Housing and Public Health Policy Committee

Members of the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee:

Cllr L Neal (Chairman)
Cllr N Legg (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr T Palmer
Cllr K Smith
Cllr S Thomson
Cllr G Walden
Cllr N Ward

If any member of the public wishes to speak on a non-confidential item, they may do so at the discretion of the Chairman

Date
Monday 20 January 2014

Time
2.00 pm

Place
Cavell Room
South Norfolk House
Swan Lane
Long Stratton Norwich
NR15 2XE

Contact
Sue Elliott tel (01508) 533663
South Norfolk District Council
Swan Lane
Long Stratton Norwich
NR15 2XE

Email: democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk
Website: www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance
Large print version can be made available
1. To report apologies for absence and identify substitute voting members (if any);

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

3. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members;
   (Please see guidance form and flow chart attached page 4)

4. Minutes of meeting held on 2 July 2013; (copy attached – page 6)

5. Chairman’s Announcements;

6. Updates from previous meetings;
   a. HCA Prospectus 2015 – 18
   b. Home options policy review
   c. Empty Homes

7. Positive Outcomes – Officer and Member Feedback; (oral update)

8. Affordable Housing; (oral update)

9. Health and Wellbeing Strategy; (paper attached – page 11)

10. Update on County position of Better Care plan (formerly Integrated Transformation Fund); (oral update)

11. Enhanced Housing Options; (paper attached – page 26)

12. Providing social housing for local people; (paper attached – page 27)

13. Changes to mobile home licensing; (oral update)

14. Date of Next Formal Meeting
   10 March 2014
Working Style of Cabinet Policy Committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the interest directly:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner’s financial position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in</td>
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If the answer is “yes” to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST INSTANCE
DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What matters are being discussed at the meeting?

Do any relate to an interest I have?

A. Have I declared it as a pecuniary interest?

OR

B. Does it directly affect me, my partner or spouse’s financial position, in particular:
   - employment, employers or businesses;
   - companies in which they are a director or where they have a shareholding of more than £25,000 face value or more than 1% of nominal shareholding
   - land or leases they own or hold
   - contracts, licenses, approvals or consents

If you have not already done so, notify the Monitoring Officer to update your declaration of interests.

YES

The interest is pecuniary – disclose the interest, withdraw from the meeting by leaving the room. Do not try to improperly influence the decision.

NO

The interest is related to a pecuniary interest. Disclose the interest at the meeting. You may make representations as a member of the public, but then withdraw from the room.

YES

Does the matter indirectly affects or relates to a pecuniary interest I have declared, or a matter noted at B above?

NO

The Interest is not pecuniary nor affects your pecuniary interests. Disclose the interest at the meeting. You may participate in the meeting and vote.

YES

Have I declared the interest as an other interest on my declaration of interest form? OR

Does it relate to a matter highlighted at B that impacts upon my family or a close associate? OR

Does it affect an organisation I am involved with or a member of? OR

Is it a matter I have been, or have lobbied on?

NO

You are unlikely to have an interest. You do not need to do anything further.
Report of the Fuel Poverty Panel
1. **Introduction**

1.1 Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP) set up the Fuel Poverty Panel in July 2013 to examine:-

- The reasons why Norfolk has the highest level of fuel poverty in East Anglia
- Services currently working to alleviate fuel poverty
- What more could be done by the County Council and other organisations and agencies to alleviate fuel poverty.

The Fuel Poverty Panel’s full terms of reference are attached at Appendix A.

The OSP was conscious that the combination of rising energy costs, welfare reform and shrinking local authority budgets could make for a very uncomfortable winter for some of the most vulnerable people in Norfolk. The main focus was, therefore, to find out what more could be done to alleviate fuel poverty in these unpromising circumstances.

1.2 The Fuel Poverty Panel consisted of six county councillors, including five members of Community Services OSP, and a co-opted member from Healthwatch Norfolk. The members were:-

Cllr Shelagh Gurney (Chairman)
Cllr Denis Crawford (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton
Cllr Emma Corlett
Cllr Ian Mackie
Cllr Elizabeth Morgan
Dr Sam Revill (Healthwatch Norfolk)
Cllr Matthew Smith

1.3 We met on six occasions to receive evidence and discuss the issues with representatives of various organisations and agencies that have a role to play in tackling fuel poverty. We met with:-

Norfolk County Council
- Welfare Rights Manager
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Norfolk Insight Team Manager
- Public Health Registrar
- Advanced Public Health Officer
- Finance, Business Partner and Transformation Programme Manager (Community Services)

Norfolk Housing Alliance (registered social
- Chairman
1.4 One of our members attended the National Energy Action Annual Conference and another attended a Winter Wellbeing Conference arranged by Norwich City Council to bring together all of the local agencies involved in tackling fuel poverty (this was a free event).

1.5 We wrote to the ‘big six’ energy companies:-

- British Gas
- EDF Energy
- E.On UK
- npower (RWE)
- Scottish Power
- SSE

We asked for information on how many dwellings in Norfolk have benefitted from work under the Energy Company Obligation and what they, as major energy suppliers, were doing to help customers find the best possible tariff.

We also wrote to National Grid requesting information on the extent of mains gas connection to residential properties in Norfolk and asking for comments on why the county seems to be poorly served in this respect.
We are disappointed to report that there has been no response to our letters from National Grid, E.ON and Scottish Power. British Gas, Npower and EDF have telephoned and promised a reply, but at the time of writing this report only SSE had provided a written response. For further details please see paragraph 4.4.

(Note, 7 Jan 2014 – E.ON, Scottish Power and EDF subsequently provided a written response.)

1.6 All of the information we received is referenced in Appendix B. Copies of the minutes of our meetings and the information on which we have based this report are available from the Scrutiny Support Manager (Health).

2. What is fuel poverty?

2.1 Whether a household is in fuel poverty or not is determined by the interaction of a number of factors, but three specifically stand out:-

- Fuel consumption – dependent on the lifestyle of the household and characteristics of the dwelling
- The cost of energy
- Household income

Low income, high energy prices and an energy inefficient home is the worst combination but any one of the variables can push a household into fuel poverty.

It is important to understand the distinction between fuel poverty and income poverty. Not everyone who is income poor is also fuel poor and there are factors other than income poverty that need to be tackled to reduce fuel poverty.

2.2 One of the first things we realised as we began our review was that the definition of fuel poverty had changed just before we started. This means that all the statistical information around this subject, of which there is masses, is about to change.

The 10 per cent definition

The original definition of fuel poverty, introduced under the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 and the Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001, was:-

- a household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10 per cent of its income on fuel to maintain an adequate level of warmth.

This was known as the 10% definition. An adequate standard of warmth was generally defined as 21°C in the living room and 18°C in
the other occupied rooms (the temperatures recommended by the World Health Organisation).

In 2000 the government’s aim was to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010. The statistics produced under the 10% definition showed fuel poverty falling until 2003 but rising again in 2004 and continuing to rise year-on-year until 2009.

2.3 In 2011 the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) commissioned the Hills review, which concluded that the 10% definition did not provide for adequate measurement of the problem. The indicator was highly sensitive to the cost of energy but not so good at reflecting the impact of energy inefficient dwellings. It captured many households that were not actually ‘fuel poor’ in terms of the 2000 Act, including higher-income families living in energy inefficient homes. The Hills review also found that the 10% indicator produced a misleading picture of trends by understating the scale of the problem when fuel prices were low and overstating it when fuel prices were high.¹

2.4 The Low Income High Cost (LIHC) definition

‘Fuel Poverty: a Framework for Future Action’ published by DECC in July 2013 introduced the Low Income High Cost (LIHC) definition of fuel poverty. It is a more complex definition, designed to distinguish between the extent of the problem (i.e. how many households are fuel poor) and the depth (i.e. what is the severity of the fuel poverty they face) so that resources can be aimed towards the households most in need.

The LIHC definition finds a household to be fuel poor if:-

- They have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- Were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line

The LIHC measure consists of two parts:

- The number of households that have both low incomes and high fuel costs (the bottom left quadrant in the diagram below).
- The depth of fuel poverty amongst these households. This is measured in terms of a fuel poverty gap, which represents the difference between the modelled fuel bill for each household, and the reasonable cost threshold for the household. This is summed for all households that have both low income and high costs to give an aggregate fuel poverty gap.

¹ Fuel Poverty: a Framework for Future Action, July 2013, Department of Energy and Climate Change; page 9
The Hills report noted that the depth of fuel poverty tends to be greater in rural households than in urban households. Rural households in fuel poverty have an average fuel poverty gap of £622 compared to £362 for urban households.

The LIHC measure is illustrated in the diagram below

2 In May 2013 two sets of national fuel poverty statistics were published, one calculated using the LIHC indicator and the other using the traditional 10% indicator. These related to 2011 and are the latest statistics available. In future years only the LIHC indicator will be used.

Table 1 below shows the difference in results across England under the two definition of fuel poverty and Table 2 shows a comparison of results for districts in Norfolk in 2011 using each of the two definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10% indicator</td>
<td>3.5 million</td>
<td>3.2 million</td>
<td>-0.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income high cost indicator (LIHC)</td>
<td>2.7 million</td>
<td>2.6 million</td>
<td>-0.1 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 Diagram from Annual Report on Fuel Poverty Statistics 2013, Department of Energy and Climate Change; page 6
Table 2 – Numbers of households in fuel poverty in Norfolk 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total number of households</th>
<th>10% indicator</th>
<th>Low income high cost indicator (LIHC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number in fuel poverty</td>
<td>% in fuel poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>56,501</td>
<td>9,833</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>53,161</td>
<td>7,951</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Yarmouth</td>
<td>42,342</td>
<td>7,441</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KL&amp;WN</td>
<td>64,459</td>
<td>11,903</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
<td>46,100</td>
<td>10,280</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>60,762</td>
<td>8,534</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk</td>
<td>52,489</td>
<td>9,301</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>375,814</strong></td>
<td><strong>65,243</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 The LIHC definition produces in a significant reduction in the official levels of fuel poverty in Norfolk and changes the emphasis between rural and urban areas in the high level figures. Whereas the North Norfolk and King’s Lynn and West Norfolk had the highest level of fuel poverty under the old measure, Norwich and Great Yarmouth have the highest levels under the new one. From next year the LIHC figures will become the sole currency in discussions about fuel poverty because figures under the 10% definition will no longer be produced.

2.5 We understand DECC’s reasons for changing to the LIHC definition and can see that it should help in targeting scarce resources to the people who need them most. However, it also appears to us that the change may not be helpful to Norfolk in future discussions about targeting of national resources. One of the reasons that Community Services OSP asked us to examine the subject of fuel poverty was because the statistics showed North Norfolk had the highest level in the eastern region. Under the new definition that is no longer the case. Cambridge has the highest percentage, with 15.8% of households in fuel poverty, followed by Luton and Southend-on-Sea both at 12.8%.

The situation in Norfolk is discussed in more detail in section 6.

3. The effects of fuel poverty

3.1 The County Council’s Public Health Registrar gave us information about the link between cold weather and excess deaths in Norfolk. There are around 530 such deaths in the county every winter. Although studies have shown a strong correlation between outdoor temperatures and mortality rates the causal link between a low household temperature and mortality is not so clear. There is, however, evidence that indoor temperature is important to maintaining health.

3.2 At below 16°C people have reduced resistance to respiratory and other
infections and a consequent increase in occurrences of colds, flu and bronchitis. Below 12°C the blood thickens, which increases blood pressure and the risk of heart attack or stroke. After more than 2 hours below 9°C there is a risk of hypothermia as core body temperature falls.

3.3 Keeping people healthy during winter is in everyone’s interests. Ill health is costly, not only for the individual concerned but for social care, the NHS and employers. In 2009 the Department of Health estimated that for every cold-related death there are eight non-fatal hospital admissions and that in the coldest months of the year NHS expenditure rose by 2%. It was estimated that the annual cost to the NHS of cold-related ill-health was almost certainly in excess of £1 billion.

3.4 ‘The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty’, published by the Marmot Review Team in 2011, contains a wealth of research evidence on the links between fuel poverty and physical health, mental health, well-being and life opportunities.

We were particularly struck by the evidence on the impact of fuel poverty on children and young people. Some of the research findings are set out below (these are fully referenced in the Marmot report):

- Children in bad housing conditions, including cold homes, are more likely to have mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, to contract meningitis, have respiratory problems, experience long term ill health and disability, experience slow physical growth and have delayed cognitive development (p 29)

- A significant proportion of children living in cold homes felt unhappy in their family – 10% as opposed to 2% of the group living in warm homes. Complementary studies point to the fact that young people living in cold homes try to find respite and privacy in other venues outside the home, where they are more exposed to mental health risks (p.29)

- More than 1 in 4 adolescents living in cold housing are at risk of multiple mental health problems (p.30)

- An increased duration of living in inadequately heated accommodation is significantly associated with having no quiet placed to do homework. This can affect a child’s educational attainment and therefore work opportunities in later life...cold housing, its impact on family life and early years can heavily weigh on other spheres of life, which affect long-term health outcomes (p.32)

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The Marmot report also includes evidence that older people are particularly at risk in the cold because their control of body temperature is weaker making them vulnerable to hypothermia\(^4\).

### The national debate on energy costs

#### 4.1 Shortly after we started to meet the issue of energy prices shot to the top of the political agenda when four of the ‘big six’ energy suppliers in the UK raised their charges for heating homes by more than three times the rate of inflation.

The big six, who between them have 99% of the retail energy market, stand accused of abusing their market position and acting in concert at the customers’ expense. According to Ofgem, the energy regulator, the average annual dual fuel bill, covering gas and electricity, is £1,315 per household. The latest statistics from mid September 2013 show that the average profit margin made on the £1,315 bill was £65. This was £30 higher than in September 2011 and September 2012 but it is a snapshot figure and volatile because of seasonal factors. In some months the profit margin has risen above £100, whereas in others the margin has been negative.

The largest part of the bill goes on buying gas and electricity on the wholesale market. This, in addition to the cost of running a retail business with billing and sales, accounts for 67% of a gas bill and 58% of an electricity bill according to Ofgem.

Ofgem says that the average dual fuel energy bill has risen by 24% between August 2009 and August 2013 and that the wholesale energy cost has risen by just 3.2% in the same period. However, the trade in wholesale gas and electricity is a very complex area and Ofgem’s methodology for calculating the cost is contested by the industry.

The companies argue that the price rises are necessary because of rising wholesale prices, the cost of using the national grid and the cost of complying with government environmental and social initiatives, such as the Energy Company Obligation, which helps improve the energy efficiency of homes. The energy companies claim that these levies add £110 to a typical annual household bill. The Department of Energy and Climate Change says that the various components of the average household fuel bill attributed to energy, fuel poverty and climate change policies are as follows:-

- Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4%
- Renewables Obligation 2%
- EU Emissions Trading System 1%

• Warm Home Discount 1%
• Feed-in Tariffs 1%

Labour has promised to freeze gas and electricity bills for 20 months if it wins the 2015 election. The coalition government has slowed the implementation of the Energy Company Obligation, which will allow energy companies to spread the cost over 4 years rather than 27 months. The government’s expectation is that the energy companies will pass this benefit on to customers, which would mean that price rises next year will be approximately £50 less for the average household than they otherwise would have been.

4.2 As a cross party group of councillors it is not for us to comment on the national political debate except to say that we welcome the spotlight on rising energy costs, which are a very significant contributor to fuel poverty.

4.3 We note that in June 2013 Ofgem said that there were too many confusing gas and electricity tariffs making it harder for customers to shop around for the best deal. In fact there were more than 300 tariffs available to UK customers. In future confusing multi-tier tariffs will not be allowed and energy companies will be expected to work with just 4 core tariffs which will be easier for customers to compare. The energy companies will also be expected to tell customers if there is a cheaper deal available for them. These are welcome developments.

The regulator has also mentioned a possible scheme whereby the suppliers would be obliged to offer their vulnerable customers, and others who have not switched for some time, a personalised estimate on the cheapest tariff from across the energy market.

Suppliers who break Ofgem’s rules can be fined and, given the high level of public interest in energy costs, they would be likely to find themselves in the media and in the political spotlight.

4.4 We approached all of the ‘big six’ energy companies to ask what they are doing to help customers in Norfolk find the best possible tariff and to find out how many dwellings in the county have benefitted under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). We would like to thank SSE, as it was the only energy company to provide information. *(Note, 7 Jan 2014 – E.ON, Scottish Power and EDF subsequently provided a written response.)*

SSE highlighted its Customer Service Guarantee, launched earlier in 2013. They have given a commitment that when customers call them they will offer to find ways to save them money, which could be through advice on more suitable tariffs, information about available discounts, energy efficiency advice or other help to reduce usage. In 2012/13 SSE paid 2,630 customers in Norfolk a Warm Home Discount and 24 customers received debt relief totalling approximately £27,000 from the Priority Assistance Trust Fund. In terms of ECO delivery, 76 properties in Norfolk have received or are in the process of receiving assistance via the
Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO), which is targeted at low income and vulnerable households.

SSE said that it would be happy to work with Norfolk County Council to increase the uptake of the ECO scheme.

5. National initiatives to reduce fuel poverty

5.1 Fuel poverty has been on the national government agenda since 2000 and there is a vast amount of data online about the prevalence of fuel poverty and the initiatives to tackle it over the past decade. Initiatives have come and gone (e.g. Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT), Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP), Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), Energy Efficiency Standards of Performance (EESoP), and Warm Front). The current national policy package consists of the following main initiatives:-

(a) **Winter Fuel Payment** – an automatic payment of between £100 and £300 to all those in receipt of the state pension.

(b) **Cold Weather Payment** - a means tested benefit from the Regulated Social Fund administered by the Department of Work and Pensions.

(c) **Feed-in Tariff Scheme** – the scheme requires electricity suppliers to pay a tariff to small-scale low-carbon energy generators for any electricity generated and exported. It is applicable to energy generation by photovoltaic (solar panels), wind, hydro and anaerobic digestion and is intended to promote the widespread uptake of small scale renewable and low-carbon electricity generation technologies.

(d) **Warm Home Discount** – a £135 discount on electricity costs for those who qualify in 2013-14 (this is a means tested discount which is separate from and does not affect a person’s Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment). All of the big six energy suppliers are part of the scheme as well as 12 smaller electricity suppliers. Some of the suppliers also offer the discount to a broader group of vulnerable people who do not qualify for Warm Home Discount, but each supplier has its own rules about who else can get this help. (These are known as the Broader Group Schemes).

(e) **Green Deal** – households can make energy-saving improvements to their homes without having to pay all the costs up front. Energy-saving improvements include:
   - Insulation e.g. loft or cavity wall insulation
   - Heating
   - Draught-proofing
   - Double glazing
Renewable energy technologies e.g. solar panels or wind turbines

Landlords must get a tenant’s permission before sign up to the Green Deal and tenants must get a landlord’s permission before signing up. This also applies to social housing. The steps are:-

- assessment of the property to see what improvements can be made and how much could be saved on energy bills
- application for Cashback scheme (if you qualify)
- choose a Green Deal provider to carry out the work
- sign a Green Deal Plan – a contract with the provider stating what work will be done and how much it will cost.
- a Green Deal installer does the work
- the cost is paid off in instalments through the electricity bill.

(f) Energy Company Obligation (ECO) – major energy companies fund energy efficiency improvements in people’s homes and recover the costs through energy bills. 15% of the targeted recipients of the scheme should be vulnerable households in rural areas. The ECO consists of:-

- The Carbon Savings Obligation (CSO) – works alongside the Green Deal to provide support for delivery of measures in hard to treat properties (such as those with solid walls, i.e. cavity wall insulation is not possible)
- The Carbon Savings Community Obligation (CSCO) – an obligation to deliver insulation measures in deprived and rural areas (which is expected to deliver a combination of lower cost loft and cavity wall insulation as well as some solid wall insulation).
- The Affordable Warmth Obligation (AW) expected to support basic heating and insulation measures in low income private tenure houses.

5.2 It is fair to say that many of the representatives we met from local councils, social landlords, private landlords, house builders and third sector organisations were less than enthusiastic about the latest national initiatives (ECO and Green Deal launched in early 2013). We heard a lot about the drawbacks, which we will briefly summarise:-

- To meet their obligations under ECO, companies may seek to target ‘low hanging fruit’, e.g. large housing association stocks in urban areas or market towns for whom energy saving measures can be delivered without great cost. They may not deliver so much to isolated rural households who are in the deepest fuel poverty but would be more expensive to help.
Private landlords have not been taking up the Green Deal because they find the process excessively bureaucratic and time consuming.

The process for engaging in the Green Deal scheme is quite complex. Finance needs to be arranged through a Green Deal provider and a contract drawn up. The loan interest rate is considered high at 7%. Also, as the loans are paid back over up to 25 years and relate to the property not the individual, it means that anyone selling their home passes the liability onto the buyer.

Although more Green Deal providers are signing up the selection is still quite limited.

Although some Green Deal providers will offer a free assessment, there is an average charge of around £95.

Marketing and communication about the Green Deal does not seem to have been effective (although £2.9 million has been spent on it nationally).

Under the Affordable Warmth Obligation, only one company has offered funding for oil fired central heating improvements. It is the households off the gas grid who need help most but are getting it least.

Planning restrictions in conservation areas and building regulations will make it very difficult for Green Deal providers to deliver external wall insulation. (However, in non conservation areas the government has recommended that external wall insulation should come under permitted development, making it much easier to install).

In October we were told that nationally only 12 Green Deal loans had been taken out since the scheme’s launch in January 2013. The Green Deal finance had only been available from September 2013.

5.3 We think that one of the reasons the Green Deal does not appeal to householders is because it encourages borrowing and people are already very wary of debt, even though the time scale for repayment may be long. When someone is struggling financially and perhaps in debt already, taking out a loan to improve the energy efficiency of their home will not be a priority.

5.4 South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils shared with us a piece of social marketing research which they commissioned to better inform their Green Deal strategy. Some of the comments from householders were quite revealing:-

‘Cost more than you save, take years to get the money back, some of the measures I have already are not that old, having to put in planning, and solar panels on your roof may hinder insurance/be turned down by your
mortgage company? or is that the grapevine…’

‘Having to sort anything like this out feels like a rigmarole. And they will probably refuse me anyway, they usually do’ (Housing Association tenant, qualitative interview)

‘I don’t want to be a guinea pig. Governments change, policies change and the goal posts move’ they continued to express a real concern about the deal not working well in the long term, in addition to feeling it was ‘a big commitment for a buyer to take on’.

6. Prevalence of fuel poverty in Norfolk

6.1 The people we met in the course of our review were extremely helpful and gave us a huge amount of information about fuel poverty in Norfolk, both directly and by referring us to the extensive data already published online. All of this is referenced in Appendix B. Most of the information we received was based on the 10% definition of fuel poverty, which is still valid this year, with the new LIHC definition coming in as the sole indicator from next year.

6.2 The number of households in fuel poverty in Norfolk actually fell in the last two years for which statistics are available (i.e. 2010 and 2011) after having risen in the years from 2004. This is true no matter which of the two definitions are used to measure fuel poverty and it is in line with the overall pattern in the rest of England. It is difficult to be sure exactly why this is the case. The reasons why it is so hard to interpret the fuel poverty data are explained in detail in DECC’s ‘Annual Report on Fuel Poverty Statistics 2013’.

The percentage of households in fuel poverty for Norfolk, the east of England and the whole of England in recent years (according to the 10% definition) are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Percentage of households in fuel poverty (10% definition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuel poverty statistics are available down to Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). LSOAs are a series of geographic areas which have been automatically generated to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They have a consistent population size, as far as possible. They typically contain from four to six Output Areas and the minimum populations is 1000 (the mean is 1500). There is a LSOA for each postcode in England.

In 2011 it was estimated that 252 of the 530 Lower Layer Super Output
Areas (LSOAs) in Norfolk had a higher proportion of households in fuel poverty than the Norfolk average of 17.4% - this was an improvement on 2010 figures where 265 LSOAs had a higher rate than the Norfolk average. (All of these figures relate to the 10% definition of fuel poverty).

6.3 We saw detailed mapping of fuel poverty in Norfolk by LSOA (according to the 10% indicator) but have not reproduced it in this report because the LIHC indicator of fuel poverty will change the picture significantly next year. Detailed local mapping under the new indicator was not available to us at the time of our review but it will be available in Norfolk Insight by the end of December 2013. Once the data is in the system it will be possible to automatically map fuel poverty to LSOA and other levels.

Tables 2 and 3 above show the level of fuel poverty in Norfolk under the new LIHC definition. Table 4 below shows fuel poverty by Norfolk district compared to the county average, the regional average and the national average in 2011 using the new LIHC definition and Table 5 shows the figures using the 10% definition:-

Table 4 – Norfolk districts’ variance from county, regional and national average fuel poverty levels in 2011 (using LIHC definition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of households in fuel poverty</th>
<th>Variance from County average (11%)</th>
<th>Variance from east of England average (10.2%)</th>
<th>Variance from England average (10.9%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Yarmouth</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>+1.3%</td>
<td>+2.1%</td>
<td>+1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KL&amp;WN</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
<td>+2.0%</td>
<td>+1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>+1.3%</td>
<td>+2.1%</td>
<td>+1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+0.8%</td>
<td>+0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 – Norfolk districts’ variance from county, regional and national average fuel poverty levels (2011, using 10% definition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>% of households in fuel poverty</th>
<th>Variance from County average (17.4%)</th>
<th>Variance from east of England average (13.9%)</th>
<th>Variance from England average (14.6%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+3.5%</td>
<td>+2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>+1.1%</td>
<td>+0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Yarmouth</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>+0.2%</td>
<td>+3.7%</td>
<td>+3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KL&amp;WN</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>+1.1%</td>
<td>+4.6%</td>
<td>+3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>+4.9%</td>
<td>+8.4%</td>
<td>+7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>-3.4%</td>
<td>+0.1%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>+0.3%</td>
<td>+3.8%</td>
<td>+3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.4%</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>+3.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>+2.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Under the new LIHC indicator the rate of fuel poverty in Norfolk is still above the regional and national averages, but not by so much.

6.5 We asked the Norfolk Insight Team to give us information about how rates of fuel poverty in Norfolk compare with other similar counties in England. Table 6 below compares the Norfolk figures with our five nearest statistical neighbours as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA). This family of neighbours is based on similar characteristics on a number of demographic and economic measures.

Table 6 - Norfolk nearest neighbours - households in fuel poverty, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Estimated number of households</th>
<th>Estimated number of households in fuel poverty</th>
<th>% of households Fuel Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>375,814</td>
<td>65,243</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>220,935</td>
<td>47,395</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>452,088</td>
<td>88,378</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>389,737</td>
<td>56,967</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon</td>
<td>488,703</td>
<td>80,538</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>310,832</td>
<td>51,574</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) (10% definition)
7.0 Why do parts of Norfolk have high levels of fuel poverty?

7.1 As discussed in paragraph 2.1, there are three main factors that can contribute to a household being in fuel poverty:-

- Fuel consumption
- The cost of energy
- Household income

During our meetings we discussed Norfolk’s situation in relation to each of these with the representatives we met.

7.2 Fuel consumption

7.2.1 The rate of fuel consumption is linked to the thermal efficiency of buildings, i.e. it takes more to heat a poorly insulated building. The Federation of Master Builders told us that 27% of the UK’s carbon emissions come from domestic housing and that the UK is one of the least energy efficient countries in Europe. Norfolk’s situation is made worse by the fact that it has a large number of older, solid walled dwellings, which are not energy efficient.

7.2.2 The Rural Fuel Poverty website developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy, has maps showing the proportion of solid walled housing in each county in England and there appears to be correlation between counties with high numbers of solid walled houses and high levels of fuel poverty. The map for Norfolk is shown below:-
7.3 The cost of energy

7.3.1 As discussed in section 4 above, everyone has been subject to sharp increases in energy costs in the past few years. Norfolk is particularly hard hit because mains gas connection is not available to many households, particularly in rural areas. Households that are not on mains gas and are therefore reliant on coal, oil, LPG (liquid petroleum gas) or electricity tend to pay significantly more for their heating fuel. A recent comparison found that mains gas was charged at 5 pence per kilowatt hour compared to 7 pence per kilowatt hour for oil. We understand that approximately 80% of properties in Norfolk are not connected to mains gas.

The Rural Fuel Poverty website has data on mains gas connections across England. The pictures for England and for Norfolk based on 2001 data are shown below.
7.3.2 It strikes us as ironic that Norfolk should be so poorly served for mains gas connections when North Sea gas comes on-shore through Bacton. On 14 October 2013 we wrote to National Grid, who manage gas connections, requesting more up to date information and asking for their comments on Norfolk’s situation. At the time of writing this report no response had been received.

7.3.4 Reliance on oil for heating can be a problem for low income households not only because of the higher overall cost but because of delivery policies. The minimum delivery is 500 litres which, depending on current prices, costs approximately £300. It is difficult for low income families to pay large sums in advance, which means that they cannot fill up oil tanks to take advantage of lower prices in summer.

7.3.5 People who use oil for heating are also at risk of fuel theft. Members of our group were aware of oil thefts in the county and that even the use of lockable metal cages around oil tanks had not protected people from thieves.

7.3.6 The use of pre-pay meters was drawn to our attention as another cause of higher energy bills. People on lower incomes tend to be more likely to pay for energy through pre-pay meters but this method is subject to higher tariffs and is sometimes used by the energy companies for the recovery of debt, which can cause more hardship for customers.

7.3.7 We noted from the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee’s report on Rural Communities (Sixth Report of
Session 2013-14) that lack of broadband in rural areas is considered a factor in the low take up of electricity switching by rural customers.

7.4 Household income

7.4.1 It is important to realise that even if someone is living in a thermally efficient house they may still be in fuel poverty because of low income.

7.4.2 The Welfare Rights Officer’s report to Community Services OSP in June 2013 set out facts about incomes and deprivation in Norfolk:-

- Incomes in Norfolk are 14% lower than the national average of £30,300.
- Approximately 110,900 people in the county are regarded as income deprived with approximately 47,360 people in rural areas (42.7% of the total) and 36,540 people in urban areas (57.3% of the total).
- Measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2010), Norfolk as a whole has above average deprivation and Great Yarmouth and Norwich are the most deprived areas.
- Out of a population of approximately 862,000, about 5.5% (47,400) people in Norfolk live in Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that lie within the most deprived in England. The balance has changed since 2007 with numbers increasing significantly in Norwich and Great Yarmouth but more slowly in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk.
- In Great Yarmouth 22% of the population are living in LSOAs among the most deprived 10% in the country (an increase from 20.2% in 2007).
- North Norfolk has a relatively large proportion of LSOAs with intermediate levels of multiple deprivation.

It is interesting to note that using the new LIHC fuel poverty indicator Norwich and Great Yarmouth are the top two areas in Norfolk for both high rates of households in fuel poverty and high levels of deprivation.

Other parts of the county also have significant areas or pockets of high deprivation and high rates of fuel poverty.

7.4.3 In terms of the potential effects of the welfare reform process, most of which is aimed at people under pensionable age, the main points are as follows:-

- The total income received by Norfolk residents from state benefits and tax credits in the year 2010-11 was £2,696 million. It is estimated that by 2014-15 this will have reduced by £181.1 million to £2,514.9 million – a drop in actual income of 6.7%.
- Over the four year period from 2011-12 to 2014-15 the loss of benefit income for Norfolk residents is estimated to be about £421 million, or more than £1,100 per household. Based on average household income of £26,000, this cut in benefits represents a cut in
income of about 4.4%.

- The table below compares the financial effect of the reduction in spending on the welfare state from 2010-11 to 2014-15 for each of the seven Local Authorities in Norfolk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total benefits in 2010-11 (£m)</th>
<th>Reductions in benefits by 2014-15 (£m)</th>
<th>Number of households</th>
<th>Reductions in benefits by 2014-15 (per household per week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>£9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>£7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Yarmouth</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>£12.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLWN</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>£9.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>£7.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>£11.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>£7.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>372,000</td>
<td>£9.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- It is clear that the loss per household per week from the reductions in benefits by 2014-15 is greater in poorer districts.

7.5 The Welfare Rights Officer also told us that the Local Assistance Scheme has highlighted that single people of working age claiming benefits are spending between 25% and 35% of their income on fuel.

7.6 The national roll out of Universal Credits was also seen as a cause for concern. Universal Credits will be paid in arrears on a monthly basis, which could cause budgeting problems for some and increase the need for emergency payments to pay for heating and other necessities. The original plan was for Universal Credits to be fully introduced in November but the government has now slowed the pace.

7.7 Pensioners can be particularly susceptible to rising energy costs because they tend to be on fixed incomes. The Welfare Rights Officer’s report to Community Services OSP on 11 June 2013 highlighted that around 21.8% of Norfolk’s population in 2010 was aged over 65 compared to 20.4% in 2006. By 2026 this is projected to rise to over 28% of the population. In actual terms it will mean an additional 118,000 older people living in Norfolk within the next thirteen years.

7.8 Despite the reduction in numbers of households in fuel poverty in Norfolk seen in the 2010 and 2011 annual statistics, all of the facts above suggest that the local authorities and other agencies the county should keep working hard to combat it.
8. **What is currently being done to tackle fuel poverty in Norfolk?**

8.1 We found that there is already a huge amount of local activity underway to tackle the different factors that combine to produce fuel poverty. We would like to commend the local authorities, third sector organisations and others with whom we spoke for the work that they are doing. It is not possible for us to report in detail on everything that we learned in this review but we have referenced it all in Appendix B and details are available from the Scrutiny Support Manager (Health). Much of the information is also available on the different organisations’ websites.

In this section we have picked out and commented on some of the local activity and plans for further improvement.

8.2 **Lowering fuel consumption by improving the energy efficiency of dwellings**

8.2.1 We took on board DECC’s opinion that improving the thermal efficiency of dwellings is a more cost effective way to tackle fuel poverty than through the benefits route and spent the largest part of our time considering improvements to the housing stock. We met with the seven district councils, the Norfolk Housing Alliance (representing social landlords), Eastern Landlords Association (representing private landlords) and the Federation of Master Builders to discuss the projects already underway and what further improvements might be possible.

8.2.2 The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) requires Local Authorities to report every two years setting out the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost effective and likely to result in significant in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. The first reports were due in March 2013. We asked each of the district councils for a copy of their HECA reports and received them from all except for Breckland Council, which has yet to produce one.

8.2.3 The local HECA reports are in varying formats and go into different levels of details but all of them set out facts and figures about the condition of housing stock, fuel poverty levels, what the councils have already done and what they are planning to do to improve the situation in the next few years. The district councils have substantial information about the condition of housing stocks in their area on which to base their plans. Some had commissioned / undertaken additional surveys but all appeared to have a good base level of information on which to act.

8.2.4 **Action by district councils**

The HECA reports are very detailed and we have selected a few
examples from each of the six that we saw to give just a flavour of the work that is going on:-

**King’s Lynn and West Norfolk**

- Development of a business case for Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation activity supported by an action plan. The business case will consider collaborative working with other LAs and social housing Registered Providers.
- Identify areas where relevant measures may not require planning consent such as External Wall Insulation (EWI) and Photovoltaic (PV) to feed into any Green Deal / ECO activity plan.
- Complete the Warmer West Norfolk heating project as part of the DECC fuel poverty funding and develop the partnership model created through this scheme to market the Green Deal/ECO to vulnerable and hard to reach households.
- Complete the pilot solid wall insulation scheme undertaken in partnership with Fenland District Council (started in 2009).

**North Norfolk**

- We will promote low carbon construction through our planning policies and through our annual Greenbuild event.
- We have established and Enforcement Board to tackle poor housing in the district council both in the owner occupied and rented sectors. The Council is currently reviewing its Housing Renewal Policy and is developing a Housing Assistance Policy which will provide financial assistance to owner-occupiers living in poor housing conditions to avoid the need to take enforcement action.
- We will provide residents with advice relevant to their own personal circumstances linked to an energy assessment of their property. The advice will include how the property, heating systems and other appliances can be used effectively to manage energy usage. This can be supported by monitoring of energy usage through the use of devices such as OWL energy monitors.

**Broadland**

- We have partnered a Green Deal provider which was secured via a procurement process.
- Use discretionary budget to incentivise Green Deals for properties rated E, F and G on their energy performance certificates.
- Work with Environmental Health Officers to inform landlords about the future EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rental rules so that they can improve the efficiency of their properties (via the Green Deal or other finance) and enable their properties to meet the appropriate standards.
- Organise and attend 50 community visits across the district and our partner authority South Norfolk per year to promote the Green Deal
and ECO as well as other council services to residents.
- Promote exemplar community and business properties which have been retrofitted using Green Deal measures, financed through the DECC (Department of Energy and Climate Change) Pioneer Places funding.

South Norfolk

- We have commissioned a housing condition stock modelling report by the Building Research Establishment to identify areas of poor housing. This combined with data on areas of high fuel poverty will help us effectively target activities and marketing.
- We use discretionary budget to promote Green Deals offering Decent Home Loans to assist owner occupiers to improve their homes.
- We have an in-house Home Improvement Agency that identifies and supports vulnerable people, arranging energy efficiency advice and improvements and signposting them to other relevant services.
- We will work with the Eastern Landlords Association to promote Green Deal and forthcoming legal requirements.
- We will also work with CNC building control and planning to encourage energy efficiency in new properties.
- We plan to select the 5 areas with highest incidences of Fuel Poverty and work with our Green Deal partner to ensure that ECO HHCRO is publicised and made available, and maximise take up of ECO HHCRO assistance.

Norwich

- The council has carried out a range of work to improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock, installing the following measures - 31 photovoltaics, 1 solar thermal, 26 voltage optimisation, 1 air source heat pump, 1,396 loft insulations, 92 external wall insulations, 2245 condensing boilers.
- The council is considering an extension of the existing house in multiple occupation licensing scheme to an estimated 2000 properties (a 10-fold increase over the statutory scheme). The landlords of these properties would be required by a licence condition to remove an excess cold hazard.
- The council believes that there is considerable scope for the green deal to be taken up by private landlords and we are already beginning to promote it in individual cases.
- The council has embarked on a programme of building up to 250 new council houses over the next five to 10 years. It is intended to explore cost-effective technologies, including passivhaus techniques, to maximise the efficiency of these new homes.

As well as the HECA report, Norwich City Council also gave us its very comprehensive Affordable Warmth Strategy, which was published in
January 2013. It includes key performance measures against the City Council’s three priorities of helping people reduce their fuel bills, improving the energy efficiency of housing and assisting people to maximise their income.

**Great Yarmouth**

- The Council’s Environmental Health Team take both informal in formal action under the Housing Act 2004 against private sector landlords to remedy hazards … excess cold is one of the principal hazards encountered … in 2012/13 Officers took such actions in respect of over 50 properties.
- Work in progress in 2013/14 to improve the council housing stock:—
  - 440 homes – single glazed window replacement
  - 785 homes – external door replacement
  - 400 homes – loft insulation top ups
- Three year programme of improvements to properties, e.g. to upgrade the poorest performing boilers and controls; to provide solid wall insulation, funded where applicable by the ECO programmes (procuring an ECO provider late in 2013 and starting the programme of work in early 2014).
- To identify ECO eligible areas and households, starting in Autumn 2013.
- Working with the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and the County Councils on integrated health & social care – one issue will be improving housing conditions, including energy efficiency and fuel poverty.
- Through Council services such as Tenancy Support, Safe at Home (the Home Improvement Agency), the Older People’s Outreach Service and Neighbourhood Management, we will provide a range of non-financial services and assistance to promote and enable the take-up of energy efficiency measures.
- With partners we will develop information and advice on how to manage energy consumption following the installation of Smart Meters. (The utility companies are expected to install Smart Meters in all homes by 2019. There will be smart meters for both gas and electricity and they will send electronic readings to the energy supplier automatically. The come with in-home displays which give real-time feedback on energy usage and what it is costing.)

### 8.2.5 Action by registered social landlords

Only Norwich City Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council are major council house stock holders. In the rest of the county social housing is provided by housing associations. The Norfolk Housing Alliance (NHA) is a forum for local social housing landlords and we invited its Chairman to meet with us. We were interested to hear about the action that Norfolk Housing Alliance members have taken to tackle fuel poverty through improving the thermal efficiency of dwellings and other through other projects. The NHA covers approximately 41,000
properties across the county.

We received a very positive response from the NHA setting out the activities of its members. The following is just a selection of some of the social housing landlords' projects:-

**Wherry Housing Association**

- Last year we insulated 50 lofts and 19 cavity walls costing £22,388.95 (received £4,499.60 in grant funding). We externally insulated 18 solid walled properties costing £161,891 (received £18,000 in grant funding). The volumes of loft and cavity insulation works we complete are relatively low as we have had a programme for the last 5 years that has completed the majority of our stock.
- The Energywise Project - one to one energy saving advice to 276 household who were identified as at high risk of fuel poverty (specifically targeted older residents, families with young children, residents with a disability and single tenant households on a low income).
- 12 trained resident energy champions who are able to give energy saving advice to residents in their neighbourhood and also attend local events to promote energy saving.
- My Home Energy Switch – Wherry has joined up with My Home Energy Switch, which is managed by the National Housing Federation, and offers free, impartial service to its customers to make sure they are on the lowest tariff or to help customers switch if they need to.

**Freebridge Community Housing**

- £400k made available this year for upgrading loft insulation in our properties where levels are currently below 50mm.
- As part of our Non-Traditional Property upgrades, all are being fitted with PV panels and additional insulation.
- As heating systems in ‘off gas’ properties become due for renewal, they are being replaced where possible with air source heating – this will be an on-going programme.
- Our front line staff promote the availability of Norfolk Credit Union’s facility for oil loans.
- We will be recruiting an Energy Advisor within the next few months whose role will involve offering advice to customers on tariffs and energy saving measures, as well as investigating schemes such as bulk oil purchasing that we are not currently involved in.

**Cotman Housing Association**

- Cotman has been commissioned by Norfolk County Council to deliver a tenure neutral community Outreach Service for Older People. This supports older people to remain independent in their
homes, and the needs and risk assessment process includes financial issues and ability to keep warm. The support planning phase encompasses “keep warm” strategies, winter weather payments etc.

- We have been doing the usual installing double glazing, upgrading cavity and loft insulation and replacing boilers with more efficient models.
- Through our membership of Places for People, we have piloted the installation of PV panels at our estate in North Walsham, at no cost to ourselves, therefore helping customers to save money.
- Our supported housing development at Great Yarmouth was completed last year and features impressive environmentally friendly features such as high insulation, solar thermal heat exchangers and passive vent ducting to reduce energy by recycling warm air and reducing water consumption.

Broadland Housing Group

- Broadland Housing Group have provided either cavity wall or loft insulation to 710 properties over the past five years with a works value of £186,636; of which £114,341 was received back in CERT payments.
- Broadland Housing Group were also successful in obtaining funding from the European Regional Development Fund for £518,605.00 to allow a model to be developed for low carbon retrofit of social housing. The properties included were refurbished to a selection of low carbon standards, using a whole house approach. The ‘whole house’ approach considers all of the low carbon energy saving elements working in conjunction with each other, to deliver the best solution for an individual property to include both physical and behavioural impacts. The total project value was £1,296,563.
- In relation to communal heating systems, £37,894.25 has been spent on Boiler Management systems over the past five years.
- Broadland have also benefitted from the Renewable Heat Premium payment and have provided solar thermal panels and air source heat pumps to 21 properties, at a cost of £172,496. £60,000 was received back in grant payments.
- Commissioning the University of Salford to help develop a behavioural change advice and guidance programme for Broadland Housing and other tenants. The intention is to provide frontline staff with simple advice to allow them to make what are called behavioural change interventions. These range from providing general advice on energy efficiency to adjusting boiler programmers in tenants’ homes.

Orbit East

- In 2012/13 we completed a wide range of thermal improvements to target our resources at a fabric first approach to investment as set out within our Warm Homes Strategy and include:-
- Loft Insulation
- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Window Replacement
- Heating System Replacement
- Solid wall insulation works

This has seen an investment in 2012/13 of £1,256,000 and we have committed to make improvements within 2013/14 totalling £1,187,000.

- We have agreed a strategy to improve our worst performing homes within our communities through focused investment and have sought to maximise our ability to deliver these improvements through securing funding from the Energy Company Obligation set out within the Green Deal.

**Saffron Housing Trust**

- Since 2004 Saffron have upgraded 2800 properties to standard - 250mm (loft) and cavity filled. Future programmes are expected to comprise between 100-250 properties per annum.
- Since 2011 Saffron have upgraded 118 solid wall properties with external insulation. Future programmes are expected to comprise between 60-70 properties per annum.
- Saffron’s central heating programme undertakes installation to 125 properties per year (this comprises a mix of oil, gas and electric heating types).
- Installed 804 PV (solar panel) arrays on properties in all areas of South Norfolk. This project was completed in Dec 2011. Over 3.5million units (kwh) of electricity produced to date. On average we are expecting tenants to save in the region of £125 per year.
- Tenants who report issues of high energy bills or fuel poverty are referred to Saffron’s Energy Officer who can give the tenant advice and explore options for switching energy suppliers with them (via USwitch).
- Saffron have in-house provision of a full time Citizen’s Advice Bureau worker who tenants are able to contact for ‘fast-track’ advice on a range of debt and income related issues including addressing issues arising from fuel poverty including advice and help in accessing British Gas Energy Trust Fund for those at risk of fuel poverty.
- Saffron work closely with Norfolk Credit Union and enable some financially vulnerable tenants to access loans for heating oil through a guarantee scheme with NCU.

**8.2.5 Private landlords’ action**

We were aware that the energy efficiency of housing stock in the private rented sector tends to be worse than in the social housing sector. For instance the average SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating for houses owned by Great Yarmouth Borough...
Council is a very good 70.8 compared to an average SAP of just 51 for all housing in the borough. In Norwich the private housing stock has an average SAP of 47 compared to 70.45 for houses owned by the City Council. A SAP of below 30 is considered a significant health hazard. The national average for social housing stock is 62.4 and for all housing it is 54.5.

North Norfolk District Council gave us figures that showed a higher rate of fuel poverty in privately rented housing stock in its area:--

Owner occupied stock – 10.4% in fuel poverty
Privately rented stock – 19.1% in fuel poverty
Housing association – 12.8% in fuel poverty

We decided to speak with the Chief Executive Officer of the Eastern Landlords Association (ELA) to hear the view of private landlords on improving thermal efficiency of dwellings. We were grateful to the ELA for its cooperation with our review and we acknowledge the good work that it does with its 1,200 members. We are also conscious that there are many other private landlords operating in county who are not members of the ELA.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the ELA informed us that from 2016 any tenant or their representative asking for their landlord’s consent to make reasonable energy efficiency improvements cannot be refused. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are required to be in place for all housing stock by 2018 and it is expected that all rented properties will be required to have an EPC of E or above. More and more tenants are becoming aware of this requirement and will want to see the EPC rating of a property to make an informed decision on whether to rent.

The CEO of the ELA made the point that housing stock in the private rented sector is generally older and less fuel efficient than the social housing stock. He also explained that private landlords have not been taking up the Green Deal because they find the process excessively bureaucratic and time consuming.

8.2.6 House builders

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) told us that it is offering certification to those builders who wish to become Green Deal providers and have introduced the Low Carbon Building Refurbishment Strategy to encourage its members to use low carbon design and construction techniques.

The FMB is also working to raise awareness of the Green Deal scheme with its members so that they can advise customers on what is available. This is a slow process as it takes time to get members assessed, certified and trained. The FMB has a membership of
approximately 9,500 small firms.

8.2.7 There has certainly been a lot of practical activity in this area in recent years and more is planned by the district councils and the housing associations. We commend them for what they have done and their recognition that there is much more to do. They are clearly monitoring the effects of their policies and are working with each other and other agencies, including the County Council, to maximise the benefits of their actions.

We noted different levels of detail in the district councils’ HECA reports but acknowledge that this is not necessarily the best guide to activity ‘on the ground’. We would urge Breckland District Council to produce a HECA report.

We think it is fair to conclude that the reduction in fuel poverty levels in Norfolk in 2010 and 2011 must, in part, be attributable to the work that has been done to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock. However, it is very difficult to disentangle all of the factors that influence the fuel poverty statistics and to be sure of cause and effect. The new fuel poverty definition and indicator should help with that.

8.3 Reducing the price that people pay for energy

As discussed in section 4, the 24% rise in average energy costs since 2009 is clearly a major contributor to fuel poverty. As with action to improve the energy efficiency of dwellings, we found there is a great deal of effort going into helping people reduce the amount they pay for heating fuel.

8.3.1 Oil buying schemes

Norfolk Rural Community Council (NRCC) told us about the Thinking Fuel oil-buying scheme which buys more than 1,000,000 litres of oil per year on behalf of over 2,000 members. People can save around 9% on their oil bills, (i.e. about £120 per year, or 6p per litre based on 2,000 litres). The scheme is run by NRCC in partnership with AF-Affinity, Anglia Farmers bulk buying arm.

The scheme is run on a community basis, which means that a local community group needs to be set up before people can register. If there is no local community group people can join through NRCC as an individual member for a fee of £20. If there is a community group then it pays just one £20 fee, which entitles all households in the community to join at no additional charge.

The scheme works as follows:-

- The bulk order syndicate operates once a month (by 5.00pm on the first working day of the month) to balance convenience with savings.
• The syndicate shops around to find the best deal with each order, but only uses providers that it believes are reliable and provide a suitable quality product.
• The minimum order is 500 litres. This is because of trading standards regulations. The majority of fuel vehicles carry pumps that are certified to deliver a 500 litre minimum.
• Everyone pays the same price per litre regardless of the volume they order.
• There is no obligation to buy.
• Payment can be made by direct debit, debit card or credit card.
• There is an option for people to pre-purchase vouchers to spend on oil (but the scheme encourages people to save and budget accordingly and signposts them to Citizens Advice Bureaux or Norfolk Credit Union if they are having problems affording their bill).

Oil bulk buying schemes cannot guarantee to get people the cheapest price every time, but they aim provide consistently good value.

The graph below shows how well the Thinking Fuel scheme compared to market prices over the past two years.

NRCC also told us about the Buy Oil Early Campaign which was launched in September 2013 by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), Citizens Advice and FPS (Federation of Petroleum Suppliers). The campaign encouraged people to stock up with oil in September when prices and demand tend to be lower.

8.3.2 The Big Switch and Save

The district councils told us about the Norfolk Big Switch and Save collective switching initiative, which six of them are promoting using funding from DECC. Great Yarmouth Borough Council is part of a different switch and save scheme, with Peterborough Council.

Households are able to register an interest in collective switching through the Big Switch and Save website. At the end of the
registration period the company that won the tender to deliver this initiative, ichoosr, goes to the energy market to request the best price for providing energy to those that have registered through a reverse auction. Those registering are then advised of the outcome of the auction and provided with details of how much they could save if they were to switch and are given 4-6 weeks to decide if they want to switch. The switch will be managed by the customers’ current and new energy companies.

In addition to the four simplified core tariffs which Ofgem has instructed the energy companies to introduce (see paragraph 4.3), they will be able to offer a fifth tariff for collective switching. It is hoped that this could result in cheaper energy for those switching in this way and that the new tariff will be available in time for the current switch opportunity. The registration period ends on 18 November 2013 and the auction takes place the next day. Those who registered will be notified and will need to make a decision on whether to switch by 13 January 2014.

At the time of writing this report, 5,652 Norfolk householders had registered for the auction on 19 November.

We saw the oil buying section on the Big Switch and Save website, where people can put in place names or postcodes and see all of the local oil buying groups on the map. There are numerous groups in Norfolk working through several bulk buying schemes.

The Welfare Rights Officer drew our attention to the fact that some fuel companies are recognising the problem of fuel poverty and offering direct debit facilities on fuel such as Calor Gas, which is a commonly used fuel in Norfolk.

8.4  Increasing people’s incomes

8.4.1 The factors which affect the level of people’s incomes go well beyond the remit of this panel. The economic background and standards of education play a part as well as the higher than average number of part-time workers in Norfolk. We looked at some of the sources of financial and other material help available for people on low incomes who may be in danger of fuel poverty.

8.4.2 Making sure that people receive all the benefits they are entitled to is clearly an important element in tackling fuel poverty. All of the councils in Norfolk provide advice and signposting on benefits and entitlements as do many third sector organisations. Norfolk County Council also commissions specialist information advice and advocacy services to support vulnerable people to access their entitlements.

The work of the credit unions is also vital in helping people on low incomes to access funds.
We focused on a few of the third sector organisations that are giving people financial and other help directly in relation to fuel poverty.

### 8.4.3 Age UK Norfolk
Age UK Norfolk gave us details about its Benefit Service, which undertook 1058 home visits to assist with the completion of forms for 770 Attendance Allowance, 89 Disability Living Allowance and did a benefit check for 796 households in the period from April 2012 to March 2013. This resulted in raising income of older people in Norfolk by £2,141,072. In the same period Age UK Norfolk’s Telephone Advice Line took 568 calls relating to queries regarding domestic fuel issues, ‘switching’ advice, energy conservation queries.

### 8.4.4 Norfolk Community Foundation Trust and Age UK
Norfolk Community Foundation Trust and Age UK told us about the Surviving Winter Appeal. The appeal, organised by Norfolk Community Foundation Trust, encourages older people who are in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance but not financially dependent on it to donate all or part of it for distribution to the people most in need during winter. Other people are also encouraged to donate. In the first year the appeal raised over £30,000 and in the following two years has raised over £60,000. There was also a one-off donation of £100,000 from Norfolk County Council last year. The County Council has given £5,000 this year.

Age UK gives out the grants according to individual circumstances, but usually between £100 and £250 per household. The table below shows the value of the grants paid out from Surviving Winter fund in recent years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Grants</th>
<th>Total grants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2011 – August 2011</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>£3,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2011 – March 2012</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>£40,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2012 – March 2013</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>£73,289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All recipients of a Surviving Winter grant are offered a benefit check to ensure they are claiming all they are entitled to.

### 8.4.5 Age UK Money School
Age UK runs a Money School which supports older people who have the capability to manage their finances effectively but who lack the knowledge and skills to do so. They have held sessions on benefits, price comparison and ‘switching’.

### 8.4.6 Local Assistance Scheme
Early in our review we received a report from the Local Assistance Scheme Development Manager at Norfolk County Council. Since April 2013 the County Council has managed the Local Assistance Scheme, which takes the place of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans which were previously administered by the Department of Work and Pensions. In April 2013 funding was transferred to top tier local authorities based on 2004/05 spending.
The scheme awards a small amount of money (£10) for emergency fuel payments. In the period between 2 April and 30 June 2013 there were 68 applications of which 54 were awarded an emergency payment. It was, of course, anticipated that the demand for emergency fuel payments would increase during the winter.

The payments are meant as a very short term solution and should be used to top up gas and electricity pre payment meters. People who use propane gas or oil cannot be helped by this scheme. Generally the scheme will only pay out between October 31st and March 31st but it was extended to April 2013 because of the unseasonably cold weather. Payment is also flexible when there are small children or disabled people living in the household.

The Local Assistance Scheme is also looking into the possibility of engaging with other existing district council schemes for the provision of emergency heating oil (in four out of seven councils). It is also looking into ways to ensure that information concerning entitlement to the Warm Home Discount Scheme is made available to those applicants to the Local Assistance Scheme who qualify for this benefit payment and also to raise awareness of the Broader Group Schemes administered by energy suppliers (see paragraph 5.1 above). The scheme is also looking at the possibility of collating all information about ways to combat fuel poverty and having one point of access to this for applicants to the scheme.

8.5 Norfolk Warm and Well

Community Services OSP has already received a report from the Director of Public Health, on 5 November 2013, about the success of this major initiative in 2012-13 and the plans for winter 2013-14. Representatives from Public Health met with us to discuss Warm and Well in detail.

Last year (2012-13) funding of £283,570 was provided by the Department of Health following a successful application to the Warm Homes Healthy People fund. This application involved a partnership of organisations in Norfolk including local government, health and the voluntary sector which together would identify and provide intervention to those requiring help. The Norfolk scheme had the following principal aims:

- Giving people cold weather information and advice.
- Providing practical and financial support.
- Encouraging community spirit where neighbours help those in need.

The individual components contributing to these aims are highlighted below:

Resources for keeping warm
• 6,000 warm packs including advice leaflet, blanket, gloves, thermos mug, room thermometer, bed socks, woolly hat and hot water bottle
• Blankets for the homeless
• Low cost loans for heating oil through Norfolk Credit Union, to combat fuel poverty in rural areas
• Portable heater loan
• Loft clearance services, ready for increased insulation laying (loft lagging)
• Low level insulation, providing radiator foil, loft lagging, and draft excluders
• Boiler repair, or replacement where quick action is critical
• Emergency heating oil for people in a crisis
• Community alarms, including extreme temperature sensors

Intensive support for the most vulnerable
• Grants for individuals in a crisis through the Norfolk Community Foundation to provide intensive help to up to 500 individuals
• Telephone and home-visit support for up to 300 individuals with long-term conditions

Building community capacity and resilience
• Up to 20 training sessions will be provided for parish councils and community groups to help them identify, support and signpost vulnerable people
• Streamline getting the right help to the right people through referral process
• Continuation of the Warm and Well fund, providing resource to groups supporting the vulnerable into the future.
• Use of the Home Shield cross-referral agency for professionals was expanded to include telephone and web referrals from the public.

Promoting of awareness
• Raise awareness of the risk of winter to vulnerable groups and solutions to overcome them
• Promote flu vaccination to all vulnerable groups

Public Health did a detailed analysis of the 2012-13 programme and found that it had been successfully delivered. There were some instances of Warm and Well packs being delivered to people who did not need them but generally the help went to people who were in need. It was also noted that the 2012-13 campaign got off to a slow start and that planning should begin earlier for his winter.

There is no grant funding from the Department of Health for Warm and Well this year. Norfolk Community Foundation had £40,000 left over from last year’s funding and Public Health has contributed £10,000, which Norfolk Community Foundation matched, giving an overall fund
of £60,000. The plan for Warm and Well 2013-14 is as follows:-

(a) Communications

The overarching theme is ‘looking after each other this winter’. There will be an awareness raising campaign with three main elements:-

- Community development key events
- Targeted and general public health messages
- Signposting to relevant services

Targeted communications will be aimed at the ten Medium Super Output Areas with the highest excess winter deaths, food banks and homelessness.

There will be a focus on working with community advocates to get information to target groups as well as using all the usual community communication channels.

A leaflet with stickers will be produced. These will be placed inside prescription bags in pharmacies and the stickers used to seal the bag. This will target those individuals with chronic health conditions.

People will be signposted to the internet or County Council Customer Service desk. The Warm and Well internet page will list the services that are available this winter.

(b) Grant application

Community groups can apply for up to £5,000 from Norfolk Community Foundation (from the £45,000 remaining from last year’s funding). This will not only provide funds for communities but raise awareness of community development.

(c) E-learning

Last year there were a number of training events but attendance was relatively poor. This year there will be an e-learning module. This will be targeted at staff who work in health and social care and partners in the Warm and Well campaign. It will allow staff who enter people’s homes to recognise the signs of a cold house and give advice. It will be a freely available tool, hosted by Norfolk’s Living Well. The training will centre of Making Every Contact Count (MECC). It is based on the following steps, which can be delivered in about 1 minute:-

- ASK: Have you thought about how to keep warm this winter?
- LISTEN
- ADVISE: A good way to keep warm and healthy would be….
- ACT: Signpost to Warm and Well services
What more could be done to alleviate fuel poverty in Norfolk?

Conclusions

9.1 First of all, we think it is worth noting that although members of our group came from four different political parties there was complete consensus on the conclusions of this report and the recommendations that we have made.

9.2 It is clear to us that the dramatic increase in the price of energy to the consumer in recent years is greatly exacerbating the problem of fuel poverty. We welcome the fact that this issue is receiving attention at national political level.

9.3 Throughout our review we were looking for ideas on what more Norfolk County Council or other organisations or agencies could do to alleviate fuel poverty in the county. We are very conscious that Norfolk County Council has to save £189m over the next three years and that the restriction on our spending is likely to have a knock-on effect on third sector capacity. We are equally aware that the NHS also faces a difficult future with flat cash budgets not keeping up with rising demand. At the same time common sense tells us that if we, as a community, do not manage to alleviate fuel poverty the pressures on the NHS and social care will increase even more.

9.4 We are pleased that the Norfolk Warm and Well initiative is to continue this winter despite the absence of central funding. In the circumstances we support the emphasis on 'looking after each other this winter' and the plan for a targeted communication campaign. We would also recommend that all County Council departments, district councils, housing associations, NHS and third sector organisations and agencies who send staff into people’s homes make use of the Warm and Well e-learning module and ensure that staff are signposting people at risk of fuel poverty toward the available help.

9.5 We noted that last year’s Warm and Well initiative opened up the Home Shield professional cross-referral agency to telephone and web referrals from the public, which we support. We heard from one of the district councils during our review that there are not many referrals from Home Shield in relation to fuel poverty. We recommend that the Home Shield service is promoted to staff who take the Warm and Well e-learning module and to community contacts, such as village agents or community oil buying champions, who may be able to refer people in fuel poverty to the service.

9.6 Enabling Communities is one of the Enterprising Norfolk work strands. We recommend that the Enabling Communities group considers ways in which local communities can participate in the Warm and Well campaign and in other activities to tackle fuel poverty in their areas.
9.7 The County Council’s is looking to develop customer insight work based on the intelligence behind all the interactions that the County Council has with local people. This means that when looking to commission or deliver a service to specific customer groups it will be possible to look in detail at how the County Council’s services already interact with them and make useful links. We **recommend** that the County Council’s customer insight work and assistance is made available to all County Council departments and the other organisations and agencies who could use it to target help (e.g. Green Deal) towards people who could use it.

9.8 We further **recommend** that the Insight Team investigates the development of a network for the sharing of information, data and knowledge in respect of fuel poverty and associated issues so that organisations can see the opportunities for working together.

9.9 We saw evidence from North Norfolk District Council and Norfolk Rural Community Council that switch and save schemes can work well for the people who sign up for them. The problem has been that not enough people do. We commend the district councils and Norfolk Rural Community Council for the effort they have put in to switch and save and would urge them to continue.

We think that Ofgem’s intervention to simplify energy tariffs together with the latest price hikes will encourage more people to switch and the collective scheme is a good way for people who do not have internet access to take part. We **recommend** that the district councils and Norfolk Rural Community Council continue to promote collective switch and save and that Norfolk County Council also helps to promote future rounds of the Big Switch and Save.

9.10 We were disappointed that five of the ‘big six’ energy companies and National Grid did not reply to our letters in time to include their comments in this report. Our letters were originally sent on 14 October and we wrote to them again on 22 November 2013. We were particularly keen hear from National Grid on the issue of mains gas supply in rural Norfolk. More connections to the gas grid would make a big difference to fuel poverty in Norfolk. We **recommend** that the County Council takes up the issue of roll-out of mains gas connections with National Grid.

9.11 We heard from several sources how householders can waste energy simply by not understanding how to use their boiler or central heating system properly. We **recommend** that the housing associations, district councils with housing stocks and private landlords ensure that new tenants are given clear written instructions for their boiler and central heating system and that one to one instruction is given where necessary.

9.12 We heard evidence about how residents prefer to take advice from
their local council more than from any other source. We **recommend** that District Councils consider allowing their logo to be used in promotion of the Green Deal in their area.

9.13 **We recommend** that Norfolk County Council expresses support for the Energy Bill Revolution which is calling for the Government to spend its carbon tax revenue, approximately £4 billion per year, on making homes more energy efficient.

9.14 Six out of seven district councils showed us their Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) reports. **We recommend** that Breckland District Council produces a HECA as soon as possible.

9.15 The HECAs contained a wide variety of good ideas for reducing fuel poverty. **We recommend** that the district councils consider each others’ HECAs and whether some of their neighbours’ ideas would work in their area (e.g. the loft clearance service in Norwich seems like a very good idea for encouraging people to take up the offer of loft insulation; several of the districts are taking very positive action to promote the Green Deal).

9.16 The Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board is the strategic body on which most of the organisations and agencies who can influence fuel poverty are represented; county council, district councils, NHS clinical commissioning groups, NHS England, the voluntary sector, and the police. **We recommend** that members of the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board receive this report and that they consider ways in which fuel poverty can be alleviated as they work together on the health and wellbeing strategic priorities.

9.17 **We recommend** that the five CCGs come together to consider how they can commission services to avoid excess winter deaths, building on the Warm and Well initiative, and work with the seven district councils to consider how the councils can help in delivering aspects which relate to the home environment.

**10. List of recommendations**

(see overleaf)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>To</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. That all County Council departments, district councils, housing associations, NHS and third sector organisations and agencies who send staff into people's homes make use of the Warm and Well e-learning module and ensure that staff are signposting people at risk of fuel poverty toward the available help.</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council Directors 7 District Councils Norfolk Housing Alliance Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. That the Home Shield service is promoted to staff who take the Warm and Well e-learning module and to community contacts, such as village agents or community oil buying champions, who may be able to refer people in fuel poverty to the service.</td>
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<td>3. That the Enabling Communities group considers ways in which local communities can participate in the Warm and Well campaign and in other activities to tackle fuel poverty in their areas.</td>
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<td>4. That the County Council’s customer insight work and assistance is made available to all County Council departments and the other organisations and agencies who could use it to target help (e.g. Green Deal) towards people who could use it.</td>
<td>Head of Planning, Performance and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Head of Planning, Performance and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. That the district councils and Norfolk Rural Community Council continue to promote collective switch and save and that Norfolk County Council also</td>
<td>7 District Councils Norfolk Rural Community Council</td>
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<td>Suggestion</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>That the County Council takes up the issue of roll-out of mains gas connections with National Grid.</td>
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</table>
| 8 | The housing associations, district councils with housing stocks and private landlords ensure that new tenants are given clear written instructions for their boiler and central heating system and that one to one instruction is given where necessary.  | Norfolk Housing Alliance  
7 District Councils  
Eastern Landlords Association |
| 9 | That District Councils consider allowing their logo to be used in promotion of the Green Deal in their area.                                      | 7 District Councils                                                                         |
| 10| That Norfolk County Council expresses support for the Energy Bill Revolution which is calling for the Government to spend its carbon tax revenue, approximately £4 billion per year, on making homes more energy efficient. | Norfolk County Council                                                                       |
| 11| That Breckland District Council produces a HECA as soon as possible.                                                                               | Breckland District Council                                                                   |
| 12| That the district councils consider each others’ HECAAs and whether some of their neighbours’ ideas would work in their area (e.g. the loft clearance service in Norwich seems like a very good idea for encouraging people to take up the offer of loft insulation). | 7 District Councils                                                                         |
| 13| That members of the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board receive this report and that they consider ways in which fuel poverty can be alleviated as they work together on the health and wellbeing strategic priorities | Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board |
| 14. | That the five CCGs come together to consider how they can commission services to avoid excess winter deaths, building on the Warm and Well, initiative, and work with the seven district councils to consider how the councils can help in delivering aspects which relate to the home environment. | 5 Clinical Commissioning Groups |
## Terms of Reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norfolk County Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel</td>
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</table>

### Terms of reference for scrutiny of

Fuel Poverty in Norfolk

### Scrutiny by

Task and finish group

### Membership of task and finish group

7 County Councillors (no requirement for the membership to be in line with the political balance of Norfolk County Council)
Healthwatch Norfolk to be invited to nominate a co-opted member
The Chairman of the Fuel Poverty in Norfolk Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to be a Member of Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

### Reasons for scrutiny

It was reported to Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 11 June 2013 that:-

- New figures released by the Department for Energy and Climate Change show a rise in fuel poverty in Norfolk of just under 10,000 households, making a total of 61,143 households in total.
- Norfolk suffers from the greatest level of fuel poverty in East Anglia with the greatest effect being felt in rural Norfolk, particularly in coastal areas.
- In Norfolk, the highest levels of fuel poverty are found in North Norfolk, where 22% of all households are in fuel poverty.
- Fuel poverty is often higher in rural areas due to older housing stock that is often detached, poor standards of insulation and no connection to mains gas supplies, thereby creating a reliance on more expensive forms of fuel.

The Panel considered it important to examine fuel poverty within the context of income deprivation, rural isolation and the impact of welfare reform

### Purpose and objectives of study

The Task and Finish Group will examine fuel poverty in Norfolk in the context of heating people’s homes. Its objectives will be:-

- To examine the reasons why Norfolk has the highest level of fuel poverty in East
Anglia.

- To examine services currently working to alleviate fuel poverty
- To examine what more could be done by the County Council and other organisations or agencies to alleviate fuel poverty

Issues and questions to be addressed

- How can the costs of commodities, such as oil and other heating fuel, be limited?
- How can the County Council or other agencies assist communities to bulk buy commodities and provide them with the right information to make more economic choices?
- How well does the County Council support fuel poverty groups around the county, e.g. Norfolk’s Warm and Well Fund.
- How well does the County Council ensure that operational staff are trained to identify fuel poverty and raise awareness of local initiatives with regard to available help?
- How successful is Norfolk County Council at identifying and referring service users or Norfolk residents in or at risk of fuel poverty to appropriate agencies?

The Task & Finish Group will consider the equality impact and the crime and disorder implications of any recommendations that it makes.

People to speak to

- Heating fuel suppliers (oil and gas)
- Norfolk Community Council and Age UK fund
- Fuel poverty groups from around the county
- Norfolk Rural Community Council
- Housing associations
- District councils
- Community Services and other County Council managers / commissioners (e.g Visiting Financial Officers, Welfare Rights Unit, Specialist Contract Group).

Other sources of information

The National Energy Action Conference, Harrogate, 16 – 18 September 2013. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Task & Finish Group, or 1 other member, to attend.

Style and approach

Panel-style meetings with witnesses

Planned outcomes

A report to Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel with the Task and Finish Group’s findings on the reasons for high levels of fuel poverty in Norfolk and recommendations on anything more that the County Council or other agencies can do to address the problem.
Deadlines and timetable

The scrutiny task and finish group will report back to Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel by 7 January 2014.

The detailed timetable of work to be agreed at the first meeting of the task and finish group, based on interviewing two sets of witnesses at each of its meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms of reference agreed by</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9 July 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fuel Poverty Panel

List of information received

Fuel poverty in Norfolk – assessment of the data – July 2013
Report by Judy Lomas, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Norfolk Insight
Team Manager, Norfolk County Council

Local assistance scheme for Norfolk
Report by Izzy Bennett, Local Assistance Scheme Development Manager

National policy context
Briefing by Maureen Orr, Scrutiny Support Manager (Health), Norfolk County Council

Fuel Poverty: A Framework For Future Action    July 2013
Department of Energy and Climate Change

Benefits and Credits: The Warm Home Discount Scheme
www.gov.uk

Green Deal: Energy Saving for Your Home or Business
www.gov.uk

Extract from Rural Communities
House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Sixth
Report of Session 2013-14, Volume 1

Fuel Poverty Scrutiny
Report by Norfolk Housing Alliance on action taken by housing associations

Norwich City Council affordable warmth strategy, January 2013
Norwich City Council advice/help to residents
Norfolk Big Switch and Save
Norwich City Council Tenure of Households
South Norfolk and Broadland HECA draft further report 2013

Fuel Poverty in Norfolk
Age UK Norfolk, Linda Gill, 16 September 2013

Norwich City Council: Winter Wellbeing Conference
Feedback report by Cllr Elizabeth Morgan
Benchmarking information:-
(i) Nottingham Energy Partnership’s analysis of the comparative cost of gas and other heating energy sources
http://www.nottenergy.com/energy_cost_comparison
(ii) The Department of Energy and Climate Change’s fuel poverty sub regional statistics
(iii) The Rural Fuel Poverty organisation’s mapping of the prevalence of mains gas connections, solid wall housing and incidence of fuel poverty across England
http://www.ruralfuelpoverty.org.uk/

% of households in fuel poverty (2011) – Norfolk compared with nearest neighbours
Briefing by Andrew Brownsell, Strategic Research Analyst, Norfolk Insight Team

Great Yarmouth Borough Council HECA report 2013

Surviving Winter Appeal
Information provided by Graham Tuttle, Norfolk Community Foundation
What activity was undertaken and who benefited
Organisations supported by NCF’s Warm & Well
Surviving Winter Appeal Final Report March 2013

Statistical Digest of Rural England 2013
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, September 2013

The Broadland and South Norfolk Green Deal, Social Marketing Analysis and Evaluation, March 2013

Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk
Draft HECA Report 2013-15

North Norfolk District Council HECA Further Report

Warm and Well Evaluation, Winter 2012/13
Public Health, Norfolk County Council

2013/14 Warm and Well proposed plan
Dr John Ford, Public Health Registrar

The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty
Written by the Marmot Review Team for Friends of the Earth, May 2011

Using Customer Insight to better target the work of all agencies involved in addressing Fuel Poverty (Experian Mosaic Public Sector citizen classification Report by Judy Lomas, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Norfolk Insight Team Management
Letter from SSE, dated 25 November 2013, regarding Fuel Poverty in Norfolk
## Fuel poverty in Norfolk – response template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Response (recommendation accepted / not accepted; comments on implementation; or reasons for not implementing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> That all County Council departments, district councils, housing associations, NHS and third sector organisations and agencies who send staff into people’s homes make use of the Warm and Well e-learning module and ensure that staff are signposting people at risk of fuel poverty toward the available help.</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council Directors 7 District Councils Norfolk Housing Alliance Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> That the Home Shield service is promoted to staff who take the Warm and Well e-learning module and to community contacts, such as village agents or community oil buying champions, who may be able to refer people in fuel poverty to the service.</td>
<td>Director of Community Services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> That the Enabling Communities group considers ways in which local communities can participate in the Warm and Well campaign and in other activities to tackle fuel poverty in their areas.</td>
<td>Director of Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>That the County Council’s customer insight work and assistance is made available to all County Council departments and the other organisations and agencies who could use it to target help (e.g. Green Deal) towards people who could use it.</td>
<td>Head of Planning, Performance and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>That the Insight Team investigates the development of a network for the sharing of information, data and knowledge in respect of fuel poverty and associated issues so that organisations can see the opportunities for working together.</td>
<td>Head of Planning, Performance and Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>That the district councils and Norfolk Rural Community Council continue to promote collective switch and save and that Norfolk County Council also helps to promote future rounds of the Big Switch and Save.</strong></td>
<td>7 District Councils, Norfolk Rural Community Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>That the County Council takes up the issue of roll-out of mains gas connections with National Grid.</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>The housing associations, district councils with housing stocks and</strong></td>
<td>Norfolk Housing Alliance, 7 District Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>private landlords ensure that new tenants are given clear written instructions for their boiler and central heating system and that one to one instruction is given where necessary.</td>
<td>Eastern Landlords Association</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>That District Councils consider allowing their logo to be used in promotion of the Green Deal in their area.</td>
<td>7 District Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>That Norfolk County Council expresses support for the Energy Bill Revolution which is calling for the Government to spend its carbon tax revenue, approximately £4 billion per year, on making homes more energy efficient.</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>That Breckland District Council produces a HECA as soon as possible.</td>
<td>Breckland District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>That the district councils consider each others’ HECAs and whether some of their neighbours’ ideas would work in their area (e.g. the loft clearance service in Norwich seems like a very good idea for encouraging people to take up the offer of loft insulation).</td>
<td>7 District Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggestion</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>That members of the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board receive this report and that they consider ways in which fuel poverty can be alleviated as they work together on the health and wellbeing strategic priorities</td>
<td>Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>That the five CCGs come together to consider how they can commission services to avoid excess winter deaths, building on the Warm and Well, initiative, and work with the seven district councils to consider how the councils can help in delivering aspects which relate to the home environment.</td>
<td>5 Clinical Commissioning Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for South Norfolk Council (SNC). The document has been produced by South Norfolk Council in collaboration with the South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (SN CCG).

South Norfolk Council has a significant role to make in the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, health improvement and health protection and if this role is fully maximised can reap enormous benefits to the local community and our partner organisations. SNC is well connected at local level with its customers and partners and its strong capacity for leadership, multi-agency working, innovation and delivery is well recognised.

Within this context, the Strategy seeks to develop new ways of delivering a range of local services to help improve public health and health and wellbeing outcomes for South Norfolk residents – our research and early successes show that we can reduce the demand on the health and social care budgets through changing the emphasis of services from reactive to proactive, working with communities and targeting early intervention initiatives where they have maximum impact on both specific local health issues. The strategy will be supported by an annual action plan although the key early proposals and actions are identified within the strategy.

The focus for this strategy will be on both the health and social care related factors that influence health and wellbeing and also the important underlying determinants of health. It is also about recognising that health and wellbeing is about more than providing support to those most in need – that is, accepting that early interventions are mandatory so that in the longer term residents can enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost public health services. Public health is clearly a strong part of health and wellbeing.

Informed by evidence from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the health profile from Public Health England and a range of other intelligence that includes discussions with key strategic partners, we have identified the delivery of the following three outcomes, with related priorities, as key to achieving our vision.

This strategy sets out to improve the health and wellbeing of children and adults in South Norfolk. The strategy recognises how important the underlying wider determinants of health and wellbeing are in ensuring a healthy South Norfolk and provides a focus on the health and social care related factors that influence people’s health and wellbeing.
FOREWORD

Councillor Yvonne Bendle
Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Health

[Insert Photo]

This is South Norfolk Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It sets out SNC’s response to the current health and wellbeing and public health agendas, and how we will lead, instigate and deliver change to maximise our contribution to health and wellbeing outcomes.

As a District Council, SNC has a strong offer to make on health and wellbeing – we provide a vast range of services, we are well connected with local communities and our customers, and we have a strong track record in securing outcomes from partnership working. We have also spent considerable time working with key partners on health and wellbeing – such as the South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group and Norfolk County Council – and have sought out the very best practice.

It is through this knowledge and experience, we have formulated a Health and Wellbeing Strategy that allows our partners to understand our role and where we believe we can make key differences to local residents and to other organisations delivering services. We are looking to work closely with our partners on our priority outcomes.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the production of this strategy. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the positive contribution made by SNC’s Housing and Public Health Policy Committee.

Health and Wellbeing is of huge importance to the customers we serve and the partners with whom we work. It is up to us all to step up to the challenge of delivering lasting and cost-effective improvements.

Councillor Yvonne Bendle
Summary of South Norfolk Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy

**Vision**

South Norfolk residents realise their potential and live fulfilling lives in decent homes, in better health and in strong communities.

**Outcomes**

- Younger people securing the best chances in life through health and wellbeing
- Older people live independently in their own homes with peace of mind
- Residents of South Norfolk enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost health and social care services.

**Priorities**

- Reduce child poverty
- Reduce childhood obesity
- Promote evidenced based Safe at Home support as an alternative to admission to hospital or social care
- Promote support for residents with Dementia
- Increase targeted advice and practical support to reduce the incidence of excess winter deaths and fuel poverty
- Work with significant employers to promote health benefits in the work place
- Embed health and wellbeing considerations into growth considerations

Residents of South Norfolk enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost health and social care services.
1. WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our Vision:

South Norfolk residents have the best possible health and wellbeing, living their lives in decent homes, in better health and with support from the community.

Our Strategic Outcomes:

Informed by key evidence from the JSNA, the South Norfolk Health Profile and other intelligence and joint working, we have prioritised the delivery of three outcomes to achieve our vision:

1. Younger people securing the best chances in life through health and wellbeing
2. Older people live independently in their own homes with peace of mind
3. Residents of South Norfolk enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost health and social care services.

The above Outcomes will be strongly supported by a wider corporate work around influencing the developing Health and Wellbeing Agenda for the benefit of local communities:

South Norfolk influences the Health & Wellbeing, NHS and Social Care Outcomes that will make the most difference to the lives of local people.

The ‘pyramid’ diagram above captures our approach, including our eight priorities to deliver these outcomes; partnership working and joint commissioning of services are key to delivery, as are the principles of prevention and early intervention, ‘think family’ and ensuring choice and control for our residents.

2. Our approach to health improvement & protection

- Wider determinants – economic development and business support, housing, advice and support, community safety
- Health improvement – smoking cessation, alcohol and substance misuse, healthy eating and physical activity
- Health protection – health protection powers, food safety, air quality, contaminated land, private water supplies, noise control, pest control

While this strategy focuses predominantly on the health and social care related factors that influence health and wellbeing South Norfolk Council also delivers a diverse range of front line services that provide essential early interventions that protect communities and provide local intelligence to inform the health improvement and health protection elements of the wider health and wellbeing agenda.

These front-line service actions will be coordinated through the Council's Corporate Plan and Directorate Business plans and because we recognise that partnership working is essential to make sure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for everyone who lives or works in South Norfolk steps will be taken to ensure effective and consistent engagement with local residents, statutory, voluntary, community and commercial organisations all of whom have an important role to play in the delivery of the wider health and wellbeing agenda.
3. CONTEXT

National Context

In 2010, the Marmot Review, Fair society; healthy lives was published which set out the evidence demonstrating relationships between health, distribution of health and social and economic conditions. The government’s 2011 public health white paper welcomed the review and placed health inequalities at the centre of its public health aims.

The transfer of public health from the NHS to local government and Public Health England (PHE) has been a significant extension of local powers and duties; it now represents an opportunity to change the focus from treating sickness to actively promoting health and wellbeing.

The costs of poor health on a range of service providers has led to an increase in reactive solutions in a range of general public health-related services, the rising demand for these services has then placed individuals at increased risk of falling off a universal pathway and needing intense support to get back onto it.

In a time of national austerity and the need to secure reductions to the public purse, there is a clear necessity to consider services that secure longer term savings and delivery efficiency in the short and medium terms, but without reducing services, and where possible improving services for customers – this will mitigate against the potential “ticking time bomb” of demographic changes and public health risks.

Local Context

On 1st April 2013 the Health and Social Care Act introduced new arrangements for health and social care, namely:

- Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Strategic Health Authorities being abolished
- NHS planning and delivery functions being transferred to the NHS Commissioning Board and Local Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Upper tier councils becoming responsible for appointing a Director of Public Health and establishing a Health and Wellbeing Board and Local Healthwatch
- Health and Wellbeing Boards becoming responsible for undertaking a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA); and publishing a local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and reviewing CCG commissioning plans to ensure they reflect the needs and priorities identified in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- A statutory duty on upper tier authorities to “take steps to improve the health of their local populations”

Since then:

- Norfolk has in place a Health and Wellbeing Board which became operational on 1st April
- A Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-17 is nearing completion
- Norfolk County Council coordinates its Health and Wellbeing arrangements through its Partnerships, Policy and Performance Team
- The Commissioning Groups are also operational; South Norfolk CCG covers the whole of the South Norfolk District and a substantial part of the Breckland District.
- The SN CCG has produced a prospectus for 2013/14
- Services are commissioned via the Integrated Community Health and Social Care team that is funded jointly by the NHS and the County Council
- South Norfolk Council has established member and officer level responsibilities for the coordination of the public health agenda and has been engaged extensively in the shaping of the health and wellbeing strategy formulation.
- South Norfolk Council and the SN CCG have held a joint workshop to further develop partnerships and to understand priority areas where they can work together
4. KEY PARTNERS WHO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE HEALTH & WELLBEING AGENDA AND THEIR PRIORITIES

South Norfolk CCG Priorities
- Frail older people – Integrating health and social care, and integrated pathways of care; case management
- Planned care and tackling variation – Redesigning elective care pathways, reviewing thresholds for surgical intervention, prescribing practice
- Emergency and Urgent care – Reforming the urgent care system; avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions
- Mental health – Improving the management of dementia, improving access to psychological therapies
- Women and children – Tackling childhood obesity

South Norfolk Council Priorities
SNC’s vision is to improve the quality of life in South Norfolk, for now and future generations, to make it one of the best places to live and work in the District.
- Enhancing our quality of life, and the environment we live in
- Promoting a thriving local economy
- Supporting communities to realise their potential
- Driving services through being business-like, efficient and customer aware

Norfolk County Council – Health & Wellbeing Board/Strategy Priorities
Overarching Goals
- Drive Integration
- Reduce Inequalities
- Prevent Health Lifestyles and Prevent Problems
These will be progressed through three priorities
- Early Life (0-5)
- Obesity
- Dementia
5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES FOR SOUTH NORFOLK

Outcome One: Younger people securing the best chances in life through health and wellbeing

Introduction
Although Norfolk’s older population is growing at a faster rate, the numbers of children and young people are expected to rise steadily over the next 20 years. Giving every child the best start in life was highlighted in The Marmot Review of Health Inequalities Fair Society, Healthy Lives as the highest priority recommendation for reducing health inequalities; it called for ‘a second revolution in early years’. Further, the challenges for all young people, particularly around jobs and developing skills and lifestyles and behaviours that will impact longer term on their health and wellbeing are key to future demand for services and health and wellbeing.

Why is this important for South Norfolk?
Poor health that begins in early life will impact on an individual for the rest of their life reducing life expectancy and also quality of life in later years: Information from Norfolk Insights confirms that:

- In South Norfolk 2,800 children (11.4%) live in poverty. This compares with 17.8% in Norfolk and 20.65 nationally.
- Of the 530 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Norfolk, it is estimated that 179 have a higher proportion of children living in poverty than the Norfolk average of 17.8%; in South Norfolk, the worst areas are in parts of the Old Costessey, Diss, Harleston and Cromwells wards.
- Child poverty as a percentage of the populations is higher in Old Costessey, Diss and Harleston and Cromwells.
- Over half the population are of working age, and there are higher numbers of children and older people across SN as a whole.
  - During 2009/10, the survey showed results significantly higher than the county average in three wards in South Norfolk. The highest overall rates in South Norfolk are for Scole and Ditchingham and Brome wards with 66.7% and 63.6% respectively of Year R and Year 6 boys being overweight or obese and girls in Year 6 in the Bunwell area with an obesity prevalence of 50% (compared with the Norfolk average of 16.8%).
- In Year 6, 16% of children are classed as obese – although this is better than the England average it is still a significant issue and is there is a higher concentration (20% +) in some areas, including Gillingham and Thurton (over 27%).
- The level of smoking in teenage pregnancy is worse than the England average.

What we want to see
We want all children to realise their full potential, and will help them from an early age to be self-sufficient and have a network of support that will enable them to live independent and healthy lives. We want targeted services aimed at young people and families so that many of the wider determinants of health such as employment, community safety, child poverty and housing can be addressed through early intervention. We believe we have a clear role to make through our services, and these can be adapted to meet need – for example our leisure services can target particular audiences.

Our two priorities to ensure every child has the best start in life:

1. Reduce child poverty
2. Reduce childhood obesity
## Outcome One: Younger people securing the best chances in life through health and wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1: Reduce child poverty</th>
<th>What we Plan to do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Address child poverty through increasing economic resilience within families</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with the Top 20 companies in South Norfolk to grow apprenticeships and target opportunities at those families with children in poverty, not already being targeted by the “troubled Families” initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with Norfolk County Council Adult Education programme aimed at preparing 16-19 year olds for work. Adult Education will work with these young people over a 10-week period to get them close to being “work ready”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver a SNC offer to work with local businesses to take these young people on a 10-week traineeship (2 days per week) which would include £400-£500 compensation payment from Adult Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We could also offer a similar compensation scheme to fund similar “traineeships” with the Top 20 companies for people over 21 not covered by the Adult Education scheme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supporting the reduction of youth unemployment and improving sustainable community youth provision.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2: Reduce childhood obesity</th>
<th>What we Plan to do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protecting young people’s health</td>
<td>Promoting healthy eating and food safety initiatives in the District to ensure on-going and longer term health benefits and to tackle the issues around obesity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch a new GP Taster Session programme for accessing Leisure Services in South Norfolk focusing on younger obese children (and their families).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reconfigure the activities available in our leisure centres to increase the focus on general activity rather than sport</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enabling young people in the district to take up and develop new sporting pursuits through a series of taster sessions aimed at grass roots level</td>
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Outcome Two: Older people live independently in their own homes with peace of mind

Introduction
South Norfolk has a higher proportion (30% of population) of older people than nationally or generally in Norfolk. This proportion is projected to increase over the next 20 years with the greatest increase being in those aged 75 to 84. There are a number of specific health issues that particularly affect older people including falls, diabetes and dementia; the level of excess winter deaths is also higher than the Norfolk average. All issues have a considerable impact on individuals involving reduced life quality, increased admissions to hospital and greater use of the social care system.

Why is this important for South Norfolk?
- The overwhelming evidence around public health in South Norfolk highlights a growing older population (especially over 75s) with significantly increased health risks for specific groups
- The net costs of providing hospital care and residential care compared to independent living are highly wide ranging as the following research example (2010) shows based on annual average costs uplifted by 13% for inflation.
- Falls represent the most frequent and serious type of accident amongst older people with about 35% of over-65's living in the community experiencing 1 or more falls and about 45% of those aged over 80 falling. Half of all fallers will also have another fall within the next 12 months. Hospital admission rates from falls are rising and by 2020 in South Norfolk 9,020 people over 65 a year are predicted to have a fall and 734 are predicted to be admitted to hospital as a result.
- Life expectancy is 3.8 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of South Norfolk than in the least deprived.
- Adult obesity is at its highest levels in Diss/Roydon, Old Costessey, New Costessey, Scole, Dickleburgh, and Bressingham and Burston.
- Emergency hospital admissions for coronary heart disease vary significantly from the best performing in Cringleford/Easton to the higher incidence in Harlestone, Beck Vale, Abbey, Northfields and Old and New Costessey.
- Hospital admissions for fractures are at their highest in Forehoe, Loddon, Henstead, Costessey, Diss/Roydon and Humbleyard.
- Estimates predict that by 2020 as the proportion of older people in the population rises many as 3,100 people in South Norfolk will have dementia.

What we want to see
We want preventative work to encourage active lifestyles throughout life promoting good health and wellbeing generally and into old age. We want vulnerable and older people to live in their own homes with dignity rather than in costly health and social care alternatives

Our three priorities to ensure older people live independently in their own homes with peace of mind:
3. Promote evidenced based Safe at Home support as an alternative to admission to hospital or social care, and develop Good Neighbour Schemes
4. Promote support for residents with Dementia
5. Increase target advice and practical support to reduce the incidence of excess winter deaths
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Priority 3: Support evidenced based alternatives to admissions to hospital</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What we Plan to do</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A project working with significant local employers to promote health benefits in the work place that will include use of leisure centres. This work will focus on active lifestyles, healthy eating, no smoking initiatives and alcohol issues with an outcome of reducing sickness and absenteeism and promoting whole life health and wellbeing in order to reduce demand on services in older age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with professionals working in health, social care to identify older people in the community who through known risk factors have an increased likelihood of having a fall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a home screening/modification service Safe at Home would which would a) target the removal of falls hazards and b) assist people to return home from hospital</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority 4: Promote support for residents with Dementia</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What we Plan to do</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaise with local communities to assist them to support people with dementia to stay engaged in their community and to take part in day-to-day activities such as shopping, visiting the bank and meeting with friends.</td>
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<td>Provide targeted help for residents with dementia including handrails, signposting, extra lighting and for example gas detectors and water-level alerts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan for an older population through supported housing schemes that are dementia friendly.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority 5: Increase target advice and practical support to reduce the incidence of excess winter deaths</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What we Plan to do</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target future homes insulation, energy efficiency and fuel switching initiatives to those areas of the district where the rate of excess winter deaths is above the national average.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign post residents in need to benefits and other support available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with other agencies to improve the referral system for high risk residents and improving the identification of at-risk residents through staff who undertake home visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the way we communicate with customers across all media improve South Norfolk Council’s online presence and services</td>
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Outcome Three: Residents of South Norfolk enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost health and social care services.

Introduction
We recognise that we need to work with those customers most in need, but we also recognise there needs to be a general offer to local residents as managing future health and wellbeing and access to services is highly important – SNC can make a very strong contribution in this context. Health and wellbeing needs to be promoted throughout life to reap longer term benefits both for residents and in managing and providing services.

Why is this important for South Norfolk?
- There is a high incidence of Diabetes, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease i.e. chronic bronchitis or emphysema), CHD (Coronary Heart Disease), Dementia, Depression, Stroke, Cancer (skin and breast) and Hip Fracture.
- The Public Health England (2013) has stated that monitoring and preventing early deaths from cancer, particularly by targeting risk factors and lowering excess winter deaths in the east of the district are priorities in South Norfolk.
- Health improvement issues need to be tackled including adult and childhood obesity, smoking, alcohol consumption, and teenage pregnancy
- Diabetes information is not available beneath district level – however, across South Norfolk 5% of the population registered with GP practices aged 17 and over have diabetes. This ranks South Norfolk 6th out of the 7 districts in the county where 1st is worst.

What we want to see
We want health and wellbeing factors to be high on the agenda for everyone in South Norfolk and to see a culture of empowerment for local residents and businesses in embracing health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. We want to ensure SNC services maximise their offer to the wider determinants of health, health promotion and health protection.

Our two priorities that will help residents of South Norfolk enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost public health services are:

6. Work with significant employers to promote health benefits in the work place
7. Embed health and wellbeing considerations into growth considerations

Wider work: South Norfolk influences the Health and Wellbeing, NHS and Social Care Outcomes that will make the most difference to the lives of local people.

We acknowledge and support the good work that is already being undertaken and believe that our distinct role and position at a hub from which spokes to a wide range of partners extend enables us to engage with other agencies on the ‘Integration’ agenda in a way that can bring significant added value making ‘great things’ happen to produce improved outcomes for residents and savings for the public purse. Accordingly, all the above outcomes will be strongly supported by a wider corporate work around influencing the developing Health and Wellbeing Agenda for the benefit of local communities:

What we want to see
We want South Norfolk Council to be playing a full and positive role in the health and wellbeing agenda by:

- Working closely with the South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group on shared outcomes
- Proactively working to support the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Reconfiguring SNC services to support health and wellbeing outcomes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Three: Residents of South Norfolk enjoy increased health and wellbeing and avoid or delay demand on higher cost health and social care services.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What we Plan to do</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 6. Work with significant employers to promote health benefits in the work place</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with local employers to promote health benefits in the work place that will include use of SNC Leisure Centres. This work will cover active lifestyles, health eating, no smoking initiatives and alcohol issues to reduce sickness and absenteeism and promote health and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver a pilot HONOR award to promote healthy food options on food business menus</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 7. Embed health and wellbeing considerations into growth considerations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that future growth is health and wellbeing-proofed through the development management process and opportunities are created through areas such as green space, play areas, design and amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the health and wellbeing of South Norfolk residents through a series of health intervention techniques that will target specific populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering a good quality leisure service that benefits the residents and improves the sustainability of the centres with projects/enhancements will be scoped to improve service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing partners to prioritise community safety/cohesion issues that matter to our communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wider work:</strong> South Norfolk influences the Health and Wellbeing, NHS and Social Care Outcomes that will make the most difference to the lives of local people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a South Norfolk (District) Health and Wellbeing Forum that will oversee the health and wellbeing strategy, will feed into the Health and Wellbeing Board and public health at Norfolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support the formation of a South Norfolk Locality Group that will meet four times per year and be co-terminus with the boundaries of the SN CCG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain a needs assessment toolkit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing health intelligence and data about ‘at risk’ populations within communities – better interaction between services at District / County / CCG level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work effectively with the Operational Partnership Team to support the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. WHAT NEXT?

Delivering the outcomes

SNC’s approach to health and wellbeing acknowledges that most residents are on a positive health and wellbeing journey through life but recognises that at certain stages of life and for particular individuals’ targeted support is sometimes required to help people stay on that positive journey. The figure below describes the determinants of the health and wellbeing of our communities in South Norfolk and demonstrates our commitment to innovative delivery through multi-agency partnerships. The evidence based priorities are a response to the risk and long term effects of not providing enough support in early years, and the net effect in older age of residents not having maximised their health and wellbeing opportunities. All services and opportunities will be delivered through strong community engagement and partnership working.

![Operational Delivery Model](image)

Operational Delivery Model

The figure below shows SNC’s Operational Delivery Model which highlights potential to work proactively and reactively. An emphasis on both behavioural and environmental improvements is chosen to highlight a culture that encourages personal responsibility where possible.
7. **THE ROLE OF SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Possible SNC role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce child poverty</td>
<td>Economic Development and Business Support Advice and Support (Housing and Benefits) Localism Through multi-agency work and projects we can provide early interventions e.g. the Operational Partnership teams, and in future delivering and coordinating Hubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce childhood obesity</td>
<td>Coordination of projects through Leisure Services or within communities Health Improvement Leisure Localism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote evidenced based Safe at Home support as an alternative to admission to hospital or social care</td>
<td>Service Delivery – includes with customers at risk – such as Handyperson scheme, Care and Repair Services, affordable warmth etc… Wide range of home improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote support for residents with Dementia</td>
<td>Enabling affordable housing Commissioning support at home Work with Registered Providers and Support Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase target advice and practical support to reduce the incidence of excess winter deaths and fuel poverty</td>
<td>Target work of Energy Team Inward investment and accessing funding Green Deal and Big Switch Advice and Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with significant employers to promote health benefits in the work place</td>
<td>Leisure Membership Environmental Services – health and safety, food safety, licensing Health Improvement Health protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embed health and wellbeing considerations into growth considerations</td>
<td>Planning Policy and Development Management Green space, design, amenity spaces, play areas Antisocial Behaviour Partnerships Leisure and health improvement initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working closely with the South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group on shared outcomes</td>
<td>Partnership working and analysis Funding opportunities Linking spend to CCG and HWB priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactively working to support the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board</td>
<td>Engagement with and involvement of partners Ensuring Drive and Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring SNC services to support health and wellbeing outcomes</td>
<td>Economic Development, Housing, Advice and Support, Community Safety, Localism, Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

This implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Council’s Housing and Public Health Policy Committee and the action plan will be revised annually. A South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board will bring together key partners to monitor progress, devise solutions to meet priorities and share intelligence. New activities will be incorporated into future Directorate Business Plans and individual initiatives will have a delivery plan which will set out a programme of activities and progress against each one.
Enhanced Housing Options (EHO) Module

EHO is an online self-help tool for housing. This is an additional feature of our Abritas Housing system and is intended to assist customers through all the housing options that may be available to them. By entering their personal information, including income, age, household size etc., they will get advice tailored to their circumstances.

Time has been spent developing the EHO to ensure it is up to date and accurate.

The next stage is testing the system, which will be done by Housing Options Officers when they interview customers. At the end of an interview, the officers will be able to email an action plan to the customer, which in turn saves on printing costs. This would include relevant advice leaflets and links to other agencies and can relate to housing, training and employment.

The next step would be to test its use through partner agencies and decide on the best business use for South Norfolk Council.

Ultimately this may be made available on the Council’s website, when we would expect it to reduce the time consuming calls from customers who have no connection to South Norfolk but are exploring housing options in the area.
The DCLG released new guidance on social housing allocations and local association on 31st December 2013. Local authorities are required to have regard for it in exercising their functions under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

Housing authorities are required to revise their existing allocation polices, where appropriate, in light of the guidance.

The Government is of the view that, local authorities should ensure that they prioritise applicants who can demonstrate a close association with their local area.

The Secretary of State believes that including a residency requirement is appropriate and strongly encourages all housing authorities to adopt such an approach; he believes that a reasonable period of residency would be at least two years.

SNC conducted a review of its allocations policy in light of the Localism Act; this had stood us in good stead in the face of any new guidance published by the government. We conduct an annual review to make any amendments in light of any environmental changes.

Our current allocations policy includes a residency test, and flexibility for individual assessment of housing need, special circumstances, armed forces and family associations.

Our residency test gives priority to local people who have lived in South Norfolk for 6 of the last 12 months or 3 of the last 5 years, matching the statutory homelessness connection. We also give priority to people employed in SN.

It is not considered to be necessary to revise the allocations policy for the following reasons:

a) Of the 582 applicants housed through Home Options between 01/01/13 to 03/01/2014, 11 were from former A2 and A8 countries, which is 1.9% of total lets. This is proportionate to the demographic makeup of the area. (A2 nationals are from Bulgaria and Romania and A8 nationals were the 8 countries that joined the EU in 2004 – all are now referred to “Accession States”.)

If the guidance was applied it would have made a very minimal difference.
The non-British Nationals we have assisted are established in the UK and in SNC; they have not recently arrived as economic migrants.

Only 1 customer would have potentially been affected if we had a 2 year local connection – It is not appropriate to consider changing a policy for an exception to the rule which would have little/no practical effect.

b) A 2 year residency qualification is likely to assist local people in other (mainly urban) areas who may wait many years for social housing. This is not the situation in South Norfolk where we have already reduced our housing register by prioritising local people and housing need, resulting in a reduced number on the register with 39% of applicants rehoused last year.

c) If implemented, a 2 year residency qualification could indeed reduce numbers on the register and the potential applications for vacant Registered Provider homes.

d) A 2 year residency qualification could result in some homeless applicants remaining in temporary accommodation longer, with increased associated costs.

e) The guidance also suggests priority for people working in the area. In addition to the A2 and A8 nationals, the current home options scheme allows people in employment in SN, but living outside the District to qualify for affordable housing – this is part of being an economically active District. To qualify for a two-year residency test, such groups would have to already be in the District for two years. It is important for people employed locally to access affordable homes in SN – and this is being achieved at the same time as local people being re-housed faster than in most other – if not all – Districts in the country.
Providing social housing for local people

Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England
Introduction

1. This is guidance by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government under section 169 of the Housing Act 1996 (the 1996 Act). Local housing authorities (housing authorities) are required to have regard to it in exercising their functions under Part 6 of the 1996 Act.

2. It is in addition to the Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England on the Allocation of Accommodation issued in June 2012 (the 2012 guidance).

3. References to sections in this guidance are references to sections in the 1996 Act.

4. Housing authorities are encouraged to review their existing allocation policies and revise them, where appropriate, in the light of this guidance as soon as possible.

Purpose of the guidance

5. Social housing – stable and affordable – is of enormous importance for the millions who live in it now and for those who look to it to provide the support they need in future. The way it is allocated is key to creating communities where people choose to live and are able to prosper.

6. The Government has made clear that we expect social homes to go to people who genuinely need and deserve them. That is why the Localism Act has maintained the protection provided by the statutory reasonable preference criteria which ensure that priority for social housing continues to be given to those in the greatest housing need.

7. The Localism Act has also given back to local authorities the freedom to better manage their social housing waiting list, as well as providing authorities with greater flexibility to enable them to tackle homelessness by providing homeless households with suitable private sector accommodation. Local authorities can now decide who qualifies for social housing in their area, and can develop solutions which make best use of the social housing stock. This guidance is intended to assist housing authorities to make full use of the flexibilities within the allocation legislation to better meet the needs of their local residents and their local communities.

8. The Government has also taken decisive steps to increase the supply of affordable housing, with £19.5 billion of public and private investment in the current Spending Review, and up to £23.3 billion more money invested from 2015 to 2018 alongside receipts from Right to Buy sales.

9. This investment in new affordable housing will help to meet housing need. We now want to see local authorities take an approach to social housing allocations which gives greater priority to those in need who have invested in and demonstrated a commitment to their local community.
10. The Prime Minister has made clear the Government’s determination to tackle the widespread perception that the way social housing is allocated is unfair, and to address concerns that the system favours households who have little connection to the local area over local people and members of the Armed Forces. Another important aim of this guidance, therefore, is to encourage authorities to be open and transparent about who is applying for and being allocated social housing in their area.

Qualification for social housing

11. Section 160ZA(6) provides that housing authorities may only allocate accommodation to people who are defined as ‘qualifying persons’ and section 160ZA(7) gives them the power to decide the classes of people who are, or are not, qualifying persons.

12. The Government is of the view that, in deciding who qualifies or does not qualify for social housing, local authorities should ensure that they prioritise applicants who can demonstrate a close association with their local area. Social housing is a scarce resource, and the Government believes that it is appropriate, proportionate and in the public interest to restrict access in this way, to ensure that, as far as possible, sufficient affordable housing is available for those amongst the local population who are on low incomes or otherwise disadvantaged and who would find it particularly difficult to find a home on the open market.

13. Some housing authorities have decided to include a residency requirement as part of their qualification criteria, requiring the applicant (or member of the applicant’s household) to have lived within the authority’s district for a specified period of time in order to qualify for an allocation of social housing. The Secretary of State believes that including a residency requirement is appropriate and strongly encourages all housing authorities to adopt such an approach. The Secretary of State believes that a reasonable period of residency would be at least two years.

14. We are aware that in some parts of the country, housing authorities share a common allocation policy with their neighbours and may wish to adopt a broader residency test which would be met if an applicant lives in any of the partners’ districts. Such an approach might be particularly appropriate where an established housing market area spans a number of local authority districts, and could help promote labour mobility within a wider geographical area.

15. Housing authorities may wish to consider whether there is a need to adopt other qualification criteria alongside a residency requirement to enable and ensure that applicants who are not currently resident in the district who can still demonstrate a strong association to the local area are able to qualify. Examples of such criteria might include:

- family association – for example, where the applicant has close family who live in the district and who have done so for a minimum period of time
• employment in the district – for example, where the applicant or member of their household is currently employed in the district and has worked there for a certain number of years

16. Whatever qualification criteria for social housing authorities adopt, they will need to have regard to their duties under the Equality Act 2010, as well as their duties under other relevant legislation such as s.225 of the Housing Act 2004.

17. Housing authorities are reminded of the desirability of operating a housing options approach (see paragraph 3.19 of the 2012 guidance) as part of a move to a managed waiting list. In this way, people who have not lived in the area long enough to qualify for social housing can be provided with advice and any necessary support to help them find appropriate alternative solutions.

Providing for exceptions

18. Housing authorities should consider the need to provide for exceptions from their residency requirement; and must make an exception for certain members of the regular and reserve Armed Forces – see further at paragraph 23 below. Providing for appropriate exceptions when framing residency requirements would be in line with paragraphs 3.22 and 3.24 of the 2012 guidance.

19. It is important that housing authorities retain the flexibility to take proper account of special circumstances. This can include providing protection to people who need to move away from another area, to escape violence or harm; as well as enabling those who need to return, such as homeless families and care leavers whom the authority have housed outside their district, and those who need support to rehabilitate and integrate back into the community.

20. There may also be sound policy reasons not to apply a residency test to existing social tenants seeking to move between local authorities. Housing authorities should assist in tackling under-occupation, for example allowing tenants to move if they wish to downsize to a smaller social home. There may also be sound housing management reasons to disapply a residency test for hard to let stock.

21. These examples are not intended to be exhaustive and housing authorities may wish to consider providing for other appropriate exceptions in the light of local circumstances. In addition, authorities retain a discretion to deal with individual cases where there are exceptional circumstances.

22. The Government wants to increase opportunities for hardworking households. That is why we have announced an intention to introduce a Right to Move for social tenants seeking to move to take up a job or be closer to their work, whether within the local authority district or across local authority boundaries. We will consult on options for implementing this policy in Spring 2014. In the meantime, we expect housing authorities to make appropriate exceptions to their residency test for social tenants so as not to impede labour market mobility.
Members of the Armed Forces

23. The Government is committed to ensuring that Service personnel and their families have access to appropriate accommodation when they leave the Armed Forces. The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1869) ensure that, where housing authorities decide to use a local connection requirement as a qualification criterion, they must not apply that criterion to the following persons so as to disqualify them from an allocation of social housing:

a) those who are currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the five years preceding their application for an allocation of social housing

b) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service

c) existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service

24. The Regulations give effect to the Government’s commitment that those who serve in the regular and reserve Armed Forces are not disadvantaged in their access to social housing by the requirements of their service.

25. When adopting a residency test, we expect housing authorities to also consider the wider needs of the Armed Forces community, and to be sympathetic to changing family circumstances, recognising, for example, that the spouses and partners of Service personnel can also be disadvantaged by the need to move from base to base.

Prioritising local connection

26. Housing authorities have the ability to take account of any local connection between the applicant and their district when determining relative priorities between households who are on the waiting list (s.166A(5)). For these purposes, local connection is defined by reference to s.199 of the 1996 Act.

27. Housing authorities should consider whether, in the light of local circumstances, there is a need to take advantage of this flexibility, in addition to applying a residency requirement as part of their qualification criteria. Examples of circumstances in which the power might be useful would include:

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1 As defined by s.199 of the 1996 Act. A person has a local connection with the district of a housing authority if he has a connection because of normal residence there (either current or previous) of his own choice, employment there, family connections or special circumstances.
• dealing sensitively with lettings in rural villages by giving priority to those with a local connection to the parish, as part of a local lettings policy (section 166A(6)(b) – see paragraph 4.21 of the 2012 guidance)

• where a group of housing authorities apply a wider residency qualification test, to give greater priority to people who live or work (or have close family) in any of the partner authorities’ own district

Information about allocations

28. It is important that applicants and the wider community understand how social housing is allocated in their area, and that they know who is getting that social housing, so that they can see that the allocation system is fair and the authority is complying with its allocation scheme. We would encourage housing authorities to consider how accurate and anonymised information on waiting list applicants and lettings outcomes could be routinely published, to strengthen public confidence in the fairness of their allocation scheme.