apply to an applicant or a member of the household. Depending on the number of factors present, the severity and their relevance to the overall situation, the effect could be a non-qualification or reduction of preference or it could lead to a non-qualification being changed to a reduction of preference. Non-qualification means the applicants cannot join the housing register. Reduction of preference means the applicant can join the register but their ability to bid may be restricted or their application suspended for an agreed period of time and subject to a set of conditions.

### 3.6 Reassessment of applications who have not qualified

Applicant who have failed to qualify will need to provide the evidence if their circumstances have changed to initiate a reassessment. If the reassessment is successful and they now qualify, they will be treated as reduced preference and either suspended or made inactive for bidding for an agreed period of time.

The table below summarises the causes and evidence required to mitigate it.

Cause	Evidence
They are in arrears of rent in advance and deposit loan or other debt owed to the Council.	Repayment plan in place and adhered to for a minimum of six months or the debt has been cleared by regular payments whichever is sooner
Eviction from a tenancy for rent arrears	Minimum six month settled accommodation with up to date rent

Cause	Evidence
	account. Repayment plan in place and adhered to for a minimum of six months
Eviction from a property for mortgage arrears	Minimum six month settled accommodation with up to date rent account. Repayment plan in place and adhered to for a minimum of six months
Responsible for paying rent and they have rent arrears and/or court costs greater than 16 weeks rent, or if the rent is charged weekly or greater than 4 months if the rent is charged monthly. This will apply equally whether they pay the rent in full, are on partial housing benefit and they pay the shortfall or are in receipt of full housing benefit where the arrears are solely the responsibility of the tenant.	Up to date rent account (where relevant) and repayment plan in place and adhered to for a minimum of six months or the debt has been cleared by regular payments, whichever is sooner. Confirmation of information provided for a housing benefit claim to be assessed.
Damage to a property and been charged for damages and/or recharges and/or court costs of over £1000.	Repayment plan in place and adhered to for a minimum of six months or the debt has been cleared by regular payments whichever is sooner
Eviction from a tenancy for anti-social behaviour	Minimum six month settled accommodation with no complaints relating to behaviour.

### 3.7 Safe Surrender Agreements

Where a tenancy is failing but has not yet met the threshold for non-qualification and resulting reduced preference, a Safe Surrender Agreement may be considered which enables the surrender of the tenancy before the situation escalates to a crisis and/or eviction. It should be agreed before the tenancy is surrendered.

The agreement is between Landlord, Tenant and relevant Council

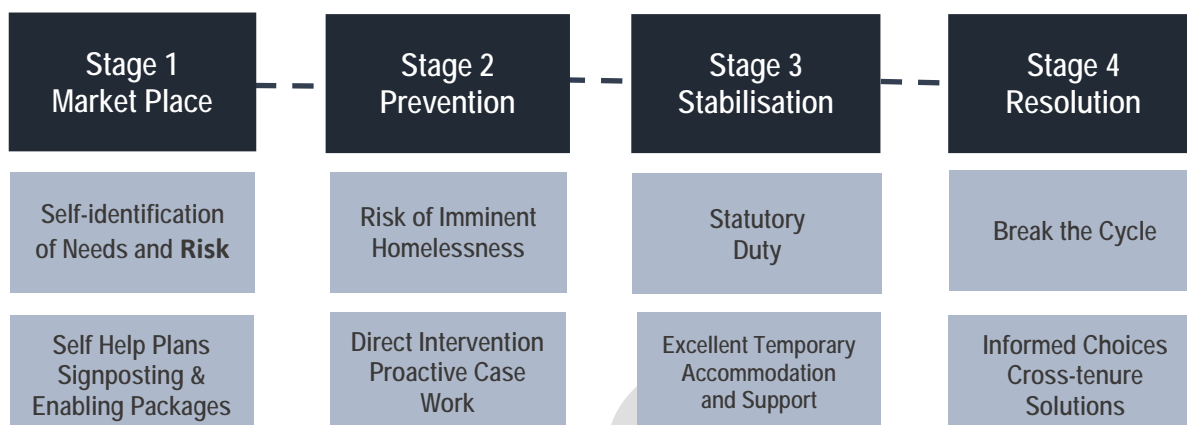
If the agreed the conditions are:

- The tenant will give usual 28-day notice.
- The partner landlord may agree a shorter notice period at their discretion.
- The tenant must be unable to manage the tenancy due to illness and/or other support needs which cannot be met at that time.
- Where the property is in danger of deterioration but substantial deterioration (under £500) has not yet occurred and does not occur before vacant possession is given.
- The tenant is struggling to pay the rent, but the rent account is not yet more than 8 weeks in arrears (net) and does not become so before vacant possession is given.

- f) The tenant is in breach of other terms of the tenancy, but this has not yet reached the level where a reduction of preference would usually be applied and does not become so before vacant possession is given.
- g) Applications submitted under a Safe Surrender Agreement, will not have reduced preference applied provided no further issues become known subsequent to the agreement.
- h) Their priority will be assessed according to current need and circumstances. If a subsequent homelessness application is made, the existence of a safe surrender agreement will allow the Councils to take this into account when making their decision.

The Safe Surrender Agreement is considered both a prevention and stabilisation under the Accommodation Pathway Model. **See Part 2.** It shows the tenant is being responsible and taking the necessary action and has taken the time to negotiate safeguards. This reconciles with the promotion of tenancy sustainment. **See 5.5**

### Allocation Pathway Model



The model relies on an allocation plan for anyone who approaches the Council. This might be designed online the applicant self-supporting or with assistance from a third party or a Council Officer. Where they identify arrears or ASB or homelessness, prevention measures will be explored and then a period of stabilisation introduced. If social housing is a realistic option, they will submit an application and the Allocation Scheme is initiated.

Stabilisation will address reduced preference and non-qualification in that the application may be submitted under the reassessment process outlined in part 3 and a reduced preference awarded which either means their application will be suspended during the period of stabilisation or they will be LIVE but prevented from bidding.

### 4.1 The Application Process

#### *The Key Stages*



**Submission:** The application to join the housing register or rent a pitch.

**Verification:** Confirming and investigating the evidence needed to assess the application

**Assessment:** Assessing eligibility, qualification, non – qualification, reduced preference, priority need

**Notification:** Formal notification of the outcome of the assessment of the application

## 4.2 Submission



The application to join the housing register is online via the market place which is located by following the link. **URL to be supplied**

The application can be submitted by one of the following:

- a) When you enter the market place website by clicking the link to the housing register, it will ask you for your name, date of birth and national insurance number and if we already hold an application for you it will advise you on what to do next. If not, it will take you to the electronic online form. You will be offered assistance via a web chat facility if you need it.
- b) Or an application may be submitted as part of your advice session which you will be offered if your navigation through the market place provides you with this option.
- c) Alternatively, if a prevention interview is needed, the application may be submitted here.
- d) If you are being referred by one of the agencies we work with, they will navigate the market place with you and as part of this they may assist you to submit an application if this is deemed one of your options.

Wherever you enter the allocations scheme system, you will be given a unique identification number. This is not an application (housing register) number which is only issued once we have assessed your application. The identification number will enable you to use the market place as an account. You will be asked to create this account when you log on for the first time. The account will hold a user name and password and these should be held by you to access the account. When an application form is submitted, we will match your identification number to the application. This prevents duplications.

The Allocations Scheme is supported by our Housing and Benefits Service. They are responsible for:

- Providing the advice via a web chat or in person
- Assisting you in navigation of the market place.
- Conduction prevention interviews.
- Agreeing stabilisation plans
- Processing the intended housing solutions including applications to join the housing register.

Once you have submitted your application and based on the sections of the form you have completed, the system will:

1. Acknowledge your submission with a date and time email.
2. Provide you with a statement of how your application will be processed.
3. Indicate the time needed to process your application.
4. Provide you with a list of evidence we need in order to verify your application. We usually need originals to be seen in one of our offices. You will be advised where to take the evidence.
5. Provide you with the average waiting times for the types of accommodation in the areas you have chosen.

#### **4.2.1 Applicants without a fixed address.**

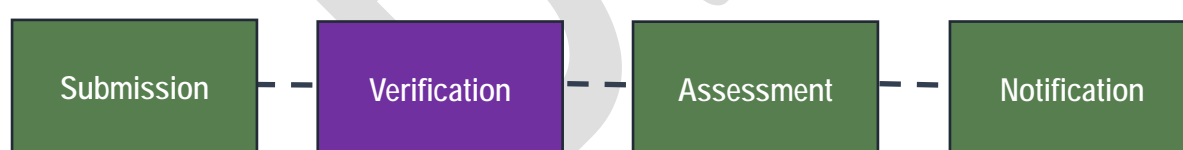
Applicants with no fixed address can request for correspondence about their application to be sent to the care of another address. If no other address is available, the Housing and Benefits Service will hold the correspondence and take reasonable steps to contact the applicant to inform them that correspondence needs to be sent to them and to agree a way of sharing the correspondence.

#### **4.2.2 Joint Applicants**

Joint applications will be accepted and will be treated as one application. The housing need of the full household will be considered in assessing housing need. Joint tenancies are normally granted where applicants have a long-term commitment e.g. married and unmarried couples, civil partners but this decision is down to the individual partner landlord who will decide whether to allow a joint tenancy in accordance with their own rules.

Carers cannot be a joint applicant unless they are already a member of the permanent household and are providing a carer role in addition to their prior and existing relationship with the applicant.

#### **4.3 Verification**



Verification requires the production of information to support the priority needs of the applicant or a member of their household and an investigation into its authenticity. Information will be required as follows:

- a) At the point of submission in order to make the initial assessment.
- b) At the point of a review to affirm the assessment.
- c) At the point of a change of circumstances to make a reassessment.
- d) At the point of offer of accommodation if either the last review was over 12 months or confirmation of new circumstances comes to light.

It is Broadland District Council's responsibility to ensure an application is verified before an allocation is made. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the information required by the date indicated and to cooperate fully with the investigation.

Where proof cannot be supplied; the reasons will be determined, and a decision must be made by a senior officer on whether the application can be processed.

#### **4.3.1 Proof Required**

For every person on the application we must normally see at least two of the following forms of proof of identity - one of which must be a photo ID, and proof of where they currently live and previously lived:

- full birth certificate
- medical card
- marriage certificate
- driving licence
- national insurance card
- Passport.

In order to assess whether the qualification rules are met and to undertake the assessment the applicant will also be asked to provide independent documentary proof of the following:

- relationship to and between all those named on the application
- immigration status
- the property you currently live in – where, the occupation status and how long
- previous property details and reasons for moving
- if you have a local connection with the Local Authority area
- salary levels, proof of income e.g. pay slips, P60
- formal evidence proving separation and relationship breakdown
- main bank account into which benefits, or salary is paid
- details of savings held including stocks and shares
- title deeds of any properties owned and/or mortgage details
- school letters
- utility bills
- proof of benefits including proof of receipt of child benefits
- residence order
- other relevant court orders
- evidence of medical conditions and how it is impacted by your housing
- evidence of mobility or physical disability and how it is impacted by your housing
- MATB1 as evidence of a pregnancy
- Notice to Quit where notice has been served
- evidence to support welfare or social reasons for moving
- evidence of unspent criminal convictions (a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or police check may be subsequently).

This list is not exhaustive, and alternatives may be requested. In the case of mobility or physical disability, the Councils will use Occupational Therapists to make an assessment where required.

#### **4.3.2 Household Splits**

Where children live with one person, but another person has access where they stay with them some of the time, and in the absence of a Residence Order from the courts, a combination of this evidence must be provided which determines the length of time spent with the main carer. i.e. their habitual residence. Children cannot usually appear on more than one application.

### 4.3.3 False information

The application form states that under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002, it is a criminal offence for anyone to knowingly give false information or to withhold relevant information if reasonably required to give it, on any matter regarding the allocation of housing. In addition, applicants will be advised that should an applicant be successful in obtaining a tenancy from one of the partner landlords by knowingly or recklessly making a false statement then the landlord would seek possession of the property and may result in prosecution leading to a fine and/or imprisonment.

## 4.4 Assessment



### 4.4.1 Assessment of housing need

All applicants who are eligible and qualify to join the Housing Register will be assessed for housing need. The law requires that reasonable preference for an allocation must be made in the following cases:

- a) People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act. **See 4.4.2**
- b) People who are owed a duty by a housing authority under relevant housing and homelessness legislation.
- c) People occupying unsanitary (unhealthy) or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability.
- e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).
- f) Broadland District Council prioritises local housing for local people and will give additional preference to local connection specifically in relation to:
  - Properties built under a s106 agreement
  - Local lettings plans
  - Rural lettings schemes
- g) Additional preference is given under the Armed Forces Covenant. **See Part 3.**
- h) Additional preference may be given to certain groups of people in order to meet local and priority need.

Applicants are placed in the Broadland District banded priority award suitable for their circumstances.

### 4.4.2 Homeless Assessment

Applicants presenting as homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act will be subject to a homeless assessment to assess the following:

- a) Whether homeless prevention measures can keep the applicant in their home.
- b) Whether the applicant is going to become homeless in the next 12 weeks.



- c) Whether the applicant is already homeless and is owed a relief duty.
- d) Whether the applicant is intentionally homeless and thereby is owed a reduced preference.
- e) Whether a Safe Surrender Agreement prior to tenancy surrender prevented imminent homelessness.

Broadland District Council will use a toolkit to undertake the homeless assessment. They will then be placed in the relevant priority band. We use a toolkit to assess and interview homeless cases. If they are assessed as being owed a relief duty, we use a Temporary Accommodation Operational Manual to process the application further,

***See associated document: Homeless (Part 7) Case Assessment and Interview Toolkit***

***See associated document: Temporary Accommodation Operation Manual***

#### **4.4.3 Temporary Suspension of Bidding**

Applicant who have failed to qualify and are subsequently reassessed so that they now qualify will be treated as reduced preference. If you have reduced preference it means that you will be awarded the correct priority band for your circumstances, but your allocation will be held for the agreed period of time to enable stabilisation. This allows the applicant to demonstrate their ability to meet tenancy conditions in the future.

This will be achieved by:

##### **Inactive to Bid:**

The application is made inactive. There is a period of stabilisation which allows the applicant to improve their tenancy management skills and increase the probability of tenancy sustainment.

We do not operate a reduced preference band, as this still allows a reduced preference applicant to receive an offer of accommodation. If they have failed to address the behaviour that led to their reduced preference award, they are a high risk of tenancy failure and this is not in keeping with the Accommodation Pathway Model.

Likewise, we do not allow them to bid and then bypass them for selection. This is not in keeping with a fair and transparent policy.

#### **4.4.4 Transfer assessments**

Social tenant applications (transfers) with a local connection will be accepted and assessed in accordance the following being met:

- a) Eligibility
- b) Qualification
- c) Housing need

Broadland District Council transferred their stock to a partner landlords operational in the area under a stock transfer agreement which preserves the rights of tenants to transfer using the Housing Register. This has been further expanded to allow all partner landlord tenants with a local connection to utilise the Housing Register to effect transfers.

#### 4.4.5 Child of Tenant

This is a scheme which rehouses adult children within a household with the aim of alleviating overcrowding while allowing the family as a whole to remain in their community.

Specific Criteria:

- ❖ It would apply where the main household has already got an overcrowded priority.
- ❖ 18 years olds+ could potentially be given their own allocation subject to an application being submitted to be considered as a single person.
- ❖ The application of the 18 year-old+ would reflect the overcrowding priority award of the main household.
- ❖ It is subject to the agreement of the 18-year-old+ and parent/guardian.
- ❖ It must alleviate the overcrowding by at least one bedroom.
- ❖ The main household and child's application would be linked so that when the child is allocated, the main application is flagged for review. If overcrowding is the only priority and this has been fully alleviated, then the main application will be treated as rehoused and the application closed.
- ❖ If the main household has another priority need besides the overcrowding it will be reassessed as a change of circumstance.
- ❖ The 18-year-old+ must be deemed as ready to move and able to afford the property and sustain their tenancy.

#### 4.4.6 Priority on Health Grounds

Priority on health or disability grounds will only be awarded after an assessment if someone in the household has a severe long-term limiting illness, or a permanent and substantial disability AND their health or quality of life is severely affected by the home they live in.

A priority medical award is not given on the basis of the medical condition or disability alone but upon the effect the housing circumstances are having on a long term and serious medical condition or disability. We will also consider if where you live now can be reasonably adapted to meet your needs. It may also be that there are combinations of serious health or disability concerns that mean that the health or quality of life of a household is being severely affected.

The Housing and Benefits Service will undertake the assessments and may ask qualified health advisers for advice and/or recommendations in relation to the condition and the impact their housing is having on that condition or that of the household. Occupational Therapists are usually used to assess housing requirements for mobility and physical disability cases. Any evidence you supply will be considered fully and further evidence may be requested.

Other recommendations that can be made on health grounds such as:

- a) The type of property that is most suitable and essential on health grounds. This can include access, space, location, or access to a garden.
- b) When a property with one of these features is advertised, preference for it may be given to applicants where a recommendation by health advisors has been accepted.
- c) Use of a garden for safe supervised outdoor play area by a child under 18 in your household with one of the following:
  - a permanent and substantial physical disability
  - severe long-term limiting illness
  - the severest forms of learning disabilities

- the severest forms of behaviour problems.
- d) Use of a garden for an adult in the following circumstances:
  - if they have a cognitive impairment that means they do not sense danger
  - at risk of wandering and so need constant supervision
- e) A garden may be recommended if:
  - if they have a severe, permanent and substantial disability or severe long-term limiting illness
  - limiting illness and caring for children is causing concern such that their continued residence is at risk
  - stress of caring for them is exacerbating the health problems
  - they have a sensory impairment and/or a guide dog and they live alone or only with others with disabilities.
- f) Extra space may be recommended if:
  - you, or someone in your household, has either a permanent and substantial disability, or a severe long term limiting illness, or the severest form of learning disabilities or behaviour problems and it is unreasonable for you to share a bedroom as it would seriously affect the sleep of those you would normally share with, to the severe detriment of their or your health
  - you are having health treatment at home that needs large machinery or a stock of health supplies to be stored e.g. you are having renal dialysis at home
  - you need a full-time Carer to provide support night and day
  - you have a permanent and substantial disability or long-term limiting illness or severe learning disability and need additional space for specialist equipment
  - you have a severe long-term limiting illness and sharing a bedroom will exacerbate your health problems e.g. you have an immune deficiency.
- g) Ground floor or category A or B wheelchair accessible on health/ disability grounds
- h) An additional recommendation that can be made is that an applicant must have ground floor on health or disability grounds or must have a ground floor property that is wheelchair accessible category A or B. This may be recommended if you have a permanent and substantial disability or severe long- term limiting illness that means that your mobility or exercise tolerance is so severely restricted you cannot safely manage any stairs.

#### 4.4.7 Care Leavers

Young people in local authority care will work with the Council to navigate the Accommodation Pathway Model. They will enter the Market Place with the assistance of social services to set up an accommodation plan. All the tenancy preparation and support measures they required to sustain a tenancy will be explored together with the possible housing solutions. Once they are stable and ready to move their application will be activated. This will be no sooner than 6 months before they reach 18 years old. This will be done jointly with the Housing and Benefits Service and social services. It is usual for applicants coming through this route to be vulnerable and therefore it is especially important to get the assessment right. For their eligibility and qualification. **See Part 3**

#### 4.4.8 Move On

Applicants in supported housing with a specialist provider will work with the Council to navigate the Accommodation Pathway Model. They will enter the Market Place with the assistance of their specialist provider to set up an accommodation plan. All the tenancy preparation and support measures they required to sustain a tenancy will be explored together with the possible housing solutions. Once they are stable and ready to move their application will be activated. This will be done jointly with the Housing and Benefits Service and the specialist provider. It is usual for applicants coming through this route to be vulnerable and therefore it is especially important to get the assessment right. For their eligibility and qualification. **See Part 3**

#### 4.4.9 Elected Members or Employees and Close Relatives

**Elected Members:**

The application will be assessed by a relevant manager of the Council. The award of priority (housing need band) must be authorised by the Council's Chief Executive Officer.

**Current or Former Employees:**

The application will be assessed by a relevant manager of the Council. The award of priority (housing need band) must be authorised by the Council's Director with the responsibility for Housing.

#### 4.4.10 Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers

Applications for these pitches are through the same route as applicants for Housing Register. A landlord reference is required. If it is their first pitch application and they have no reference, they will need to provide a guarantor, usually an existing pitch holder with a good record. They are assessed and awarded a priority need band. There may be an additional assessment of any site-specific factors. The assessments will be in accordance with Gypsy and Traveller Site Management Good Practice Guide (Published by Communities and Local Government July 2009) and will include consideration of the balance and mix in the community, therefore prioritising the long-term cohesion of the site.

**Specific Considerations:**

- a) Extra support with the process is offered to applicants where it is needed.
- b) The pitches are not advertised on the website and these are covered as direct lets. **See Part 5**
- c) A degree of limited discretion in allocating pitches is required and should not be automatically bound to the household with the highest priority. The Councils will have the discretion to offer pitches other than the one applied for to prevent the household residing on an unauthorised encampment.
- d) Sites are often occupied by extended family groups and this can help to ensure good community relations on the site. In some exceptional circumstances the Councils may, in consultation with the site manager, want to take account of factors which a pitch allocation may have in adversely affecting the suitability of the site as a social unit.
- e) If as a result of an assessment of their application, the landlord has good reason to be concerned about the risk of conflict with existing residents, they should take up this issue with the applicant, and carry out a risk assessment. Refusal to allocate a pitch must be based on the merits of the application, without undue influence from those already on a site.

- f) The landlord will confirm the landlord reference with the applicant.
- g) The landlord reserves the right to withdraw any offer which may have been granted on the basis of incorrect information.

#### 4.4.11 Housing Priority Bands

Each application will be assessed to determine the level of housing need of the household and placed into one of four bands:

Band	Priority Need
Band 1 Urgent	People with an urgent medical need inc. hospital discharge
	People with an urgent need for an adapted property
	If your home has been destroyed by a disaster
	Homeless and fleeing/threat of violence (with or without local connection)
	s193 Duty and in TA/s189 Relief Duty
	Witness Protection
Band 2	Threatened with Homelessness (next 12 weeks)
	High Medical Need
	High Welfare
	Current tenant in an adapted property they no longer need
	Current tenant willing to take a smaller property
	Disrepair/Unsafe Home/lacking essential amenities
	Overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms (affordability test)
	Someone needing an adapted property
Band 3	Care Leavers
	Threatened with Homelessness (next 12 weeks)(no priority need)
	Medium Medical Need
	Medium Welfare Need
	Lack of Amenities
	Overcrowded by 1 or more bedrooms
	Tenant under-occupying by 1 or more bedroom (affordability test)
	Move On
	Have a need to move to the Broadland area where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others.
Band 4	Intentionally Homeless

Band	Priority Need
	s193 Duty (not ready to move)
	TA (assessment in progress)
	Meet eligibility/qualification
	No Housing Priority Need

Band Considerations:

**Cumulative Need:** We do not operate a banded system with cumulative need. If you have more than one priority need (reasonable preference allocation). We will use your highest priority to place you in the correct band.

**Time Waited:** You will be placed in the priority band in effective band date order. Those who waited the longest will be the highest in the list. **See 4.4.12** to see how we determine your effective band date.

**Suspension of Bidding:** We do not operate a lower band for reduced preference. Instead we manage this within the administration of the housing register and bidding process. In this way we promote good tenant behaviour and sustainable tenancies. **See 4.4.3**

**Adequately Housed:** **You will be in band 4. If you are adequately housed. You will still get the benefit of any S.106 PROPERTIES, AND ANY TRANSFERS THAT BECOME AVAILABLE.**

#### 4.4.12 Determination of Effective Band Date

In order to determine your effective band date, and provided there is no delay in providing the information required within the time stipulated, we use the following:

- ❖ Your first assessment, we will use the date you submitted your application
- ❖ If you have a change of circumstances and your priority need changes and you go up a band, we will use the date your new priority was awarded.
- ❖ If you have a change of circumstances and your priority need changes and you go down a band, we will use the same effective band date you had in your original band.
- ❖ An assessment and award of priority cannot take place without the supporting evidence. If you fail to provide this at the point of submission or the date you advised us of the change of circumstances, we will use the assessment date as the effective band date.
- ❖ If you are statutory homeless, the effective band date will be the date we accepted a statutory duty under the homeless legislation.
- ❖ In the unlikely event more than one applicant bids for the same property and they have the same effective band date, we will consider the type of priority awarded and the urgency of the priority to determine who will be allocated the property.

#### 4.4.13 Household Type and Property Size Allowed

The legislation states in order to allocate a property we must ensure all of the following:

- The size of the property must be suitable for the household need
- Landlords must make best use of their stock
- The property must be affordable for the applicant it is allocated to
- It should be possible for the applicant to sustain their tenancy if the property is allocated
- The household's circumstances must be fully considered
- The property is allocated in accordance with the Broadland District Council Allocations Scheme.

The table below shows how we allocate property size. For further clarification and definition of the room and space standards. **See Appendix 2: Allocation by Bedsize**

Household Type	Property Size	Conditions
Single Person	Any 1 bed property or 2 bed above ground Floor	2 beds will only be allocated where a property is deemed hard to let. It is allocated subject to affordability and sustainability.
Couple	Any 1 bed property or 2 bed above ground Floor	2 beds will only be allocated where a property is deemed hard to let. It is allocated subject to affordability and sustainability.
Carer	A bedroom will be allocated if the carer needs to reside in the property and is not already part of the permanent household	Subject to an agreed medical need for a Carer. Evidence of Housing Benefit and/or Disability Living Allowance will need to be at enhanced levels. Young carers treated as if they are 16+
Medical	A bedroom will be allocated if recommended as part of the medical need	Subject to an agreed medical need where the extra room may be needed to accommodate large equipment or there are serious mobility issues.
Child Residency	A bedroom will be allocated for a child resides as part of the household 4 nights per week or more and we have evidence they are part of the applicants household	Subject to evidence such as Child Benefit and/or Custody Order. We will not allow the same children on more than one application.
Unborn Child	Provision will be made for an unborn child provided we have evidence	Subject to evidence of a MATB1 issued by NHS confirming the pregnancy. The unborn child will be treated as same sex. The overcrowding priority will not be awarded until the child is born and a birth certificate has been provided. The applicant will be able to bid without the

		overcrowding award. The date of birth will be used to determine the effective band date.
<b>16+</b>	Own Bedroom	The child is deemed in need of their own personal space.
<b>Sex Separation</b>	Children of the opposite sex will only be allocated their own bedroom when they are 10 years or older	This reflects the current benefits position.
<b>Students</b>	Living away from home will not be treated as part of the main household	Where a household normally includes a family member who currently lives away from home studying at college or university that family member may be considered part of the household for the duration of the initial course. This will usually be up to 3 years. Evidence of the end date of the course must be provided and a reassessment will be made following the end of the course. Post graduate study may not be covered by the above criteria. This ties in with Housing Benefit.
<b>Under Occupation</b>	Allow under occupation by 1 bedroom	This will only apply where a property is deemed hard to let and subject to affordability and sustainability.
<b>Ground Floor</b>	Ground floor units will be prioritised for medical need where possible but ultimately, we will make best use of stock.	We will advertise clearly to show how we allocate ground floor properties. We will seek to be fair to applicants and partner landlords. Some partner landlords may restrict upper floors when a household has children for safety reasons, and this will show in the advert.
<b>Adapted</b>	Adapted units will be prioritised for medical need applicants who require the specific adaptations in the property.	OT assessments will be used to assess the requirements of the household.

#### 4.5 Notification



Once an application has been assessed the applicant will be notified in writing of the following:

- ❖ The band in which they have been assessed
- ❖ The size and type of property they qualify for



- ❖ How to access the Scheme Guide in order to bid for properties
- ❖ Their Housing Register number
- ❖ Their bidding reference number
- ❖ Their right of review of their band and property size/type eligibility
- ❖ Qualification under reduced preference where relevant, the conditions imposed and the reassessment process.

#### **4.6 Cancellation of Applications**

Applications will be cancelled for one or more of the following reasons:

- a) The applicant requests cancellation
- b) The applicant's circumstances change, and they are no longer eligible or no longer qualify
- c) The applicant has not responded to a review of their application within the 28 days requested.
- d) The applicant is found to have made a false or deliberately misleading statement, or to have withheld information in connection with their application.
- e) The applicant has not placed a bid for 12 months
- f) The applicant has not responded to contact from the Council within the 28 days requested.
- g) The applicant has failed to provide the evidence required to assess their application.
- h) If cancelled, the applicant will need to review and update their accommodation option plan. A review via the market place will take place to enable this.

#### **4.7 Change in circumstances**

A change in circumstances must be notified to the Council immediately together with any supporting evidence. Failure to do this could result in an applicant not being considered for a property. This is because priority is based on the applicant's current situation. A change in circumstances will mean that an application has to be reassessed.

#### **4.8 Deliberate or worsening circumstances**

Where there is evidence that an applicant has knowingly and deliberately made their housing situation worse in order to gain a higher priority on the register, the assessment of their priority need will be based on the circumstances before their situation changed through their actions to deliberately worsen their circumstances.

Some of the examples are listed below:

- Applicants who have allowed family members or others to move into their property, who previously had suitable accommodation or the financial means to secure their own accommodation, and this has resulted in the property being overcrowded.
- Applicants who have moved from previously suitable or more suitable accommodation which it was reasonable for them to continue to occupy, into a less suitable property.
- Homeowners who have transferred their property to another family member within the last 5 years from the date they make their application to the Register.
- Applicants who have given up affordable and suitable private rented accommodation which they are able to maintain, to move in with other relatives or friends, creating a situation of overcrowding and/or sharing of bathroom/kitchen and/or a split household.

- Requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a Notice to Quit.

BDS

### 5.1 The Allocations Process

#### *The Key Stages*



**Property Identification:** Notification by the agent or partner landlord of a property that is available to let

**Expression of Interest:** The applicant either bidding or agreeing to view a direct offer

**Letting:** Offer, viewing, resulting the offer and lettings types

**Tenancy Sustainment:** Sign up and continued supervision of new tenancies with support

#### 5.1.1 Blended Allocations

The Broadland District Council Allocations Scheme combines allocations by direct lets and choice-based lettings as a blended system. The majority of properties are advertised through the choice-based lettings system. Applicants have their own accounts and access the system via online. They are able to bid for a property. The list of bidders are shortlisted and the highest priority applicants is usually put through to the partner landlord who owns the property.

However, there are times when the properties are not advertised, instead they are matched direct to an applicant and the applicant is nominated to the partner landlord who owns the property. These are called direct lets and they are used to manage the most urgent or specialised cases.

Matching and Shortlisting will prioritise active cases. Where this is exhausted the inactive list will be used and selection is subject to:

- Satisfactory progress during a stabilisation period
- Tenancy failure is low risk
- Agreement by the partner landlord.

#### 5.1.2 Predicting Properties

The Council will use information provided by the Allocations Scheme to predict the number, type and location of properties due for letting. This is undertaken on a strategic and operational level in order to meet the needs of the applicants the Scheme is designed to house.

#### **Annual Lettings Plan:**

Each year an annual lettings plan will be produced based on consultation with the Housing Enablement Team who are responsible for overseeing all the properties being built in the area. They will have expected handover

## Supply and Demand Modelling:

dates which will be affirmed by the partner landlord who is building the properties. Based on averages in previous years it is also possible to predict how many properties already in management with the partner landlords will be expected to become empty (void). The plan is usually broken down into quarters and by partner landlord and then further as new build and relets. It should also be possible to assess whether they are specialist units such as Housing with Care, sheltered, adapted, or general use (general needs). Partner landlords will make properties available under agreement. In order to plan longer term, a supply and demand model is used to determine the types, size, numbers and locations where properties need to be developed. This is known as the supply. The demand is the number of applicants on the housing register and the type, size and location of the properties they need. The Housing and Benefits service will work with the Housing Enablement Team and the partner landlords to undertake this exercise. Ideally the model should aim to predict 3-5 years and longer if possible. The predictions are used by the housing developers to undertake scheme appraisals in the required areas.

## 5.2 Property Identification



When a partner landlord has a property that is available to let, they notify the Councils. Broadland District Council will monitor the number of properties they receive from each partner landlord and then determine whether they need to match it to an urgent applicant as a direct let or advertise it as a choice based letting. Each month end and quarter end, the totals will be reconciled against the predicted properties in the annual lettings plan and against the targets set for direct lets and choice-based lettings. There may be other targets which will also need to be factored into the allocation.

Therefore, the allocation of a property takes place on two levels:

- a) At letting type
- b) At applicant level

### 5.2.1 Direct Lets

Broadland District Council will make a direct let in the following situations:

- a) Where a property is needed urgently to deal with an emergency or to provide temporary accommodation for a homeless family.

- b) Where an allocation is required to ensure protection of the public, for example, following a decision made by a Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel meeting or to fulfil agreements made with offender management services, or where a customer has been referred as part of the witness protection scheme. These are usually referred to as sensitive lets. **See 5.2.8**
- c) Where a customer's home is being repaired and they need to be moved from the property on a temporary or permanent basis.
- d) Where the applicant has enjoyed an established occupancy of the property, has a reasonable expectation of a property of that type and would be a suitable tenant (e.g. former tenants of the property, non-secure or introductory tenants or carers or family members with no succession rights). A tenancy reference will be obtained to verify the decision.
- e) Homeless and in TA under s189B(2) relief duty or main duty – use of TA
- f) Urgent rehousing requirement: property, health, personal safety, discharge of homelessness duty the allocations needs to be undertaken quickly.
- g) Duty to house under s39 land compensation act 1973.
- h) Failure to bid.
- i) The applicant has exceeded the number of offers they are allowed, and their refusal has been deemed unreasonable.
- j) Adapted units.
- k) Vulnerable applicants where they would find bidding problematic.
- l) Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

If a direct let is needed for other reasons it requires the approval of the Allocation Scheme Panel will make the decision. **See Appendix 3: Terms of Reference for the Allocation Scheme Panel.**

### 5.2.2 Choice Based Lettings

The main method of allocation is via choice-based lettings and the majority of properties are advertised in order for applicants to be able to choose. There will be specific restrictions:

- Applicants can only bid for the property type and size they are allowed. **See 4.4.14**
- 80% of the properties advertised will be open for bidding by all applicants.
- 20% of the properties advertised will be targeted for social landlord tenant transfers only. **This will need to be reviewed if a CHR is introduced.**
- Targeted adverts for adapted units, those restricted under a local letting plan, rural letting scheme or s106 agreement.
- Applicants will be limited to 3 offers.
- Ensuring a balance between homeless applicants and other priority need with local demand in Band 1.

### 5.2.3 Advertising the Property

Properties identified for choice-based lettings are advertised online on the Allocation Scheme System for a period of 7 days from Wednesday to Tuesday. This is called an advert cycle. The 7<sup>th</sup> day is the closing date.

Alternative housing options such as private rented, shared ownership properties and other solutions do not have an advert cycle. They remain on the website at all times.

### 5.2.4 Rent Regimes

This should be clear in the advert and/or offer letter where it is a direct let. There may be 3 types:

**Social Rented:** Properties built before the affordable rent programme; the rent is calculated as a formula rent under the rent standard. Tenure types will be Starter and Assured tenancies.

**Affordable Rented:** Properties built under the affordable rent programme; the rent can be up to 80% of the local market rent value. Tenure types will be Starter and Affordable Assured with some of them being fixed term tenancies of between 3 and 5 years. This is determined by the partner landlord's tenancy policy.

**Fair Rented:** These are generally for tenancies issued prior to 1989 or stock transfer properties. They only apply to social landlord transfers currently on a secure or preserved secure tenancy. The rent is registered every 2 years with the Rent Officer Service. Tenants on secure tenancies may not be able to transfer their tenancy to an Affordable Rented property unless the advert specifically states you can. If you bid for it and accept it, you will be expected to surrender your secure tenancy and sign up on an affordable assured tenancy. This will be discussed with you at the time and you may wish to seek independent advice.

### 5.2.5 Property Descriptions

The advert or direct offer letter should contain a clear description of the property.

- a) Photographs
- b) Type (house, flat)
- c) Tenure (social rented, private rented, shared ownership)
- d) Number and max occupancy of bedrooms
- e) Location
- f) Level of accessibility for those with mobility issues/wheelchair users
- g) Services provided (sheltered housing scheme manager, caretaker)
- h) Heating type
- i) Age restrictions
- j) Whether pets are allowed
- k) Availability of outside space (garden etc.) and parking
- l) Rent and service charges (split weekly/monthly) and rent regime. **See 5.2.4**
- m) Special information (location of bus routes/ other amenities)
- n) Property size category (known as the PPGC code)
- o) Targeted advert for transfers only or if a local letting provision only
- p) Permission to under occupy.

### 5.2.6 Local Letting Provision

Sometimes local lettings agreements are agreed with Broadland District Council either for a new development or existing properties. The table below outlines the types of local letting provision operating within this Allocations Scheme. These are monitored annually and measured for their impact on the main Allocations Scheme.

Local Letting Provision	Description
<b>Local Letting Policies</b>	<p>Local Lettings Policies Section 167(2E) of the 1996 Housing Act enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories.</p> <p>Criteria in addition to the Allocation Scheme is considered when an allocation is made to a particular estate or community. They are used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other housing policy objectives, and are usually developed where there is a wish to alter the balance of the community or ensure a balanced community at the stage where a new development is let.</p> <p>The partner landlord will gain approval from their own Board and the Allocations Scheme Panel. The planning department of the Councils will also be involved where the policy is being applied to a new development.</p> <p>The reason for its proposed introduction must be set out as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the particular issue that is affecting the community that requires the Local Lettings Policy</li> <li>▪ the area it would cover including the number and types of properties</li> <li>▪ how long the policy will be in place</li> <li>▪ what they hope to achieve by its introduction</li> <li>▪ what the policy contains</li> <li>▪ the impact on the main Allocations Scheme</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Lettings Schemes</b>	<p>In areas which are officially defined as either villages or rural parish the rural lettings scheme may apply. The allocation will be made to the applicant with the highest priority, where there is equal priority, the allocation will be given to the applicant that demonstrates the greatest connection to the community which is assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ how long the applicant has resided in the community</li> <li>▪ how long the applicant has been employment in the community</li> <li>▪ how long the applicant has been involved in voluntary work within the community</li> </ul>
<b>Section 106 Agreements</b>	<p>Section 106 Agreement Letting Scheme Properties developed on sites that incorporate a Section 1064 agreement determining the allocation of housing on that site will be let in accordance with the terms of the agreement. Such agreements</p>

	<p>have been developed to ensure that secure mechanisms are in place to restrict the occupancy of the dwelling both on first occupation and in perpetuity to those who have a local community need for an affordable dwelling.</p> <p>The partner landlord will gain approval from their own Board, the Councils planning department and the Allocation Scheme Panel.</p>
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### 5.2.7 Hard to Lets

Some properties are harder to let because they are less attractive to applicants who will either refuse them or fail to bid for them. This could be a number of reasons including, location, floor level, age, condition. Broadland District Council will consult with the landlord and if it is deemed hard to let, then it may be made available to a wider pool of people on the Housing Register. This would include households that can afford to under occupy by one bedroom. If after 2 advert cycles this is still not let, it will be offered to South Norfolk Council. If the property is still not let, it may be offered to another Local Authority with permission from the partner landlord. Broadland District Council must ensure that it has been let to eligible applicants in priority need.

### 5.2.8 Sensitive Lets

Sensitive lets are rare and likely to be due to two main reasons:

1. Where we have to be careful with the applicant or a member of their household due a traumatic incident. We need to consider the location of the property or even the type of the property to ensure that the accommodation would not expose them to undue stress. In these cases, we will undertake a sensitive let as a direct offer.
2. Where the partner landlord informs us that a property has a management history which requires the careful selection of the next tenant to ensure harmony in the area where it is located. In these cases, we may have a targeted advert for transfers only as a choice-based letting or we will make a direct offer.

In both cases the priority order and time waited will be preserved. We will however be using additional selection criteria to manage the letting sensitively. Both types of cases must be presented to Allocations Scheme Panel for approval. If it is the applicant and their identity must be protected then, only the case specifics will be heard by the Panel.

### 5.2.9 Housing with Support or Extra Care

Some accommodation is designed specifically for older people or people who need a specific type of care or support. There is a charge in addition to the rent. The older people schemes are designed for those with a minimum age of 55 or 60. They may also have extra care provision. If the property is advertised as choice-based letting, the advert will be clear who can apply. Some schemes are not advertised and are subject to a direct let.

In exceptional circumstances, younger people may be considered for older people schemes, if they require support, and other types of accommodation are not suitable. This would be achieved through a direct let.



In both instances, the partner landlord will undertake a need and risk assessment of the applicant to ensure they meet the eligibility for the scheme.

### 5.3 Expressions of Interest



#### 5.3.1 Bidding for Properties

Once an applicant has been assessed and provided there are no restrictions such as a reduced preference or they are not ready to move, they will be made active to bid and issued a choice based lettings scheme guide to help them use the system. This enables them to apply for an advertised property which meets the size and type they are permitted. They can bid for up to two properties a week, but they must do so before the closing date to be considered. The expression of interest is by bidding.

Bidding can be undertaken by:

- Phone
- Text
- Website

#### 5.3.2 Assisted Bidding and Auto Bidding

Where someone is vulnerable or unable to bid for themselves and has no one to do it for them, we will allow you to register for assisted bidding. You provide us with your choices, and we do it for you. They placed using a function we call auto bidding. If you wish to change your choices, you need to contact us. We may need to reassess your application if your new choices do not match with your current priority need. The auto bids are like advance expressions of interest. You will need to be sure of choices so that the auto bidding system can bid for the type of home you are willing to accept.

#### 5.3.3 Grouped Bids

In certain circumstances, properties that are advertised may be grouped into one single advertisement. This will include advertisements for new build properties and those properties made available following regeneration schemes, where properties will be grouped by property type and size. Schemes under 5 units will not be subjected to grouped bids. Where there are grouped advertisements, applicants who place one bid will be considered for all properties within the group.

#### 5.3.4 Retrospective Bids

A retrospective bid request is a bid placed once the bidding cycle is closed. It is usually a request from an applicant, or their authorised representative, to include a new bid or withdraw an existing bid and replace it with another. It will only be considered if there was period during the bidding cycle where the bidding facility was unavailable for 30 minutes or more and the Housing and Benefits Service can confirm this. The Council places alerts on the system when the system is down and

invites retrospective bids where necessary. If allowed, a retrospective bid can only be placed by the Council no later the close of business on the day after the closing date. By placing such a bid, the applicant is not guaranteed an offer. The applicant will need to contact the service by phone or come in person. The Council will alert the partner landlord who owns the property, the shortlist will be suspended whilst this bid is processed and then the shortlist will be run again.

### 5.3.5 Shortlisting

When a closing date is reached for a choice based letting, the applicants who bid for the property will be shortlisted within 3 working days.

The shortlist will use the following parameters to prioritise:

- Broadland District Council local connection **See 3.2**
- Local letting provision **See 5.2.6**
- Targeted advert criteria **See 5.2.5**
- Reduced preference applicants who are inactive to bid should not appear on the list. **See 4.4.3**
- Bedsize and property type allowed **See 4.4.14**
- Adapted unit.

The successful applicant will be verified if they are to be selected for the property and it has not been done within the last month or the applicant shows an outstanding issue. The property must be deemed suitable to the needs of the applicant and there must be agreement by the partner landlord.

If an applicant has to be bypassed because there are circumstances which mean they do not suit the property or cannot be selected, a bypass reason must be put in the system. This is mandatory and ensures the decisions are fair and transparent. This will be preserved on the applicants offer history.

Typical bypass reasons are:

- Bid was placed before a change of circumstance was requested
- Failed tenancy reference – arrears
- Failed tenancy reference – ASB
- Failed tenancy reference – other
- Unable to afford
- Matching incorrect – review application
- Unable to contact using 2 different methods and making 3 attempts

If a shortlist is exhausted and it is not possible to select an applicant, the list may be run again to check there are no further applicants who have been missed.

Where it has not been possible to select an applicant, a matching exercise will be undertaken on applicants who are inactive to bid. If one of them matches, their stabilisation will be reviewed, and risk assessed. If the Council feels they could now sustain their tenancy and the partner landlord agrees; then they will be selected for a direct offer subject to conditions around tenancy sustainment.

### 5.3.6 Direct Offer

Where a property or an applicant has been identified for a direct offer **See 5.2.1** a matching exercise will be undertaken to ensure the property is suitable for the

applicant. It uses similar criteria to the shortlisting process undertaken for choice-based lettings. Officers will undertake the matching exercise in the Housing Register.

Once matched a list is generated. Bypass reasons are mandatory on a match list in the same way as they are for a shortlist. The successful applicant will be discussed with the partner landlord and following their agreement, an offer will be made. The expression of interest is by the applicant responding favourably to the offer.

## 5.4 Letting



### 5.4.1 Offer of Accommodation

All applicants selected for a property will receive a formal offer letter which serves two purposes:

- preserves the offer history whether they accept or refuse the property
- meets legal compliance

**Broadland District Council will:**

Formally notify the applicant they have been selected for a property either by shortlisting as a choice based letting or matching as a direct let. This will usually be accompanied with direct contact by email or phone. It should not completely replace it.

**Partner Landlord will:**

Formally offer the applicant the property; even if this has to be done retrospectively because of the quick turnaround of voids.

All formal contact around selection and offer is subject to the following:

- a) Applicants will usually be contacted within 3 working days of the closing date.
- b) It is the applicant's responsibility to keep the Council of current contact details.
- c) Applicants have up to two working days to respond.
- d) If they fail to contact or to express an interest if they do, the Council will go to the next applicant on the shortlist.
- e) Partner landlords will have their lettings procedures which will usually include an affordability check, a suitability assessment and a needs and risk assessment if they are providing specialist housing. Pitches for gypsies and travellers may be subject to further assessments. **See 4.4.11**
- f) The landlord has the final decision on whether they will accept the applicant for the property, however they are required to contact the Council before rejecting them to see if there are more measures that can be put in place to make the offer more suitable.

- g) Selection and an offer may be withdrawn if it is found that the information supplied by the applicant was either false or incorrect or they have had a change in circumstances.
- h) All offers are subject to viewing.
- i) Once the formal offer is made the status of the applicant on the Housing Register will show as 'Under Offer'.

#### 5.4.2 Limited Offers

Broadland District Council has a limited offer policy:

- homeless single offer; penalty discharge of duty and no reapplication unless circumstances change
- management transfers unlimited; no penalty required
- all other 3 offers only; penalty suspension for 6 months which could have the added requirement of a reapplication and new application date. This drops them down the time waited queue.
- An offer is deemed to be reasonable if matches area, bedroom allocation, floor level, property type for household, criteria for medical award, takes into account young children, and is an average standard or repair or more. Where an offer is agreed as not reasonable it will be withdrawn and will not count as one of the limited offers.

#### 5.4.3 Viewings

There is no obligation on the applicant to take a property unseen. The partner landlord will contact the applicant to arrange a viewing. They will send an Officer to attend the viewing with the applicant. Following the viewing the applicant will be expected to either accept or refuse the property. If they refuse, they will be referred back to the Council and another applicant known as a nomination will be requested. If the partner landlord pulled the shortlist themselves, they will go to the next suitable applicant on the shortlist and repeat the offer process until the property is accepted. If it proves hard to let. **See 5.2.7**

There are three types of viewing:

##### **Single Viewing:**

One applicant views the property at any one time. This will be used primarily for sensitive lets.

##### **Multiple Viewing:**

More than one applicant will view at the same time. All the applicants will be verified. Only the top applicant if offered formally. The remainder are given viewing letters only. If the top one refuses, the next one is formally offered etc. Any who failed to get a formal offer will be withdrawn. There are no penalties for having it withdrawn in this situation.

##### **Accompanied Viewing:**

This may be single or multiple. The applicant is accompanied by either an advocate, a Support Worker, a Homeless Officer or an Occupational Therapist. It is usually offered where the applicant is likely to need extra assistance

around the viewing in respect of vulnerability, mobility need, and navigation around their rights under the homeless duty.

#### 5.4.4 Resulting the Offer

Recording the outcome of the viewing/offer is called resulting the offer. It is mandatory in order to preserve the offer history and property history. It also serves to allow management of the Councils and partner landlord partnership arrangement.

The partner landlord will obtain a formal record of the outcome. The table below outlines each type of result and the ensuing action.

Outcome	Action Required	Applicant Status
<b>Withdrawn - multiple viewing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No penalty</li> <li>Automatic system function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer history preserved</li> </ul>
<b>Withdrawn - other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner landlord refuses applicant</li> <li>Councils withdraw</li> <li>Housing register review initiated. <b>See 6.3.1</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer history preserved</li> <li>Housing Register review with review period</li> <li>May require an investigation.</li> <li>Under review and inactive to bid allow a review and/or investigation to take place</li> </ul>

<b>Accepted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acceptance recorded</li> <li>▪ Provisional tenancy start dated recorded</li> <li>▪ Monitored for sign up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer history preserved</li> <li>▪ Status changes to accepted</li> <li>▪ Inactive to bid</li> </ul>
<b>Refused – homeless</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refusal recorded</li> <li>▪ Limited Offer maintenance <b>See 5.4.2</b></li> <li>▪ Statutory review initiated <b>See 6.3.2</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer history preserved</li> <li>▪ Statutory review with a review period</li> <li>▪ Under statutory review and inactive to bid</li> <li>▪ The review will pick up changes in circumstances and penalties as a result of a single offer.</li> </ul>
<b>Refused – other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refusal recorded</li> <li>▪ Limited Offer maintenance <b>See 5.4.2</b></li> <li>▪ Exceed limited offer penalty evoked</li> <li>▪ Change of circumstances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer history preserved</li> <li>▪ Change of circumstance prompts a Housing Register review with review period</li> <li>▪ Number of offers remaining</li> <li>▪ Penalty action if limited offers exceeded</li> </ul>

#### 5.4.5 Publicising Lettings

Our performance around lettings is publicised:

- **Annually;**
  - **Quarterly;**
  - **Weekly;**
- will show:

on the property page of the choice-based lettings system we

- ❖ Areas where properties were let
- ❖ Number of bids each property had
- ❖ Band and effective band date of the successful applicant came from for each property
- ❖ No personal information will be disclosed

## 5.5 Tenancy Sustainment



Our Accommodation Pathway Model ensures that anyone who approaches us for housing, or a housing related matter will be sent through the key stages of:

- Marketplace
- Prevention
- Stabilisation
- Resolution

The Allocations Scheme is designed to sort our longer-term solutions for people, and this means making it possible for them to stay in the home of their choice and one that meets their need. We therefore ensure that at each of the key stages of the model we will do everything practically possible to promote tenancy sustainment.

The table below describes the tenancy sustainment measures that are/could be adopted in order to achieve tenancy sustainment.

Marketplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Accommodation Option Plan is designed for the household</li><li>▪ Affordability and household size will be considered</li><li>▪ Specific health needs will be considered</li><li>▪ Age will be considered</li><li>▪ Support and care needs will be considered</li><li>▪ Previous tenant history will be considered</li><li>▪ Professional reports will be considered</li></ul>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Each case presenting in high priority need will be assessed to see if there is prevention solution with the provider of their existing home</li><li>▪ Support and care assessment will be undertaken to see if more or different is needed</li><li>▪ Living skills will be promoted to allow tenancy management learning</li><li>▪ Families will be prioritised alongside single people if they are reaching crisis point</li><li>▪ Referring agents will be required to undertake a hands-on approach</li><li>▪ Safe Surrender Agreements put in place before a failing tenancy is surrendered. <b>See 3.6</b></li></ul>

Stabilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discharge of duty will only take place if the applicant is completely unwilling to engage in the previous key stages of the model</li> <li>▪ All temporary solutions will be quantified and qualified in order to set a tenancy sustainment standard and promote learning</li> <li>▪ People who are not ready to live independently will undertake a period of stabilisation to see if this will remedy the situation. They will not be able to bid for social housing during this time.</li> <li>▪ Support and skills will be introduced to promote learning and redressing of any negative tenancy behaviour</li> <li>▪ Reduced preference cases will be subject to a mandatory period of stabilisation to ensure they address the behaviour which resulted in the assignment of preference assignment. They will be unable to bid for social housing and may not qualify for other housing options either as private landlords will have similar requirements to partner landlords.</li> <li>▪ The existence of a Safe Surrender Agreements prior to tenancy failure, shows the applicant is prepared to take responsibility and negotiate stability prior to surrendering the tenancy. It allows the Councils to assess their application with this in mind and will likely allow them to qualify without the need of reduced preference. This in turn enables the current priority need, to be addressed much earlier and factored into the Accommodations Options Plan. <b>See 3.6</b></li> </ul>
Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All types of housing solutions will be considered with recourse to tenancy sustainment implications</li> <li>▪ Partner landlord and other housing providers within the partnership will be required to work with the Council to provide a hand holding period for applicants who have support and care identified and require longer to settle in. During this time, their application will remain open but suspended subject to a satisfactory assessment with input from the applicant themselves and any agencies involved. If the assessment is successful and they are managing their tenancy effectively, their application will be closed retrospectively. The tenancy start date will be used as the closure date to ensure performance is not penalised.</li> <li>▪ Applicants being referred to the rent deposit schemes, and other such private housing options may experience a longer period of stabilisation as private landlords are less likely to be partners.</li> <li>▪ The partner landlords usually have a tenancy support or sustainment service which will support the new tenancy and this should be flagged as a requirement for all applicants who have undergone a mandatory stabilisation period and for those who are already identified with support and care provision.</li> <li>▪ The Council and the partner landlords will have the final decision in whether to accept a level of risk in relation to tenancy sustainment with an applicant.</li> <li>▪ The Council and the partner landlords will seek to provide a guarantee where practically possible with applicants which meet the threshold of high risk.</li> </ul>



### 5.6 Decisions

The administration of the Allocations Scheme requires Broadland District Council to make key decisions in relation to an application to join the Housing Register.

- a) The decision that confirms or denies your eligibility to join. **See Part 3**
- b) The decision that confirms or denies your qualification. **See Part 4**
- c) The decision that awards your priority housing need. **See Part 4**
- d) The decision to reassess your application as reduced preference. **See Part 3**
- e) The decision to reassess your priority housing need following a change of circumstance. **See Part 4**
- f) The decision to cancel your application. **See Part 4**
- g) The decision to deny your review. **See Part 6**
- h) The decision that deems your refusal of a property as unreasonable. **See part 5**
- i) The decisions to refuse a duty under the homeless legislation. **See Part 4**

If you disagree with a decision in relation to your application, you have the right to request a review. In order to ensure you are heard by the correct officer, it is important to understand the following:

- ❖ If you provide evidence that you did not provide for your assessment. ***This is a change in circumstance. See 4.7***
- ❖ If you think we failed to follow our policy or stated process, or you simply feel we could have handled your application better. ***This is a complaint. See 6.2***
- ❖ If you disagree with a homeless decision under Part 7 of the legislation. ***This is a statutory right of review.***
- ❖ If you disagree with your priority award under Part 6 of the legislation. ***This is a statutory right of review.***
- ❖ If you have completed a period of stabilisation on reduced preference. ***This is a housing register review.***
- ❖ If you take legal action and the judge agrees with you and directs the Councils accordingly. ***This is a judicial review***
- ❖ If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of your right of review. ***You may appeal.***

### 5.7 Complaints

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the management of their application, other than where a review can be made, they should follow the Council's published complaints procedure, available on the Council's website at **URL to be supplied** or on request.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the action the Council takes, they can send a written complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman who can be contacted at:

**Local Government Ombudsman**  
**PO Box 4771**  
**Coventry CV4 0EH**  
**Tel: 0300 061 0614**  
**Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)**

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint against a partner landlord, they should contact:

**Housing Ombudsman Service**  
**Exchange Tower**  
**Harbour Exchange Square**  
**London**  
**Tel: 0300 111 3000**  
**E mail: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

## 5.8 Reviews

There are several types of reviews:

Housing Register Review	This review is initiated by the Council in order to maintain applications on the housing register.
Statutory Right of Review	This is the right of review requested by the applicants because of a decision made in relation to their application.
Judicial Review	This a review undertaken by the Courts because something has come to light in a case where legal action has been taken.

### 5.8.1 Housing Register Review

Broadland District Council undertakes the current Housing Register reviews:

<b>Band 1 Reviews:</b>	These applications will be reviewed every 4 weeks. This ties in with homeless prevention and relief duties. These are critical cases and should not retain the highest level of priority indefinitely as factors in relation their circumstances usually change rapidly.
<b>All other bands:</b>	These applications will be reviewed every 12 months. Good practice dictates these are undertaken annually in order to maintain the accuracy of the Housing Register.
<b>Spontaneous Reviews:</b>	These arise from time to time as a result of being alerted either by an allocation or because we have been contacted by another agency in relation to the application.
<b>Reassessment Reviews:</b>	Applicants on reduced preference who have completed a period of stabilisation in relation to their behaviour will have a review when it ends in order to assess their ability to sustain a tenancy. If they have failed, they may no longer qualify. If they succeed, they will qualify, and action will be taken to allow them to bid in the awarded band.

In order to undertake Housing Register reviews, we will:

- a) Set the correct review period on their initial assessment and all subsequent reassessments.
- b) Our Allocations Scheme will flag the application on its review date.
- c) This will be assigned to an Officer to review.
- d) They will write to the applicant or contact them by their preferred method to confirm if their circumstances remain the same.
- e) The applicant has 21 days to respond.
- f) If they fail to respond their application is cancelled.
- g) If they confirm the circumstances remain the same, the correct review period is reset.
- h) If their circumstances have changed, they will be asked to provide the evidence and their application is reassessed as a change in circumstances. Their new review period is set following the reassessment.
- i) With reassessment reviews for reduced preference applicants, a tenant reference will be obtained from their current landlord in relation to their behaviour during their stabilisation period. References from other agencies may also be obtained if the reason for their reduced preference is not tenancy related. If the reference is favourable, they will be made active to bid and this will be confirmed in writing. If they have failed their reduced preference will be removed and they will no longer qualify to be on the Housing Register and their application will be cancelled.

### **5.8.2 Statutory Right of Review**

If you are not satisfied with a decision you may request a statutory right of review which would cover:

- The information we used to make the decision
- Whether the information was fully considered
- The reason for the decision
- The decision itself.

The following steps should take place for a Statutory Right of Review:

- a) The applicant or their representative should make the request within 21 days of the decision preferably in writing. The request should state why they disagree with the decision and if necessary, provide the necessary information they felt should have been considered.
- b) The request will be logged and acknowledged. It will state how long the review will take. The reviews will be carried out within 28 days of the request being received. If more time is required, an extension will be requested with the applicant.
- c) The review will be assigned to a senior Officer who did not make the original decision.
- d) If the information was not previously provided for the original decision, the review will be closed, and the applicant will be advised in writing that this now being treated as a change in circumstances.
- e) If the senior Officer feels that the applicant is correct or partially correct the outcome will be to uphold the review and the application will be reassessed.
- f) If the senior Officer feels the original decision is correct, they will deny the review and the original decision stands.
- g) The review outcomes will be recorded.
- h) The applicant will be advised in writing within 14 days of the decision.
- i) If the review needs more time, the applicant will be advised in writing that an extension is required.

- j) If the applicant is still not satisfied, they may appeal the decision. **See 6.4**

### 5.8.3 Judicial Review

Where an individual or organisation feels the Council's Allocations Scheme is unfairly prejudicial or their case has been dealt with a prejudicial manner, they may wish to take legal action. They should seek independent advice before doing so.

The case will be heard in Court before a judge. Both sides will appoint counsel. If the judge decides the case against the Council to be partly or fully substantiated, the Council will be formally advised of the verdict and will need to respond through their counsel. The result may be an alteration to the Allocations Scheme and/or a reassessment of the applicant's case. These are termed judicial reviews.

## 5.9 Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the statutory right of review, you may request an appeal. Appeals are heard by the Allocations Scheme Panel. Both sides get the chance to represent their point of view before the panel. The terms of reference for the Allocations Scheme Panel are detailed in **Appendix 3**

The following steps should take place for an Appeal:

- a) The applicant or their representative should make the request within 14 days of the review decision preferably in writing. The request should state why they disagree with the decision and if necessary, provide the necessary information they felt should have been considered. They should indicate whether they want an oral hearing i.e. appear before the Panel or have it heard by written submission.
- b) The request will be logged and acknowledged.
- c) The appeal will be assigned to a senior Officer who did not make any of the original decisions. Their role is to collate the papers and service the Panel.
- d) If the information was not previously provided for the original decision, the appeal will be closed, and the applicant will be advised in writing that this now being treated as a change in circumstances.
- e) The Officer will convene the Panel within 14 days of receiving the request. In exceptional situations a longer period may be agreed.
- f) Only 3 representatives of the Allocation Scheme Panel are needed to hear an appeal.
- g) The Panel will meet. In attendance will be the senior Officer. If an oral hearing was requested the applicant or their representative and a Council Officer from the Housing and Benefits Service will also attend.
- h) The Panel may feel that the applicant is correct or partially correct the outcome will be to uphold the appeal and the application will be reassessed.
- i) The Panel may feel that the original decision is correct they will deny the appeal and the original decision stands.
- j) The appeal outcomes will be recorded.
- k) The applicant will be advised in writing within 14 days of the Panel decision.
- l) If the applicant is still not satisfied, they may contact the ombudsman. **See 6.2.** Alternatively, they may seek independent advice.

## Appendix 1: Lettings outside of the Allocation Scheme

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Lettings where an allocation takes place which a tenancy or licence is created that are outside of the Broadland District Council Allocations Scheme include:

- a) **Introductory or probationary tenancies:** Where an introductory/probationary tenancy becomes a secure or assured tenancy
- b) **Family Intervention Tenancies:** Introduced by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, Family Intervention Tenancies are a form of residential tenancy without security of tenure. They may be offered by either a local housing authority or a registered provider to anyone who is a tenant of a secure (or assured) tenancy subject to a possession order on the grounds of anti-social Behaviour or domestic abuse or anyone who (if they had a secure or assured tenancy) could have had such a possession order made against them.
- c) **Succession:** Under S89 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenancies), under S133 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (introductory tenancies) or under S90 of the Housing Act 1985 (fixed term tenancies).
- d) **Non-Secure tenancies or temporary accommodation:** Any accommodation that is provided to meet an interim duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- e) **Temporary decants:** Secure or Introductory tenants of a local authority or assured or assured shorthold tenants of Registered Providers who need to be moved temporarily whilst major work is carried out on their home.
- f) **Demoted tenancies:** Following a successful application for a demotion order under sections 14 and 15 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- g) **Mutual exchanges:** Between existing tenants under S92 of the Housing Act 1985 or under S158 of the Localism Act 2011.
- h) **Assignment:** To a person who would be qualified to succeed the tenant under S92 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenancies) or S134 Housing Act 1996 (introductory tenancies).
- i) **Conversion of an introductory tenancy:** to a secure tenancy under S125 Housing Act 1996).
- j) **Transfers of secure or introductory tenancies by a court order:** Made under certain provisions contained within matrimonial, family, children, and partnership legislation.
- k) **Land Compensation Act:** Allocation to a person entitled to rehousing under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- l) **Re - Purchased Homes:** Allocation to a person whose home is repurchased under sections 554 or 555 of the Housing Act 1985 (defective dwellings).
- m) **Transfers:** Within the same partner landlord (registered provider) stock, where the unit has not been made available to the Councils under current partner arrangements.

## Appendix 2: Allocation by Bedsize

A bedroom is defined under the legislation and regulation as:



**The Room Standard:** The room standard is contravened when the number of persons sleeping in a dwelling and the number of rooms available as sleeping accommodation is such that two persons of opposite sexes who are not living together as partners must sleep in the same room. Children under the age of ten excluded from this definition. A room is available as sleeping accommodation if it is of a type normally used in the locality either as a bedroom or as a living room.

**The Space Standard:** The space standard is contravened when the number of persons sleeping in a dwelling is in excess of the permitted number, having regard to the number and floor area of the rooms of the dwelling available as sleeping accommodation. A child under the age of 1 year and a child aged 1 year or over but under ten shall be reckoned as one-half of a unit. A room is available as sleeping accommodation if it is of a type normally used in the locality either as a living room or as a bedroom.






















No account shall be taken for the purposes of either standard of a room having a floor area of less than 50 square feet.

Floor Area of Room (square feet)	Number of Persons
110 or more	2
90 or more but less than 110	1.5
70 or more but less than 90	1
50 or more but less than 70	0.5

This table below provides guidance on the size of home that different types of household can bid for on the Broadland District Council Choice Based Lettings website. Further information may be provided by the partner landlord on the website when a property is advertised. Use the key below to explain the symbols.

Key	
	Number of bedrooms allowed for this household type
	Number of bedrooms allowed for this household type, subject to the ages and sex of the children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Two children under the age of 10 are usually expected to share a bedroom</li><li>Two children of the same sex are usually expected to share a bedroom until they are 16</li><li>Once a child is 16 a separate bedroom is allowed</li></ul>
<b>D</b>	The Council will award the extra bedroom as a discretionary allowance, but it is subject to affordability and the ability to sustain their tenancy even if they are on benefits and subject to the bedroom tax.

*	Some partner landlords may only allow households with children to bid on houses
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Household	Bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5+bed
Single person			D	D		
2 Adults – Couple (inc.: same sex couples)			D	D		
2 Adults			 *	D		
1 Adult plus 1 Child				D		
1 Adult plus 2 Children						
1 Adult plus 3 Children						
1 Adult plus 4 or more Children						
Couple plus 1 Child				D		
Couple plus 2 Children						
Couple plus 3 Children						
Couple plus 4 or more Children						

Note: Households with access to children who do not live with them as part of the permanent household will only be able to bid for the property size they have been allocated as part of their priority award. **See 4.3.2 and 4.4.14**

### Appendix 3: Terms of Reference: Allocations Scheme Panel

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The role of the Allocations Scheme Panel is to:

- Approve a direct let for an applicant does not meet the criteria list in 5.2.1
- Approve a sensitive let requested by the Council in relation to an application or a partner landlord in relation to a property. Simple cases will be heard by 3 panel members via an online platform and the decision ratified at the next full panel meeting. Complex cases or cases where the decision will have a negative impact on the household will be heard by the full panel.
- Consider and approval Local Lettings Policies partner landlords may wish to introduce.
- Hear appeals where an applicant has exercised their right to a review, remains dissatisfied with the outcome and wishes to take it further.

The panel members are:

Housing and Benefits Managers (joint administrator responsibility)

Senior Officer, Saffron Housing Trust  
Senior Officer, Clarion (Circle Wherry) Housing  
Senior Officer, Cotman Housing Association  
Senior Officer, Orbit Housing Association  
Senior Officer, Flagship Housing Group  
Senior Officer, Broadland Housing Association  
A Panel is quorate with 3 or more members  
A chair will be elected for appeal panels.

The Panel will process requests and appeals by ensuring the following:

- a) A member may present a request from their own organisation, but they must excuse themselves from the decision as a clear conflict of interest.
- b) A member can be part of the panel to hear an appeal if they were involved in the original decision.
- c) Requests and appeals must be submitted to Broadland District Council by email, however requests can also be made in writing or by telephone where appropriate.  
**email address to be supplied**
- d) Submissions must be in the format of the proforma which can be download from the website. Housing Solutions Officers will support applicants to submit a proforma by the most appropriate means. **URL to be supplied**
- e) Panel members should have the papers for a request or appeal at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.
- f) The Panel must give due consideration and fair treatment in relation to:
  - The decision to have their appeal heard orally or by written submission
  - The appellant to be accompanied by one person to advocate on their behalf
  - Time for all parties to have sight of the papers in relation to a request or appeal
  - Necessary time for an investigation where necessary
  - Request for adjournments from the applicant if it is deemed reasonable
- g) Business discussed by the panel is confidential to panel members only. Named parties may request a copy of the decision. These will only be released at the discretion of the panel and with personal data other than the named parties redacted or removed.
- h) Approval requires a majority vote and the meeting to be quorate.
- i) The chair will be responsible for conveying the decision of a panel.
- j) The Panel decision is final.



# THE VISION FOR A BEST IN CLASS HOUSING OFFER AND DRAFT ALLOCATIONS POLICY

**Addendum to the vision for a best in class housing offer and draft allocation policy – following questions at informal briefings by Councillors it felt useful to provide a more detailed briefing to better inform the considerations of the committee**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 Currently the system used by Broadland Council is a mixture of Capita and Jigsaw. Jigsaw provides services for the management of temporary accommodation whilst Capita provides systems for the management of housing register and allocations and homelessness services. The current systems set up is expensive and disjointed. In addition, Capita has provided a note of de-support (from September 2020) and removal of licenses (from April 2021), as they seek to discontinue their housing system in its current form. Whether or not a new policy is implemented, an implementation of new systems is required to allow continuous provision of the statutory function of the housing service from April 2021. To allow the development of a best in class housing model as described, investment in the system is also a necessary requirement.
- 1.2 Significant market testing has been undertaken to allow officers to understand the best quality and produce of product available for the council to meet its intended operating model.
- 1.3 Work is already underway to put in place a new housing system. Costs are outlined below and show that implementation will yield a saving over a 4 year period of time against current costs. Capital costs are allocated against existing IT Capital Project budgets for 20/21. It is likely capital costs can be absorbed into this budget, but councillors should note that spend but will place an additional budget pressure.

## **2 COSTS AND GOVERNANCE**

- 2.1 The overall cost for the IT system to replace both South Norfolk and Broadland Council current systems is as follows
- 2.2 The initial cost will be £86,769 which will come out of capital expenditure. This works out as the following (55/45% split):
  - 2.2.1 South Norfolk Council                      £47,722
  - 2.2.2 Broadland District Council              £39,046
- 2.3 This will be unbudgeted spend this financial year, members are asked to endorse this expense to enable longer term savings.
- 2.4 The annual support maintenance of the system will be £17, 353. This works out as the following (55/45% split):
  - 2.4.1 South Norfolk Council                      £9,543
  - 2.4.2 Broadland District Council              £7,808

## **Savings**

- 2.5 By procuring a joint system between the two Councils to enable a best in class offer, we will be able to maximise the benefit of two Councils, one team. The table below compares the cost of the existing system compared to proposed system and the savings this will bring.

- 2.6 The purchase of the new system not only provides the support to the best in class approach but will also yield a saving over four years.

	Proposed system		Current system		Savings 4-year difference
	Cost	Rolling total	Current budgeted yearly costs	Rolling total	
Year 0	39,046	39,046			
Year 1	7,988	47,034	35,167	35,167	
Year 2	7,988	55,023	35,167	70,334	
Year 3	7,988	63,012	35,167	105,501	
Year 4	<b>7,988</b>	<b>71,001</b>	<b>35,167</b>	<b>140,668</b>	<b>69,666</b>

### 3. Conclusion

To note the costs and work to establish fit for purpose systems to enable a best in class housing model and new allocations scheme.

## Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment

**Name of Officer/s completing assessment:** Victoria Parsons

**Date of Assessment** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### 1. What is the proposed Policy (please provide sufficient detail)?

#### **Broadland District Council Allocations Scheme South Norfolk Council Allocations Scheme**

The Allocations Schemes were developed jointly by Broadland and South Norfolk Councils as part of the Best in Class Housing Offer. Two Allocations Scheme documents have been created to facilitate individual Council branding however, the content of the schemes are the same. With this in mind and in recognition that the schemes will be administered by a single Officer team, a joint EqCIA has been prepared.

The Allocations Scheme aims to:

- Improve the means by which local people gain access to social rented housing through a system that allows choice and is fair, transparent and accountable.
- Ensures the lettings service embraces equality and diversity by being open and fully accessible to all individuals and to provide support to customers where needed
- Meets the legal obligation of the council in respect of giving appropriate priority to customers with a 'reasonable preference' category
- Makes the best use of housing stock, including areas of low demand and 'hard to let' properties.
- Assists customers with understanding their housing options
- Increases opportunities for tenant mobility
- Formalises partner working arrangements

We also acknowledge that COVID-19 has exacerbated and widened inequalities, particularly amongst:

- People with a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnicity
- People living in poverty, on low incomes or just finishing their education
- People working in industries particularly affected by COVID-19, for example, leisure, retail and hospitality.
- Those in unaffordable, insecure or unsuitable housing,
- People experiencing Domestic Abuse
- People experiencing social exclusion and isolation
- Those with health conditions including mental health

The Allocations Scheme was created both before and during the outbreak of COVID-19 and is designed to be a timely response to the ongoing impacts that will be felt in relation to the allocation of social housing. It was co-produced by the housing offer project officer team, consultants Campbell Tickell and a joint member working group. In addition, the scheme has been checked for legal compliance by NPLaw.

A public and stakeholder consultation is taking place 9<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October with respondents specifically asked to feedback on any potential equalities implications. Responses will be incorporated into this EqCIA following completion of the consultation process.

<b>2. Which protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 does this Policy impact: (indicate whether the impact could be positive, neutral, or negative)</b>			
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Potential Impact</b>		
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Age	✓		
Disability	✓		
Race	✓		
Sex	✓		
Religion or Belief		✓	
Sexual Orientation	✓		
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓	
Pregnancy/Maternity	✓		
Gender Reassignment	✓		
<b>3. Which additional Communities characteristics does this policy impact?</b>			
Health	✓		
Place inc. Rurality	✓		
Low Income and Poverty	✓		

#### **4. What do you believe are the potential equalities impacts of this policy?**

Please include:

- Partnership organisations worked with in the development of this policy
- Evidence gathered to inform your decision
- Where you have consulted, Who and How this has informed the decision/policy
- Any other groups impacted not detailed above

**Note:** Impacts could be positive, neutral, or negative and impact groups differently

The scheme sets out the process by which available social housing is allocated to households on the housing list and for Broadland and South Norfolk Council's a Hybrid system has been proposed. For the majority of applicants this would provide the opportunity to have choice in bidding for available properties through an online system. This system provides transparency and expectation management in that applicants will see what properties are available, in what location and what they are likely to be successful in bidding for.

For those who need additional support, for example, those with a learning disability, health condition including mental health or are vulnerable, assisted bidding can be implemented. In addition, for specific properties Direct Lets will be available in certain circumstances, summarised as applying where:

- There is an urgent rehousing requirement
- Where there has been failure to bid or a number of refusals
- Where the applicant is vulnerable
- For some adapted units.

In addition, where there is a delivery completion of more than five houses on a particular development, a nominations process will take place. Applicants will place a bid on the development and the council will shortlist based on applicants circumstances within the banding criteria (including s106 requirements) and allocate the most suitable properties to each successful individual to make sure those in most need gain access.

In order to increase accessibility and to create a flexible service, the councils will be seeking to implement a wider online offer for the service. However, we also appreciate that an online option may not be appropriate for some, for example, for those with complex cases, those who are unable to use the internet without support and those who are unable to access the internet. To this end, current options for contact, such as phone, letter and face to face (dependant on COVID-19 circumstances) will continue to give a wide range of choices.

The Councils are not proposing to operate a reduced preference band, instead opting to operate a suspension of bidding arrangement. Applicants on a reduced preference band could still be re-housed and this can reduce the incentive to seek support or resolve the behaviours, such as rent arrears or ASB that led to the reduced preference banding. With a suspension of bidding arrangement, applicants would be awarded banding based on their needs but they would be suspended from bidding on any properties until a suitable period of stabilisation has been completed. This could include seeking support for anti-social behaviour or reducing rent arrears. Applicants will be able to work with the Councils Housing & Benefits Advisors, link into organisations within the Help Hubs and wider organisations.

In this way good tenant behaviour is promoted and there is increased likelihood of future sustainable tenancies.

Young and single people, single adult headed households, those on low incomes and those with mental health and complex needs may be impacted by this policy. However, in mitigation the aim is to directly seek to resolve issues which could lead to a future failure of tenancy and re-presentation to the Council. All suspension of bidding cases will be assessed carefully on their circumstances, to ensure that we are not compounding inequality or increasing risk and/or vulnerability for applicants. As with all of the proposals contained within the scheme, regular monitoring and review will need to be undertaken to ensure the process is effective and does not result in a wholly negative impact.

The following provides details of some of the believed impacts in relation to the protected characteristics

## **Age**

It is expected that the scheme will have positive impacts in the following areas.

### **Young people**

Young carers will be treated as a 16+ child and allowed a separate bedroom allocation. This is in recognition of the caring duties they perform in addition to other responsibilities they may have and the benefit of have a safe, relaxing space for these young carers to use.

The councils will accept applications to the list by those who are aged 16-18. However, those under 18 cannot legally hold a tenancy. Where the councils are approached by a 16-18 year old, the Joint Protocol to address the needs of homeless young people in Norfolk will be applied and a joint assessment will be undertaken to identify the best support for that young person, including reunification with family, the application of any duties under the Children Act, accommodation with Children's Services acting as a guarantor, or identification of an alternative guarantor.

Child of tenant arrangements is proposed within the allocations scheme as means with which to rehouse adult children within a household. Specific criteria applies, however this would seek to alleviate overcrowding and allowing the adult child of the household to seek independence and move away from the family home while allowing the family as a whole to remain in their community.

As covered by current legislation, care leavers aged under 21 years are afforded a local connection where they have been looked after by Norfolk County Council for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16 or they have been placed in accommodation in Broadland or South Norfolk by another authority for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16. However the Councils have taken the decision to extend this local connection to those aged under 25 years old. This brings the offer into line with the statutory duty for Children's Services to offer Personal Advisor support for all care leavers up to the age of 25. In addition, the councils will work with the young person and Children's Services to set up an accommodation plan and to prepare for a tenancy.

In terms of bedroom allocations, the councils are proposing a policy of a separate bedroom for children of the household aged 16+, with children of the opposite sex allocated their own bedroom when they are 10 years or older. This is in line with current calculations for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit in respect of the spare room subsidy and ensures that we do not place applicants in a property that could be unaffordable.

Older people:

The proposed banding criteria gives a Band 2 priority for those who are current tenants seeking to move to a smaller property. This is more likely to impact on older people who may wish to downsize and would allow them to move a property that may be better placed to meet their needs and allows a family home to become available.

## **Disability**

Although the provision of supply is out the scope of the Allocations Scheme, we are highly conscious that access to an accessible property is needed to support applicants with a disability or health condition. Within the Allocations Scheme the Councils will give priority based not only on an assessment of the disability or health condition but also by how the health or quality of life is affected by the applicant's home. From this, the Councils can also make a recommendation that the household has a requirement for a specific property, for example, ground floor, wheelchair accessible, garden space or adapted.

Additionally, we need to ensure that where existing social housing properties that have adaptations become void that they are managed so the adaptations don't have to be removed. This is not a good use of housing stock to meet the needs of applicants on the housing list, nor is it a good use of the council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding which may have been used to install the adaptations.

As mentioned above, working with the Landlord to facilitate a direct let through matching an adapted property to an applicant will ensure better use of stock and an appropriate and long-term housing solution for the applicant.

To facilitate further the councils are including within the priority banding a Band 2 allocation for those seeking to move from an adapted property that is no longer needed. Again this ensures that an adapted property becomes available sooner.

As per the bedroom provision for young carers detailed above, where there is an agreed medical need for a Carer and they are not already a permanent part of the household, provision for a bedroom can be given, in addition, where there is a need to accommodate large equipment or where there are serious mobility an additional room can be allocated.

With these measures it is aimed the Allocations Scheme will have a positive impact on applicants with a disability.

## **Race**

The Allocations Scheme aims to have a positive impact for all applicants and we acknowledge that those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups may be disproportionately affected by some aspects of homelessness, for example:

- Black people are disproportionately affected by homelessness with 1 in 23 black households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness, versus 1 in 83 households from all other ethnicities combined.
- 24% of people making homeless applications to local councils are from BAME groups, even though they make up just over a tenth (11%) of all households in England.<sup>1</sup>

Due to issues with the Broadland IT system we are unable to extract data relating to ethnicity of applicants for the housing list. With a new system coming into place in April 2021, recording will be improved and can provide a comparator with South Norfolk data. The Councils can use this data to ensure that services are accessible. It should also be noted that provision of this information is voluntary for all applicants and so may lead to some areas of under reporting.

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[https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_releases/articles/black\\_people\\_are\\_more\\_than\\_three\\_times\\_as\\_likely\\_to\\_experience\\_homelessness](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/black_people_are_more_than_three_times_as_likely_to_experience_homelessness)

We can, however provide data around ethnicity of applicants seeking assistance under a prevention or relief duty through the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) to give an overview. Data for 2019/20 suggests that of those approaching Broadland, 6.9% of applicants were from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other Ethnicity<sup>2</sup>. Taking Census 2011 data, the overall Broadland population of those with the same ethnicities was 2.3%. Although not at the same numbers as the England average above, it does indicate that there is a slightly higher representation from those of a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnicity who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

In comparison, in South Norfolk, just 1.6% of HRA approaches were from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other Ethnicity compared to an overall population percentage of 2.4%. However, only 88.1% of approaches were from white applicants as opposed to 97.6% of the overall South Norfolk population. For 10.2% of applicants, their ethnicity is not known, perhaps indicating under reporting.

The differences in the data highlight the importance of the standardisation of the information supplied to the councils, this will enable the councils to carefully monitor the housing list and ensure that the policies and processes contained within the scheme does not have a negative impact.

The council also extends support to those of a Gypsy and Traveller background , firstly through the provision of a local connection for those who are Gypsy's,(as defined in the Caravan Sites Act 1968) who have habitually resorted to the area and wish to seek permanent 'bricks and mortar' housing.

Relevant to South Norfolk Council is the management of applications for pitches managed by a Registered Provider. The process detailed in the Allocations Scheme provides a consistent application procedure, and because available pitches will be allocated through a direct let process enables an assessment of priority need in addition to an additional assessment of any site-specific factors which will include consideration of the balance and mix in the community, therefore prioritising the long-term cohesion of the site.

## **Sex**

The Councils acknowledge that some genders will be more represented in specific household categories approaching the housing service. For example, Domestic Abuse disproportionately affects women and children. National statistics state that almost 1 in 3 women aged between 16-59 will experience DA in their lifetime (ONS, 2019). An estimated 20% of children in the UK have lived with an adult perpetrating DA (NSPCC, 2011). In recognition of the impact of DA on young people, the Domestic Abuse Bill currently in progress through Parliament has been amended to recognise children as victims of DA in their own right.

Approximately 4.2% of men in comparison with 7.9% of women suffered domestic abuse in 2018 (ONS). As part of the Council's priority banding system, those who are homeless and fleeing violence or the threat of violence, including Domestic Abuse will be awarded the highest priority band on the Housing List – Band 1, to enable the applicant and their household to access safe housing. In addition, Domestic Abuse is one of the four priorities contained within the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025 with a focus to seek housing options to suit the varied needs of victims. This could include the provision of sanctuary schemes to prevent loss of current home. The Councils will also make use of direct and sensitive lets, where appropriate to ensure safety.

The Councils have extended Housing List qualification criteria to include where they are divorced, separated or a civil partner of service personnel and are required to move out of Ministry of Defence accommodation. This is in addition to former members of the armed forces and bereaved or widowed spouses. While this will mainly positively impact heterosexual women as they represent the greater proportion of spouses and civil partners in terms of Armed Forces personnel, it would not in consequence negatively impact males or those who identify as LGBTQ+.

## **Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment**

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<sup>2</sup> HCLIC Data 2019/20 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2019-20>



The Allocations Scheme contains no specific policies or procedures that relate to Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment, however, as with other protected characteristics, those who identify as LGBTQ+ may be more likely to be over represented in certain areas, for example, research from Stonewall (2018) suggests that 11% of the LGBT+ population have experienced domestic abuse in the previous 12 months; twice as high as the population as a whole. For bisexual women this increases to 13%, and for Trans or non-binary people to 19%.

In addition, research by the Albert Kennedy Trust in 2016 found that young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender comprise up to 24 per cent of the youth homeless population with the main reasons were parental rejection, abuse within the family or being exposed to aggression and violence.

## **5. What do you believe are the potential Communities impacts of this policy?**

Please include:

- How the policy can meet agreed priorities
- Evidence gathered to inform your decision
- Partnership organisations worked with in the development of this policy
- Where you have consulted, Who and How this has informed the decision/policy
- Any other groups impacted not detailed above

**Note:** Impacts could be **positive**, **neutral**, or **negative** and impact groups differently

### **Health and Mental Health**

This EqCIA details above how the Allocations Scheme can have a positive impact on those with a disability or health condition. In terms of mental health, the Councils acknowledge that worry over the loss of a home can exacerbate mental health, while mental health conditions can increase the risk of homelessness.

Policies and processes within the Allocations Scheme that aim to have a positive impact on MH include:

- Safe Surrender process, where an existing social housing tenancy is failing, the agreement enables the surrender of the tenancy before the situation escalates to a crisis and/or eviction. Safe Surrender agreements will be taken into account when assessing subsequent housing applications.
- Assisted bidding and Direct Lets for applicants who need additional support bidding or because their circumstances mean that a direct let to a specific property may provide the best option.

### **Place inc. Rurality**

Measures contained within the Allocations Scheme seek to support safe, coherent communities. These include:

- Properties being available for applicants across both districts, subject to the property not being allocated to an applicant on the list for the 'home district' of the property. This ensures that no property is left empty and they retain their use as a home, reducing the prospect of ASB and providing an element of mobility amongst residents of South Norfolk and Broadland.
- S106 properties enabling local residents to access affordable housing in their area
- The suspension of bidding process where ASB has been an issue
- The provision of sensitive lets where a property has a management history which requires the careful selection of the next tenant to ensure harmony in the area where it is located.

### **Low Income and Poverty**

Affordability of housing can be one of the main reasons applicants approach for housing advice and access to the housing list. This is more likely to affect, in particular, single income households, for example, young and single people and single headed households. To provide some illustration, of those who approached the Councils as homeless or threatened with homelessness under the HRA in 2019/2020 just under 50% of those were aged under 34. Single males comprised an average of 39% of approaches, 20% were single females. From the perspective of single adult headed households, just under 3% were headed by a male



and 23% headed by a female. Nationally ONS statistics state that 86% of single parent households are headed by women, however the number of male headed families has increased by 22% overall.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, private rental prices average at £404 pm in Norwich (Broadland and South Norfolk figures not available) for a room in a shared property and an average of £785 in Broadland for a three bedroom property (ONS, 2020)<sup>4</sup>. Applying the salary principle of 30x monthly rent used by letting agents to determine affordability this requires an annual salary £12,409 and £23,550. For those eligible for assistance with housing costs, a welcome rise in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates was introduced in April 2020<sup>5</sup>, however there can still be considerable shortfall for households to make up. An average of £45 pm for a room in a shared property to £76 pm for a three bedroom property. It should also be noted that locally approx. 20-25% of households in the sub-region in receipt of help with housing costs are in employment.

Although the statistics above don't take into account all reasons for households applying to the housing list, such as medical need, overcrowding etc. it does indicate that affordability can be a determining factor in approaching the housing list. This is going to be particularly pertinent as the economic impacts of COVID-19 continue to become apparent.

For young and single people, based on an assessment of their circumstances and needs, an application to the housing list may not be the most suitable housing solution. However, the Accommodation Pathway model, within which the Allocations Scheme sits seeks to provide a one-stop housing advice platform on a wider basis than that of social housing. This could include measures to prevent housing crisis, remaining in the family home, debt and welfare advice and support into the private rental sector, including rent and deposit schemes.

## **6. How is it proposed that any identified negative impacts are mitigated?**

Please include:

- **Steps taken to mitigate, for example, other services that may be available**
- **If a neutral impact has been identified can a positive impact be achieved?**
- **If you are unable to resolve the issues highlighted during this assessment, please explain why**
- **How impacts will be monitored and addressed?**
- **Could the decision/policy be implemented in a different way?**
- **What is the impact if the decision/policy is not implemented?**

The detail contained within questions 4-6 above provide examples of characteristics, including protected characteristics of those who may be more likely to approach the councils, either in, or to prevent housing crisis or who are experiencing a change in circumstances, and which could be resolved through an application to the housing list.

It also gives detail of the measures contained within the Allocations Scheme which are designed to have a positive impact for people for will identify as having one or more of those characteristics, including where the Councils seek to reduce the barriers for approach for housing advice. The Allocations Scheme will need to be carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure that the predicted impacts remain positive or neutral in particular with regard to,

- The suspension of bidding process
- The re-assessment of non-qualified applicants
- Continued impacts of COVID-19
- Impacts from Britain's exit from the EU, especially in relation to eligibility criteria for people from abroad

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<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2019>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland/april2019tomarch2020>

<sup>5</sup> <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/>

**Signed by evaluator:** Victoria Parsons

**Signed by responsible head of department:**

Please send your completed forms to the equalities lead (Victoria Parsons) to be reviewed and stored in accordance with our legal duty.

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REVIEW DATE – (See Page 2 for details of reviews. Please send a copy of the reviewed document to Victoria Parsons)

## **HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

**Report Author:**

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**Portfolio:**

Housing and Wellbeing

**Wards Affected:**

All

**Purpose of the Report:**

This report recommends the adoption of the Council's new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy (attached at Appendix A to this report).

**Recommendations:**

That Cabinet

1. Consider and approve the Council's new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy;  
  
or
2. Approve alternative action in respect of the proposed new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides context to the creation of the new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In common with all local housing authorities, the Council has a statutory role in ensuring the quality and suitability of homes in its area and address hazards in people's homes. To do this, the Housing Standards Team works closely with home owners, housing associations and private sector landlords to ensure that properties within their ownership meet the required standard.
- 2.2 A multitude of legislative tools are available to assess properties and address hazards and risks. The Housing Act 2004 is the primary Act detailing 29 specific hazards that may be assessed. The Act details procedures and duties for local authorities to address defects identified in people's homes. In addition various regulations have been introduced to amend the Act and provide bespoke procedures, for example specific Smoke Alarm Regulations.
- 2.3 The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy is a legislative reference document for officers in the Housing Standards Team. The Policy details what action can be taken and what legislative and regulatory basis there is for that action. It is an essential tool in ensuring that the Council remains legally compliant in its enforcement activity.
- 2.4 The current Housing Standards Enforcement Policy is out of date and needs to be updated to ensure the Council remains compliant with the latest housing enforcement legislation and regulations.
- 2.5 The appended Policy has been written to meet the requirements of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 and the Regulators Code, which came into statutory effect on 6 April 2014. The Council has a duty to follow the principles of good regulation specified in the Act and to have regard to the Code when setting policies or principles that determine how we carry out our regulatory activities.
- 2.6 The focus of this report and the proposed new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy is in relation to the statutory and therefore non-discretionary powers that the Council has under a wide range of housing related legislation. Use of discretionary housing enforcement powers, including those relating to empty homes will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet later in the year.

## **3 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 The Council's existing policy statement is in need of updating in order to reflect newly enacted regulations in relation to Electrical Safety Standards in the private rented sector.

- 3.2 In addition it has been agreed that a Banning Order Policy, that is solely applicable to Housing Standards related matters should be adopted. Therefore the opportunity has been taken to develop a Council Banning Order Policy, which has been appended to the attached Housing Standards Enforcement Policy. The Banning Order Policy has been developed in accordance with the current MHCLG Guidance.

#### **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 In order to provide the Housing Standards Team with a legally compliant and legislatively up to date Enforcement Policy, it is proposed that the appended policy be agreed and adopted. The new policy, when agreed, will take immediate effect and will be published on the Council website.

#### **5 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 5.1 It is feasible that the Council could continue with the current Housing Standards Enforcement Policy, however such an approach would undermine the Council's ability to take effective enforcement action in respect of sub-standard housing in the District.

#### **6 RISKS**

- 6.1 **Resource Implications:** There are no new resource implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications:** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications:** There are no direct equality issues arising from this report and it has not been necessary to prepare an Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment.

The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy articulates the importance of ensuring that housing standards are adhered to in order to improve the quality of life of those living in sub-standard homes.

- 6.4 **Environmental Impact:** One of the primary roles of the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy is to address any adverse environmental impacts that might arise from poor housing conditions.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder:** The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy provides a clear statement of action that can be taken by the Council, should there be a breach of the relevant housing legislation. This will on occasion lead to enforcement action that will address illegal activity.
- 6.6 **Risks:** Not adopting an up to date Housing Standards Enforcement Policy could have both legal and reputational risks for the Council.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The current Housing Standards Enforcement Policy requires updating to reflect new legislation and practice, and in order to adhere to central Government guidance.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That Cabinet

1. Consider and approve the Council's new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy;
- or
2. Approve alternative action in respect of the proposed new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

### **Background Papers**

Broadland Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2019

Improving the private rented sector – A Guide for Councils, MHCLG July 2020

Banning Order Offences under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Guidance for Local Housing Authorities MHCLG April 2018

# **Broadland District Council**

## **Housing Standards Enforcement Policy**

**Adopted: November 2020  
Review Date: November 2022**

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## **SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General Principles**

Enforcement action will be based upon an assessment of risk to residents' health and safety, public health and/or the environment.

All enforcement action will be based upon an objective assessment following consideration of all the facts of the matter, and will not be based on anecdotal evidence, hearsay or other subjective assessment.

It will not be normal practice for formal enforcement action to be used as a punitive measure for minor technical contravention.

All enforcement action shall have regard to relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidance periodically issued by the Government, the Chartered Institution of Environmental Health, Local Government Regulation and other relevant bodies. This also includes the Human Rights Act 1998 and the test of proportionality. Regard will also be had for departmental procedures and work instructions.

All authorised officers, when making enforcement decisions will abide by the requirements of the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy. Any departure from this policy must be exceptional, be capable of justification and be fully considered by the Assistant Director, Individuals and Families before the decision is taken, unless there would be a significant risk to public health and/or safety by delaying the decision.

## **SECTION 2. TYPES OF ACTION**

### **2.1 Informal Action**

2.1.1 Informal action to secure compliance with legislation includes:

- Offering verbal advice
- Verbal requests for action
- Informal written advice (visit reports and letters)

2.1.2 The circumstances where it is appropriate to use informal action are:

- Where the act or omission is trivial or not of a serious enough nature to warrant formal action.
- As an initial notification to the alleged offender of a minor problem.
- Where from the individual/organisations/businesses past history it can be reasonably expected that informal action will achieve compliance.

- Where confidence in the individual/businesses management is high.
- Where the consequences of non-compliance will not pose a significant risk to residents' health and safety or the environment.

2.1.3 There may be circumstances when some of the above are not met. However it may be more effective than a formal approach e.g. this may apply to charitable or voluntary organisations. If an authorised enforcement officer considers this is appropriate, they will discuss the matter with their line manager to ratify their action. For non-hazardous and minor contraventions, a revisit may be an inappropriate use of resources.

All enforcement documentation issued or sent, will:

- Contain all the information necessary to understand what needs to be done, why, when and by whom.
- Clearly distinguish between legal requirements and best practice advice or recommendations.
- Indicate the legislation that applies.

An authorised enforcement officer will at all times, even if only giving verbal advice, differentiate between legal requirements and matters which are recommended as good practice.

## **2.2 Formal Action**

### **2.2.1 Relevant Legislation**

Formal action to secure compliance with legislation may include:

- Improvement Notice (Housing Act 2004)
- Suspended Improvement Notice (Housing Act 2004)
- Prohibition Order (Housing Act 2004)
- Suspended Prohibition Order (Housing Act 2004)
- Hazard Awareness Notice (Housing Act 2004)
- Emergency Remedial Action (Housing Act 2004)
- Emergency Prohibition Notice (Housing Act 2004)
- Empty Dwelling Management Order (Housing Act 2004)
- Compulsory Purchase Order (Housing Act 2004 and/or Town & Country Planning Act 1990)
- Demolition Order (Housing Act 1985)

- Ruinous and dilapidated buildings and neglected sites Notice (Building Act 1984)
- Protection of Buildings Notice (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982)
- Drainage Notice (Building Act 1984/Public Health Act 1961)
- House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Mandatory Licence (Housing Act 2004)
- The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018
- The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018
- Caravan Sites Licence (Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960)
- Direction Order (Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994)
- Civil Fine Procedures - The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014; The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations (2015); The Housing Act 2004 as amended by The Housing and Planning Act 2016; Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Notices
- Works in Default
- Prosecution (summary or indictment)
- Rent Repayment Orders
- Banning Orders

### 2.2.2 Appropriate Circumstances

The circumstances where it is appropriate to use formal action include:

- There are significant contraventions of legislation.
- There is a lack of confidence in the individual/business to respond to an informal approach.
- There is a history of non-compliance with informal action.
- The consequence of non-compliance could be potentially serious to residents and/or public health.
- There is a requirement to issue a notice to protect the resident from any retaliatory conviction.

- Although prosecution is intended, immediate or swift action is necessarily required to remedy a serious threat to public health.

### 2.2.3 Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020

This recently enacted legislation enables a range of Notices to be used. The relevant Notices are:

- Remedial Notice (Regulation 4 (1))
- Remedial Action Notice (Regulation 6 (2))
- Urgent Remedial Action Notice (Regulation 10 (3))

The Council may consider it necessary to deal with non-compliance with the processes, (as detailed in the above regulations), using summary proceedings in a Magistrates Court or via the Civil Fine procedure as detailed in Appendix A.

### 2.2.4 Improvement (IN), Prohibition (PN), Emergency Prohibition (EPN) and Hazard Awareness Notices (HAN) (including Suspended, Improvement and Prohibition Notices)

The circumstances where authorised officers will consider the service of Improvement, Prohibition and Hazard Awareness notices under the Housing Act 2004 includes one or more of the following:

- An assessment of a property under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) reveals the presence of one or more Category 1 Hazards, (hazards rated A, B or C). The Council has a duty to take action.
- An assessment of a property under the HHSRS reveals the presence of one or more Category 2 Hazards, (hazards rated D, E, F, G, H, I or J). The Council has a discretionary power to take action.
- There is little confidence in the individual/business resolving the matter through an informal approach.
- The service of a notice is the only realistic option to secure compliance.
- There is a history of non-compliance with informal action.
- Standards are generally poor with little management awareness of statutory requirements.
- There is a realistic chance of securing conviction for non-compliance
- The consequences of non-compliance could be a risk to

residents' health and safety.

- Previous action has failed to resolve the issue in question.

In general, improvement and prohibition notices will not be used for minor technical contraventions but will be used where there is a risk to resident's health and safety. Hazard awareness notices may be used where the risks are either minor or where it is deemed impracticable for works to reduce or eliminate more serious risks.

Authorised enforcement officers will only serve an improvement notice where they are satisfied that service of a notice is the most appropriate course of action and will discuss the content of the notice with a colleague, usually their line manager, **before** service takes place.

Notices will only be issued and signed by those officers authorised to do so. Authorised enforcement officers will only consider service of an improvement notice in respect of one or more HHSRS Category 2 Hazards where the following applies.

### **HHSRS Band D Hazard**

There will be a general presumption that where one or more Band D hazards exist, officers will consider action under the Housing Act 2004. Where the hazards identified relate to "Damp and Mould" and "Fire", action will be determined as if the assessment for a "vulnerable occupant" is the "actual occupant". Where "Excess Cold" is identified as a Band D hazard, insulation works to the property will be considered a priority when enforcement action is taken.

### **Multiple HHSRS Hazards Bands D – I**

Where a number of hazards at Band D or below appear, when aggregated together, to create a more serious situation, or where the property appears to be in an un-maintained and/or dilapidated condition, the Housing Standards Senior Manager or the Assistant Director, Individuals and Families may authorise action under the Housing Act 2004.

Officers will discuss the content of the notice with a colleague, usually their line manager, **before** service takes place.

Authorised enforcement officers will place realistic time limits on improvement and prohibition notices which, where possible, will be agreed with the recipient as being attainable. Wherever possible, the authorised officer should also discuss the contents of the notice with the recipient and will consider any alternatives that may be put forward by the recipient at that time.

Generally, in cases where there has been a failure to comply with an improvement or prohibition notice, the Council will consider summary proceedings or a Civil Fine Procedure and works in default where they are also required.

### 2.2.5 Emergency Remedial Action

The circumstances where authorised officers will consider the undertaking of emergency remedial action includes one or more of the following:

- An assessment of a property under the HHSRS reveals the presence of one or more Category 1 Hazard, (hazards rated A, B or C). The Council has a duty to take action.
- The hazard(s) involve an imminent risk of serious harm to the health or safety of any of the occupants in those or any other residential premises.
- There is little confidence in the individual/business resolving the matter through an informal approach.
- Taking emergency remedial action is the only realistic option to remove the imminent risk.
- There is a history of non-compliance with informal action.
- Standards are generally poor with little management awareness of statutory requirements.
- The consequences of in-action could be a risk of serious harm to residents' health and safety.
- Previous action has failed to resolve the issue in question.

Emergency remedial action will not be used for minor technical contraventions but will be used where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to residents' safety. Emergency remedial action will only be approved by those officers authorised to do so.

Authorised enforcement officers will only approve emergency remedial action where they are satisfied that such action is the most appropriate course of action. They will discuss the details of the case, the required works and content of the notice with their line manager, **before** the action takes place.

Wherever possible, the authorised officer should also discuss the matter with the property owner(s) and will consider any alternatives that may be put forward by the recipient at that time.

Emergency remedial action will be followed in the statutory time (7 days), by a Housing Act 2004 Section 41 Emergency Remedial Action Notice.

### 2.2.6 Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

Actions in relation to empty homes will be carried out in accordance with the current approved Council policy.

The circumstances where authorised officers may consider the initiation of an EDMO or CPO includes the following:

- These Orders will only be considered in respect of long term empty property where all other actions have failed to result in the dwelling coming back into use within a reasonable timeframe.
- Additionally a CPO may be considered without previous engagement, where a suitable long term empty property is brought to the Councils attention in an area of housing need, and where the owner has made it clear they have no intention to have the property occupied, and has no good reason for that intention.
- A CPO will not be initiated without prior authorisation from the Assistant Director, Individuals and Families in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- The owner(s) have been fully appraised of their statutory compensation rights.

Only enforcement officers authorised to issue EDMOs shall do so and they must follow and have due regard to the statutory guidance under the Housing Act 2004 and relevant case history decisions from the Residential Property Tribunal.

#### 2.2.7 Demolition Order

The serving of a Demolition Order may be considered to deal with a property (normally a detached property), where a full socio-economic assessment indicates that there is no other reasonably acceptable alternative.

The Council will not serve a Demolition Order unless satisfied the following conditions are fulfilled:

- There must be sufficient evidence to instigate prosecution proceedings.
- There must be adequate arrangements in place to ensure that the Demolition Order does not result in homelessness of any occupants.
- The owner(s) have been fully appraised of their statutory compensation rights.

#### 2.2.8 Ruinous and Dilapidated Buildings and Neglected Sites Notice, (Building Act 1984),

Protection of Buildings (Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982),

Drainage Notice (Building Act 1984 and Public Health Act 1961).

These notices will be considered in the following circumstances:

- An assessment of the property indicates defects likely to lead to risks to public health or safety.
- There is little confidence in the individual/business resolving the matter through an informal approach.
- The service of a notice is the only realistic option to secure compliance.
- There is a history of non-compliance with informal action.
- Standards are generally poor with little management awareness of statutory requirements.
- There is a realistic chance of securing a conviction for non-compliance.
- The consequences of non-compliance could be a risk to residents' health and safety.
- Previous action has failed to resolve the issue in question.

#### 2.2.9 Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and Holiday Caravan Sites Licences.

These licences will be issued on application by a relevant fit and proper person and payment of the appropriate fee.

Conditions will be attached to Holiday Caravan Site Licences in accordance with statutory guidance and Model Standards where applicable. Conditions for relevant HMO's that require a licence, will include statutory conditions and additional conditions based on, but not exclusive to, the Councils adopted 'Landlord's guide to amenities and facilities for licensed HMO's'.

A person commits an offence for breaches of Licence conditions of Holiday Caravan Sites. Section 72 of the Housing Act 2004 details offences relating to the HMO licensing procedure. Such offences will be dealt with according to the general policy on Prosecutions and Civil Penalties (See Appendix 1).

#### 2.2.10 Residential Caravan Sites Licences (Breach of conditions)

The circumstances where authorised officers will consider the service of a Compliance Notice under the Caravan Control of Development Act 1960 includes one or more of the following:

- There is little confidence in the individual/business resolving the matter through an informal approach.
- The service of a notice is the only realistic option to secure compliance.
- There is a history of non-compliance with informal action.



- Standards are generally poor with little management awareness of statutory requirements.
- There is a realistic chance of securing a conviction for non-compliance.
- The consequences of non-compliance could be a risk to residents' health and safety.
- Previous action has failed to resolve the issue in question.

#### 2.2.11 Direction Order

Service of a Direction Order is only relevant to unauthorised encampments, and will only be considered after a meeting under the auspices of the Norfolk Protocol for the Consideration of Unauthorised Encampments has been convened.

A protocol meeting will consider all aspects of the encampment including the health, safety, welfare, human rights etc. of the campers, balancing the human rights of the campers, with those of any affected nearby settled residents. The campers will be invited to send a representative to the Protocol meeting.

In cases of urgency, a Direction Order may be considered without prior reference to a Protocol meeting but in these cases the matter must be discussed with the Assistant Director, Individuals and Families and their agreement obtained. Where practicable the County Traveller Liaison Officer will be notified of such urgent action.

#### 2.2.12 Works in default

The Council will consider it appropriate to instigate works in default where one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The relevant person has failed to comply with a statutory notice requiring the execution of works.
- It is considered unlikely that the relevant person has any intention to carry out the required works.
- It is considered that the relevant person does not have the capability or capacity to organise and execute the required works.
- One or more of the property's occupants are considered to be vulnerable.
- Where the relevant person demonstrates a flagrant disregard for the health and safety of his tenants, and/or a flagrant disregard for the requirements of the legislation, consideration will be given, where statute empowers, to undertake works in default and a simultaneous prosecution.

### 2.2.13 Simple Caution

The issuing of a caution may be considered appropriate under the following circumstances:

- To deal quickly and simply with less serious incidents.
- To divert the accused from an unnecessary appearance in the criminal courts on matters that can be more quickly and equally efficiently dealt with by way of a simple caution.
- To reduce the chance of a repeated offence.

The Council will not issue a caution unless the following conditions are fulfilled:

- There must be sufficient evidence to instigate prosecution proceedings.
- The offender must admit the offence.
- The offender must show remorse and have undertaken to prevent recurrence of the offence.
- The offender must accept the caution once they have understood its importance and significance and have given a written consent to being cautioned.
- Commencing a prosecution proceeding is not in the public interest, taking into account the public interest principles described in The Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors.

If a person declines the offer of a caution, prosecution proceedings will normally be the next course of action. In some circumstances, the Council may consider a written warning will suffice instead of a caution, e.g. in the case of an offence which is minor in nature.

### 2.2.14 Prosecution

The Council will consider it appropriate to instigate prosecution proceedings where one or more of the following criteria are met:

- There is general disregard for the law, particularly where the economic advantages of breaking the law and/or the loss/adverse impact or potential loss/adverse impact on others resulting from the offence are substantial.
- There appears to have been a disregard for residents' health and safety.
- There is a history of non-compliance with the law, an approved Code of Practice or the relevant guidance, and the person in charge and/or company is not intending to rectify or deal with this non-compliance.
- The person in charge and/or company is not capable of dealing

adequately with the issues and is not prepared to pay for professional advice, or take on board recommendations.

- As a result of a legal contravention, there has been a serious incident or case of ill health.
- The offence involves failure to comply with a notice.

When considering whether to prosecute for a breach of legislation following an incident, the seriousness of the contravention not the severity of the incident, is the prime issue for consideration. The extent of personal or company responsibility for the incident is also relevant.

Due regard must also be taken of guidance contained in The Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors issued by the Crown Prosecution Service and relevant statutory codes of practice and the test of proportionality under the Human Rights Act. Factors to be considered may include:

- The seriousness of the alleged offence.
- The risk of harm to public health.
- Identifiable victims.
- Failure to comply with a statutory notice served for a breach of legislation.
- Disregard of public health for financial reward.
- The previous history of the party concerned.
- Offences following a history of similar offences.
- Failure to respond positively to past warnings.
- The likelihood of the alleged offender(s) being able to establish a due diligence defence.
- The ability of any important witness to give evidence and their willingness to co-operate.
- The willingness of the alleged offender to prevent recurrence of the alleged offence.
- The probable public benefit of a prosecution and the importance of the case e.g. whether it might establish a legal precedent.
- The more serious the offence, the less likelihood that the public interest will allow anything other than a prosecution.
- Whether other action, such as issuing a simple caution in accordance with current government guidance.
- Any explanation offered by the alleged offender, (person or company representative).

Once a decision to instigate prosecution proceedings has been taken, the matter should be referred, without undue delay, to the Council's legal advisors.

#### 2.2.15 Fine Procedures

##### **The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014**

Where the Council is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that a person has failed to comply with the requirement to belong to a Redress Scheme the Council may, by notice, require the person to pay the authority a penalty of £5,000.

The Council will initiate a fine procedure detailed in the Order where satisfied that a person has failed the requirement without any warning procedure.

##### **The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations (2015)**

Where the Council is made aware that a rental property does not have a Smoke Alarm fitted on every floor and a Carbon Monoxide Alarm fitted to any habited room which contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance, or that such an alarm was not appropriately checked at the start of a tenancy, the Council will consider issuing a penalty notice.

The level of fine imposed will be determined by procedures detailed in the Councils "Statement of Principles" which can be found on the Council website.

##### **Financial Penalties as an Alternative to Prosecution**

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends the Housing Act 2004 by introducing a new Section 249A, to enable local housing authorities to impose a financial penalty up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution for the following offences under the Housing Act 2004:

- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice (section 30).
- Offences in relation to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Section 72).
- Offences in relation to licensing of houses under Part 3 of the Act (Section 95).
- Offences of contravention of an overcrowding notice (Section 139).
- Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Section 234).
- Breach of a Banning Order (Section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016).

The criminal burden of proof, i.e. beyond all reasonable doubt will be satisfied before a Civil Penalty is issued as an alternative to prosecution. The Council

will satisfy itself that a realistic prospect of conviction will be achieved prior to the introduction of this Civil Penalty.

The Council will assess whether there is sufficient reliable evidence to prosecute with regard to The Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors. The Council will consider any potential defences available and in certain circumstances may decide to conduct an interview under caution in accordance with PACE codes of practice to assist in determining whether the issue of a Civil Penalty is appropriate or not.

The decision to impose fixed penalty notices under the Housing Act 2004 as amended, is delegated to the Assistant Director, Individuals and Families. Determination of appropriate penalty levels will follow the procedure as approved by the Council.

#### 2.2.16 Rent Repayment Orders

Under Section 40(2) The Housing and Planning Act 2016 a Rent Repayment Order (RRO) requires the landlord, under a tenancy of housing in England, to repay an amount of rent paid by a tenant, or a local housing authority, an amount in respect of a relevant award of Universal Credit paid (to any person) in respect of rent under the tenancy.

RROs have now been expanded to cover the following Housing Act 2004 offences:

- Section 30(1) failure to comply with an improvement notice.
- Section 32(1) failure to comply with a prohibition order etc.
- Section 72(1) control or management of an unlicensed HMO.
- Section 95(1) control or management of an unlicensed house.

And

- Section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 for breach of a Banning Order.

If the Council becomes aware that a person has been convicted of such an offence, the Assistant Director Individuals and Families will consider the commencement of proceedings at the First Tier Tribunal for a RRO. This will however only apply in cases where the Council has paid rent, in the form of Universal Credit/Housing Benefit on behalf of the tenant.

#### 2.2.17 Banning Orders

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 makes provision for the imposition of banning orders. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 (Banning Order Offences) Regulations 2017 details Banning Order offences. Among other relevant offences detailed in the regulations, Housing Act 2004 offences for which a banning order may be used include

- Section 30(1) failure to comply with an improvement notice

- Section 32(1) failure to comply with a prohibition order etc
- Section 72(1) control or management of an unlicensed HMO
- Section 95(1) control or management of an unlicensed house
- Section 139(7) Contravention of an overcrowding notice
- Section 234(3) Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Section 238(1) False or misleading information

The Assistant Director, Individuals and Families will consider application to the First-tier Tribunal for a banning order against a person who has been convicted of a banning order offence.

A copy of the Councils Banning Order Policy is attached at Appendix 3.

## **Appendix 1 Civil Penalty Decision Process**

This Civil Penalty Decision Process encompasses procedures for the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

Where the Local Housing Authority considers that a Housing Act offence has been committed it must decide whether to prosecute or to issue a civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution.

The following factors, whilst not exhaustive, are examples of where it would be appropriate to consider for prosecution:-

- The seriousness of the offence, for example breach of a Prohibition Order would be an offence only suitable for prosecution.
- The antecedents of an individual, for example a landlord indicates that he / she has been prosecuted for Housing Act / similar offences.

The following factors, whilst not exhaustive, are examples of where it would be appropriate to consider the issuing of a Civil Penalty:-

- No evidence of previous non-compliance with appropriate legislation
- No previous convictions recorded
- Not in the public interest to prosecute
- Offence was committed as a result of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding (these factors must be balanced against the seriousness of the offence )
- Prosecution is likely to have a serious adverse effect upon an individual's eg a landlord physical or mental health, always bearing in mind the seriousness of the offence.

### **Determining the level of Civil Penalty**

In order to ensure that the civil penalty is set at an appropriate level the following factors will be considered

- The seriousness of the offence, determined by harm caused and culpability of the offender
- The history of compliance of the offender
- The punishment of the offender for the offence
- The deterrent from repeating the offence
- The deterrent from others committing similar offences
- Removing any financial benefit obtained from committing the offence

### **Harm**

In determining the level of harm the Local Housing Authority will have regard to

- The individual i.e. physical injury, damage to health, psychological distress
- To the community i.e. economic loss, harm to public health
- Other types of harm i.e. public concern/feeling over the impact of poor housing condition on the local neighbourhood

The nature of the harm will depend on the personal characteristics and circumstances of the victim e.g. tenant. Where no actual harm has resulted from the

offence the Local Housing Authority will consider the relative danger that persons have been exposed to as a result of the offenders conduct, the likelihood of harm occurring and the gravity of harm that could have resulted

Factors that indicate a higher degree of harm include:

- Multiple victims
- Especially serious or psychological effect on the victim
- Victim is particularly vulnerable

#### **Examples of Harm Categories that will be considered**

<b>High</b>	Housing defect giving rise to the offence poses a serious and substantial risk of harm to the occupants and/or visitors for example danger of electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning or serious fire safety risk
<b>Medium</b>	Housing defect giving rise to the offence poses a serious risk of harm to the occupants and/or visitors for example falls between levels, excess cold, asbestos exposure
<b>Low</b>	Housing defect giving rise to the offence poses a risk of harm to the occupants and/or visitors for example localised damp and mould, entry by intruders

#### **Culpability**

In determining culpability the Local Housing Authority will have regard to 4 levels of culpability.

Where the offender:

- Has the **intention** to cause harm, the highest culpability where an offence is planned
- Is **reckless** as to whether harm is caused i.e. the offender appreciates at least some harm would be caused but proceeds giving no thought to the consequences even though the extent of the risk would be obvious to most people
- Has **knowledge** of the specific risks entailed by his actions even though he does not intend to cause the harm that results
- Is guilty of negligence

#### **Examples of Culpability that may be considered**

<b>Very High (Deliberate Act)</b>	Intentional breach by landlord or property agent or flagrant disregard for the law i.e. failure to comply with a correctly served improvement notice
<b>High (Reckless Act)</b>	Actual foresight of, or wilful blindness to risk of offending but risks nevertheless taken by the landlord or property agent for example failure to comply with HMO Management regulations
<b>Medium (Negligent Act)</b>	Failure of the landlord or property agent to take reasonable care to put in place and enforce proper systems for avoiding commission of the offence for example; part compliance with a schedule of works but



	failure to fully complete all schedule items within notice timescale
<b>Low (Low or no culpability)</b>	Offence committed with little or no fault on the part of the landlord or property agent for example obstruction by tenant to allow contractor access, damage caused by tenants

### **Determining the Civil Penalty Amount**

In assessing the seriousness there is a need to consider both culpability and harm. The table below sets out the interrelation between harm and culpability as a determinant of the Civil Penalty banding.

<b>Harm</b>	<b>Culpability</b>			
	<b>Very high</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>High</b>	Band 5	Band 4	Band 3	Band 2
<b>Medium</b>	Band 3	Band 3	Band 2	Band 1
<b>Low</b>	Band 1	Band 1	Band 1	Band 1

### **Banding Levels**

<b>Band 1</b>	<b>£0 - £999</b>
<b>Band 2</b>	<b>£1000–£4999</b>
<b>Band 3</b>	<b>£5000–£9999</b>
<b>Band 4</b>	<b>£10,000–£19999</b>
<b>Band 5</b>	<b>£20000–£30000</b>

The starting point in each band will be the midpoint i.e. for Band 3 the mid-point will be £7,500

- Band 1 relates to offences where there is a low risk of harm. Financial penalties at this level are designed to encourage compliance with lower level requirements for example failing to maintain yards and gardens or failure to display an information notice in a house in multiple occupation. They will also act as an initial deterrent where management standards are beginning to slip to prevent more significant contraventions.
- Bands 2 and 3 relate to more serious problems however a lower level of harm or culpability will reduce the need for higher fine levels.
- Band 4 and 5 fines relate to where there is a higher risk of harm and greater culpability. These offences carry significantly higher financial penalties.

### **Aggravating/Mitigating Factors**

The penalty may be increased or decreased from the centre starting point within the band to the maximum or minimum level in the band. Issues affecting this decision are detailed in the table below.

#### Issues relating to Aggravating/Mitigating Factors

Full co-operation following identification of offence	Reduce from starting
Minimal further input required by the council to achieve compliance	No adjustment
Significant involvement by the council required to achieve compliance	Increment increase

A significant lack of co-operation and/or obstruction leading to significant further enforcement activity (e.g. works in default)	Further incremental increase
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## **Ability to Pay**

1. Statutory guidance states that local housing authorities should use their existing powers to, as far as reasonably possible, make an assessment of a landlord's assets and any income (not just rental income) they receive when determining an appropriate penalty.
2. The existing powers available to the council include:
  - Section 235 Housing Act 2004 (power to require documents to be produced)
  - Housing benefit and council tax information (permitted by Section 237 of the Housing Act 2004)
  - Service of a requisition for information under section 16 of the Local Government (miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976 (power to obtain particulars of persons interested in land)
3. An offender will be assumed to be able to pay a penalty up to the maximum amount unless they can demonstrate otherwise. When a person receives a notice of intent to impose a financial penalty they have the right to make written representations about the proposal. We will specifically ask for those representations to include any evidence of the person's inability to pay the stated penalty.
4. If no representation is received then the starting assumption will be that the person is able to pay. This assumption will be tested against information held by the council such as council tax and housing benefit records, or publically available information such as company records or land registry entries.
5. Evidence put forward in a representation will be assessed for accuracy against council-held and public information.
6. Where appropriate, further information may be required through service of notice using the powers listed above.
7. Any evidence about ability to pay will be considered before a final decision is made about the level of the penalty.

## **Representations and Appeals**

8. A person who receives a notice of the council's intention to impose a financial penalty may make written representations to the council. These should be addressed to the Housing Standards Team or emailed to [psh.housing@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:psh.housing@broadland.gov.uk)

9. Written representations will be considered by the Housing Standards Senior Manager.
10. A person who receives a final notice requiring a penalty to be paid may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal against
  - 10.1. The decision to impose the penalty, or
  - 10.2. The amount of the penalty
11. Details about how to make an appeal will be included with any final notice.

### **Recovery**

12. A penalty must be paid within 28 days beginning with the day after that on which the notice was given
13. Where a penalty is not paid within 28 days, the councils will seek to recover it through a county court order.

## Appendix 2 Government Penalty Process

### Matrix for civil penalties

- This matrix has been developed to help local authorities use their powers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to impose a civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution for certain housing offences;
- This matrix is not binding and local authorities may choose to take a different approach
- In this matrix the following banding has been applied:

Band 1	£0 - £4,999	ASP £2,500
Band 2	£5,000 - £9,999	ASP £7,500
Band 3	£10,000 - £14,999	ASP £12,500
Band 4	£15,000 - £19,999	ASP £17,500
Band 5	£20,000 - £24,999	ASP £22,500
Band 6	£25,000 - £30,000	ASP £27,500

(ASP = Assumed Starting Point)

Level of Culpability	Assessment
Low	
Medium	
High	
Level of Harm (potential or actual)	
Low	
Medium	
High	
Culpability and Harm (combined)	
Civil Penalty Band 1	Amount
Aggravating factors 2	Revised penalty
Mitigating factors 3	Revised penalty
Income/asset check 4	Revised penalty
Final assessment	Final amount

1

Low culpability/high harm = Band 4	Medium culpability/high harm = Band 5	High culpability/high harm = Band 6
Low culpability/medium harm = Band 3	Medium culpability/medium harm = Band 4	High culpability/medium harm = Band 5
Low culpability/low harm = Band 1	Medium culpability/low harm = Band 2	High culpability/low harm = Band 3

1 Penalty to be increased by £1k for each aggravating factor up to a maximum of £5k

2 Penalty to be decreased by 31k for each mitigating factor up to a maximum of £5k

3 Offender assumed able to pay a penalty up to a maximum unless they can demonstrate otherwise.

## **Appendix 3 Banning Order Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Broadland and South Norfolk Councils will:

- decide when to apply for a Banning Order, and
- how we will determine the length of time we will request the ban apply for

This policy applies only to Housing Standards offences and is designed to ensure transparency, consistency and fairness in how and when banning order are sought and accords with the published MHCLG guidance.

### **Legislation**

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 enables the Councils to pay for the FTT to impose a banning order on an individual following conviction for a banning order offence.

### **Considerable Offences**

The offences for which a banning order may be applied for are listed in the statutory regulations issued in 2017 and apply to convictions for these offences issued either on or after 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

Spent convictions cannot be considered and if an absolute or conditional discharge for a relevant housing offence has been given, then that offence cannot be regarded as a considerable banning order offence.

### **Principles of Banning Orders**

The MHCLG guidance sets out an expectation that banning orders should be aimed at the most serious offenders.

### **Length of Banning Order**

It is not possible for the Councils to determine the length of a banning order, however we will make a recommendation to the FTT with accompanying reasons. A banning order is for a minimum of a 12 month period but there is no statutory maximum limit.

### **Determining When to Apply for a Banning Order**

The Councils will consider applying for a banning order for the most serious and pernicious offenders. In doing so, the following factors will be considered:

- The seriousness of the offence
- Any previous convictions or listing on the National Rogue Landlord Database
- The harm caused to the tenant by the offence
- Whether the recommended punishment is proportionate to the offence
- Will it provide sufficient deterrent and prevent repeat offending
- Will it deter others from committing similar offences

Where it is deemed appropriate and proportionate to do so, the Councils will make full use of the powers to apply for banning orders.

The decision whether to pursue a banning order will be made on a case by case basis and will be based on legal advice. The decision will be made by either the Housing Standards Senior Manager or the Assistant Director Individuals and Families following a recommendation made to them by the case officer.

#### Procedure for Applying for a Banning Order

The procedure for applying for a banning order is set out in Section 15 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and can be summarised as:

- The Councils are required to issue a 'notice of intent' to the individual within 6 months of them being convicted of the relevant offence
- The person the notice relates to will have 28 days in which to make written representation to the Councils. The representation may be via any written format.
- Following the 28 day period, having given due consideration to any representation received, should the Councils still propose to pursue a banning order an application will then be made to the FTT

#### Requests for Information

Section 19 of the Housing and Planning Act gives provision to the Local Authority to be able to require that a landlord provide information for the purpose of enabling the Councils to decide whether to apply for a banning order. This can include requiring the landlord to provide details on ALL properties they own.

In relation to requests for further information made by the Councils under this section:

- It is an offence to ignore or fail to provide the information requested, unless the landlord can provide reasonable excuse
- It is an offence to provide false or misleading information
- Failure to provide information or providing false or misleading information is punishable on summary conviction to a fine.

#### Consequences of a Banning Order

Where a banning order is made, the individual will be determined not to be a 'fit and proper' to hold a license under Part 2 or 3 of the Housing Act 2004 and any licences in force under those parts will be revoked.

Where a banning order is made, the individual prohibited from:

- Letting housing in England
- Engaging in letting agency work within England
- Engaging in property management within England; or
- Doing two or more of those things (to ensure that any order is effective and to prohibit engagement in other related activities)

It is a criminal offence to breach a banning order and is punishable on summary conviction to imprisonment, a fine, or both.

#### Entry on the Rogue Landlord Database

Where a successful banning has been made, the Councils must make an entry on the National Rogue Landlord Database. The entry is maintained for the period of the banning order.

#### Publicity Following a Banning Order

Where a successful banning order is made, the Councils will consider whether to publish the details including the name of the individual who has been banned. The Councils may take legal advice prior to publication and will be cognisant of the relevant Ministry of Justice guidance as to whether to publish sentencing outcomes. Information on banned landlords will be made available to tenants on written request.

## **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY**

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**Portfolio:** Planning

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

To outline the background to the review of the Planning Enforcement Service for Broadland Council to provide a high quality and customer focused service and to establish an Enforcement Plan which sets out details of the service for Members and customers.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To agree the use of the Enforcement Plan at Appendix 1 for the Planning Enforcement Service at Broadland Council.
2. To agree the use of the Enforcement Strategy at Appendix 2 for the Planning Enforcement Service at Broadland Council.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Following an internal review of the Planning Enforcement Service offered by Broadland District Council it is proposed to update the Enforcement Strategy used by BDC to form an Enforcement Plan to be used in order to provide a high quality and customer focused service. In conjunction with this it is also proposed to publish an "Enforcement Strategy" to support the Enforcement Plan which provides more information about the enforcement service for customers.



## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 An Audit review was undertaken in early 2020 which identified a number of actions be taken to improve the completeness of enforcement records including correspondence to developers including timescales to address breach, together with an audit trail to provide an overview of the case including key dates such as dates of complaint received, dates of correspondence and site visits. In conjunction with this it was recommended to instigate the implementation of electronic files for the entire enforcement process, including filing of documents to the Document Management System. The audit also highlighted the need to review and update the Planning Enforcement Strategy.
- 2.2 The Development Plan also identifies the need to scope a review of the enforcement plan to be undertaken in Quarter 1. This review has been undertaken during July 2020 and has considered the Audit recommendations.
- 2.3 Broadland District Council currently has a stand-alone Planning Enforcement Strategy which was agreed in 2015.
- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government sets out that: 'Effective enforcement is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system'. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. Local planning authorities should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it is appropriate to do so'.
- 2.5 At present, Broadland Council does not have an "Enforcement Plan" and as part of the enforcement review it is proposed to develop a Planning Enforcement Plan which updates the current strategy to be used to provide a high quality, customer focused service.

## **3 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 The Enforcement Strategy currently seek as far as possible to achieve positive compliance with the law and to respond proportionately, taking account of the circumstances of the case, to provide a customer focussed service and work holistically with other service areas.
- 3.2 The Broadland service updates Members and Parish Councils on a monthly basis of progress on cases and updates the customer of the outcome of investigations. There is limited contact with the complainant during the investigation. Proactive enforcement is undertaken by monitoring the commencements of development for compliance with conditions attached to planning permissions.

## **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 It is proposed to retain the key elements of the existing Enforcement Strategy and to enhance this by confirming the Council's priorities and service standards that the customer can expect in terms of the types of complaints that will be investigated and to define a timeline for the key actions, together with updates on how matters are progressing and to identify the next steps. These are set out in the Enforcement Plan and expanded on in the Enforcement Strategy, which will also form the basis of information available online for customers.
- 4.2 It is also proposed that a proactive approach is taken towards the monitoring of the commencement of developments which have planning permission.
- 4.3 To ensure that Members have an over view of current cases it is also proposed that a monthly report is provided to all members which highlights the key stages which have been undertaken. It is also suggested that these could be provided to Parish Council for their information. In association with the provision of this information, it is proposed that training is provided to ensure that this information is used appropriately.

## **5 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 5.1 To continue to operate the current Enforcement Strategy.

## **6 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 6.1 This is an update to the existing enforcement strategy and does not raise any additional risks. Without an up to date enforcement plan our course of action in relation to enforcement cases could be challenged.

### **6.2 Resource Implications**

- 6.3 Recommendations from the Audit report, together with remote working during Covid-19 have highlighted the need to work more electronically and for files to be available electronically.
- 6.4 As part of the review it is recommended that a proactive approach is taken towards the monitoring of the commencement of developments which have planning permission to ensure compliance with associated conditions. This monitoring can be linked with existing commencement monitoring which is undertaken in connection with Building Control, Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 legal agreements and Planning Policy, together with other teams in the Council (i.e. Council Tax).
- 6.5 **Legal Implications** – This is an update to the existing enforcement strategy / policy and does not raise any additional legal implications. We will take specific legal advice in relation to individual cases as appropriate.

- 6.6 **Equality Implications** – Where formal enforcement action is proposed in relation to specific cases an appropriate assessment will be undertaken at that time.
- 6.7 **Environmental Impact** – The proposals will have a positive environmental impact by ensuring that development does not have an adverse impact.
- 6.8 **Crime and Disorder** – The proposals will work in a positive way to ensure compliance with appropriate legislation.
- 6.9 **Other Risks** – No.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The review of the Planning Enforcement service has highlighted a number of enhancements to the current service. The proposed Enforcement Plan will develop the existing Enforcement Strategy to provide a high quality, customer focused service and will be supplemented by the Enforcement Strategy.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To agree the use of the Enforcement Plan at Appendix 1 for the Planning Enforcement Service at Broadland Council.
2. To agree the use of the Enforcement Strategy at Appendix 2 for the Planning Enforcement Service at Broadland Council.

## **Background Papers**

Broadland District Council - Planning Enforcement Strategy

## **Planning enforcement plan**

### **The purpose of this plan**

This plan sets out how the authority will respond to suspected breaches of planning and related controls in its area; how it will monitor the implementation of permissions; investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it is appropriate to do so.

The Council is firmly committed to the effective enforcement of planning control. It views the harmful effects of any breach of planning control very seriously and has a compliance team based within the Planning Service area.

### **Introduction**

The Town & Country Planning Act provides Local Authorities with the legislative background to exercise control over unauthorised development and non-compliance with any condition or limitation attached to a planning permission. Controls relating to advertisements, listed buildings, trees and conservation areas are found in separate legislation.

This document sets out the Council's plan for planning enforcement and the approach the Council will take in investigating and remedying breaches of planning control.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states "*The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development*". Enforcement is an integral part of the planning system and "*is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system*" (para. 207 of the NPPF).

There is a duty on planning authorities to investigate alleged breaches of planning controls and resolve issues effectively in accordance with the Development Plan, any Supplementary Planning Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). However, any subsequent enforcement action is discretionary.

### **What is planning enforcement?**

The overall objective of the planning enforcement function is to maintain the integrity of the planning system.

### **The main functions of planning enforcement are:-**

- To maintain public confidence in the planning system:

The integrity of the Council's development management function depends on the Council's readiness to take enforcement action when it is considered expedient to do so. Parliament has given this Council the primary

responsibility for taking whatever enforcement action is necessary within the area for which it is Local Planning Authority.

Notwithstanding the above point it should be noted that the Broads Authority is the Local Planning Authority for enforcement matters within its area. The enforcement of matters relating to waste management and mineral workings is the responsibility of Norfolk County Council.

- To investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development both reactively and proactively:

The Planning enforcement team has both a proactive as well as a reactive role in monitoring the progress of development on sites and ensuring compliance with planning conditions. The team also responds to third party complaints and allegations about possible breaches of planning control.

- To act proportionately

Ensuring any enforcement action is commensurate with the breach of planning control to which it relates. Enforcement action will not normally be taken to remedy trivial or technical breaches of control which are considered to cause no harm to amenity or the public interest.

- To take action where it is appropriate to do so

Although nothing in this plan should be taken as condoning a wilful breach of planning law, the Council's enforcement powers are discretionary and will only be exercised when it is considered expedient to do so.

### **The following principles underpin the functioning of the service:**

#### **An emphasis on customer focus**

- Allegations of suspected breaches of planning control can be reported to the Compliance team in person, by telephone, by email, by letter or via the Council's website.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days and the complainant given the name of the officer assigned to investigate the particular case
- The identity of persons reporting suspected breaches of planning control will be treated as confidential. However, where the success of an appeal or prosecution is dependent on evidence being provided by the person who reported the breach, the Council will discuss with the individual concerned whether they are willing to relinquish their confidentiality and provide the required evidence before proceeding with formal enforcement action or a prosecution.
- Parish and Town Councils and Ward members will be provided with an update on a monthly basis as to the progress made on all the complaints received and planning permissions monitored within their respective areas.

- Updates will be given to a complainant at key stages and of the outcome of an enforcement investigation when the matter reaches a conclusion.

### **Effective decision making**

- Upon receipt of a complaint an assessment will be made as to whether a breach of planning control exists. This may involve carrying out a site visit.
- We will prioritise:
  - Unauthorised development which is causing or threatening significant harm to public health and safety.
  - Cases where there is ongoing or immediate threat of irreversible harm to amenity or the environment.
  - Harm to areas protected by statutory designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSIs), Conservation Areas Archaeological sites.
  - Harm to listed buildings and their setting.
  - Harm to trees and hedges, especially where protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) or Regulations.
  - Unauthorised development likely to harm protected species or habitats.
  - Monitoring of major developments.
- The Council's enforcement powers are discretionary and will only be exercised when it is considered expedient to do so.
- The majority of decisions as to whether and how to proceed with an enforcement investigation are vested in the Officers with only a very few cases being reported to members for consideration and for a course of action to be agreed.
- Development Plan policies, appeal decisions, case law, individual site circumstances and the level of harm likely to be caused will all be taken into account in respect of an individual case in order to ensure consistency in decision making.

### **Flexibility in applying procedures**

- In most instances an attempt to persuade an owner or occupier of a site to voluntarily remedy the harmful effects of unauthorised development will be made. We will aim for this to be undertaken within 6 weeks of the initial site visit
- Lengthy negotiations however will not be allowed to hamper or delay whatever formal enforcement action may be required to make the development acceptable on planning grounds, or to compel it to stop
- In seeking to remedy a breach by negotiation regard is had to the statutory time limits beyond which the Council would be precluded from taking enforcement action together with relevant planning policies and other material considerations

- Each case is progressed as far as possible with the information available at that time
- Where a retrospective planning application is refused relating to an existing breach of the planning regulations the associated planning decision notice will be accompanied by an enforcement notice setting out what needs to be done to remedy the breach of planning control

### **Applying the most appropriate measures**

- The council has a range of enforcement measures available and will have regard to which power (or mix of powers) is best suited to dealing with any particular breach of control to achieve a satisfactory, lasting and cost-effective remedy. This may result in some instances in letting the legislative powers of colleagues from other departments or even other agencies taking precedence to resolve issues which cross departmental boundaries.
- Wherever possible and appropriate the Council will seek to remedy breaches of planning control through negotiation and mediation.

### **Proactive enforcement**

- The Compliance team pro-actively monitors planning conditions imposed on planning and other permissions both at the time of commencement of development and where appropriate at subsequent development stages
- The Compliance team, in conjunction with colleagues in other departments, will explore avenues of collaborative working which could include the issuing of fixed penalty notices to secure the remedying of breaches of planning and other related offences which cause harm to the public realm.
- The Compliance team will, when called upon to do so, provide advice to prospective and newly established businesses to ensure that they will not fall foul of planning and related legislation.

### **Planning Enforcement Strategy**

This Enforcement Strategy supports the Enforcement Plan and explains the planning enforcement function. It will clarify the various breaches of planning control and criminal offences that planning enforcement can address and detail the powers given to the Council and how and when these powers may be employed.

The strategy gives clear guidance on what we can do and how complaints are prioritized. It explains how complaints can be made, and sets out what can reasonably be expected from the Council once a complaint has been made.

The document has been prepared in accordance with the advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government which states: 'Effective enforcement is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system'. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. Local planning authorities should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it is appropriate to do so'.

### **What will we investigate...?**

A breach of planning control is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as "the carrying out of the development without the required planning permission, or failing to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted". Whether something requires planning permission is not straightforward and while there are some fairly obvious breaches, such as building a new house without planning permission, many others are more difficult to define or less well known.

For example:

- Building work, engineering operations and material changes of use that are carried out without first obtaining planning permission;
- Development that has planning permission but is not carried out in accordance with the approved plans;
- Failure to comply with conditions or the terms of a legal agreement attached to a permission or consent;
- The unauthorised demolition of a building within a conservation area without planning permission;
- Works carried out to a listed building (both internal as well as external), which affect its historic character or setting, without listed building consent being granted;
- The unauthorised felling or carrying out of works to a tree which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or which is within a Conservation Area (CA);
- Unauthorised Advertisements;
- Failure to properly maintain land so that it detrimentally affects the amenity of the area;



- Failure to comply with the requirements of enforcement notices, breach of conditions notices and stop notices.

It should be noted that a breach of planning control becomes immune from enforcement action if no formal action has been taken within the time limits set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Essentially these time limits are: Four years from the substantial completion of a building or other operational development and for the change of use of any building to a dwelling house; and ten years for a continued use of land or breach of planning condition

Similarly, planning enforcement action can only be pursued where works have taken place without the benefit of, or are inconsistent with, planning permission. Therefore, domestic extensions, regardless of their impact on neighbours, are immune from planning enforcement action if they fall within permitted development rights; and those commenced with permission and built as approved also are beyond further control, even though a neighbour, perhaps new to the area, was not consulted.

In addition to investigating complaints which we receive relating to breaches of planning control, we will also undertake proactive investigations to ensure that development is built in accordance with its planning approval and associated conditional requirements.

Whilst it is not possible to check all developments, the combination of responsive and a proactive approach should raise awareness of the need for compliance, so maintaining a culture of compliance. This is likely to involve working more closely with other Council departments to ensure a co-ordinated and targeted approach which has the maximum impact.

### **What will we not investigate...?**

What is not a breach of planning control?

Many issues that arise the council cannot get involved in as they are issues that are between two private parties, as those are considered to be civil matters. Other matters may be covered by other legislation but are not issues that the council as Local Planning Authority can get involved with. Some of these are:

- Internal works to a non-listed building;
- Matters controlled by other legislation such as Building Regulations / public nuisance / Highways / or the Environment Agency;
- Competition from another business;
- On street parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas;
- Obstruction of a highway or public right of way (the Police or Highways Authority may be able to get involved);
- Parking a caravan within the residential boundary of a property provided that its use is ancillary to the dwelling;
- Clearing land of undergrowth, bushes and trees (provided they are not subject to Tree Preservation Order, within a Conservation Area or owned by the council);
- Operating a business from home where the residential use remains the primary use;
- Boundary disputes – disputes about ownership are a private matter and cannot be controlled under planning legislation;

- Deeds and covenants which are a private matter between the signatories to the documents;
- Loss of value to a neighbouring property;
- Insertion of windows in dwellings – once a building has been occupied windows can normally be inserted into existing walls provided that there is not a planning condition to prevent the insertion of additional windows;
- Where development is ‘permitted development’ under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015.

### **How will the matter be investigated..?**

Allegations about suspected breaches of planning control will be investigated thoroughly and accurately in accordance with the principles of Good Enforcement set out within the Local Government Concordat, and the principles contained within the Regulators Code.

The five principles of good regulation are:

- Transparency
- Accountability and Openness
- Proportionality
- Consistency
- Targeted (at cases where action is needed)

The integrity of the process depends on the Council’s readiness to take proportionate enforcement action when it is required to do so. Parliament has given local planning authorities the primary responsibility for taking whatever enforcement action is necessary within their area and the council will exercise its planning enforcement powers rigorously when it is considered expedient to do so. This means that any action taken must be in the wider public interest and the action must be proportionate to the level of the breach. We will consider this by thorough assessment of the relevant facts in each case. Our consideration will be no different to those when considering the merits of an application for planning permission before the development started. For instance, if a development would have received planning permission, it will not be enforced against simply because it was carried out before planning permission was granted. Formal enforcement powers will not be used against trivial or technical breaches of planning control which cause no harm. The Council will always seek to ‘remedy’ a breach before considering formal action, often breaches can be resolved through negotiation, for example by working with the developer to alter a building so that it no longer requires consent, or by the submission of a retrospective application to seek consent.

When would formal action be considered?

- Where the breach presents significant harm to amenity, or the existing use of the land and buildings merits protection in the public interest.
- Where attempts to negotiate regularisation of the breach have failed, and the harmful effects of the development require enforcement action to make the development acceptable.
- Where planning permission for the development has been refused and the development is not acceptable in terms of planning policies or other material considerations.

Where formal planning enforcement action is taken, we will take steps to publicise this to act as a deterrent to other offenders.

The council has delegated authority to its officers to exercise the legislative powers available to it for breaches of planning control, the tools available are :

- **Planning Contravention Notice** – this requires persons to provide information in respect of the development and/or activities taking place on the land. These notices are often served as a first step to gain information from the person carrying out the development and/or activity before determining whether other notices should be served.
- **Enforcement Notice** – this is the principal tool to remedy a breach of planning control. It will specify what the alleged breach is, the steps that must be taken to remedy it, and a time period in which to carry out those steps.
- **Listed Building Enforcement Notice**- This is the equivalent Notice available under the listed building legislation
- **Breach of Condition Notice** – this is used to require full or part compliance with the conditions on the grant of a planning permission.
- **Stop Notice/Temporary Stop Notice** –these Notices requires activities to stop immediately on the land and are most commonly used to deal with breaches of planning control that are seriously affecting the amenity of nearby residents or to prevent serious or irreversible harm to the environment.
- **Untidy Land (s.215) Notice** – where the condition of buildings or land causes serious harm to the visual amenity of an area, the Council can serve a Notice on the owner and occupier, under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to remedy the condition of the land and buildings.
- **Court Injunction** – Although they are rarely used, legal powers are available for the council to apply to the High Court or the County Court for an injunction to stop an actual or alleged breach of planning control.
- **Prosecution** – the council can pursue prosecution proceedings against any person who carries out unauthorised works to trees that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or are within a Conservation Area, unauthorised works to Listed Buildings, and certain unauthorised works of demolition works within Conservation Areas. Additionally, offenders may be prosecuted for non-compliance with a temporary stop notice, stop notice, enforcement notice and breach of condition notice.
- **Direct Action (with costs recovery)** – failure to comply with the requirements of a Notice may result in the council using powers available to it to enter land and carry out such works that are required by an Enforcement Notice. All costs incurred in carrying out such works can be recovered from the landowner. Where costs are not recovered, they can be registered as a charge on the land.
- **Advertisements** – the legislation (Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007) which deals with advertisements is separate from that dealing with general planning matters. The display of an advertisement without formal consent is an offence, and the council does have the power to prosecute the person displaying it, if it considered that it harms the amenity of the area or public safety. There is no need for an enforcement notice, or similar, to be served. If a person is found guilty of an offence, he or she could be liable to a fine.

## **Priorities**

It is usually necessary to give priority to those issues where the greatest harm is being caused, as it would be inappropriate to investigate and pursue all allegations with equal priority and intensity. Therefore each case is prioritised according to the seriousness of the alleged breach. This priority is decided by officers, and subsequently reviewed after an initial site visit.

We will prioritise:

- Unauthorised development which is causing or threatening significant harm to public health and safety.
- Cases where there is ongoing or immediate threat of irreversible harm to amenity or the environment.
- Harm to areas protected by statutory designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSIs), Conservation Areas Archaeological sites.
- Harm to listed buildings and their setting.
- Harm to trees and hedges, especially where protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) or Regulations.
- Unauthorised development likely to harm protected species or habitats.
- Monitoring of major developments.

## **What level of service can a complainant expect..?**

We will promptly register every case and acknowledge receipt either by letter or by email within three working days. You will be given the name of the Compliance Officer dealing with your complaint so you know who to contact, together with a reference number.

We will then carry out some initial checks (usually including a site visit) in accordance with the priority given to the case, but in any event within ten working days.

Complainants will be updated by telephone, email, or by letter on completion of the site visit and/or initial assessment investigations as to whether -

- No breach was identified
- That there is a need for further investigations
- That a breach of planning control has occurred

Where there is an identified breach of planning control the following assessment will be made –

- What is the planning harm – how serious is it ?
- Would it be likely to be granted planning permission (with or without conditions)?
- Is it a minor breach (technical) or more serious?
- Can we resolve it simply by negotiation or modification?
- Is action needed quickly because the development or activity is harmful and not acceptable?

The decided actions will need to be proportional to the breach and balanced with the available resources. Dealing with enforcement cases can be a lengthy and complex process. The different types of enforcement cases vary considerably in complexity as does the time taken for their resolution. Where cases take a long time to resolve we will ensure complainants are updated at each significant stage of the process. For instance, complainants will be advised if a retrospective planning application is submitted and will be notified if an enforcement notice is issued and the relevant dates for compliance.

If the investigations indicate that a breach of control has occurred that justifies enforcement action an Enforcement Notice will be served. The Notice takes a minimum period of 1 month to come into effect during which time the person(s) served with the notice can appeal against it to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government via the Planning Inspectorate. An Enforcement Notice may be quashed or revised by the Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Where an appeal is lodged the Council can take no further action until the appeal has been decided. It is not unusual for the appeal process to take several months. If a person decides to appeal against an enforcement notice; this will add to the time taken to resolve the case. In consequence it is not possible to give a standard time for dealing with enforcement cases.

Where a Breach of Planning control causes serious harm the Council can seek immediate remedial action. This action may involve the serving of a Stop Notice when an Enforcement Notice has already been issued. Temporary Stop Notices may be served when an immediate cessation of the harmful activity is required, usually before an enforcement notice comes into effect. They can only last a maximum of 28 days and may only be served once. These should only be served to prohibit what is essential to safeguard amenity of public safety in the neighbourhood; or to prevent serious or irreversible harm to the environment in the surrounding area.

Notwithstanding the above we will regularly review all our cases to ensure the most effective action plan is in place to secure a satisfactory outcome as quickly as possible. Complainants will be advised when cases are closed, and the reason. We will endeavour to resolve enquiries within six months of their receipt. However should further action be required, such as the issue of Enforcement Notices, clearly this timescale will not be possible.

### **What happens when someone complains about you ?**

If you are contacted about an alleged breach of planning control, you are entitled to know what the allegation is (but not who made it) and to have the opportunity to explain your side of the case. We are aware that sometimes people make complaints due to neighbour disputes, as such we will always seek to work with you to understand the true facts of the case.

Initially a council officer will visit the site. This is usually without any prior warning to the owner or any tenants / employees at the site. Officers are authorised to visit a site to investigate and will show identification when they arrive.

Council officers also have powers to obtain a warrant of entry where access is refused or refusal is anticipated. Wilful obstruction of a person exercising a right of entry is an offence so you should always seek to work with the council officer. However, we are required to give

24 hours notice to insist on entry to a residential house but if you are happy to allow us access then we will usually take up that offer.

In the event of a breach being established, your co-operation will be sought to correct the breach either by removing or modifying the unauthorised development or by ceasing the unauthorised use or activity prohibited by a planning condition. A reasonable period of time, which will depend on the nature of the breach, will be allowed for you to do this.

In some circumstances you may be invited to submit a retrospective planning application or other appropriate application if it is considered that consent may be granted, or an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Use or Development may be invited in the event that you can show that the breach is immune from enforcement action and therefore lawful. You may be served with a Planning Contravention Notice which requires information concerning the development carried out. This Notice is used to establish the facts of what has occurred so that we can determine whether a breach of control has occurred and whether formal action is appropriate. The implications of not completing and returning the Notice will be explained to you, and the officer dealing with the case will be available to answer any questions you have on the matter.

If you are running a business which is threatened by enforcement action, you will be directed to our Economic Development section to see whether alternative premises can be found to minimise the possible impact on the business, this does not mean that the enforcement action will be delayed or stopped.

If you are issued with an Enforcement Notice you will be given the precise details of the breach, the reasons for the action, the steps required to overcome the problem and the time period for compliance. You will also be advised of your right to appeal any notice issued.

The Compliance officers aim is to resolve breaches of planning control and they will work with you to achieve this in a positive and pragmatic way. Most breaches are resolved through negotiation and discussion, and we encourage you to cooperate positively. It is in the interests of all parties if an identified breach can be addressed and then resolved at an early stage.

### **What to do if you are unhappy with our service**

The council aims to provide an efficient and effective service for everyone it deals with and to maintain good relations with those who use our services. Planning enforcement is a complicated area of law and care must be taken to arrive at a correct and appropriate course of action related to alleged breaches of planning control. If you are aggrieved with the service offered to you, there is a complaints procedure, where complaints can be investigated. Details of this procedure are available on the council's website. If you remain dissatisfied, the matter can be investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman. They will make an independent investigation of whether maladministration has occurred by the district council and if it has, recommend what remedy ought to take place. The Ombudsman will not normally deal with a complaint unless it has first been through the Council's own complaint procedures and deals only with aspects concerning the conduct of the investigation.

We always welcome constructive feedback and any ideas on how we can improve our services. Please contact us if you can suggest ways of improving the service.

## Links

[https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do\\_you\\_need\\_permission](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do_you_need_permission)

[https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common\\_projects/9/change\\_of\\_use](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code>

## **FUTURE OF COMMUNITY GRANTS**

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**Portfolio:** Economic Development

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

The purpose of this report is to review the first year of member ward grants and other community funding sources, and to put forward proposals for review.

### **Recommendation:**

Cabinet is asked to agree to the new approach to community grants which includes:

- Changes to the member-led ward grant system to utilise underspend in February each year.
- More accessibility for community groups to input to the application process
- The introduction of more formalised branding and promotion of the scheme.
- The introduction of a start-up grant; linked to the new Community at Heart Lottery
- Development of a whole council approach to community funding

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council has delivered several community grant schemes in the past which have been predominantly funded through external sources. Only the member ward grant is now left, which is £23,500 per year, and funded internally. This is provided to the community, based on building capacity and infrastructure.
- 1.2 The member ward grant is discretionary, there is no statutory requirement for this work. At a time when Councils budgets (and other funding bodies) are under pressure, we need to ensure that the future member ward grant has a clearly defined role in supporting the prevention agenda to reduce demand on current and



future council services by building capacity and infrastructure within the community to allow our residents to help themselves and each other.

- 1.3 Due to the current pandemic many community groups have been placed on hold, which has resulted in a loss of income. However, many of our community groups have really stepped up and out of their comfort zones to support those impacted by the COVID crisis, by providing volunteers and support to residents in need. It is an appropriate time to review our grants to ensure we are best meeting the needs of our communities.
- 1.4 This report outlines proposals to review the current member ward grant scheme; to look at some of the challenges currently faced in its effective delivery and its impact on our communities.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Building community capacity is much bigger than simply providing the community with funding for projects. We utilise an asset-based approach to community development which seeks to build on what is already present in our communities; mobilising individuals and groups to come together in order to realise and develop their strengths. Quite often groups and residents who contact the Councils are looking for support to gain the skills and tools needed to be able to run their own schemes and are not looking for funding. The communities team dealt with 107 contacts last year to support with a wide range of issues.
- 2.2 There are a wide range of potential funding sources for communities to tap into, beyond what the Council can offer. One of the key functions of the communities team is to look for other funding sources to make the Councils money go further. It is easy to look at using our funds first as a 'quick win' and whilst this is popular, it is not always the most appropriate. Where members actively engage with the communities team, we often see better outcomes for the community group and are able to maximise the funding available.
- 2.3 The current member members ward grant is £500 allocated per member to support projects which benefit ward residents. This can be spent on up to 10 individual projects per ward member. Total budget is £23,500.

### **2019/20**

- 2.4 Fifty-two projects were supported last year, with the average spend on a project being £392.08. £20,388 out of the £23,500 was spent from the fund. As well as a member ward grant underspend, five members did not spend any of their budget at all this year, and 10 members spent less than 75% of their ward budget. The member ward grant fund ended on 1<sup>st</sup> March.
- 2.5 We saw an increase in applications in February as members tried to reach the deadline. This proved challenging to process payments as Officers reported that we saw a reduction in the quality of applications and incomplete applications during this last month.

- 2.6 All the projects funded met the ground rules, although achieving this required intervention and support from Officers to some members. These tended to be members who did not attend training.
- 2.7 There were a range of payments made, with around 75% of spend going on equipment /materials. Just under 20% was spent on buildings / infrastructure. In terms of themes, youth was by far the biggest theme with around 55% of the budget, building maintenance was second with around 15%, and wellbeing, environment and social isolation all around 10%.
- 2.8 Around 80% of the projects can be described as core funding for community groups, i.e. grants have been for ongoing funding to replace materials or equipment. Around 20% of projects could be considered 'place shaping' projects, where the funding from the council has been used to fill a gap in provision where the needs of local residents have not been met, or enable a project to continue, that would otherwise would have folded.
- 2.9 On some occasions the provision of core funding has meant that we are replicating that provided by a range of other funding providers, and we would also expect that the community group or local parish could provide funding for this type of project in many cases.

## **2020/21**

- 2.10 This year so far there has been very little spend, with only one application processed and two in progress. This is to be expected because of the attention which has been focussed on dealing with COVID and community groups have not been meeting. There is a need in our communities for funding however, and we would expect that spend will increase significantly before the deadline in March.
- 2.11 This year, the social isolation funding provided by Norfolk County Council was used to create the 'keep it going grant' which can be used to help existing groups grow and become more sustainable. It can be utilised for day to day running costs or expansion of the project and could include equipment purchase/hire or venue hire. The grant is up to the value of £300, and to date the Council has awarded nine grants that equate to a total spend of £2,700.
- 2.12 Feedback has been received about members ward grant which tells us that several councillors struggle to spend the money, whilst others feel they need more available to them. As previous mentioned, underspend last year was 13%.
- 2.13 We have a clear purpose in the ground rules for member ward grants, in terms of reducing demand on services, supporting inclusive growth and promoting health and wellbeing. However, this is interpreted in many different ways by the community and members, it is also challenging to track the impact that grants have.
- 2.14 Evaluation of the impact of community grants is incredibly difficult. The more preventative a grant is, the less precise an evaluation as to its effectiveness can be. This difficulty can lend itself to grant bodies in general awarding funding to

projects that are dealing with demand management, rather than true prevention and long-term capacity building. However, whilst future evaluation shouldn't be led by 'bean counting', officers are working to tighten up the evaluation process to ensure we can demonstrate the effectiveness of a community grant programme.

- 2.15 Incomplete applications can take time to process; often additional information must be sought by officers to enable effective decision making.
- 2.16 Currently there is little interconnection between community grants and CIL (community infrastructure levy). CIL funding can provide communities with funding related to growth to provide community infrastructure.
- 2.17 On 5 November, the Council will be launching the Community at Heart Lottery; the first ticket goes on sale on 12 January 2021 and the first draw takes place on 27 February. This is a weekly online lottery created to support local good causes across the district.
- 2.18 Tickets cost £1, and when supporters buy a ticket they will be able to choose where they want their money to go – 50% of the ticket cost will go to the persons nominated good cause and 10% will go into a community fund run by the council. The remaining 40% will go towards prize money and the operation of the lottery.
- 2.19 Final agreement has not yet been made about how the funds raised from the 10% will be utilised – until we have a clearer idea about what level of income we can expect it is not possible to make a firm decision.

### **3 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the following proposals to revise our community grants package. The proposals look to implement changes to our member-led grant system, following feedback from members and our communities, which will also support our community groups post COVID.
- 3.2 These proposals will look to address the underspend that we saw last year, providing a more flexible approach and ensuring we have the right mechanisms in place to work closely with communities to target our resources where they are needed the most. This proposal will also address the issues of multi-member Wards having to complete individual applications.
- 3.3 The approach needs to ensure we don't follow a money centred approach but focus on a problem-solving approach. Members and officers need to work together more, within our communities, to identifying what the problem is we are trying to address with each allocation of funding. By identifying what the problem and solution is, we will be more likely to effectively measure the impact of our intervention. Officers will work to review how we measure the impact of community grants for future recommendations.
- 3.4 The new approach should embed itself within the health and wellbeing strategy which will help support a revised evaluation process, enabling us to track the aim

of the funding request, with strategic goals, to support reporting of the added value our funding provides.

### **3.5 Member led funding:**

- 3.5.1 The fund opens at the beginning of the financial year and £500 is ringfenced for each member until January 31. Between 1 February and 1 March any remaining budget that has not been spent is offered out to all members on a first come, first served basis. This means that where some members may not utilise all their funding because there is little requirement for it in their Wards, others can access more if the demand is there.
- 3.5.2 The total amount of grant funding available does not change. It is hoped this will reduce the amount of overall underspend in the member-led funding budget.
- 3.5.3 Funds are accessed by completing a form which can be jointly populated by the community group and the Ward member. This format encourages greater partnership working between the community and the member, placing greater emphasis on the community helping themselves. It also ensures that the community who are potentially benefiting from funds can fill in details such as bank details, reducing the amount of duplication and room for error in the current system.
- 3.5.4 Authorisation to allocate funding remains unchanged with the Member who has authority to sign off budget spend in their own ward. Where multi-member application, only one application would be required, with a system of each member approving the single application.
- 3.5.5 More emphasis on the naming and branding of the scheme to support promotion of its existence, and to encourage the community in being proactive in applying for it - thus supporting the work members currently undertake to promote the grants available.
- 3.5.6 This promotion could particularly work well in areas where local intelligence or data suggests we have issues that need addressing, encouraging awareness of the issue and applications from community groups who can address these issues. This way we can ensure our funding supports 'need' and not 'want'.
- 3.5.7 This is all based upon the existing ground rules for accessing member-led funds. The purpose of these changes would be reinforced to make the funds more accessible in areas where they are needed, to meet the council's objectives to reduce demand on long term services and encourage inclusive growth and health and wellbeing in our communities.
- 3.5.8 Where funding is required by a project, the Council needs to reinforce an approach to seek other funding sources first, before using our own limited funds. This approach does not diminish the Council's role in funding but enhances our role as a place shaping organisation and not a funding body.

- 3.5.9 Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year asked that the amount of funding for member ward grants be reviewed as South Norfolk Council currently have £1000 per member. These comments were also reflected in the recent Wellbeing Panel. The amount of discretionary funding the Council chooses to put into the community can be increased if members choose to do so, although with the saving targets currently in place this will mean taking funding from elsewhere. It is useful to note however, last year there was an underspend in the existing budget.
- 3.5.10 The community at heart lottery, once opened, is likely to enable community groups to raise additional funding themselves with some groups in other areas of the country who benefit from a community lottery raising several thousand pounds a year.

### **Start-up grant**

- 3.6 To build on the success of the keep it going grant, a similar light touch approach could be used to kick start worthwhile community activity. Grants of up to £300 could be offered to informal groups (of 3 or more people) looking to try out an idea for a community project. This is an area where projects currently struggle the most to get funding, which prevents some ideas even getting off the ground. By adopting this approach, we would be supporting real innovation at a grassroots level for very little expenditure.
- 3.7 A potential budget of £5,000 for the first year would allow testing this concept to see how it works, and there is scope to utilise the money raised from the lottery to fund this in the future if it is successful.

### **3.8 Infrastructure projects**

- 3.9 Working closely with the planning and economic development teams, there is opportunity to create a whole council approach to funding, by linking together community grants, community lottery and CIL to provide the appropriate funding stream and support. Communities see themselves as one, therefore the Council needs to work together as one team to identify the right route for funding applications.
- 3.10 It is proposed that officers work together to identify opportunities to create a flexible whole Council approach to community grants and CIL funding.

## **4 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The current arrangements could be kept in place. Whilst this would still ensure money goes out to communities, we have the chance to review in year one and develop our model using learning from last year.

## **5 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 6.1 Resource Implications: there is no requirement for extra resources to implement changes.
- 6.3 Legal Implications: None

6.4 Equality Implications: None

6.5 Environmental Impact: None

6.6 Crime and Disorder: Community capacity building and cohesion contributes to safer communities.

6.7 Risks: None

## **7 CONCLUSION**

7.3 The Council's member ward grant scheme has supported a wide range of projects, building on the council's strong reputation for community support. By reviewing how we deliver the grants function for the Council we can more effectively support the work within the community to support local community projects

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 Cabinet is asked to agree to the new approach to community grants which includes:

- Changes to the member-led ward grant system to utilise underspend in February each year.
- More accessibility for community groups to input to the application process
- The introduction of more formalised branding and promotion of the scheme.
- The introduction of a start-up grant; linked to the new Community at Heart Lottery
- Development of a whole council approach to community funding

## **TEMPORARY CHANGE TO HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY - UPDATE**

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**Portfolio:** Wellbeing

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

To report on the success and necessary extension to the temporary change to the Housing allocations policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2020

### **Recommendation:**

Cabinet is asked to agree an extension to the temporary amendment to the criteria within the Council's Housing Policy, agreed in June 2020, for three months, to allow officers discretion to place eligible, and suitable, individuals currently living in supported accommodation within the 'High' category for allocation. This extension will cease on the 31 January 2021 subject to further review by Cabinet if still required.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In June 2020 officers requested that a temporary change be permitted to the Housing allocations policy to allow the Housing team to capitalised on the

opportunity the national Covid-19 response scheme 'everyone in' requirement provided. This change was authorised by Cabinet for an initial three-month period with a request that this come into Cabinet again if an extension is required. This report details the impact of the change and the need for a further extension up to 31 January 2021.

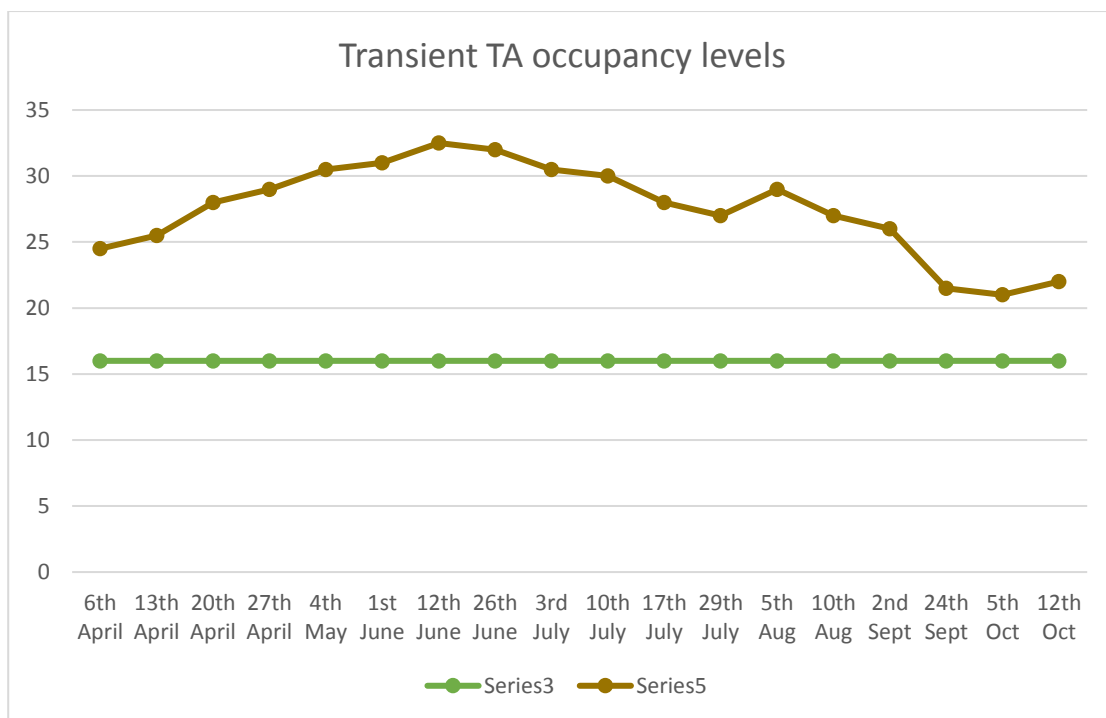
## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The 'everybody in' ask resulted in a significantly increased demand from non-priority single people who lived in transient accommodation. These individuals were mostly known to the Council already, but the sector was unable to react quickly enough to facilitate the move to suitable accommodation. This often resulted in individuals moving back to transient accommodation with the customers in question then failing to engage with the housing team.
- 2.2 The Covid-19 pandemic meant that officers had to provide accommodation to all, including those in non-priority need. Officers have always sought to help everyone including those out of the priority need category, access other accommodation other than TA (temporary accommodation), the reason for this is three-fold:
  - 2.2.1 The accommodation in question was often linked to a family or friend support network
  - 2.2.2 There is no legal duty to provide accommodation to those in non-priority need
  - 2.2.3 The unnecessary cost to the council in providing accommodation to someone who has a suitable alternative place to stay
- 2.3 However, separate to this, the team, through the Council's rough sleeper initiative, provided accommodation to all those facing rough sleeping, prior to and during the pandemic. This offer continues to be in place to meet our aim of no one should have to live on the street.
- 2.4 Based on the platform provided of 'Everybody In', officers in the housing team have built good working relationships with and support to residents to encourage them to explore opportunities for sustainable accommodation options, with the aim of enabling them to prosper long term.

## **3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The team have been very successful in reducing TA demand and the temporary change to the policy has been vital. The total TA occupancy is now nearly back to pre Covid-19 average levels.





3.2

- 3.3 Of the 22 remaining occupants, 5 are already nominated to further accommodation, 8 remain in bed and breakfast and 9 within alternative accommodation awaiting nomination. Bed and Breakfast accommodation is always the Council's least preferred option due to suitability and cost however we utilise this essential part of the sector when the completed risk assessment shows that the individual poses an increased risk if not monitored 24/7, this being a service our teams cannot provide in a cost effective manner.
- 3.4 The recommended short-term extension of the policy amendment will allow the team to continue moving the last few individuals into supported accommodation where needed. There will continue to be people remaining in bed and breakfast as their support needs are greater than support accommodation providers can facilitate, however we continue to work on steps to further reduce the need for bed and breakfast where we can and use only as a last resort.
- 3.5 Although our work has been positive, the eviction embargo, whereby landlords have not been able to take eviction action during the pandemic has come to an end. Officers are already seeing an increase in notification from customers that their landlord has notified of intention to take possession. Whilst we continue to work with customers and landlords from a mediation standpoint, officers anticipate an increase demand on TA over the next 6 to 12 months. It is therefore necessary to continue to reduce current occupancy to provide the resilience in our TA offer to allow the team to meet the expected rising demand.

## **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 To extend the temporary change in the allocation policy to allow those in supported accommodation to be placed in a high priority banding, which would enable the necessary throughput to reduce temporary accommodation numbers.

## **5 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 5.1 To remove the extension. This will however reduce the required throughput and result in the saturation of move on opportunities. The result of which will remove the opportunity to create resilience within the councils TA offer placing further financial pressure on TA budgets. This action would also risk those that we are currently supporting returning to transient accommodation thus missing out on the opportunity to find safe and secure accommodation

## **6 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** – Will reduce the financial impact of B&B accommodation in the longer term, allowing better control and more effective use of resources
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – There are no legal implications
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** – Those in temporary accommodation are usually negatively impacted financially. The emerging issue from COVID is that poorer communities are more likely to be more negatively impacted by COVID.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** – There are no environmental impacts of the policy.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – There should be no impact to crime and disorder other than the right accommodation puts a protective factor in place to reduce the likelihood of being involved in crime, either as a victim or perpetrator.
- 6.6 **Risks** – the risk to Broadland would be further financial overspend on temporary accommodation if this temporary extension is not agreed, and potentially damages the excellent reputation the Council has in supporting vulnerable residents.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Officers are encouraged with the level of impact that this temporary change has had on peoples lives, both present and long term. Officers also remain encouraged by the overall impact this change has had on over TA numbers. It is believed that this further small extension will provide officers with the time needed to allow the final number of people access to the accommodation they need

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to agree an extension to the temporary amendment to the criteria within the Council's Housing Policy, agreed in June 2020, for three months, to allow officers discretion to place eligible, and suitable, individuals currently living in supported accommodation within the 'High' category for allocation. This extension will cease on the 31 January 2021 subject to further review by Cabinet if still required.

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THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER  
2006 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any  
particular person (including the authority holding that information))**

Pages 372 to 373 are not available to the public because the information is confidential as it includes exempt information about the financial or business affairs of a person