

Housing, Wellbeing Leisure & Early Intervention Policy Committee

Monday 22 January 2018

*2:00pm, Colman Room
South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court,
Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XE*

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

Large print version can be made available



Contact Claire White on 01508 533669 or democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Members of the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure & Early Intervention Policy Committee:

Cllr F Ellis (Chairman)

Cllr D Bills (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr S Blundell

Cllr J Hornby

Cllr N Legg

Cllr J Overton

Cllr A Pond

This meeting may be filmed, recorded or photographed by the public; however anyone who wishes to do so must inform the chairman and ensure it is done in a non-disruptive and public manner. Please review the Council's guidance on filming and recording meetings available in the meeting room.

Agenda

1. **To report apologies for absence and identify substitute voting members (if any);**
2. **To deal with any items of business the Chairman decides should be considered as matters of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.** Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;
3. **To receive Declarations of Interest from Members;** (Please see guidance attached page 7)
4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee held on 13 November 2017;** (copy attached – page 8)
5. **Discretionary Payments – District Direct Hospital Discharge and Early Help Flexible Fund Payments;** (report attached – page 11)
6. **Funding Supported Housing;** (report attached – page 21)
7. **Future Work Programme;** (attached – page 26)

8. Exclusion of the Public and Press

To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

9. Leisure Pricing Proposals for Future Delivery;

(report attached – page 27)

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of paragraph 3 of PART 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

Working Style of Cabinet Policy Committees

Member Leadership

Members of the Committees will take the lead in understanding the direction provided by Cabinet and delivering work to Cabinet requirements. Whilst recognising political allegiances, members will work in a collaborative manner with officers and cabinet portfolio holders to consider the relevant issues when developing Council policy.

Collaborative Working

All meetings of the Committees will be constructive and conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust. Officers will commit to supplying meetings with information relevant to making informed decisions on policies and matters. Members will commit to thoroughly reading and understanding papers, raising questions that are pertinent to the issues at stake. Members will, where feasible, agree definable actions to be taken forward by officers to develop policy, rather than having items for noting or simply to discuss.

Frequency and Nature of Meeting

Each Committee will have at least 3 formal, public meetings per year. In assessing items delegated by Cabinet for review, the Committee may decide that it wishes to meet on a more or less frequent basis.

The Committee may also hold informal meetings should it require in order to progress specific items in detail. However, if the Committee is meeting to determine whether to refer items for Cabinet approval, the meeting should follow the Council's Standing Orders and thus be subject to a formal agenda, be held in public and the meeting recorded.

Informal meetings may be held in any manner suitable for conducting business (e.g. via meeting, conference call, circulation of information via e-mail, or site visits); while relevant information will be supplied by officers where appropriate, these meetings will not be subject to a formal agenda or minutes. Where business of the Committee is undertaken through informal meeting, all members of the Committee will be provided opportunity to participate. Members will expect to be able to participate in a free and frank exchange of views when deliberating subjects.

Training

Members commit to undertaking development – for example, attending formal training sessions, or reading relevant background material, in order to properly equip themselves to deliver their expected role fully.

Accountability

The Policy Committees will be accountable to Cabinet. They will not be able to make decisions themselves, but can recommend decisions to Cabinet. Cabinet may review whether the Committees are discharging their duties effectively, and may receive progress reports on how the Policy Committee is working to discharge its duties.

Work Programmes

The Work Programmes for the Policy Committee will be established by Cabinet. Members of the Committee will not be able to raise items to be included in the work programme. Where topics have been identified for inclusion in the work programme, the Committee will work to identify how it will discharge its responsibilities, including the resources required to do so.

Managing Time

However the Committee is meeting, it will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The Chairman will be responsible for ensuring the meeting stays focused on pertinent issue, and does not become side-tracked on issues that are not relevant to the policy under consideration, or those that should be discussed by a separate committee.

Agenda Item: 3

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

Members are asked to declare any interests they have in the meeting. 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 on the matter.
- 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.
- In any case, members have the right to remove themselves from the meeting or the voting if they consider, in the circumstances, it is appropriate to do so.

Should Members have any concerns relating to interests they have, they are encouraged to contact the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy) or another member of the Democratic Services Team in advance of the meeting.



Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 13 November 2017 at 10.00am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: F Ellis (Chairman), D Bills (Vice-Chairman), S Blundell, J Hornby, N Legg and J Overton

Apologies: Councillor: A Pond

Cabinet Member in Attendance: Councillor: Y Bendle

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Communities and Well-Being (J Sutterby), the Head of Health and Leisure Services (S Goddard) and the Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer (K Mitchell)

9 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee held on 25 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman welcomed Jamie Sutterby, the Council's new Director of Communities and Well-Being, to the meeting.

The Director of Communities and Well-Being briefly outlined future items to be considered by the Committee:

- Long Stratton Leisure Centre
- Leisure Three-Year Action Plan
- Approach to Homeless Reduction Act / Universal Credit implementation
- Housing Option List Policy
- Supported Housing Consultation
- Changes to the Structure of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships

11 THE SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING REGISTER

Members considered the report of the Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer, which sought guidance regarding the future operation of the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

The Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer drew members' attention to the Cabinet decision made 5 December 2016, explaining that it was now time for Cabinet to review the position regarding the introduction of a registration fee. He further explained that following new government guidance, Cabinet would also be asked to reconsider the local connection and financial resources tests.

Members noted that following recent government guidance, legal advice had indicated that the Council could no longer justify applying a local connection test, and that the test should be abolished and backdated to 28 July 2017. The Committee agreed that this advice should be adhered to, however, members suggested that it would be useful to continue to monitor the number of people registering who did have a local connection with South Norfolk. The Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer agreed that it was possible to continue to collect this data, but stressed that this would be for monitoring purposes only.

Regarding a registration fee, the Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer explained that there had been no further guidance from the Government concerning the matter. He suggested that a fee would dissuade local people joining the register and referred to the associated costs to the Council, should a fee be introduced. Members noted that since Broadland District Council had introduced a fee of £100 in January 2017, only 3 people had joined the register. Members concluded that the disadvantages of introducing a fee, outweighed any benefits.

Members queried the numbers of those on the register that had successfully gone on to acquire a plot in South Norfolk on which to build a home to live in. The Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer explained that currently there was no means of assessing this and after some discussion, it was suggested that officers could email all applicants on the register, to provide an update on their current position. The Committee stressed that it did not want the process to become onerous for officers, however, on balance felt it important to assess whether the planning permissions granted were linked to those on the register.

Turning to the financial resources test, the Housing Enabling and Policy officer explained that to his knowledge, such a test had only been introduced in some of the London Boroughs. Members agreed that setting clear financial criteria would be difficult, as would assessing an applicant's financial position and the credibility of any funding. Members concluded that it would be too much of a financial burden to implement.

It was then

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO CABINET THAT

1. The local connection test is abolished and that this is back dated to 28 July 2018;
2. No registration fee is introduced;
3. No financial resources test is introduced;
4. For monitoring purposes only, the Council;
 - (a) Continues to collect data to establish who on the register has a local connection to South Norfolk;
 - (b) Contacts all applicants to establish how many have been successful in acquiring a plot of land in South Norfolk, on which to build a house to live in;
5. The position is reviewed in 2 years' time, unless circumstances provide reason for earlier review.

12. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman informed members that a date for the next meeting of the Committee would be circulated shortly.

(The meeting concluded at 10:43 am)

Chairman

**Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee
22 January 2018**

Agenda Item: 5

**Discretionary Payments
District Direct Hospital Discharge and Early Help Flexible Fund Payments**

**Report of the Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager
Cabinet Member: Yvonne Bendle**

CONTACT
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The draft Housing Support and Regulation Strategy (HSRS) and associated policies were previously considered by this Committee at their last meeting and recommended to Cabinet, which agreed the recommendation on the 4th December. At that Cabinet, officers were asked to consider a discretionary grant to assist with reducing delays in hospital discharge by assisting people to return to their home. Following that meeting officers became aware of an Early Help support measure that fell within the definition of discretionary assistance that needed to be included in the list of Council agreed support and assistance.
- 1.2 The Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee are asked to advise on content of the attached grants/payments and recommend any amendments or additions before it is taken to Cabinet for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance England and Wales) Order 2002, made under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001 came into force on 18 July 2002. Councils are required to publish a policy detailing how it will exercise its powers and discharge its duties. The Housing Support and Regulation Strategy details that information.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The **District Direct Hospital Discharge Grant** (Appendix One) is intended to assist our residents who are able to return home from hospital but are being prevented from doing so because there are factors at their home that prevent them from doing so that can be speedily remedied. Enabling that speedy discharge enables the hospitals to make better use of their resources, freeing up expensive bed space and increasing health service capacity and resilience. More importantly for some of our residents, the speedy move back to their own homes improves their chances of recovery and lessens their likelihood of readmission or loss of life expectancy.
- 3.2 This grant is intended to complement and not replace other support and assistance that may be available, either from the Council or other agencies.

- 3.3 It differs from the Disabled Facility Grant in so far as it is addressing the immediate need which may be short term/temporary in nature, for example a resident returning home to recuperate. However, it could also be used to complement a DFG by enabling a person with longer terms needs to be able to return home with a support/care package whilst their longer-term needs, that could be addressed with a DFG, are fully assessed and understood.
- 3.4 We have set the maximum grant at £3000 to enable us to fund items that have been suggested by other agencies, however the experience from other parts of the country where such assistance is being provided indicates the average grant to be less than £500, with the most common works being installation of key-safes to allow carer access and temporary ramping to doors to enable wheelchair access. This type of work would normally be undertaken by our Handyperson Service.
- 3.5 The types of work that could be funded has been included for example purposes and not intended to be a definitive list. We have focussed on the intended outcome of the grant and the grant parameters, in order to enable flexible responses and solutions to what will invariably individual circumstances.
- 3.6 The **Early Help Flexible Fund** (Appendix Two) has had a wide range of applications with the key areas of spend being: emergency provisions such as food, electric or oil; support with household essentials and supporting people into or to maintain education, training or employment. The fund has also been used for the purchase of Help Hub resources which have provided support to multiple families.
- 3.7 Both grants will be subject to the governance and monitoring arrangements agreed on the overarching document agreed by Cabinet.

4. Risks and implications arising

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish details of the support it provides to residents and how it will discharge its enforcement responsibilities. Failure to publish the details could lead to risk to reputation in the event of a complaint to the ombudsman.
- The Financial support offered is costed within the budget

- The measures and services in this strategy do not adversely impact any of the protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010.
- Measures and services in this strategy will have a positive impact on the environment.
- Measures and services in this strategy will have a positive impact on crime and disorder.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee agree to the District Direct Hospital Discharge Grant and the Early Help Flexible Fund, subject amendments as agreed by the Committee, to be put to South Norfolk Cabinet for approval and included as an addendum to the South Norfolk Housing Strategy 2016 -2019.

Appendix One

SOUTH NORFOLK DISTRICT DIRECT HOSPITAL DISCHARGE GRANT	
Purpose of grant	To assist a person in a hospital (acute/non-acute) setting to return to their home.
Maximum Grant	£3000
Eligible Persons	<p>A person who is normally a resident of South Norfolk who is in a hospital setting and able to return to their home, or the home of their main carer, and is prevented from doing so because of the condition of the home.</p> <p>The person must be in receipt one or more of the following benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Pension Credit Guarantee • Job Seekers Allowance (Income related) • Employment Support Allowance (Income related) • Housing Benefit • Council Tax Support • Universal credit
Eligible Properties	A permanent and legal residence including dwellings, mobile homes or caravans and houseboats.
Eligible Works/equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum cost of works £50.00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works that are essential for safe access into and around the home, the safe occupation of, and to enable the provision of personal care. • Works must be urgently needed to enable the person to return home and of the nature that can be quickly carried out. • The Eligible person must be responsible for the for the cost of the works. Works /support/equipment that would normally be the responsibility of another agency would not be eligible. • Eligible works will be agreed by the South Norfolk Council Independent Living Team
Eligible expenditure	15% of the cost of works Care and Repair Fees to cover the cost of arranging for and making payments to the contractors to undertake the work
Relevant Works	<p>Repairs, equipment, adaptations and other measures to allow the person and their carers safe access into and around their home.</p> <p>Examples of works include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Portable/temporary ramping ○ Temporary stair lift ○ Over bath shower ○ Furniture moving ○ Stair and grab rails ○ Key safe ○ 3 months' community lifeline ○ Environmental controls ○ Repairs ○ Heating upgrades

Note: The grant will be funded from the Disabled Facility Grant allocation made to the Council through the Better Care Fund.

Appendix Two

EARLY HELP FLEXIBLE FUND - funded by South Norfolk Council	
Purpose of assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide funds to allow people or families in need of early help support to remain safe, well and independent. • To enable an individual or family who needs additional support to access and make habitable appropriate accommodation in the community and/or to enable continued independent living in the community or in their own home (excluding rent and housing costs). • Funding to allow individuals or families supported through early help to access other services and provision which will have a positive impact on the individual or family's wellbeing and prosperity, including but not limited to: employment, education and training related expenses.
Maximum Grant	£250 (per household)
Minimum Grant	NA
Eligible Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident of South Norfolk • In financial hardship (as evidenced by referring agency or by the individual) • Unable to afford the requested item(s)/provision through own means <p>Active case of at least one EH partner agency and has consented to a request for support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access to alternative sources of funding

Ineligible Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those unable or unwilling to provide evidence of financial hardship (evidence can be verbal or information from EH partner) • Those able to afford the relevant item but unwilling to use their own funds. • Those unwilling to work with the South Norfolk help hub or one of the agencies within the early help partnership to address underlying need.
Entry route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any South Norfolk Early Help partner • Direct via Early Help request for support
Eligible costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency provision of food and/or other vital household items to provide sustenance for up to 3 days where provisions cannot be accessed via foodbank or other sources. • Emergency provision of electric and/or gas to cover a period of up to 3 days where an agreement cannot be made with an energy supplier or where funding cannot be accessed through appropriate loans or alternative grant funding. • Provision of heating oil where no other suitable source of hot water and/or heating is available within the property. Quantity of oil purchased subject to supplier minimum amounts. • Access to resources which enable the individual or family to overcome barriers to wellbeing or achieving potential, including access to employment, education and training and emergency transport costs.
Ineligible costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items or provision which are not necessary for the customer or family to remain safe and well or which does not alleviate the presenting hardship or barriers to achieving potential.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for any one-off item where by funding has already been provided through the Flexible Fund on a previous occasion under the same circumstances.
Delivery mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are made via the Early Help Request for Support Process. Applications will be decided on by an authorising officer and signed off by the budget holder at South Norfolk Council. • The precise delivery of the Flexible Fund payment will depend on the resource being provided. Where a request for support is made by a practitioner / worker, the onus will be on the worker to provide information and costings for the items requested. • The flexible fund will not take the form of a cash grant direct to customers.
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where support is provided because of an unmet support need the customer must agree to engage with the relevant offer of ongoing support in order to access the Flexible Fund. • Where a customer receives support through the flexible fund on more than one occasion in the same financial year the total amount shall not exceed £250.

Funding Supported Housing

Report of the Housing and Benefits Manager

Cabinet Member: (Yvonne Bendle - Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure & Early Intervention)

CONTACT

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1. Introduction

The DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) and DWP (Department of Works and Pensions) have produced a policy statement and consultation for Funding Supported Housing. The purpose of this report is to explain the proposed changes, consider the implications for South Norfolk Council and our partners. Whilst any reduction in funding is never welcomed, the policy statement and consultation aims to aid supported housing by 2020 and therefore the response from the Council will be positive.

The full consultation can be found [here](#)

2. Background

- 2.1. Supported housing is any housing scheme where accommodation is provided alongside care, support or supervision to help people live as independently as possible in the community. The Council has an excellent homeless prevention track record. Alongside this we are also determined to make sure that the properties that people do move into will provide suitable sustainable accommodation thus avoiding a perpetual homeless cycle which, in addition to poor outcomes for individuals creates substantial cost to statutory partners
- 2.2. Norfolk County Council has substantially reduced supporting people money. This has had a significant impact on our partners as they seek to maintain services with an increasing demand, particularly around older people. Many of those who access our housing service have additional support needs including but not limited to mental health, drug or alcohol dependency, victims of domestic abuse, vulnerable young people including care leavers, people with learning or physical disability, ex-offenders and vulnerable armed forces veterans.
- 2.3. Where peoples high level support needs are greater than what our early help team, FIRST (Financial Independence, Resilience, Skills and Training) officers and the housing team can provide we use the most suitable partner to make sure those needs are met.

3. Current Position and Consultation Proposals

- 3.1. The Central Government policy statement and consultation splits supported housing into three parts:
 - short-term and transitional support
 - sheltered housing and extra care supported housing, which both directly impact our services, and
 - long-term support, (nb – this does not directly impact on SNC services and so is not addressed below).

Current South Norfolk Position

Sheltered Housing

- 3.1 There is currently a good and appropriate level of provision of sheltered housing available for our customers. To mitigate for the loss of supporting people money from the county Council, providers have increased charges by an average of £1.50 per week, which is covered by the residents' housing benefit. All providers are reviewing their service provision to make sure it is suitable and sustainable.

Short term and transitional supported housing

- 3.2 In South Norfolk, there are a variety of providers and service types including (but are not limited to) Leeway and Orwell who focus on victims of domestic abuse (DA) and high-level support organisations such as Genesis, Solo housing and Stonham.
- 3.3 Previously, Supporting People funding provided a consistent funding stream to our partner agencies and its decrease has forced agencies to rethink their business structure, creating possible future instability.
- 3.4 At present, much of the shortfall left by the removal of Supporting People has been filled by housing benefit payment, however as its payment is dependent on occupancy and subsequent claim which fails to provide certainty of income.

Government Proposed Policy Changes

The Policy which is subject to consultation aims to, by 2020:

3.5 Sheltered housing

Re-aligning funding streams to make sure that they are sustained and consistent, and allow cost certainty to encourage investment in supply by providers. This will be achieved through a proposed sheltered rent. This will allow for better cost control and certainty and the regulator will be able to standardise gross eligible rent, which will be covered by housing benefit

3.6 Short term and transitional housing

Strengthen focus on outcomes oversight and cost control and make sure it fits within welfare change. This will be achieved by the introduction of a local grant fund which will be 100% commissioned by Norfolk County Council. This will provide a secure income aiming to attract investment by housing associations and the private sector to promote building. The money will also allow the

implementation of a suitable longer-term staff structure. Whilst it would have been desirable for supported money to have been made available for agencies before supporting people funding was removed, the consideration to increase money within this sector is welcomed.

These aims are supported by the Council and we propose to respond positively to the policy to support the approach taken to sheltered, short term and transitional Housing.

4 Risks and implications

4.1 The principles and proposals of the policy proposal are largely positive, recognising the difficulties of sustainability within the existing models and looking to ensure greater stability and consistency in the future, to support the provisions of sheltered housing, particularly in the context of increasing demand nationally.

4.2 The overriding risk is that our key providers either feel that this funding is not suitable to sustain their existing business model, are unsuccessful in any grant requests or feel that it does not meet their full provision. This will result in the reduction or removal of these services from our area. We will work with each partner to understand this risk and the possible impact for our residents.

4.3 Potential impacts for this are:

4.3.1 Reduction – Reduction regularly impacts staff provision. The people using this service have high support needs and require help and training to get to a point where they can start being ready to take on a new sustainable tenancy. Although the service may remain, failure to provide the right level of support puts the individual at risk of falling into the perpetual circle of homelessness through eviction. This fails to meet many of the principals and aims the Council are seeking to achieve within our early help and preventative ethos.

4.3.2 Removal – The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act which comes into force in April 2018 puts the emphasis upon the Council to find suitable housing. Partner agencies and the services provided are an essential avenue for those not ready to take on housing. Whilst it is probable that this service would be available elsewhere this could potentially be from other providers who have less local knowledge and are located out of the District. This carries further issues including cost both in relation to service charge and cost of transportation, communication with resident and ability to be involved in future developments in service provision.

5 Recommendation

5.1 Members of the Committee are asked to note the above consultation, its key proposals and possible impacts in South Norfolk and support a positive response to the consultation.

* Projections suggest that the overall number of supported homes may need to rise across Great Britain from 650,000 to 845,000 by 2030 (30% increase), particularly among older people (35% increase on current demand) and people with disabilities (53% increase).

Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure & Early Intervention Policy Committee – Work Programme

Date of meeting	Subject	Responsible Officer	Objectives	Next stage
Date TBA	Changes to the Structure of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships	Jamie Sutterby	To keep the committee briefed on changes to the sustainability and transformation partnership governance arrangements, both county wide and within the locality.	
Date TBA	Health and Wellbeing Draft Plan	Sam Cayford	To explore the role that SNC can and should (continue to) play both in county wide partnerships and locally.	