



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Date: Thursday, 14 November 2019
Time: 18:30
Venue: Supper Room
Address: Town Hall, Hall Plain, Great Yarmouth, NR30 2QF

AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

You have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter to be discussed if it relates to something on your Register of Interests form. You must declare the interest and leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

You have a Personal Interest in a matter to be discussed if it affects

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

You must declare a personal interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

Whenever you declare an interest you must say why the interest arises, so that it can be included in the minutes.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| 3 | <u>MINUTES</u> | 4 - 7 |
| | To confirm the minutes of the last meeting. | |
| 4 | <u>MATTERS ARISING</u> | |
| | To consider any matters arising from the above minutes | |
| 5 | <u>FORWARD PLAN</u> | 8 - 8 |
| | The Committee is asked to receive and consider the Forward Plan. | |
| 6 | <u>TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION STRATEGY</u> | 9 - 20 |
| | Report attached. | |
| 7 | <u>HOUSING ADAPTATIONS SERVICE REVIEW</u> | 21 - 48 |
| | Report attached. | |
| 8 | <u>HRA DEBT CAP REPORT</u> | 49 - 57 |
| | Report attached. | |
| 9 | <u>BOROUGH PROFILE DATA</u> | 58 - 69 |
| | Presentation attached. | |
| 10 | <u>SELECTIVE LICENSING</u> | 70 - 74 |
| | Report attached. | |

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

To consider any other business as may be determined by the Chairman of the meeting as being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

In the event of the Committee wishing to exclude the public from the meeting, the following resolution will be moved:-

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act."

13 GYN BOARD MINUTES

Details

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 17 October 2019 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Grant (in the chair); Councillors Candon, Flaxman-Taylor, D Hammond, Martin, Smith-Clare, Talbot, Wainwright & Williamson.

Councillor Wells attended as a substitute for Councillor Cameron.

Mr N Shaw (Strategic Director), Mrs N Turner (Director of Housing), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Ms Holly Notcutt (Community Development Manager) Mrs Ria Frosdick (Executive Services Officer).

Ben Hogston (Associate Director of Primary Care Development, Gt Yarmouth & Waveney), Dr Karen Mitchell (GP Partner at ENMP and Clinical Chair of Coastal Health GPPO), Christine Breeze (Integrated Commissioning Manager East), Dr Paul Noakes (GP Partner at Park Surgery) attended for item 7.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cameron and Galer.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th September 2019 were confirmed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reported that there were no matters arising from the above minutes.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

6 WARD HEALTH DATA REPORT

In addition to the data presented, Councillor Williamson has requested the economic data, to be able to look in detail at specific wards and identify known trends.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the report and requested that a presentation with a wider range of economic data be made available for the November meeting.

7 CCG - STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN

Members received a presentation from representatives of the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group which provided an update on the Strategic Transformation Plan.

Following the presentation members asked a series of questions and discussed issues relevant to the borough on obesity, GP out of hours services, smoking and life limiting illnesses

Councillor Wainwright would like to suggest that this presentation is made to all members in the New Year.

Councillor Talbot requested information on our of hours GP services in Gt Yarmouth.

8 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PERIOD 6 BUDGET MONITORING

The committee received and considered the 2019/20 HRA and capital budget monitoring position as at the end of period 6 from the HRA Service Manager.

Members noted that the right to buy figures were below the projected figures for 2019/20, this will continue to be monitored.

RESOLVED:

That the committee considered the 2019/20 Housing Revenue and Capital Budget monitoring report for period 6.

9 NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director and Community Development Manager. When discussing the report members raised a number of issues:-

- The need to capture qualitative impact, as the soft outcomes of the NTW team are immense.
- The holistic approach provided by the Neighbourhoods Team and its impact.
- Losing funding for the Community Connectors would have an impact, these relationships need to remain in place.
- The funding ends in exactly one year and the need for clear options to continue some of the work undertaken by the programme.

Councillor Williamson proposed an addition to the recommendations as follows:-

That a cross party member working group be established to discuss the future of the work in the three neighbourhood areas.

Following a vote this proposed addition was lost.

RESOLVED:

1. That following receipt of the evaluation report, a meeting be arranged by the Strategic Director with the Big Lottery to assess the potential for future external funding streams.
2. To work with Norfolk County Council's newly appointed VCSE Manager over the next 6 months to ascertain the value of community and voluntary sector work in the borough.
3. To bring a further report outlining current provision; identifying and gaps or duplication; with a view to informing the future priorities of the Neighbourhoods & Communities Team from October 2020 onwards.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ii. The Strategic Director advised that Holmes builders have been on the Claydon Pavilion site recently to make it safe. This is being pursued as quickly as possible via the insurance company. A meeting has been scheduled for the 18th November with Shrublands Football Club and Claydon Community Association to look at options and gain input going forward.

The Housing Director advised that the tenants survey is due to go out next week. The survey provider will attend the meeting on the 23rd January 2020 with feedback.

iii. The Norfolk Community Directory (link below) was recently discussed at the Yarmouth Area Committee and information on the Directory will be provided to the Yarmouth Area Committee.

<https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/norfolk-community-directory>

RESOLVED:

The Chairman suggested that Councillor Martin contacts the editor of the Norfolk Community Directory to request that details of additional local groups and projects are added if necessary.

11 (i) Period Poverty Quarterly report.

The committee received and considered the Tricky Period Project update report from the Neighbourhoods That Work Co-ordinator.

It was noted that demand had been higher than anticipated but it was suggested that better quality, unscented products should be used going forward. Also, a need for further products was identified such as incontinence pads and possibly nipple cream/shields due to the loss of the local breastfeeding support team. The Community Development Manager advised that DIAL are submitting a bid for Tampon Tax funding and if successful more options could be explored.

RESOLVED:

To transfer the remainder of the project budget to DIAL and for DIAL to take over the lead partner role enabling the project to develop and attract additional external funding.

12 GYN BOARD MINUTES

It was reported that these would be brought to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at: 21:02

Forward Plan for Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee

	Matter for Decision	Report by	Pre Agenda Meeting (PAM)	Housing & Neighbourhoods	Policy & Resources	Council
1	GYN Board Minutes	Strategic Director (NS)				
2	Temporary Accommodation Strategy	Housing Director	06/11/19	14/11/19		
3	Housing Adaptations Service Review	Housing Director	06/11/19	14/11/19		
4	HRA Debt Cap Report	Finance Director	06/11/19	14/11/19		
5	Borough Profile Data	Strategic Director	06/11/19	14/11/19		
6	Selective Licensing	Senior Housing Licensing Officer	06/11/19	14/11/19		
7	Housing Allocations Scheme	Housing Director	05/12/19	16/12/19		
8	HRA Budget Report	Finance Director	05/12/19	16/12/19		
9	Quarter 2 Performance Report	Housing Transformation Manager	05/12/19	16/12/19		
10	Middlegate Estate Update	Strategic Director	15/01/20	23/01/20		
11	Empty Homes Update	Housing Director	15/01/20	23/01/20		
12	STAR Survey Results	Housing Director	15/01/20	23/01/20		
13	Period 10 Budget Monitoring - HRA	Finance Director	19/02/20	23/01/20		
14	Property Redress Scheme	Head of Environmental Services	19/02/20	27/02/20		11/07/19
15	Quarter 3 Performance Report	Housing Transformation Manager	TBC	TBC		

Subject: Great Yarmouth Borough Council Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2019

Report to: Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 14th November 2019

Report by: Tracey Slater, Service Unit Manager (Housing Options)

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to approve the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Great Yarmouth Borough Council has a legal duty to provide interim or temporary accommodation for households who approach the Council as homeless and who meet the criteria as set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). To be considered for temporary accommodation a household must be homeless (not just threatened with homelessness), eligible for assistance (meet immigration condition) and believed to be in priority need for housing. In some other cases (cold weather) the Council will accommodate for short periods of time homeless households irrespective of whether they are believed to have a priority need.
- 1.2 One of the strategic objectives of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy adopted in 2018 was to ensure that there was available a stock of suitable temporary accommodation to meet the needs of homeless applicants. This new Temporary Accommodation Strategy will look to address how the council is to achieve this element of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) was implemented which, brought about the most significant change to homelessness legislation since it was first introduced in the 1970's.
- 2.2 As is indicated in the Temporary Accommodation Strategy, following the

introduction of the HRA in April 2018 the Council has seen a steady increase in the use of temporary accommodation most notably bed and breakfast and the Council's LA Housing Stock. At the end of quarter 2 of 2019/20, the 89 households in temporary accommodation were accommodated in:

- Bed and Breakfast – 22 households
- Leased properties – 12 households
- Council owned (General Fund) properties – 12 households
- Council housing stock (Housing Revenue Account) – 43 households.

2.3 This new strategy will look to ensure that the Council can meet its statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation whilst looking to reduce our use of Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation so it is only used in an emergency for un-planned placements for families and other households, all to be restricted to a minimum time period. The Council's reliance on using its LA Housing Stock as temporary accommodation will also be minimised and we will look to make more effective use of existing temporary accommodation owned or directly leased by the Council.

2.3 By working in partnership with homeless households we will look to prevent and relieve their homelessness to reduce the number of households who require a temporary accommodation placement. Homeless households will be supported to explore all suitable options to relieve their homelessness including accommodation in the private sector or affordable housing so, if temporary accommodation is required it can be provided in a planned manner and not as an emergency placement.

2.4 This strategy will look to regularly monitor whether there is sufficient availability of temporary accommodation to meet need within the borough and where there is an evidenced need, consideration will be given to expanding the portfolio of temporary accommodation to ensure that identified needs are met.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 It is difficult to predict on-going costs for temporary accommodation as this is dictated by demand that can fluctuate. The actual cost to the Council of the provision of temporary accommodation is therefore linked to the numbers of household in temporary accommodation, the type and cost of this accommodation and the income which can be collected (as rent and other housing costs) from homeless households. The Council does however, seek to maximise the recovery of rent and other housing costs from homeless households, although it is not

possible in all cases to recover all income which is due. Spend on temporary accommodation is monitored on a monthly basis along with income received.

- 3.2 When procuring all types of temporary accommodation, we will seek to ensure that best value is achieved.

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Although it is not a statutory requirement, it is deemed good practise to have a Temporary Accommodation Strategy and specific guidance was provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in July 2019 in connection with the placement of families out of area.
- 4.2 In adopting the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and implementing the Action plan the Council will have a better understanding of the need for temporary accommodation to ensure that it can effectively plan to address changes in the Council's temporary accommodation requirements, it makes effective use of existing provision and delivers better outcome for homeless households by ensuring that use of bed and breakfast provision is reduced and households are placed in the most suitable available temporary accommodation. Without the adoption of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan there is a risk that the Council could become increasingly reliant on bed and breakfast accommodation which will have a negative impact on homeless households and especially families or that spend on temporary accommodation increases without appropriate mitigation being undertaken.
- 4.3 The Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan includes specific actions around ensuring that there is an appropriate supply of housing in the private sector and of affordable homes to ensure that the Council can minimise the need for temporary accommodation. The strategy does however, recognise in some cases, that the Council may need to increase its temporary accommodation portfolio to ensure the Council's statutory responsibilities can be met in the most appropriate way.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are requested to approve the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A : Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2019

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Management Team
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Management Team
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan
Financial Implications:	Covered in report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Covered in report
Risk Implications:	Covered in report
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	The Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan will ensure that the needs of those with protected characteristics will be considered in the discharge of the Council's statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation.
Crime & Disorder:	None.
Every Child Matters:	Needs of children considered as part of Temporary Accommodation Strategy and suitability of temporary accommodation provided.



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2019

Document created	October 2019
Agreed by Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee	
Review date	October 2020

Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2019.

1. Introduction

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has a duty to provide interim or temporary accommodation for households who approach the Council as homeless and who meet the criteria as set out in the Housing Act 1996, Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.) To be considered for temporary accommodation they would need to be homeless (not just threatened with homelessness), eligible for assistance (meet immigration conditions) and believed to be in priority need for housing. An applicant who meets one of the criteria below will be considered to be in priority need;

- (a) a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside.
- (b) a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
- (c) a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, learning disability or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside.
- (d) a person aged 16 or 17 who is not a 'relevant child' or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- (e) a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
- (f) a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
- (g) a person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces.
- (h) a person who is vulnerable as a result of: (i) having served a custodial sentence; (ii) having been committed for contempt of court or any other kindred offence; or (iii) having been remanded in custody.
- (i) a person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out.

The threshold for triggering the section 188(1) duty to provide temporary accommodation is low as the housing authority only has to have a reason to believe (rather than being satisfied) that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need as indicated above.

This strategy sets out the Council's approach to the provision of temporary accommodation in accordance with the Council's duties to provide interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996 and the relief duty as per Section 189B while homelessness enquires are undertaken, and longer-term temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the same Act.

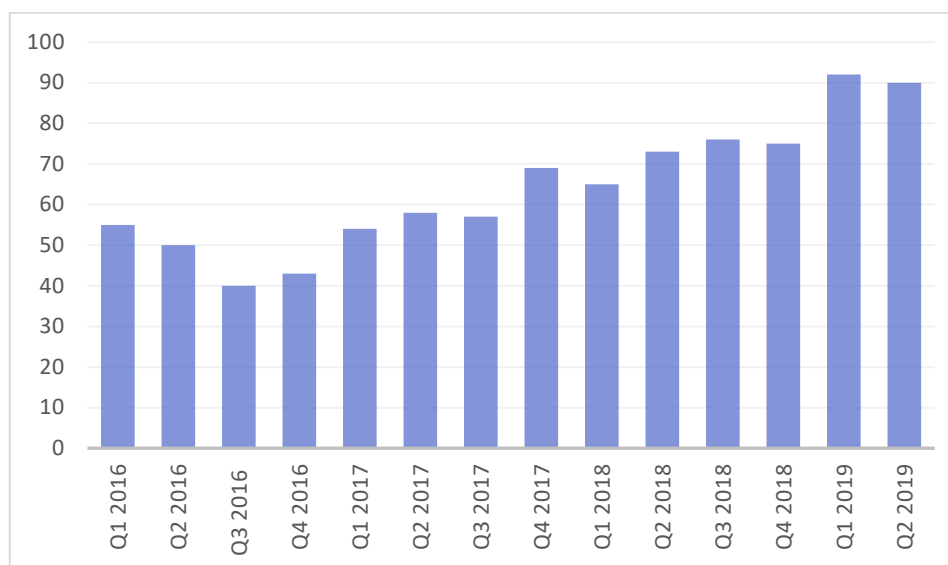
The Council also provides temporary accommodation for households for whom there is no statutory duty to provide interim or temporary accommodation under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which ensures that all street homeless households are accommodated during periods of ongoing freezing temperatures. Within this document

placements under both of these duties are referred to as temporary accommodation placements.

2. Current Position

The Council is dependent upon a supply of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households. The supply of temporary accommodation needs to be able to meet the needs of a range of household types and sizes as well as ensure that households who require ground floor accommodation or wheelchair accessible accommodation can have their requirements met.

Average number of Temporary Accommodation units in use per quarter from 2016 - present



As is indicated above, the Council's use of temporary accommodated has steadily increased since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 (Q2 2018 onwards).

The Council needs to have access to some temporary accommodation which is accessible immediately to meet the needs of those households who approach the Council when they are homeless, including those who contact the Council for assistance out of normal working hours. Temporary accommodation that can be accessed in a more planned manner also needs to be available.

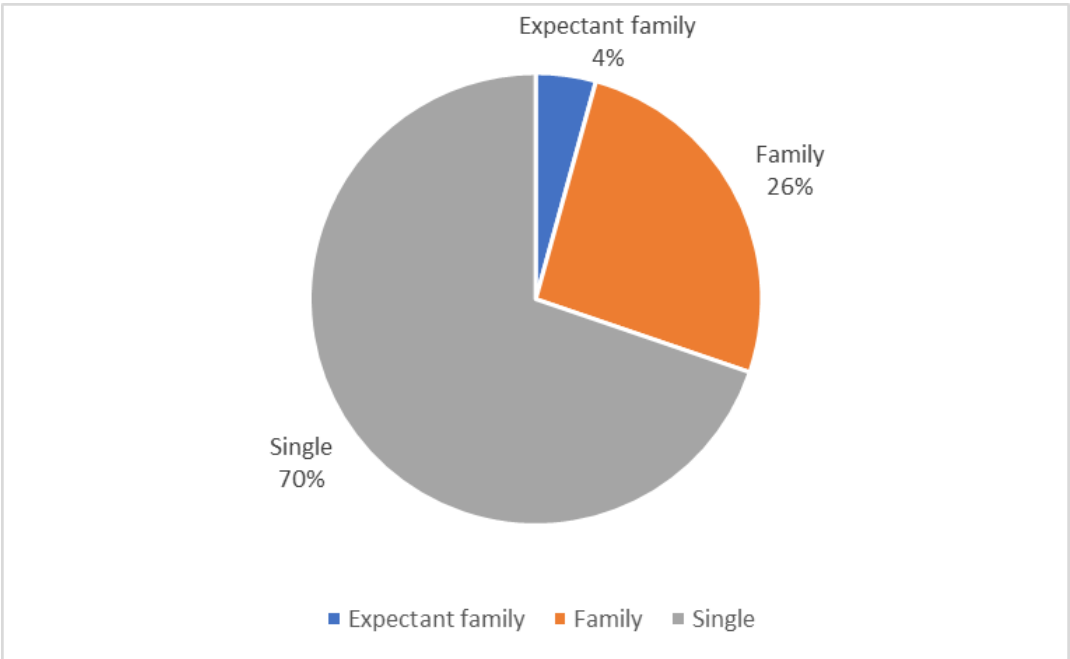
To meet these requirements the Council uses a range of different types of accommodation:

- Private sector leased properties
- Council owned properties developed specifically for or bought for use as temporary accommodation –
- The Council's own housing stock
- Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation

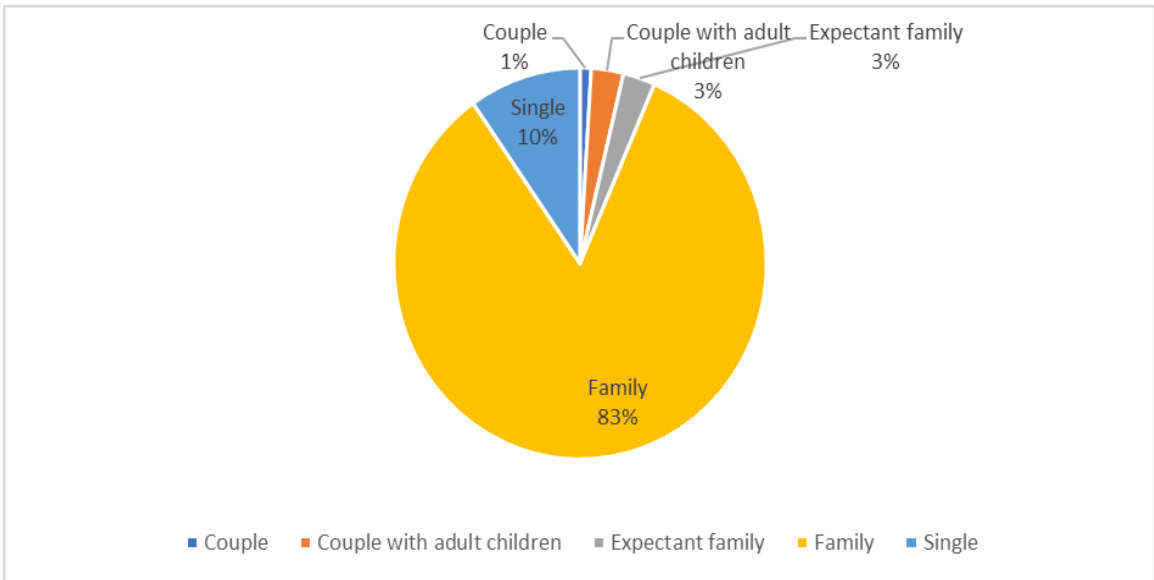
Other than Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation, all temporary accommodation is self-contained and will be provided with carpets in all bedrooms and living rooms. Self-contained accommodation is available furnished or unfurnished.

Generally, at any one time 70% of households in Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation are single people and 30% households with children whereas, within self-contained units 11% are single people and 89% households with children as shown by the graphs below:

Percentage of households in Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation by household type as at 31.10.19



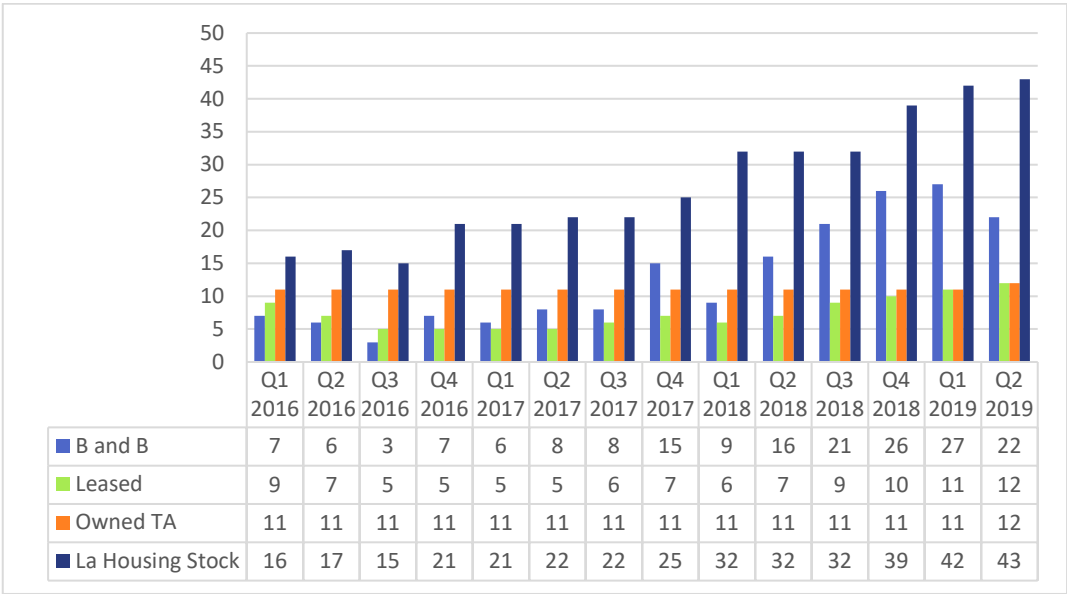
Percentage of households in self-contained Temporary Accommodation by household type as at 31.10.19



The graph below indicates the types of temporary accommodation used over the period April 2016 to September 2019. This shows that the main increase in the type of temporary accommodation used has been in the use of Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation and the Council’s own housing stock. As the number of Council voids appears to be declining annually, it is not in the Council’s interest to be too reliant on using the Council’s housing stock as such

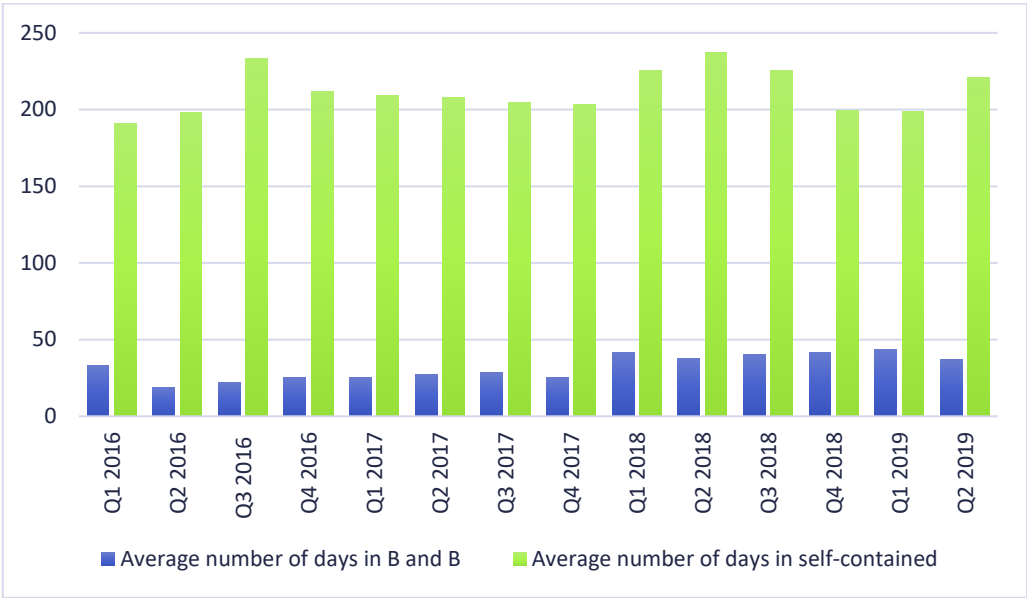
uses restricts the ability to use these properties to permanently rehouse applicants on the Housing Register.

Usage of temporary accommodation by type per quarter from 2016 to present



The graph below shows that the average number of days spent in temporary accommodation from April 2016 to September 2019 has remained steady although the number of households accommodated has increased throughout this period.

Average number of days spent in temporary accommodation per quarter from 2016 to present



3. Suitability of accommodation

The Council’s approach to the provision of temporary accommodation takes into account the statutory requirement on local authorities in respect of the suitability of temporary

accommodation, including the Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012 and has regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as required by Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

When deciding if a temporary accommodation placement is suitable, consideration will be given to Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2019) which states that the following factors need to be taken into account:

Needs, requirements and circumstances of each household member – this includes any identified health or mobility issues, any care or support provided by agencies or the need to access specialist medical services. The key factor to consider when assessing medical issues is whether the condition itself would make the accommodation unsuitable. Consideration will be given to whether the accommodation is affordable for the applicant and their household.

The location of the accommodation – factors to consider include the ability to access the workplace if in paid employment, avoiding disruption to the education of young people, especially those at critical points in time such as being close to GCSE examinations. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for a placement outside of the area to be arranged should the applicant be considered to be a risk to others or at risk should they be placed in temporary accommodation within the borough.

The size and facilities of the accommodation – the accommodation provided should have adequate space for the household taking into account the needs, requirement and circumstances of the household. Households requiring temporary accommodation will often be placed into accommodation that has fewer bedrooms than a household would be entitled to on a permanent basis.

Assessments in regard to suitability of a temporary accommodation placement are completed on a case by case basis to ensure that any temporary accommodation offered is considered reasonable and suitable for the household. These assessments are made within the context of the accommodation and resources that are available to the Council.

The Council will wherever reasonable and practicable try to secure suitable temporary accommodation within the Great Yarmouth Borough area to allow a household to maintain their existing networks, such as employment, schooling, medical care and family and social support. However, this may not be possible in all cases, where out of borough placements are used, the Council will use its best endeavours to minimise the time that a household is placed outside of the Borough. Where an out of area temporary accommodation placement is made, the host Local Authority will be notified.

Bed and Breakfast placements.

In exceptional circumstances, the Council will use Bed and Breakfast or hotel accommodation to meet its temporary accommodation duties. Examples of when such accommodation will be used are:

- Providing accommodation to single or couple households under SWEP arrangements
- When no self-contained accommodation is available
- In an emergency (including out of hours placements).

Bed and breakfast/hotel accommodation will not be used for any young person of 16 or 17 years of age and when used for families will only be used as a last resort or on an emergency basis. Families will be moved to self-contained accommodation as soon as an alternative temporary accommodation placement can be found.

Temporary accommodation requirements

The Council will seek to reduce the need for temporary accommodation through its work with homeless applicants to prevent or relieve homelessness. Homeless households will be supported to explore all suitable options to relieve their homelessness including accessing good quality and suitable accommodation in the private rented sector or affordable housing. There will however, be an ongoing need for temporary accommodation and this need for temporary accommodation will be regularly monitored to assess whether there is sufficient availability within the borough to meet need, with monthly monitoring of:

- Number of households placed in temporary accommodation
- Size and type of household
- Need for accessible temporary accommodation
- Usage by type of temporary accommodation.

Where there is an evidenced need based on the monitoring of the need and usage of temporary accommodation to increase the Council's portfolio of temporary accommodation, consideration will be given to expanding the portfolio to meet identified needs through;

- Leasing of additional private sector units
- Acquisition/ development of temporary accommodation within the General Fund
- Joint working with Registered Providers.

The Action Plan sets out the actions the Council will take working with partners to ensure that there is an appropriate supply of temporary accommodation across the borough.

Monitoring and review

The strategy and action plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

Temporary Accommodation Action Plan

To ensure that there is an appropriate supply of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households who require it, over the period 2019-2024 the Council will:

- Work in partnership with homeless households to prevent and relieve their homelessness to reduce the number of households who require a temporary accommodation placement
- Seek to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation for all household types by at least half (including SWEP usage)
- Ensure that no family stays in Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation for more than two weeks
- Inspect all Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation within the borough prior to first use and on a regular basis
- Monitor the use of temporary accommodation ensuring that the supply of accommodation available (owned or leased) is sufficient to meet the needs of those households who require it
- Seek to reduce the overall amount of time that homeless households stay in temporary accommodation
- Minimise the use of the Council's own Council housing stock for use as temporary accommodation
- Provide a range of furnished and unfurnished accommodation to meet specific needs of homeless households
- Ensure value for money is obtained in securing and providing temporary accommodation
- Increase homeless household's ability to access the private rented sector through financial support (rent deposits/bonds)
- Provide additional support in partnership with Registered Providers and local charities to homeless households to successfully maintain their temporary accommodation placement and ensure they have the skills to maintain their subsequent tenancy
- Identify ways to support the victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes where it is safe to do so
- Work in partnership with local domestic abuse charities to ensure that refuge provision is not blocked as residents are unable to move on when they are ready to do so
- Increase the supply of affordable housing owned by the Council and Registered Providers across the borough.

Subject: Housing Adaptations Service Review
Report to: Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee 14 November 2019
Report by: Independent Living Service Manager

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee are requested to consider the report and approve the following recommendations:

- An increase in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget by £84,500 p.a. to enable the recruitment of one full time Technical Officer and one full time Occupational Therapist on fixed term contracts for 2 years.
- An increase in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital adaptations budget of £200,000 per annum for 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Agree minor modifications to the current Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants as set out in section 7 of this report

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of this report is to set out the rational for increasing the resource to deliver the adaptation service, in addition the report also highlights recent modifications to the Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants.

The Council's Independent Living Services team deliver a range of services that support the borough's residents to live safely and independently in their own homes. The services include the delivery of adaptations that are deemed necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practical to meet an individual's or households needs. These adaptations are funded via the Disabled facilities Grant (DFG) for those residents who own their own home or rent from a private landlord or Registered Provider and via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the Council's own tenants

Appendix one provides an overview of how the services are delivered and Appendix two sets out the organisational structure of the Independent Living Service.

2. CURRENT SERVICE DELIVERY

Table 1 provides a flavour of the demand and adaptation work delivered by the team in 2018/19.

Table 1: Adaptation Activity

Activity	Number of Referrals Recommendations	Number Approved	Number Completed
Disabled Facilities Grant ¹	178	145	131
Adaptations to Council Homes ²	303	296	288
Be at Home ³	197	181	164
Totals	678	622	583

In recent years government has annually increased the grant for DFG to Council's. In 2018/19 the Council spent its full allocation of £1.24 million on Disabled Facilities Grants and Be at Home. In addition, a further £350,000 from the HRA was spent on adapting the Council's own stock.

In terms of delivery of the adaptation service there are 3 key functions, the assessment process, the administration of the application and the technical delivery of works.

The 4.5 Technical Officers undertake other work both associated with and independent of the adaptation services, including joint visits to determine feasibility of works, visits to residents whose homes are in serious disrepair, surveying residential properties the Council is seeking to acquire and properties the council owns to determine whether they can be adapted, dealing with claims of latent defects on any of the Councils previous improvement/regeneration projects and arranging urgent adaptation works that facilitate hospital discharge / prevent imminent hospital admission.

3. SERVICE CHALLENGES

Managing Current and Future Demand for Adaptations

The biggest challenge is keeping pace with the demand for adaptations, which continues to remain consistently high. Table 1 notes that the number of completions is lower than the number of approvals by 39 cases. Through-put of cases is dependent on staff resource, in particular Technical Officers. The current resource is insufficient to keep pace with demand resulting in cases being carried over from one year to the next and the creation of a small waiting list. This means that people are waiting longer for their adaptation work.

Currently there are 87 GYBC tenant cases and 11 private sector cases waiting for a Technical Officer to carry out a survey of their home. In addition, it is understood that there are around 100 people waiting for an OT assessment from Norfolk County Council (NCC) Locality Team and a further 42 people waiting for an Integrated Housing Adaptations OT

¹ Includes major works over £1,000

² Includes both minor and major works

³ Includes mostly minor works and some fast track DFG's

assessment. Not everyone waiting for an assessment will require adaptation works, some may need equipment only, however it is likely that at least half will require works further increasing pressure for Technical Officers.

*'Adaptations Without Delay – A guide to planning and delivering home adaptations differently'*⁴ published by the Royal College of OT's and the Housing Learning Improvement Network (LIN) advocates a different approach to assessments using trusted assessors instead of OT's for all but the most complex of cases. This document emphasizes the point that DFG legislation does not specify that an OT assessment is needed for every case. The legislation merely requires the housing authority consults with the social services authority. The service currently undertakes most of the minor adaptation work without an OT assessment and would be keen to use the trusted assessor approach for more straightforward major adaptations in the future. The use of Trusted Assessors is being discussed across the 7 districts with NCC. This approach will speed up the assessment process, however unless the Technical Officer resource is addressed there will continue to be delays.

Reducing Waiting Time for Adaptations: Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

The service currently reports on end to end time for DFG's with a target of 240 days. This is measured from initial enquiry to works complete. In 2018/19 and 2019/20 the Councils performance against this target was:

Table 2: Average End to End Time in Calendar Days (Initial Enquiry to Works Complete)

	2018/2019	2019/2020
Quarter 1	258	239
Quarter 2	309	190
Quarter 3	280	
Quarter 4	249	

Members will note the performance for quarter 2 2019/20 has shown a sustained improvement and an average end to end timescale for DFG's of 190 days, however there is a health warning:

- The performance is very likely to see to dip again in future quarters as the service experiences delays with OT assessments. The number of calendar days from initial enquiry to receipt of the D(OT)2 assessment has risen to 74 in the last quarter. This data is being used inform discussions on improvement with the OT and their managers
- The OT resource attached to the Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT) was reduced to part-time for a period of 8 months while recruitment took place. The full OT

⁴ <https://www.rcot.co.uk/adaptations-without-delay>

resource is now in place, however with pre-agreed holiday and training commitments the two staff have not yet been able to work at full capacity.

- The type and scale of the work will impact on the number of days. If several of the jobs completed in Q2 were straight-forward this would have a positive impact on the end to end times. Larger works invariably take more time both in preparation and delivery.

Further analysis of the 2018/19 data revealed that 24.5% of cases were completed within 6 months (182 days) 43% were completed in 9 months (273 days), 20% were completed in 12 months and 12.5% in just over 12 months. Some of this delay is outside the control of the service where applicants delay the process for personal or health reasons. There is also a delay of 3 to 6 weeks where an electrical isolator switch is required, which can only be fitted by the applicant's electricity supplier.

Norfolk council's monitor the average number of days it takes to complete each stage of the process of a DFG. The table below sets out the data for GYBC and Norfolk.

Table 3: End to End Times for the Seven Key Stages Quarter 4 Performance 2018/19

Activity	Average Day Count GYBC	Average Day Count Norfolk
Initial enquiry to triage by the Assistant Practitioner (AP)	0	7
Triage by AP to visit face to face assessment by OT or AP	13	35
Face to face assessment by OT or AP to works schedule complete by Technical Officer	114	64
Works schedule complete to valid application	30	34
Valid application complete to grant approval	1	6
Grant approval to start of works	14	46
Start of works to completion of works	76	23

The table clearly identifies GYBC as a negative outlier on the Norfolk average in the third and seventh stages of the process. This third stage includes the time taken by the OT to write up the assessment, and the waiting time for a Technical Officer to be available to take the case. The seventh stage is the time taken to carry out the work by the contractor. This can vary depending on the nature and complexity of the works.

Reducing Waiting Time for Adaptations: GYBC Tenants

The process for delivering adaptations for GYBC tenants is slightly different and there are other factors within the process which place demand on the Technical Officer's time.

OT assessments are given either a priority one (urgent) or priority two (non-urgent) classification. Urgent, priority one cases are dealt with first and the priority two cases are generally added to the waiting list.

Table 4: Applications Received and Completions by Designation in 2018/19⁵

Designation	Number Received	Number Completed
Priority One	45	36
Priority Two	246	215
Void	12	6

Of the 87 GYBC tenants currently waiting for adaptations, 42 are waiting for level access showers. Tenants are advised that there is currently a waiting time of one year for works. The waiting list has remained consistent for several reasons:

- Adaptations in void properties taking precedence over priority two cases. Void cases are often more complex, involving joint visits and assessments, which consume a considerable amount of time particularly if several visits are required as part of the housing allocation matching process.
- Priority one cases can also be more complex and require the Technical Officer reschedule other works to accommodate the urgent need.
- A small number of cases each year are added to the waiting list indicating there isn't quite enough resource to keep up with current demand or tackle the waiting list.

It has been calculated that tackling the backlog of work would take approximately 2 years, require an additional capital budget of £400,000 and an additional full-time Technical Officer.

Occupational Therapist Resource

The available Occupational Therapist resource continues to be an issue not only for Great Yarmouth but across Norfolk.

Using this decision-making framework, In Adaptations without Delay non-occupational therapy staff (trained trusted assessors or Assistant Practitioner level staff) could conduct more home visits allowing professional OT's to concentrate on the specialist level of intervention.

Given the waiting list for assessment currently sitting with NCC Locality Team and the issues being experienced by Housing Options consideration should be given to the Council engaging its own OT resource. The benefits of this would be:

⁵ Includes recommendations from OTs for both minor and major adaptation works

- Improved response times to assessments both for existing tenants and Housing Options applicants.
- Improved quality of assessments both for existing tenants and housing applicants because of the OT having a better understanding of the council's stock.
- Timely advice on acquisitions and new build based on their knowledge of the waiting list.
- Tenants would be able to refer themselves directly to the OT for adaptations relieving the pressure on assessments within Locality.
- Assessment of temporary accommodation resulting in better outcomes for homeless applicants.
- Assisting with the existing back log of adaptations in the Council's stock, carrying out reassessments of need as required

In addition to the OT resource the trusted assessor approach could also be adopted; with key housing staff receiving training to undertake assessments within the council's own stock.

In terms of the private sector the move towards using trusted assessor needs to be developed in conjunction with the IHAT and NCC to ensure that staff resource is appropriately used including the Assistant Practitioners within the IHAT and Independent Living staff. The adoption of the framework within 'Adaptations without Delay' supports the use of trusted assessors for all but specialist (complex, high risk cases) this should free up OT resource and enable more staff to undertake assessments leading to a reduction in waiting time.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

There are certainly many challenges, however there are also several exciting opportunities that will improve the applicants experience of the adaptation process leading to a tenure neutral service and creating greater levels of job satisfaction for those staff involved in the process.

Areas for Change

Meeting Existing and Future Demand: The report is clear that there is a need to increase the Technical Officer resource to reduce waiting times and improve the applicant experience. The additional resource is required to deal with the existing waiting list for adaptations within the council's own stock. Alongside the additional Technical Officer resource, the Council would need to agree and increase in the capital budget for works of £400,000 over two years. Across both tenures it is also apparent that with the introduction of a different approach to assessments will increase demand and therefore the need for additional Technical Officer resource is likely to remain.

Aligning the DFG and GYBC Tenant Adaptation Process to Develop a Tenure Neutral Approach: This has already started with work to rationalise the number of IT systems, development of new processes and the introduction of some new ways of working that are starting to yield small gains in time taken to deliver adaptations. To fully align the services and provide a consistent delivery time across both tenures, the current backlog within the Council's own stock needs to be dealt with separately using the additional Technical Officer resource to support this. This will allow the service to move more quickly towards a tenure neutral approach with one case load spanning all tenures. Although the service will work towards adopting a tenure neutral process by April 2020 there will still be a difference in process and potentially the time to deliver applications as means testing still applies for DFG applicants. For this reason, it is proposed to continue collect and monitor performance metrics for DFG and council homes adaptations separately.

Occupational Therapist Resource: The report highlights several reasons why the council should consider employing its own OT resource and develop a Trusted Assessor approach. As suggested it would significantly improve the efficiency in several key areas including adaptations, housing allocations and void turn-around times.

What is Required:

- 1 FTE Technical Officer (2-year fixed term contract)
- Increase in the HRA capital budget for adaptations of £400,000 spread over two years
- 1 FTE Occupational Therapy post to be shared across Independent Living Service, Housing Options, Tenancy Services and the Housing Enabling function (2-year fixed term contract)
- Access to Trusted Assessor Training.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Disabled Facilities Grant: Capital

The Council receives an annual capital funding allocation from the Better Care Fund to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants which for 2019/2020 is £1,188,068. This grant has increased annually since 2016 to meet the increasing demand for adaptations. The expectation is that this will continue therefore the Council will need the staff resource to ensure the allocated grant is fully spent.

In addition, the Council can choose to provide capital funds via borrowing should the amount of government grant not meet the demand for adaptations.

Disabled Facilities Grant: Revenue

The revenue budget for delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to the private sector sits in the general fund. The service is provided by the Independent Living Team, who operate a Home Improvement Agency that charges a fee to support applicants through the process, the fee is set against the Disabled Facilities Grant. The fees provide income for the council, to off-set the cost of providing the service.

GYBC Tenant Adaptations

The cost of the works and the staff resource to deliver those works are met by the Councils HRA. The budget for 2019/20 is £366,300 and reflects the service's current capacity to deliver the works.

Table 5 Indicative Cost of Proposals

Activity	Budget Required	Potential to use Existing Budgets or Generate Income?
1 FTE Technical Officer	£41,400 (Salary + on-costs) £3,700 (non-salary)	No: This post will be funded via the HRA and will require an additional budget.
HRA Budget for dealing with waiting list	£400,000	No: Additional capital requirement within the HRA
1 FTE Occupational Therapist	£47,813 (Salary + on-costs) £3,700 (Non-salary)	Yes: £12,000 of General Fund budget is currently used to fund an externally provided OT service this could be diverted to fund the post. The remainder would be funded from the additional HRA budget mentioned above. Potential savings on void times could also be used to off-set the cost.
Trusted Assessor Training (2-day course)	£420 (per employee)	Yes: In part could be met from within existing training budgets. This would be split across the HRA and GF depending on which service the staff receiving training are from

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS & RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The following legislation sets out the statutory requirements placed on a local authority in respect of housing and adaptations. This legislation forms the basis of the Council's Private Sector Housing Adaptation & Improvement Policy and the Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants.

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

Section 1 of the act imposes a duty on the council to provide adaptations or special equipment needs in the home to help with convenience or for safety. Any provision of resources is dependent upon an assessment of need under the NHS & Community Care Act 1990.

Disabled Persons Act 1986

The Disabled Persons Act 1986 strengthens the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires Local Authorities to meet the various needs of disabled people, including provision of aids and adaptations.

Housing Act 1985

Under section 8 of the act the council has a duty to consider housing conditions in its district and the needs of the district for the provision of further housing accommodation. This may include the provision or adaptation of existing accommodation for its own disabled tenants.

Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

Under this act the council has a duty to provide disabled facilities grants to eligible applicants.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people with the protected characteristics that are specified in section 4 of the Act. Disability is one of the specified characteristics.

Care Act 2014

Provides the opportunity to improve local provision of home adaptations in line with the Act's aspirations and duties to integrate, health, social care and housing, achieve efficiency savings and move from crisis intervention to prevention.

The measures outlined in this report will ensure that the Council continues to comply with the relevant legislation and deliver adaptations in a timely manner.

7. RISKS

The following risks have been identified:

Risk:

Failure to recruit to Technical Officer post

**Mitigation:**

Advertise in key industry press and websites including Foundations
Consider use of recruitment agency

Insufficient capacity within the current cohort of contractors on the Contractor Framework



Tender the waiting list work and appoint a single contractor to deliver

Failure to recruit an Occupational Therapist



Advertise in key industry press and websites including Foundations
Consider use of recruitment agency

Revised processes lead to larger capital budget requirement for both DFG and HRA



Government have increased DFG budgets annually for the last 3 years as a result of recognising the wider system savings of DFG.
Recruiting an OT for housing will lead to better use of stock negating the need for more costly adaptations

8. ADAPTATION POLICY FOR COUNCIL TENANTS

This report also highlights the recent modifications to the Adaptation Policy for Council Tenants.

The current policy, which was adopted in March 2016, was revised in June 2018 following a report to Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee. The policy has recently been reviewed and updated to capture changes in job roles/title, changes to service titles and to provide greater clarity to how applications for adaptations are determined.

The following are the key updates, which are now required:

- Section 6.2: Reasonable & Practical bullet point 3 has been expanded to include '*Where a tenant is receiving palliative care the Council will consider sympathetically individual cases of under-occupation by more than one bedroom. This may include timely provision of some or all of the assessed adaptations where they are technically possible*'
- Section 7.3.1: Assessment Process has been developed to:
 - Take account of the Technical Officers role (bullet point 2),
 - Clarify the process for dealing with cases where there are complex needs and there is a need to work collaboratively to achieve the most appropriate solution, which will

- aim to offer best value for money whilst meeting the needs of the tenant (bullet point 4), and;
- Explain that where a move to more suitable accommodation is recommended this will be subject to availability of suitable housing stock, which will include both Council or Registered Provider stock and in some cases the tenant may also consider a move to the private rented sector.
- Section 8: Cost of Adaptations paragraph one has been expanded to include more examples of when the Council may consider increasing the upper limit of works to £50,000
- Section 9: Tenants Installing their own Adaptations has been developed to provide clarity to how the Council will deal with adaptations that have been carried out at the tenant's own expense with the Council's permission.
- Section 13: Review of Decision now includes a request to review a decision to refuse works on the grounds that it is not reasonable and practical **or** necessary and appropriate for their needs.

A copy of the revised policy is attached at Appendix 3

9. CONCLUSION

The service is working hard to deliver a cost-effective efficient service, but there is insufficient capacity within the team to deal with both the waiting list for adaptations the potential increase in new demand.

The report outlines areas where the capacity could be enhanced and the benefits this would bring to both the applicant and the Council by moving towards delivery of a tenure neutral service.

The Council has an excellent reputation with partners for delivering services that keep people living at home for longer, however with more resource this could be delivered better and faster resulting in greater system-wide savings across housing, health and social care.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee are requested to consider the report and approve the following recommendations:

- An increase in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget by £84,500 p.a. to enable the recruitment of one full time Technical Officer and one full time

- Occupational Therapist on fixed term contracts for 2 years.
- An increase in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital adaptations budget of £200,000 per annum for 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Agree minor modifications to the current Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants as set out in section 7 of this report

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Overview of the Adaptation Process

Appendix 2: Organisational Structure for Independent Living Service

Appendix 3: Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants 2019

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	None
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Via ELT at 28 th October meeting
Existing Council Policies:	Private Sector Housing Adaptations and Improvement Policy GYBC Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Considered and included
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Considered and included
Risk Implications:	Considered and included
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	Considered / EQIA to be completed
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	Considered

APPENDIX 1 OVERVIEW OF THE ADAPTATION PROCESS

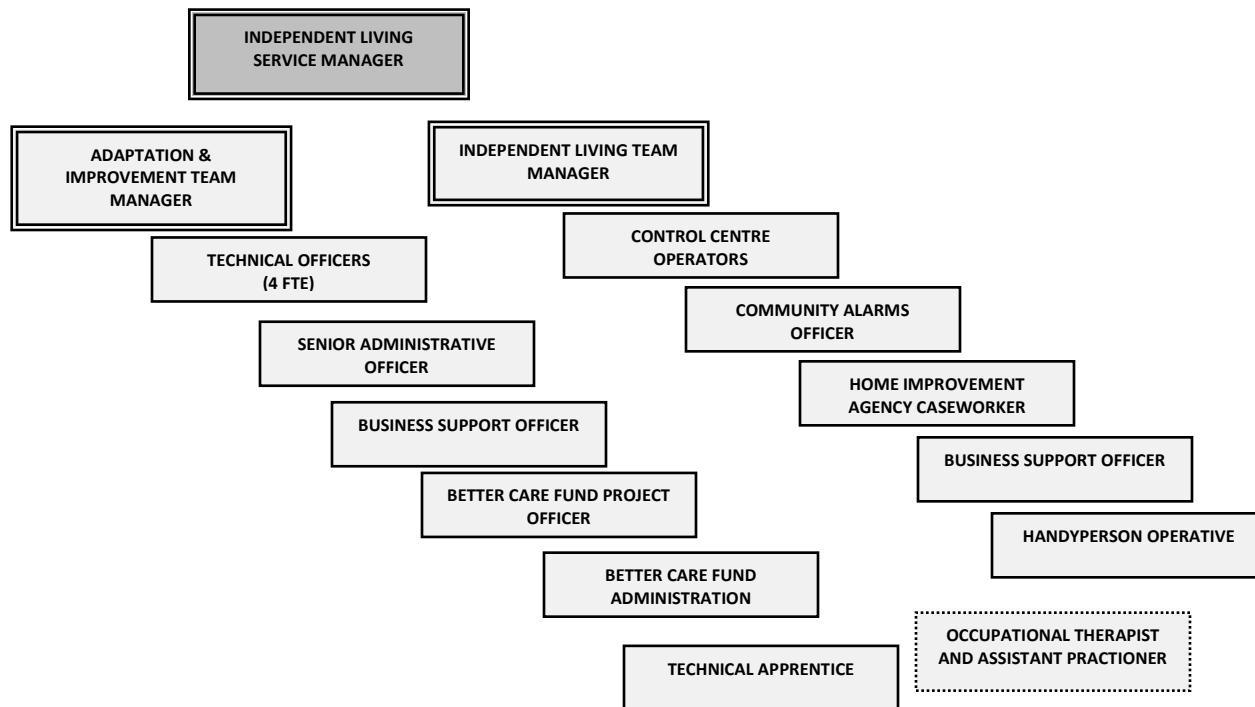
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications for adaptations in council properties can be made to Norfolk County Council Adult Social Care. Applications for adaptations in the private sector using DFG are made directly to the Council's Independent Living Service. Requests for minor adaptations in council tenancies can also be dealt with directly by the Council's Independent Living Service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A telephone assessment is carried out to determine eligibility and to gather information to determine who the most appropriate person is to visit the client, for DFG applicants this is carried out by the Integrated Housing Adaptations Team and for GYBC tenants it is carried out by Norfolk County Council Locality Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A home visit is carried out, usually by an Occupational Therapist who will consider if the client needs adaptations and if adaptations are required makes a recommendation of the works necessary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation is sent to the Borough Council

PROCESS SPLITS FOR INTO DFG AND GYBC TENANTS	
DFG	GYBC Tenants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant is asked to complete an application for the DFG funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tenant is asked to complete an application form.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once received the application is checked and a financial assessment is carried out to identify if the applicant is eligible for a grant and if so, the level of any contribution the client will make. If the applicant's contribution exceeds the costs of the works required, no grant will be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once received the application is checked and the case is passed to the Technical Officer to survey for the works.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant is advised in writing whether they have a contribution and invited to proceed with the process. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant is invited to engage the Council's Home Improvement Agency (HIA)** to help them through the process. The HIA can advise and assist if required to source alternative funding if the applicant has a contribution to make. 	
PROCESS REMERGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant is advised if they need to arrange for an electrical isolator switch to be fitted prior to commencement of works 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Officer arranges a visit to survey. Survey is carried out and a schedule of works is completed where it is necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practical to carry out the works. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Officer offers the work to the next available contractor on the framework. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical officer visits with contractor to agree works – prices already set via a schedule of rates and to agree a start date, which is usually within 6 weeks. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works start – Technical Officer monitors progress and agrees any variations required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works complete – Technical Officer snags works with contractor. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor completes any snags before works are signed off by Technical Officer. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor submits invoice for works. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Officer checks and agrees payment. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey is sent to applicant. 	

** The applicant can choose not to engage the HIA and find their own contractors to carry out the works. From the date the DFG is approved the applicant has 12 months to undertake the work.

The process set out above is for straight-forward adaptations not requiring plans, building control or planning approval. If these are required, they would be completed following an initial survey.

APPENDIX 2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE



The Independent Living Services Team comprises of 23 team members which equates to 19.2 full time equivalents. The service is subdivided into adaptations and improvements (technical and back office) and Independent Living (alarm installation & monitoring and assessment & support).

Four Technical Officers currently deliver the adaptation works each completing on average 54 cases per year and holding a case load at any one time of between 15 to 20 depending on complexity of the works. The works overseen by the Technical Officers can range from straight forward access such as the provision of ramps, through to whole house adaptations comprising of an extension and significant adaptations both internally and externally. Therefore, the preparation time and works delivery times can vary considerably depending on the scale of the work. Presently 2.5 full time equivalent Technical Officers work on the delivery of DFGs and 1.5 full time equivalents on the delivery of adaptations in the council's own stock.

APPENDIX 3



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants 2019

Document Originally Created: March 2016	
Revised: April 2018	Revisions agreed by Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee: 14th June 2018
Revised June 2019 (Minor revisions to process)	
Review date: June 2021	

1	Background
2	Purpose of the Policy
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13	Appeals
14	Complaints
15	Monitoring & Review of the Policy

1 BACKGROUND

Under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 the council has a duty to consider housing conditions in its area and have regard to the particular needs of chronically sick and disabled persons. This includes the provision or adaptation of existing accommodation for its own disabled tenants.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) provides funding each year for the provision of aids and adaptations to enable its tenants to remain in their home for as long as it is safe and reasonable to do so. This funding comes from the housing service's capital and revenue budget.

The adaptations Policy specifically refers to adaptations carried out for tenants of GYBC

2 PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of the policy is to set out the council's approach to the provision of aids and adaptations for GYBC tenants, who are eligible to receive them, and how they will be delivered.

The assistance available through this policy aims to provide an efficient, practical and cost-effective adaptation service, taking into account the health and well-being of the tenant and household.

3 POLICY AIMS

The policy aims to help GYBC tenants, and their immediate household, who are disabled or suffer from long-term ill health to live independently in their home.

The council is committed to facilitating the provision of aids and adaptations to properties and will endeavour to deal with requests for assistance as quickly, effectively and sensitively as possible. Applications are dealt with using a priority system combined with date order. Any exceptions to this will need approval from a senior officer.

3.1 Definitions

The policy refers to 'disabled' persons. A person is defined as 'disabled' under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 if:

- their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired
- they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind
- they are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairments that have been present since birth or otherwise.

Generally, the impairment of the applicant must have lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.

4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

Section 1 of the act imposes a duty on the council to provide adaptations or special equipment needs in the home to help with convenience or for safety. Any provision of resources is dependent upon an assessment of need under the NHS & Community Care Act 1990.

Disabled Persons Act 1986

The Disabled Persons Act 1986 strengthens the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires Local Authorities to meet the various needs of disabled people, including provision of aids and adaptations.

Housing Act 1985

Under section 8 of the act the council has a duty to consider housing conditions in its district and the needs of the district for the provision of further housing accommodation. This may include the provision or adaptation of existing accommodation for its own disabled tenants.

Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

Under this act the council has a duty to provide disabled facilities grants to eligible applicants.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people with the protected characteristics that are specified in section 4 of the Act. Disability is one of the specified characteristics.

5 DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE

5.1 Eligibility

Consideration will be given to secure tenants of GYBC or their partner, or member of their immediate family, who is permanently resident in the household and who have an impairment which has a significant or serious long-term effect on their ability to:

- carry out normal day-to-day activities in and around their home
- and / or access essential facilities within their home.

Works for others living at the property such as lodgers, will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances and only if they have been resident with the tenant for more than 12 months.

An applicant who is not a named tenant on the tenancy agreement, must be registered as living at the property for council tax purposes, and if aged over 18 years, they should be registered at that address on the electoral roll. Adaptations will only be considered if the property is the main residence of the individual and they do not hold another tenancy or own another property.

5.2 Adaptations for Children

In cases where a child is disabled, and the parents are separated, adaptation works will usually only be completed at the property of principal residence (normally the residence of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit for that child).

5.3 Adaptations to Facilitate Hospital Discharge

Adaptations will be considered where the applicant is waiting to be discharged from hospital and requires their home to be altered.

5.4 Who is not Eligible?

Circumstances where requests to adapt a property may be refused include:

- Where an individual has no recourse to public funds
- Where major adaptations are required, and the applicant is waiting for medical procedures, which will improve their mobility. This can be reviewed once their recovery time is complete. Temporary or minor adaptations may be considered during this interim period.
- Requests for major adaptations will not normally be approved where a Right to Buy application has been received by the council. Following completion of a Right to Buy sale, adaptations could, however, be considered under the council's Private Sector Policy by way of a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Reasons for refusal will be provided to the customer in writing and each case will be considered on individual merits. GYBC recognises that there may be occasions where applications for adaptations fall outside of this policy and these will be assessed on an individual basis.

6 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The policy in respect of adaptations to GYBC dwellings reflects the statutory requirements for disabled facilities grants in the private sector.

Before an application for adaptations can be considered, Norfolk County Council Social Services need to confirm that the applicant is either registered or registerable disabled under the National Assistance Act 1948.

6.1 Necessary and Appropriate

An Occupational Therapist will also submit a recommendation of what is required and advise whether the proposed work is '**necessary and appropriate**'. Although there is a duty to consider Social Services advice the formal decision as to whether the proposal is 'necessary and appropriate' is for GYBC to take.

If the application relates to a condition which is medical rather than functional, Social Services will still need to confirm that the applicant is registered or registerable as disabled. However, they will then need to arrange for the applicant's medical practitioner to provide the relevant clinical information to GYBC to assess whether the work is necessary. This may involve a referral to a medical advisor.

To qualify as an adaptation, the work must be designed to:

- Enable a disabled person to gain access to and from their home
- Make the dwelling safe for the disabled person and other occupants
- Enable access to a room which is used as the 'principle family room'
- Facilitate access to and from a room used for sleeping
- Enable access to a toilet, bathroom or shower room and facilitate the use of the facilities
- Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food
- Improve or provide a heating system to meet the needs of a disabled person
- Facilitate the use of a source of power, light or heat by altering the existing means of control or providing additional ones
- Enable a disabled person to have access and movement around the home in order to be able to care for someone else living there

6.2 Reasonable and Practical

Once the Occupational Therapists assessment is received and the proposed work is deemed as necessary and appropriate, GYBC must then decide whether the work is '**reasonable and practical**' before proceeding.

The following factors will be considered as part of that assessment process to establish the overall suitability of the property for the works being recommended:

- The cost of the adaptation. The upper limit is £30,000, however, in some cases the limit may be increased to £50,000 at the discretion of the Housing Director.
- The age and structural condition of the property to establish whether the adaptations can be carried out safely without having an adverse effect on the fabric of the property.
- The suitability of the property for the size of household. An adaptation will be considered where the household will be under occupying the property by a

maximum of one bedroom. Where a tenant is receiving palliative care the Council will consider sympathetically individual cases of under-occupation by more than one bedroom. This may include timely provision of some or all of the assessed adaptations where they are technically possible'

- Whether there is suitable alternative accommodation within the social housing stock that is likely to become available within 12 months.
- Whether there are any competing needs of family members that need to be met in that property.
- The impact of the adaptation on the property and its future use.
- The availability of the household's existing support network and carers.
- The household's intentions regarding the long-term use of property.
- Whether the adaptations will meet the long-term needs of the applicant.
- Whether external adaptations, such as ramping would adversely affect the area for other residents e.g. Ramping will not generally be provided in a communal area.
- Where the tenant is in breach of their tenancy agreement e.g. rent arrears or substantiated reports of anti-social behaviour.

If an adaptation is refused on the grounds of it being not reasonable and practical the tenant will be offered the option of transferring to more suitable alternative accommodation. Transfers are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme.

Tenants can request a review of the decision to refuse the works and this should be done in writing within 28 days of receiving written notification of refusal. Section 13 sets out the review process.

It is important for GYBC to consider all these factors to ensure it makes the best use of its financial resources whilst meeting the needs of the applicant.

7 TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

There are three categories of aid and adaptations:

- Equipment
- Minor Adaptations
- Major Adaptations

The most appropriate solution will be sought in all cases and will aim to offer the best value for money whilst meeting the needs of the household. This will be

achieved by ensuring that the works are **necessary and appropriate** to meet the needs of the disabled person and are **reasonable and practical** depending on the age and condition of the property, prior to authorising the works as outlined in the legislation guidance (Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996).

7.1 Equipment

Portable or temporary equipment is available to help with those who have difficulties with daily living activities such as:

- Reaching down to put on socks, stockings or shoes
- Turning the taps on and off or generally managing in the kitchen
- Getting in and out of the bath
- Getting up from a low toilet
- Getting up out of an easy chair
- Carrying things between rooms

Applications for equipment should be made to Norfolk County Council who will then assess and recommend what equipment is required. In some circumstances, equipment may be provided free of charge to those people who meet the eligibility criteria although this is not guaranteed. Further information is available on Norfolk County Council website. [Norfolk County Council Support to Stay at Home](#)

7.2 Minor Adaptations

GYBC recognises that the timely provision of minor adaptations can often postpone the need for more substantial adaptations.

The type of work carried out includes:

- Lever taps
- Stair rails
- External grab rails
- Internal grab rails
- ½ steps
- Small ramps

Requests for minor adaptations will normally be made on behalf of the tenant by an Occupational Therapist but they can also be made by a GYBC staff.

7.3 Major Adaptations

Major adaptations can include:

- Bathroom works
- Kitchen works
- Extensions where remodelling the existing layout is not possible and a move has been considered as not appropriate.
- Internal access – door widening, stair-lifts, through floor lifts
- Property access – ramps, car hard-standing (but not the cost of providing the dropped kerb this is met by the tenant).

Requests for major adaptations are recommended to GYBC by an Occupational Therapist following an assessment.

7.3.1 Assessment Process

- An Occupational Therapist will carry out an assessment of the needs of the applicant to determine what is necessary and appropriate (this may include working with other health professionals, such as a medical consultant or GP)
- The Council's Technical Officer will determine whether the works are reasonable and practical taking account of the factors set out in section 6.2.
- The Occupational Therapist's recommendations will normally form the basis of any scheme of works required to meet the needs of the applicant (and where applicable their household), which in some cases may include moving to more suitable accommodation.
- Where the tenant's needs are complex and there may be more than one way of meeting the identified needs; the Occupational Therapist will carry out a joint visit with the Technical Officer. At that visit, in conjunction with the tenant the options will be considered in line with this policy, to establish the most appropriate solution, which will aim to offer best value for money whilst meeting the needs of the tenant. This may include undertaking works that meet the necessary need of the tenant now while other more suitable accommodation is found to meet the whole range of identified needs.
- In cases where a move to more suitable alternative accommodation is recommended, the move will take place as soon as reasonably practicable and will be subject to suitable housing stock being available from the Council or a Registered Providers. In some cases, the tenant may also want to consider a move to the private rented sector.

7.3.2 Restrictions

Major adaptations will normally only be carried out following a recommendation from

an Occupational Therapist, for eligible tenants and in suitable properties.

8 COST OF ADAPTATIONS

The cost of adaptations is met by GYBC from its Housing Revenue Account. The maximum cost of adaptations that can be funded by GYBC is £30,000. There will be a small number of cases where the maximum cost can be increased to £50,000, for example where multiple adaptations are needed, where an extension is recommended to create downstairs living, or where works will meet a particular need which otherwise cannot be met in the existing affordable housing stock within a reasonable time period.

GYBC will consider these applications on a case by case basis to determine whether the maximum cost of works can be increased to £50,000, such decisions are at the discretion of the Housing Director. This discretion will only be used in exceptional cases where:

- Suitable alternative accommodation is not available in the current affordable housing stock, or;
- An applicant has been waiting in excess of a year for a move to a more suitable property that is either adapted or can be adapted at a lower cost, and;
- Alternative funding cannot be identified. This would include making representation to NCC Social Services for top up funding or approaching charitable organisations, and;
- Where discussions with the Occupational Therapist to find an alternative less costly way of meeting the tenant's needs have been exhausted

8.1 Means Test

A means test is not applied to tenants and therefore no financial contribution is required.

GYBC reserve the right to review whether a financial contribution should be sought from tenants at a future date.

9 TENANTS INSTALLING THEIR OWN ADAPTATIONS

Secure tenants of GYBC may be able to organise their own adaptations at their own expense. In all cases, the tenant must obtain written agreement from GYBC before carrying out alterations or adaptations to their property. GYBC will only refuse permission with good reason, such as if the work:

- Would interfere with any maintenance to the property
- May cause a potential health & safety risk

- Would breach regulatory requirements

The written request will need to state what works and adaptations the tenant wishes to carry out and who will be undertaking the works. A tenant must not start works without first gaining written permission from GYBC. GYBC may inspect completed works to ensure they are carried out satisfactorily.

GYBC will also advise the tenant prior to approval of an adaptation that they may be required to remove any adaptations and make good any damage to the property and/or reinstate the original features of the property at the end of their tenancy. For example, when a bath is replaced with a shower, the tenant may be required (depending on the property type) to install a replacement bath at the end of their tenancy.

The tenant will be responsible for the maintenance and repairs of adaptations that they have arranged themselves for the duration of the tenancy. In addition, GYBC will not be liable for any damage or injury caused by the adaptations not installed by them

The amount of rent charged will not be affected by installing privately funded adaptations to the property.

At the end of the secure tenancy, tenants who have carried out adaptations at their own expense and with the approval may be eligible for some compensation in accordance with legislation (Housing Act 1985 Part 4 Section 99A 'Right to compensation for improvements')

If adaptations have been carried out at the tenant's own expense without permission:

- GYBC may agree to take over the ownership of the adaptations subject to the standard of the adaptation works being satisfactory and capable of being granted consent for by the Council.
- The tenant may be required to remove the adaptation, reinstate original features of the property and make good the damage to the property if the quality of the adaptation is not satisfactory, the Council would not have given consent for the adaptation works or it would not be suitable to re-let the property with the adaptation in place.
- If GYBC has to repair any damage after a tenancy has ended caused by the adaptation of the property by the former tenant or remove an adaptation the former tenant had installed, the former tenant will be liable for the cost of the works.

10 REMOVING ADAPTATIONS

Where adaptations have been carried out to a GYBC property and a new tenant

moves in, the adaptations will not normally be removed. Adaptations will only be removed if there are exceptional reasons to do so.

The Council makes every effort to let adapted properties to those tenants who require them.

11 MOVING OR BUYING AFTER ADAPTATIONS ARE COMPLETE

Following a major adaptation, the council would normally expect the tenant to remain in the adapted property for a minimum of five years. However, there may be exceptions where the individual's needs have changed and, with agreement from the Occupational Therapist and the council, a move to a suitable alternative property will be considered. Should the new home require any adaptations to meet specific needs, these will be assessed in accordance with the terms of this policy.

11.1 Mutual Exchange

Mutual exchanges will be considered in line with legislation with Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 setting out the grounds for refusing a mutual exchange). Therefore, permission may be refused if the property:

- Has been adapted or has features that make it suitable for a disabled person
- Is a property owned by a landlord which lets properties to particularly vulnerable people or;
- Is for people with special needs (supported housing) and if the mutual exchange took place there would no longer be such a person living in the property.

11.2 Right to Buy

Applications to exercise the Right to Buy by tenants who have had adaptations carried out by the council may be refused in line with legislation (Housing Act 1985 Schedule 5: Exceptions to the Right To buy). All applications will be assessed on a case by case basis.

12 CHANGE OF NEEDS

If a tenant's needs change after adaptations have been installed for example they can no longer do something that they could manage before, the council, upon request will arrange for the tenants needs to be reassessed.

13 REVIEW OF DECISION

It is important that tenants are able to request a review of a decision in a clear, fair and efficient process. Tenants may request a review of a decision to refuse works on the grounds that it is not reasonable and practical (section 6.2) or necessary and appropriate for their needs (section 6.1). Reviews should take place as soon as possible in order not to disadvantage an applicant.

The review process is as follows:

- a) A review request must be made by the tenant within 28 days of the decision regarding their application. This time limit may be extended in exceptional circumstances.
- b) The review must be conducted by another council officer who was not involved in the original decision and is senior to the officer who made the original decision.
- c) The review process will normally be based on written representations.
- d) The review officer may make further inquiries and interview applicants and other interested parties but there will be no requirement to hold a full oral hearing.
- e) The review should be concluded within 8 weeks of the review request or as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards.
- f) The decision on review will be and communicated in writing to the tenant and give reasons if the review outcome is against the tenant.

14 COMPLAINTS

Any complaints about this policy or its implementation will be addressed through the council's corporate complaints system.

15 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy will be monitored and be subject to bi-annual review unless there is a fundamental change of legislation.

Subject HRA Borrowing

Report to ELT 11/10/19
Housing & Neighbourhood Committee 14/11/19

Report by Finance Director and Housing Director

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out a summary of the Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) current financial position following the removal of the debt cap.

The report recommends that:

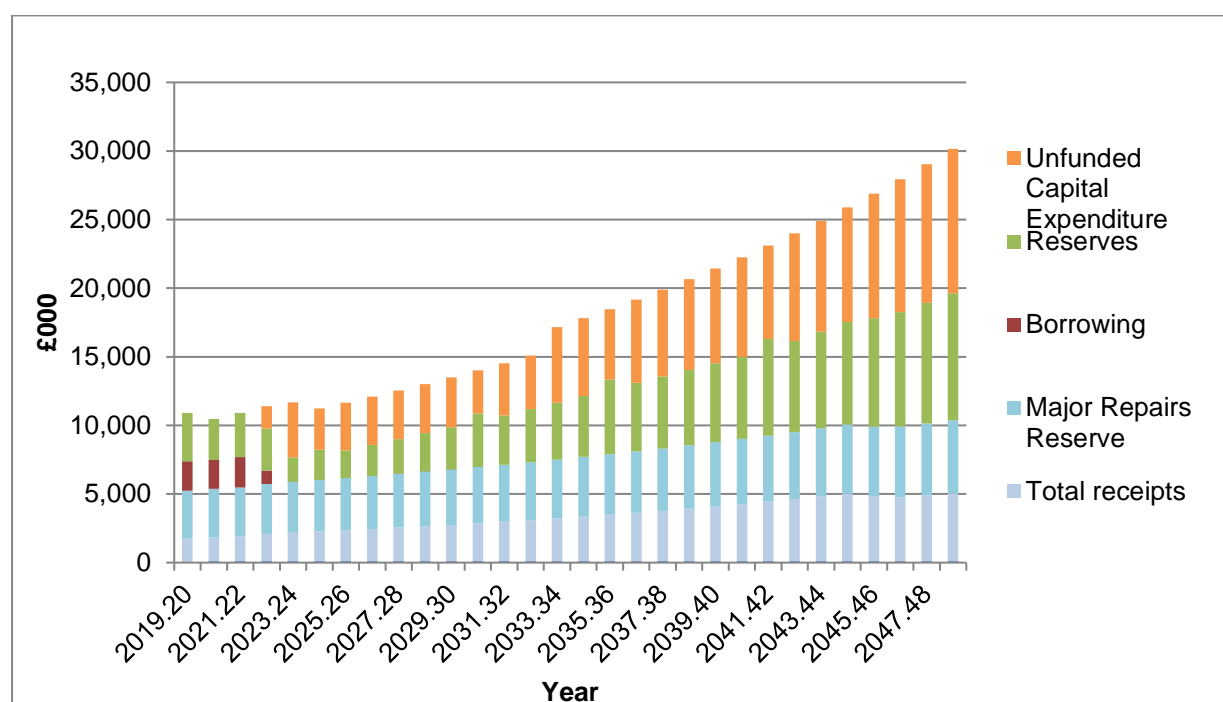
1. Subject to normal budget approval processes, the repairs and maintenance budget is reduced by £500,000 in 2020/21 and the subsequent two years.
2. The released revenue funding is used to support borrowing to fund a programme of acquisition or development of new Council homes within the HRA as set out in the report.
3. A review of further opportunities to fund new affordable housing is undertaken following the completion of the next stock condition survey in 2022.
4. Opportunities for sites are identified and a programme of delivery including numbers and timeframes is developed and reported back to Member as set out in the report.

1. Background - Housing Revenue Borrowing Cap

- 1.1 Local authority housing is contained within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is a ring-fenced account that funds the council's activity as a landlord. The HRA records all the income and expenditure associated with the provision and management of council owned homes in the borough, effectively operating as a business of its own separate from the councils' other operations.
- 1.2 In April 2012 the HRA moved to a Self-financing model which accompanied a limit on the amount of housing debt that an authority could hold within an HRA. In a treasury attempt to control public borrowing levels, this limit was based on a calculation of the level of debt that a landlord/council could support. The calculation was based primarily on the valuation of each authority's current housing stock along with income and expenditure assumptions. A total borrowing limit was therefore set for each landlord, which for Great Yarmouth Borough Council was £89m.

- 1.3 Councils borrow within their HRA's in order to invest in the housing stock. This includes programmes such as building more homes to provide further income, or even to refurbish or regenerate existing homes. However, due to each council being limited to how much they could borrow, the debt cap greatly restricted local authorities' ability to invest in building much-needed new homes.
- 1.4 One of the biggest constraints on public sector house building is the ability to finance development. The vast majority of local authorities were at or above 80% utilisation of the original available debt cap, with many above 90%. GYBC was included within the higher percentile. Any remaining debt cap held by local authorities, was not really 'available' as it was used by most, as a form of reserve within a system of prudent financial management.
- 1.5 Table 1 below demonstrates a high-level forecast as part of the 2018/19 budget, using the HRA 30 year business plan model prior to the removal of the £89m debt cap.
- 1.6 This shows the profile of borrowing and use of the HRA reserve balances to finance the overall capital programme, including the affordable housing programme. The model uses reserves before borrowing to finance the capital programme and highlights the limitations of the original debt cap which meant that the Council would exhaust its ability to borrow by 2022/23, leaving future capital expenditure unfunded and providing only very limited ability to increase the supply of affordable homes – limited to one to one Right to Buy replacements. As per the CIPFA guidance, the viability of the self-financing regime depends ultimately on the council acting prudently and safeguarding against financial risk. In doing so, within the HRA budget sufficient sums have been set aside to meet any unforeseen liabilities that may arise. This is in the form of our maintained minimum reserve balance, which in 2019/20 is £2m.

Table 1 – Original 30 year plan – with original £89m debt cap



- 1.7 In order to help solve the 'housing crisis', the Government announced it would scrap the debt cap limitations on how much councils can borrow against their HRA Assets. The HRA debt cap was removed with immediate effect and the new determination came into force on 30th October 2018.
- 1.8 Authorities are now able to borrow above their original debt cap, to meet their spending requirements and take advantage of interest rates while they remain low.
- 1.9 Local authorities will now have to reconsider what this means for housing in their areas. The challenge for councils is how to take advantage of the removal of the borrowing cap and building up their capacity and developing the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver new housing on a much larger scale than has previously been possible.
- 1.10 The flexibility of this will not be the same for all authorities, as each authority will take an independent review of financial resources available. Factors such as reserves, existing stock conditions, land availability and rent income levels will have varying impacts on the scale of new development which can be supported, along with how quickly this can be realised.

2. Current Programme and Delivery

- 2.1 In 2017/18, a full stock condition survey took place across the Council's dwelling stock, resulting in 5,580 dwellings and 531 blocks/communal being successfully surveyed.

- 2.2 Survey data highlighted that at the time 865 properties, representing 16% of the stock, were classified as non-Decent. The industry average for a survey of this type would expect approximately 5-7% being classified as non-decent.
- 2.3 Following the results of the stock condition survey, a significantly increased Major Works Capital programme was introduced within the 2018/19 HRA budget, to ensure that both the homes identified as non Decent as a result of the Stock Condition Survey and future homes, which become non Decent were addressed over a five year period. Overall ensuring that all homes within the dwelling stock are Decent.
- 2.4 As a result, overall capital investment into the stock has remained high to ensure progress in meeting the Decent Home standard is maintained. Investment into the stock for the last financial year, 2018/19 to 2023/24 is forecast to be approximately £49 million on just under 5800 dwellings, an average of £8,500 per dwelling.
- 2.5 The HRA also maintains a Repairs & Maintenance programme, which ensures the planned cyclical upkeep to the specific areas of heating, lighting, lifts, smoke alarms, garden maintenance and minor neighbourhood planned works. It also includes the day to day costs of repairs for tenants and refurbishment of empty properties in between tenant occupancy.
- 2.6 As a result of the number of non Decent Homes, revenue planned cyclical spend on the housing stock is high, although this is starting to reduce. Benchmarking of repair costs is expected to show that this level of revenue expenditure is high compared with other landlords.
- 2.7 The 2018/19 HRA Outturn report detailed that the Repairs & Maintenance budgets resulted in an £1.161 million underspend. Despite this, the 2018/19 outturn resulted in an approximate spend of £1,416 per dwelling (excluding any capital expenditure). The underspend has been largely delivered due to increase capital investment within the stock, therefore reducing the number of day to day repairs required.
- 2.8 In 2019/20, budget monitoring to period 6 shows that expenditure on day to day repairs is forecast to continue to decline. This trend is expected to continue in future years until expenditure stabilizes as the current capital programme brings all of the housing stock to the Decent Home standards and maintains it at this level.

3. Capacity To Support & Deliver A New Build Council Homes Programme.

3.1 Funding

3.2 The forecast trend of repairs and maintenance expenditure reductions allows the Council to utilize further revenue funding to support additional borrowing. The additional borrowing capacity can then be used to fund the provision of new affordable homes within the HRA, beyond the level required to meet Retained Right to Buy receipt replacements. Reducing the repairs and maintenance revenue budget by a forecast £500k per annum in 2020/21, along with the following two years will have no negative impact on the ability to maintain the Council's housing stock, this only reflects the expected ongoing reduction in spend of this budget.

3.3 If a forecast £500k saving is achieved, this budget could be used to service approximately £20 million of additional borrowing raised from PWLB on a 50 year loan basis. Assuming an average build cost of £150k per unit, this would deliver around 133 new homes. With additional homes being added to the stock and re-let at affordable rents, it could be estimated to generate a further £720,000 per annum within the HRA.

3.4 The new homes example quoted above assumes no use of 1-4-1 Retained Right to Buy Receipts and no use of external grant funding. If additional funding was factored in, the number of new Council homes which could be developed is expected to increase above the estimated 133 homes, providing increased rental income.

3.5 Increased numbers of homes within the HRA would have wider benefits to the Council, such as an increase Council Tax income and a potential reduction in need for temporary accommodation.

3.6 Land

3.7 Potential development land for new Council homes is usually linked to existing estates, whether this is redevelopment of obsolete property or use of spare land such as underused gardens and garages. Councils are in the best position to release such land, taking into account residents' views and aligning the developments with the council's objectives.

3.8 Within the council's HRA there is limited available land. A number of small infill potential developments have been identified which could contribute towards an extended new build programme, although infill sites have proven more expensive to develop than larger sites. In order to maximise the number of new homes delivered, an ongoing pipeline of new developments is required to be developed containing a mixture of smaller and larger developments sites.

- 3.9 In order to develop a continuing pipeline of schemes, the council will need to review the opportunities for development on land held within both the HRA and General Fund and this will be a priority area of work over the next six months so that by early 2020/21 the council will have identified the number of potential sites and homes which could be delivered (subject to planning) on both HRA and General Fund land. As part of this, options to include nearby/adjacent stalled sites (where planning permission has been granted but not yet started) will be considered to ensure development opportunities are maximized. Where General Fund land or property is used, a regeneration approach may lead to mixed use developments being brought forward and appropriate committee approval will be sought where General Fund land will be required to deliver homes within the HRA
- 3.10 In order to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land to deliver new homes, the council will need to consider a range of options and opportunities such as purchasing land to create a land bank for ongoing development of homes. A further report on how the council will deliver an increased housing development programme will be presented to committee within the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year. This report will set out the expected development potential of HRA and General Fund sites and how acquisition of homes and land will provide the required ongoing pipeline of schemes to ensure the additional funding capacity to deliver new HRA homes is maximized.
- 3.11 Land identified within the General Fund for potential development will require a land transfer to the HRA. This is completed by adjusting the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). In effect this increases the HRA and reduces the General Fund borrowing and generates no capital receipt for the General Fund.
- 3.12 Development Skills and Experience**
- 3.13 A potential obstacle to delivery of a new council house building programme is that local authorities have limited experience and expertise in building homes. It is a complicated business acquiring appropriate sites for development, securing planning consent and procuring design and construction. The council has limited existing capacity in this area due to the limits imposed by the debt cap historically.
- 3.13 In order for the Council to fully utilize the lifting of the debt cap, a number of approaches will be considered to address the skills gap, whilst also ensuring that new Council homes can be delivered:
- Purchasing homes from developers through Section 106 Agreements
 - Purchasing homes from developers (additional homes above Section 106 Agreement requirements)
 - Exploring opportunities for joint developments with Equinox Enterprises
 - Purchasing homes from Registered Providers (new or existing homes).

- 3.14 These opportunities will require early engagement of the Council to ensure that the homes being acquired meet the Council's requirements in terms of quality and specification and also best meet identified housing need.
- 3.15 The Council will also explore the best way to develop in house expertise and capacity in developing new Council homes. This will include considering whether it can buy in the required skills from a Registered Provider, to bring forward an ongoing programme of new build schemes. Such an approach would need to ensure that the learning from the Registered Provider's involvement is captured to develop the necessary skills, experience and expertise within the Council to ensure in the future the Council does not need external support in this area.
- 3.16 It should be noted, that due to the need to identify land opportunities for new build homes and develop an ongoing pipeline of schemes, the build timescales for the development of new homes as well as the need to ensure the Council has access to the required skills and resources, that the delivery of additional Council homes is likely to commence towards the end of 2020/21. The identified additional borrowing will result in the delivery of the largest programme of Council house building that the Council has seen since in recent years. Subject to approval of the report, the Council will look at the most effective way to deliver the required in house skills and resources to deliver this extended programme.

4. Financial implications and Risks.

- 4.1. The report highlights that following the removal of the borrowing cap there is still prudence around how much a council can borrow against its HRA housing stock. The HRA's present social use value will be very different from its open market use value in terms of credit risk.
- 4.2. Council borrowing is governed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy's prudential code, this binds authorities to the principle of borrowing within their means. The code does not give guidance on the upper limit of borrowing as it is "down to local determination" and largely set by housing income.
- 4.3. Additional borrowing capacity to support new affordable housing delivery can be supported by utilizing the £500k reduction in the demand for revenue Repairs & Maintenance spend, whilst maintaining existing capital spend to meet the Decent Homes programme.

- 4.4. The additional borrowing capacity will be drawn down as required to fund capital expenditure on new homes rather than in advance each year. Borrowing will be undertaken in accordance with standard procedure and at appropriate rates to ensure value for money in borrowing this additional funding is achieved.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. The additional borrowing recommended by this report will solely be used to meet the costs of increasing the number of council homes within the HRA, in accordance to all relevant legislation and financial practice code.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. The Council's capital expenditure on the housing stock has resulted in a reduction in revenue expenditure on repairs and maintenance. As a result, as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process it will aim to reduce its Repairs & Maintenance spend by £500k for 2020/21, and for the following two financial years. This then creates revenue capacity which can then be used to fund new additional borrowing to support an acquisition or development programme of new Council homes.
- 6.2. To effectively utilise the additional borrowing capacity, the Council will need to use a blended approach of acquisitions and new build homes, whilst the Council builds the required capacity in terms of land availability and skills and expertise to deliver the expected number of new homes. As part of this the Council will need to keep under review a schedule of development sites within the HRA, General Fund and any potential development sites from the open market.
- 6.3. The Council needs to engage with both Registered Providers, to explore the possibility of temporarily buying in the required skills and Homes England, to discuss the potential for grant to support the council's new build aspirations.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<i>Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?</i> Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Sent for information
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Agreed
Existing Council Policies:	N/A
Financial Implications:	Included within detail of the report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	Included within detail of the report
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
<i>Every Child Matters:</i>	N/A

Great Yarmouth borough profile data

Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee

November 2019



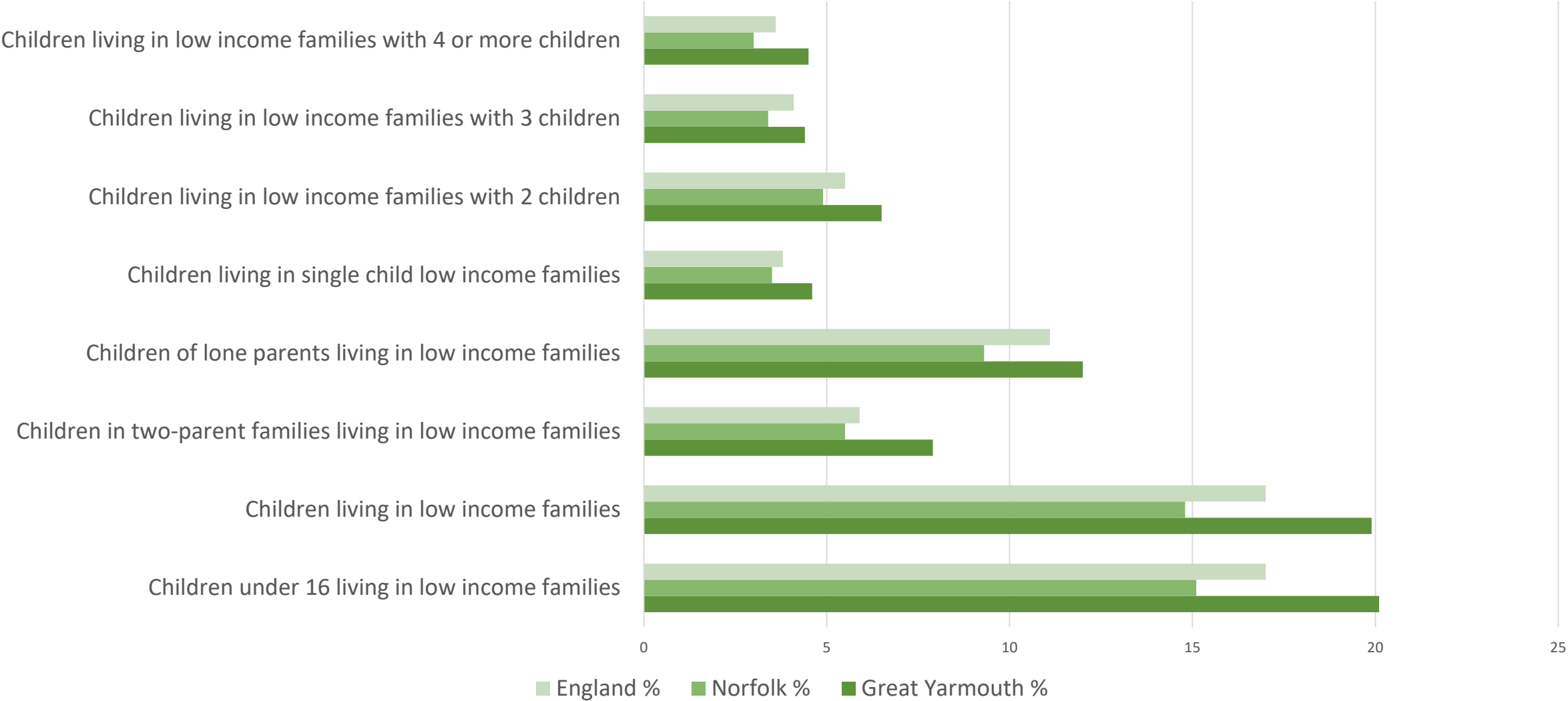
Context

- Great Yarmouth has several interrelated challenges with other relatively remote seaside towns – connectivity/isolation, the quality of housing stock, seasonality, transience and demographics
- Population: 99,370 (and growing)

Children & young people

- Approximately 19,700 people under 17 live in the borough
- 20% of children live in low income families (higher than the averages for Norfolk and England) and these are higher concentrations in the inner town wards of Great Yarmouth and Magdalen
- The infant mortality rate is lower and there are less instances of hospital admissions through either deliberate or unintentional injuries to children than in the rest of Norfolk

Children in Low Income Families



Education and skills

- 51.9% GCSE pass rate 2017-18 (5 passes graded 4-9)
- 33% people of working age have no qualifications
- 10.6% of people have a qualification at NVQ level 4 (or higher), compared to a national average of 39.3%
- All 6 mainstream secondary schools rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' in latest Ofsted inspection

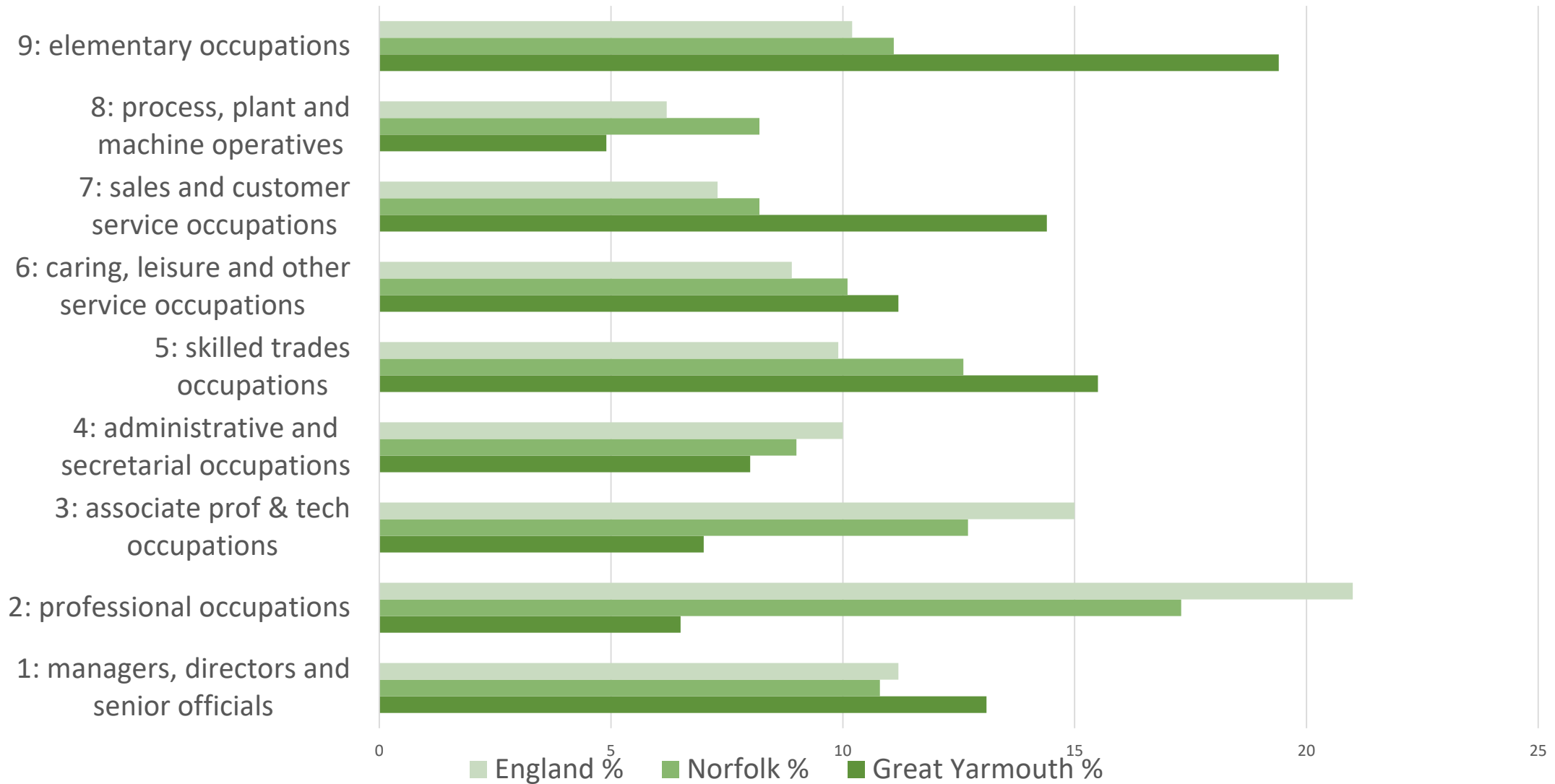
Education: GCSE attainment

Cohort	Gt Yarmouth	England
2017/2018	51.9%	59.1%
2016/2017	53.5%	59.1%
2015/2016	55.5%	59.3%
2014/2015	51.0%	55.8%
2013/2014	48.5%	55.5%
2012/2013	46.6%	59.9%
2011/2012	52.2%	59.9%
2010/2011	53.9%	59.5%

Employment

- Between April 2018 and March 2019, 73.5% of the working age population of Great Yarmouth is economically active, compared to 78.7% for Great Britain
- Between April 2018 and March 2019, Great Yarmouth had an employment rate of 69.8%, compared to 75.6% for England
- 99 apprenticeships completed in 2018

Occupation Types



Health

Illness or health condition	Great Yarmouth	England
Long term life limiting illness or disability	22.5% (ranging from 17.7% in Fleggburgh to 25.6% in Magdalen)	17.6%
Self assessed bad or very bad health	7.1%	5.5%
Adults doing less than 30 mins per week physical activity	26.4%	22.0%
Obese 4-5 year olds	27.9% (ranging from 17% in Fleggburgh to 35.3% in Central/Northgate)	22.1%
Depression	8.1%	8.3%
Smoking	11.1%	5.4%

Analysis: improving (or better than average)

- Relative improvement in terms of Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019: the borough removed from the top 20 most deprived districts in 2015 to 25th in 2019
- Slowly narrowing the gap to the national average on GCSE attainment levels
- Notable proportion of the population have a skilled trade
- In a small number of health areas we are better than the national average e.g. infant mortality, anxiety and depression

Analysis: notable outliers

- Higher than average levels of children living in low income families
- Higher skilled people are at a third of the level of the national average
- Proportionally more economically inactive people than the national average
- The proportion of the population in low skilled (often seasonal) employment
- Significant health issues affect large numbers of people especially in places like Central, Northgate and Magdalen (life limiting and associated illnesses like obesity and diabetes)

Data sources

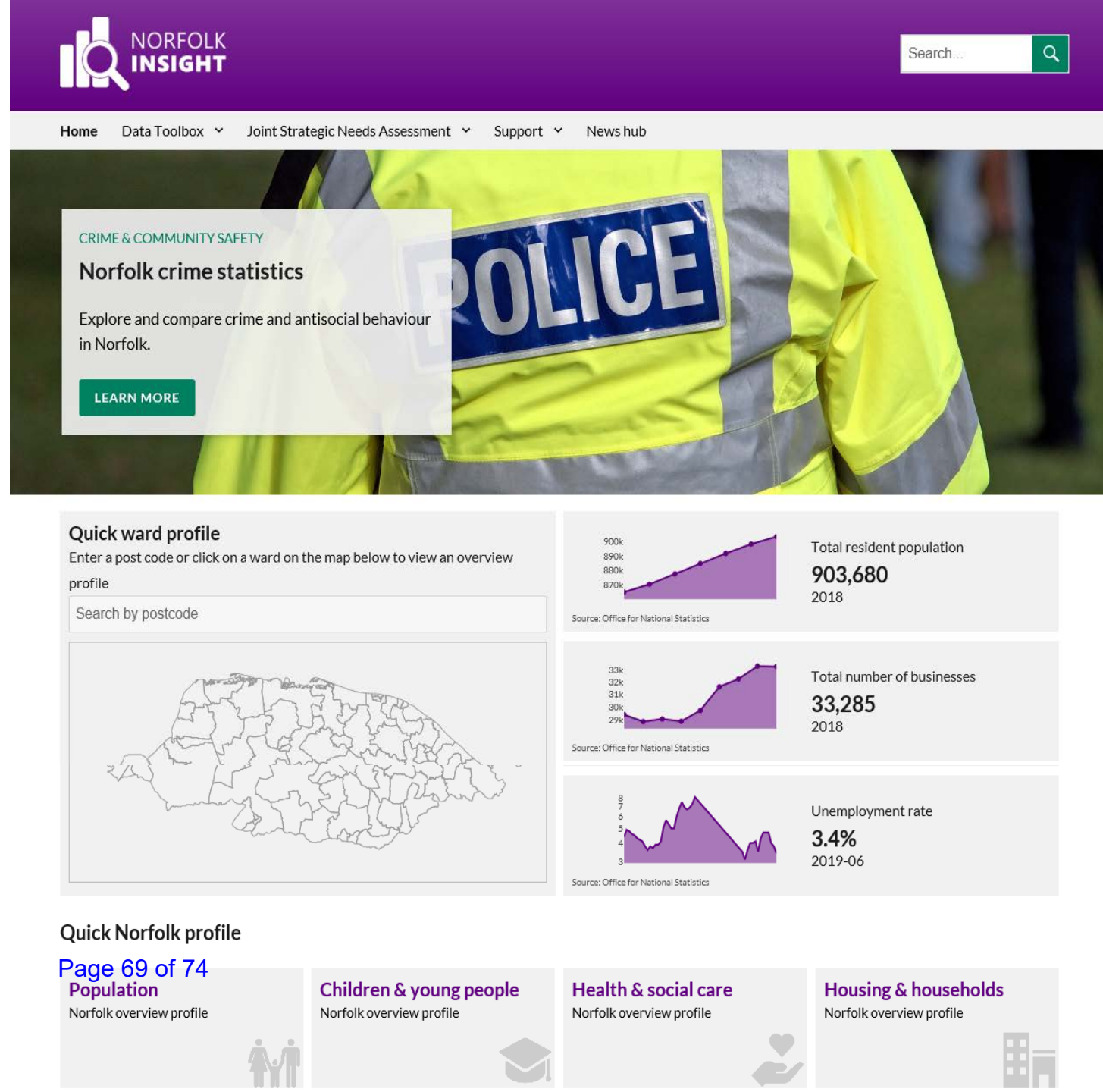
- For borough and ward data on crime, children, health, employment etc:

www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

- For ward health data:

www.localhealth.org.uk

- For economy and employment data: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/bus-register/business-demography/index.html>



Subject: SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE REPORT

Report to: Executive Leadership Team – 4th November 2019; Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee – 14th November 2019

Report by: James Wilson, Head of Environmental Services
David Addy, Senior Housing Licensing Officer

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

This report seeks to update the Executive Leadership Team and the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee on the implementation and operational stages of the Selective Licensing Scheme. The Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the update report ahead of future updates.
2. Agree that Members representing the Nelson Ward and The Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee may attend a quarterly Nelson Ward Private Rented Sector Group.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following a stakeholder consultation exercise during summer 2018, Full Council met on 13th September 2018 and agreed to introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme for the most challenged parts of the Nelson Ward. This commenced on 7th January 2019 and will run for five years, until 6th January 2024 – unless extended following another stakeholder consultation and designation
- 1.2 The Selective Licensing Scheme aims to tackle significant and persistent levels of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), crime, poor housing conditions, low housing demand, and high deprivation, related to the private rented housing sector within these areas.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Applications for Selective Licences have been open since December 2018, with licences legally required from 7th January, application fee discounts ending on 7th April, and late application fees of £1,000 per currently rented property after 7th July.
- 2.2 The year 1 Selective Licence inspections are underway, with a significant number of hazards or defects found within the dwellings visited so far.

3. SELECTIVE LICENCE APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 We have had a combined total of 1,365 applications for dwellings out of an estimated 1,677 properties that require Selective Licences (a very high proportion of over 81%), comprising of 1,238 applications to The Home Safe Scheme (THSS), and 127 directly to the Council. This is approximately 90% of the properties having applied to be members of and inspected by THSS.
- 3.2 There are a minority of outstanding applications which have not been completed due to not paying the application fee, a £1,000 late application fees is being levied, and the applicants are being warned of enforcement action, which we hope will ensure that the applications are completed promptly.
- 3.3 The approximately 300 unlicensed properties are continuing to be identified (through Benefits, Council Tax, reports and other data), with the properties, landlords and lettings agents notified to apply for Selective Licences, the requirement for the £1,000 late application fees, and the legal consequences of being unlicensed.
- 3.4 This application and identification work has proved beneficial in identifying properties requiring Mandatory HMO licences and/or Planning Consent. The approximate number of licensed HMOs is likely to rise from 60 to over 80, this work is being progressed.
- 3.5 Additionally, the work has uncovered letting agents and property managers who are not compliant with the legal requirement to belong to a redress scheme. In such cases the Council may serve notice of monetary penalties of up to £5,000.
- 3.6 Whilst individual properties, and occasionally small property portfolios have been sold prior to, or following the implementation of the Selective Licensing Designation, this has led to opportunities of engaged landlords investing in the private rented sector; additional owner-occupied dwellings; and additional properties owned, managed and made available to families as emergency accommodation.

4. INSPECTION OUTCOMES

- 4.1 There was an initial small tranche of pilot inspections undertaken by THSS' Lead Housing Inspector, during July and August, following which the results were reviewed, and processes adjusted. The full first year inspection programme for THSS and Council inspections commenced September, and will be completed by January 2020, after which the first annual reporting will take place.
- 4.2 As of the week commencing 21st October, there had been 355 inspections. The most

common hazards or defects are summarised as follows:

- Window safety;
- Kitchen and cooker workspace;
- Carbon monoxide detectors;
- Damp and mould growth;
- Ceiling or wall plaster damage or leaks;
- Ground Floor - suitable and sufficient smoke/heat alarm provision;
- Kitchen electrical sockets unsuitable/insufficient;
- First Floor – suitable and sufficient smoke/heat alarm provision;
- Gutters blocked or damaged.

- 4.3 The nature of the above hazards or defects identified during inspections, means that the majority are likely to be 'Category 2 Hazards' under the 'Housing Health and Safety Rating System' (HHSRS). This helps demonstrate that the licence holders, landlords, and lettings agents have been making efforts to eliminate the more harmful or dangerous 'Category 1 Hazards'.
- 4.4 The aspects where Category 1 Hazards were more likely, such as gas installations, inadequate heating and insulation, or defective electrical installations, were dealt with prior to inspection, due to the requirements of Selective Licensing; this is because applicants must hold valid Gas Safe Certificates and Energy Performance Certificates for their properties to obtain and maintain a licence; also, licence holders are now obtaining Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) for their properties, being made aware that this will become a licence requirement, once the Government passes the 5 yearly EICR requirement into law, as announced in 2018.
- 4.5 It should be recognised that whilst the property improvements directly help protect the health, safety and wellbeing of tenants and their neighbours, they also help ensure that tenants do not need to sue their landlords for compensation due to sub-standard or dangerous properties under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. Equally, if landlords refuse to make repairs or improvements following inspections, then these reports could be used as evidence in legal action by tenants, in addition to the Council's own enforcement activities.
- 4.6 The outcomes of Selective Licensing are being communicated outside of the Council through the Early Help Hub, a monthly Selective Licensing Partnership Meeting, the Comeunity Board, Eastern Landlords Association meetings, and the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Landlords Association meetings. The reception and response are generally positive from licensed landlords, and within landlord association meetings.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME

- 5.1 Now that the Selective Licensing Scheme is in the operational phase, THSS have appointed a Local Scheme Manager, as specified in the Council's concession and contract with them. Norwich City Council's Private Sector Housing Manager has taken on this role. Their knowledge and extensive experience with the private rented sector and Environmental Health in Norfolk should be an asset to the Council's Selective Licensing Scheme.
- 5.2 With the emerging themes and identified issues from the Selective Licensing inspections and reports or complaints, it is now possible move forward with community involvement and improvement activities similar to those THSS have been involved with in other areas.
- 5.3 Such activities in other areas have included rebuilding walls around gardens and yards to deter burglars, using donated bricks from B&Q, time and labour from a construction colleague, and facilities from a local Church.
- 5.4 In order to agree such priority activities within the Nelson Ward Selective Licensing Designation, it is proposed that Officers from Environmental Services, THSS, and landlord representatives meet on a quarterly basis. However, it could benefit if Members representing the Nelson Ward and H&N are also involved in this 'Nelson Ward Private Rented Sector Group'.

6. ENFORCEMENT

- 6.1 Court summons have been served for several housing act licensing offences with respect to HMOs and Selective Licensing, with the prosecutions due to take place during the autumn or winter. For subsequent cases – depending on the severity – the Council may issue Civil Penalties of up to £30,000 per offence: unlike prosecutions, this money can be retained by the Council to invest in Selective Licensing and housing enforcement work.
- 6.2 When an individual is convicted of a criminal offence, or they have two confirmed Civil Penalties, the Government expects the Council to apply for a Banning Order on the landlord, where they must sell off their entire residential property portfolio to someone unrelated or unconnected with them.

7. UPDATES

- 7.1 The first annual update will be made to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee during January/February 2020.
- 7.2 Additional progress updates – such as this one – will be given to ELT, H&N and

other Committees as required.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 There have been applications for a very high proportion of properties requiring Selective Licences, with the remainder being identified and encouraged to apply under threat of enforcement.
- 8.2 The Selective Licensing inspections have found significant defects and hazards throughout the private rented sector, which are being addressed by the licence holders, landlords and letting agents. These are primarily low risk issues and would not have been identified or addressed without this scheme being in place.
- 8.3 Enforcement action is due to commence with prosecutions this autumn/winter.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee is recommended to:
- Note the contents of the update report ahead of future updates.
 - Agree that Members representing the Nelson Ward and The Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee may attend a quarterly Nelson Ward Private Rented Sector Group.

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Consulted during project stage.
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Consulted during project stage.
Existing Council Policies:	The Housing Strategy has been considered.
Financial Implications:	Yes being addressed within the existing budget management and business case for the scheme
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Legal advice during project stage.
Risk Implications:	Risk Register was maintained during project. Significant challenges have been met and closed.
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	No.
Crime & Disorder:	No.
Every Child Matters:	If issues found within property then referred to appropriate agency.