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 10 November 2014

Time
9.30 am

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

Contact
Sue Elliott tel (01508) 533685
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 9 June 2014
   (copy attached – page 6)

5. - Good News Stories:
   (oral update)
   a. Gypsy & Traveller Site, Costessey
   b. Empty Homes

6. - Housing & Public Health Realignment Update;
   (structure chart attached – page 11)

7. - Early Intervention;
   (presentation to be delivered to Committee)

8. - Peer Review of Homelessness Service;
   (briefing note attached – page 12)

9. - Health & Wellbeing Strategy Update;
   (oral update)

10. Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy;
   (report attached – page 13)

11. The Right to Build Vanguard Project;
   (report attached – page 18)

12. Promotion of Services via Members;
   (oral update)

13. Future Work Programme;
   (to be tabled at the meeting)

14. Date of Next Formal Meeting
   23 February 2015 (10.00am)
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
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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.
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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>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the answer is “yes” to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<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>
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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 share holding
- land or leases they own or hold
- contracts, licenses, approvals or consents

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You are unlikely to have an interest. You do not need to do anything further.
Housing and Public Health Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 9 June 2014 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors L Neal (Chairman), N Legg (for part of the meeting), T Palmer, K Smith and G Walden

Apologies: Councillors S Thomson and N Ward

Substitutes: Councillor D Bills (for part of the meeting) for N Ward

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Y Bendle

Officers in Attendance: The Housing & Public Health Manager (M Swann), the Housing Standards Manager (T Cooke), the Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer (K Mitchell) and the Housing & Public Health Partnerships Officer (K Gallagher)

Others in attendance: Tig Armstrong (Project Manager - Green Deal) and one politics student attending to observe the meeting.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

The following member declared an ‘other’ interest in the matter listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Reason for Declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39 &amp; 41</td>
<td>T Palmer</td>
<td>Board Member of Saffron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 20 January 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from Minute no 27, members were advised that an extension until 30 April 2014 had been made to the deadline for bids for funding from the Homes and Communities Agency and an announcement of the outcome was expected in mid-July 2014.

Arising from Minute no 31, members were advised that the Better Care Plan had been submitted to the Government and officers were awaiting feedback. It was suggested that
there were concerns nationally that the aims and outcomes of the Plan would not be met if some of the funding was being used to underpin other services.

38 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman distributed copies of the Heath & Welfare Strategy 2014-17, advising members that the document encompassed comments from the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee. The Housing and Public Health Manager stated that the Strategy had been considered and accepted by Cabinet and was also available on the website.

39 POSITIVE OUTCOMES

a. Affordable Housing
The Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer advised members that 174 affordable homes had been completed in South Norfolk during 2013/14, 119 of which had been through Section 106 Agreements. The Committee was informed that a target of 200 completed affordable homes had been set for 2014/15.

The Housing and Public Health Manager commented that statistically, 2.3 jobs were generated from each home built and the overall delivery so far of 592 affordable homes meant that 1360 jobs had been created. He added that there was a £97,000 investment for each home which meant an inward investment for the district of £55M which not only provided the community with affordable housing but also added value to the economy.

b. Empty Homes
The Housing Standards Manager advised members that the total number of known, long-term, empty homes brought back into use in 2013/14 was 77 – almost three times the set target. The engagement of the Policy Committee had been followed by improved performance. He informed members that a forced market sale of a property in the District had recently been completed following a lengthy legal process. The Committee was advised that the Council had received £1.15M in Empty Homes Bonus monies and £0.1M in additional Council Tax over a six-year period, half of which had been obtained since the involvement of the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee. Members agreed that the campaign had been successful and were pleased that the Council’s proactive approach had produced positive results.

c. Enforced Market Sale
The Housing Standards Manager gave details of a forced market sale (as detailed in 39b above) in Harleston which highlighted the range of measures the Council was prepared to implement to secure outcomes that benefit the local community.

d. Homelessness Prevention Figures
The Housing and Public Health Manager provided members with an update on the Homeless Prevention Figures, advising the Committee that since the Housing Options procedure had been reviewed to provide a more generic service, the service to customers had greatly improved and the number of homelessness cases had decreased due to an increased emphasis on tackling issues early to prevent homelessness situations arising. Members were advised that 304 homelessness cases had been prevented in the last year.
and that although there had been an increase in demand and pressure, there had not been an increase in homelessness and that repeat homelessness remained an issue of the past.

The Committee was advised that the Council’s success in decreasing the Homelessness figures in South Norfolk was due to ensuring there was a mixed supply of affordable housing in the district, managing the demand well, and taking early steps to help people to not lose their homes. Members were informed that the next challenge was to deliver outcomes for customers which extended ‘beyond housing’.

e. Gypsy & Traveller Transit Site
The Housing Standards Manager gave details of the gypsy and traveller transit site which had been opened in Bawburgh which had been well received by residents. Members commented that the site was attractive and spacious, and hoped it would be well used.

f. Independent Living Targets/Figures
The Housing and Public Health Manager updated members on the targets and figures for Independent Living in the district. He was pleased to advise that the target for the year had been to help 1500 people to achieve independent living and that the actual figure met had been 1585. The Committee was informed that the figure set for the next year was 1800 people. Members were pleased that early benefits were already arising from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

g. Help to Buy
The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer provided members with a brief overview of the Government’s Help to Buy Scheme which had been introduced 15 months ago. He advised that the scheme had proven to be a great success in the District with 176 purchasers using the scheme in South Norfolk and added that the economic growth taking place in South Norfolk was helping to make this outcome possible.

The Committee agreed that many positive outcomes had been noted and that there had been a marked shift in performance due to the work of officers in close collaboration with the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee. Members commended officers for their hard work and proactive thinking, and a service which was helping to secure much broader outcomes.

40 GREEN DEAL FUNDING

Tig Armstrong, the Project Manager for Green Deal, advised members that South Norfolk Council, Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council had worked in partnership and successfully bid for almost £1.45M of Green Deal funding. One third of the funding would be utilised in the South Norfolk District to benefit local people.

The Committee was informed that an action plan would be produced followed by a communications plan (which would include the role of members) and an outcome of 200 small scale heating improvements would be secured. It was advised that priority areas would be Wymondham, Diss, Costessey, Harleston and Earsham, based on issues such as fuel poverty and excess winter deaths, and that show houses would be developed in the district.
Mr Armstrong explained that there would be a further delivery of 133 solid wall insulations from the Home Improvement Fund (a separate funding stream).

Members were made aware of the key challenge to make links to wider agencies, for example: a total of £100,000 would be spent on Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) training to optimise benefits of the Green Deal to local businesses. In addition, the Early Help agenda would provide a valuable contribution to help those families most in need.

Tig Armstrong gave an overview of Green Deal Funding, explaining that the scheme nationally was not yet delivering the results which had originally been expected. The Committee was informed of how the Government was planning to incentivise the scheme, not just through funding but by completing projects locally to increase public awareness and understanding of the aims and objectives of Green Deal, which would enable the scheme to gain momentum. Mr Armstrong explained that work was being undertaken to simplify the scheme to enable more public understanding, with the intention to engage with local people and increase public awareness.

Concerns were raised that the public perception was one of apprehension nationally, and that people were naturally suspicious of something appearing to be ‘too good to be true’. It was agreed that in order to gain a more positive perception, it would be necessary for work to be completed as a demonstration of the authenticity of the scheme, for community groups to be consulted and engaged in the scheme, and for advertising to take place to increase public awareness.

**41 HOME OPTIONS SCHEME UPDATE**

The Housing & Public Health Manager advised the Committee that a meeting with Saffron Housing had taken place to address issues raised by Cllr Palmer at a previous meeting of the Housing & Public Health Policy Committee. He informed members that a ten point action plan had been produced to increase customer awareness, and that three more points had been added to advertise the scheme further to people who had previously been reluctant to join the housing register.

Cllr Palmer informed the Committee that he was pleased with the level of communication between the Council and Saffron Housing and the outcomes being secured.

**42 THE GOLD STANDARD CHALLENGE**

The Housing & Public Health Partnerships Officer provided members with an overview of the Communities and Local Government’s (CLG) Gold Standard Challenge for Homelessness. The Committee was advised of the ten steps that councils must take before they could be assessed against the ten challenges to achieve the Gold Standard, and that the Council had been successful in forming a Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR) Group with three other local authorities; Norwich City Council, Waveney District Council and Nottingham City Council. Officers advised that South Norfolk Council had been the first of the group to be reviewed and was currently awaiting feedback from the DPR.

The Housing & Public Health Manager informed the Committee that informal feedback received from partners at the CLG had been positive.
43. FIT FOR BUSINESS, FIT FOR LIFE

The Housing & Public Health Partnerships Officer gave a verbal presentation to members on Fit for Business, Fit for Life, a project which sought to engage 20 local businesses in using tools already in existence to help improve the health of their employees. She explained how the Council was working with other partners, including Active Norfolk, and local employers to tackle issues including exercise, health and non-smoking with the intention that dealing with such issues would improve productivity and work absenteeism.

The Committee was advised that officers were working closely with the three leisure centres and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and that returns from Active Norfolk had already shown a positive impact, the results of which would be made available on CORVU in the future.

Members noted that a key action on the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy was being progressed and were interested in receiving further progress reports.

44. UPDATE ON STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer provided members with a verbal update on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. He advised that all authorities in Norfolk and Suffolk had been approached for their interest in the assessment and that both Breckland District Council and North Norfolk Council had joined in April 2014, bringing the total to five authorities which would be used as a basis for research.

The Committee was informed that the projected population beyond 2030 was a vital factor in calculating future housing requirements. Officers advised that figures would be produced by the end of September 2014, signed off by Cabinet in October 2014 and published on each of the five websites.

45. CURRENT HOUSING INTELLIGENCE

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer presented the Committee with a Current Housing Intelligence document which sought to advise them of up to date key details about housing supply, provision and need in South Norfolk. She advised members that the document was in the public domain and that officers would continue to update the information.

Members agreed that it was useful to have a document which collated all of the key information in one document and showed how the different strands of work interlocked.

46. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the date of the next formal meeting to be held on 10 November 2014.

The meeting closed at 11.33am

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Chairman
Housing and Public Health Policy Committee

10th November 2014

Briefing note – Peer Review of Homelessness Services

Last year, the Government announced a new ‘Gold Standard’ for local homelessness services. The Gold Standard support and training scheme showcases the very best Housing Options services across the country and ensure that homelessness remains the last possible option for our vulnerable residents. A fundamental part of this process is a peer-review which is intended to be a key mechanism for delivering continuous improvement and for the sharing of best practice.

In August we received the results of the (very thorough) peer review of our Service – completed by Nottingham City Council and Waveney District Council (both very high performing housing authorities). The peer review assessment was very demanding but we definitely rose to the challenge - our overall score of 77% really is a fantastic achievement, far exceeding the 60% pass mark.

The reviewers were very impressed by what they saw in our services across SNC. Our staff, our facilities and our corporate approach to customer service were all very highly praised with 100% scores for our engagement with customers and for staff development & involvement.

This result confirms our position as one of the top performing teams in the country - we are the first Norfolk authority to complete the peer review and one of only around 20 nationally at the time to have had the confidence to complete the peer review. Most other authorities have scored in the low to mid-60% range.

Success has only been possible because of our truly effective corporate approach and the work of every team at SNC feeds into this. This is a very exciting time for housing and all of us at SNC as we work closer than ever before with internal colleagues and key external partners and play our part in some truly trail-blazing agendas. This was very much recognised in the peer review and the work we are all delivering on Early Help, particularly the new hub, was of great interest to our reviewers and was recognised as being the very best practice in supporting vulnerable families. The corporate commitment to our journey, the support from elected members and the willingness of colleagues across all services to support our team was also recognised.

Now the work begins as we draw out the key actions from our Continuous Improvement Plan and look to increase the outcomes and the value for money that we deliver as a team. We have also played our part as the lead reviewer for Nottingham City Council’s peer review. We now need to identify the good practice taking place in Nottingham and ensure that this is showcased and protected and we need to work through the areas where we think Nottingham could drive their service forward and help them to take steps in this area. SNC will feedback to the Nottingham staff, managers, directors and elected members. At the same time we also need to make the most of this learning and think about some quick-wins that we can adopt and scope out the potential for some bigger homeless prevention options that all Norfolk authorities may want to think about.

David Neville – November 2014
Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy

SNC is statutorily required to produce a homelessness strategy and the existing strategy has now ended. The previous strategy was produced sub-regionally with Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council, and we are working on the production of a 2015/20 strategy again on a sub-regional basis with BDC and NCC, but also with the NHS Integrated Commissioning team and NHS City Reach.

This report informs Housing and Public Health Policy Committee of the progress made in producing a joint homelessness strategy and key issues that have arisen, and seeks views on the strategy proposals and commitment to consult with partners from November 2014 to January 2015.

A copy of the strategy is provided with this report.

Cabinet member(s): Yvonne Bendle
Ward(s) affected: All

Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail: Kerrie Gallagher 01508 533783 kgallagher@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Background information

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires Local Authorities to produce a homelessness strategy (based on the evidence from a homelessness review) that applies to everyone at risk of homelessness, not just people who may fall within a priority need group for the purposes of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

2. Production of the strategy

This is the third greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy to be produced since 2007. Work started on the formation of this document in January 2014. The following organisations been involved in the formation of this consultation document:

- Broadland District Council
- City Reach – NHS
- Integrated Commissioning Team – NHS
- Norwich City Council
- South Norfolk Council
The priorities and actions proposed in the strategy are based on the following:

- homelessness review;
- trends and issues;
- national and local policy; current and proposed;
- analysis of the outcomes of the previous Homelessness Strategy Action Plan;
- feedback and learning from the diagnostic peer review carried out as part of the national gold standard challenge.

3. Current Position in South Norfolk

South Norfolk Council is currently placed in a strong position in terms of homelessness prevention.

In April 2014 our homelessness prevention service was subject to a Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR) by Nottingham City Council and Waveney District Council, both very high performing housing authorities. The peer review assessment was very demanding and we scored very highly with a score of 77%, far exceeding the 60% pass mark.

Key Successes

- In 2008-13 SNC recorded 1,722 cases where homelessness was either prevented or relieved outside of the statutory homelessness framework (homelessness prevention currently being achieved in excess of 90% of cases). During a time when presentations to the council for assistance have increased, we have kept preventions and homeless applications at a stable level by investing time to work with customers at an early stage to prevent their circumstances worsening.
- We have very successfully utilised income from the Single Homeless Prevention Fund to be more innovative and creative in the way that we are able to relieve individual circumstances at an early stage to avert later crisis.
- We ensure that all customers accessing supported accommodation in the area are given a support plan to meet other needs which help that individual or family get on in life, such as in employment and training, or health and wellbeing.
- We have realigned our services to ensure that specialist advice is available for all customers when they request it, and at the earliest occasion. We have increased accessibility of specialist housing advice services. This has ensured that we are able to provide appropriate and holistic advice, help more people and prevent more homelessness than ever before.
- We continue to work closely with the Housing Benefit service to provide a more unified service for customers. All parties work together to provide the temporary funding necessary for stability through Discretionary Housing Payments, while we provide the debt and housing advice required. This approach ensures that the customer progresses in terms of debt and/or alternative housing for the duration of the DHP award rather than reaching the end of the award and being no further on.
4. Identified vision and priorities for the new homelessness strategy

In working with partners, the challenge for SNC has been to “raise the game” in terms of visioning. Our approach is shifting from what is becoming the “industry norm” of homelessness prevention to early interventions and early help leading to outcomes wider than housing ones. This is a challenge that was endorsed as part of the DPR of SNC’s homelessness services, where we were encouraged to continue promoting this agenda with our sub-regional and business partners.

NCC and BDC are agreed that the approach needs to widen with the contexts we’ve raised i.e. early interventions, economic development, health and wellbeing, the community and promoting customers to take ownership of their own circumstances. With substance agreed, the draft wording proposed is as follows:

**VISION:**

*Greater Norwich is a place where agencies work together to support people who might become homeless. Helping people to take control of their own circumstances earlier and stopping them from becoming homeless will be our main aim. This will allow people to reach their potential in a stable home; have good health and wellbeing and give them a better chance to find work.*

Based on the above information the following four proposed priorities have been identified for the strategy:

- **Priority one:** Targeting our resources at those people who are most at risk of homelessness.
- **Priority two:** Helping people find affordable, safe, good quality housing.
- **Priority three:** Working better together with our partners including: health, education, criminal justice, mental health, substance misuse, children services, social care, job centre, private sector landlords and third sector providers so that we can work in a co-ordinated way to prevent homelessness.
- **Priority four:** Helping people develop independent living skills, maintain or regain their independence to reduce the risk of someone becoming homeless in the future.

Some of the actions proposed over the period 2015-16 are:

- Working with partners, to ensure that an appropriate level of support is available to customers at an early stage; to reduce the risk of financial difficulty leading to homelessness, and increase the opportunity for the customer to enter or regain employment at the earliest point.
- Conducting a review of our temporary accommodation for homeless households, in order to ensure that we offer a range of options to meet customer need. This is coupled with a focus on keeping the numbers accommodated as low as possible through prevention work.
- Assisting the owners, tenants and landlords of homes where there is a disabled occupant to make adaptations or help them to find alternative and more suitable accommodation. By making a full assessment of the customers housing and
social care needs we will work with partners to meet SNC statutory duties and improve SNC’s contribution to health and wellbeing.

- Improving the health and wellbeing of elderly and vulnerable people by reducing the length of time they are living in unsuitable housing by delivering:
  - Integrated Early Interventions such as Care and Repair Services to reduce hospital admissions caused by housing related issues
  - Handy Persons Services to reduce hospital admissions through slips, trips and falls
  - Facilitating access to housing with care by working with social services, landlords and support providers.

- Working in partnership with health care services to support customers who are, or who are at risk of homelessness, to access necessary health care services to reduce the likelihood of homelessness having a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing.

- Working with our partners in Children’s Services, to improve pathways for young people leaving care, re-launching the 16&17 year old homeless protocol and revising the intentionally homeless family protocol.

5. Development and implementation

The draft strategy has been produced by a sub-regional working group, led by Norwich City Council. SNC has played a pro-active part on this working group. It is intended this group will oversee the strategy consultation.

The strategy will be developed with mindfulness to and active engagement with other relevant strategic documents such as the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Norfolk Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Some early consultation on thinking has already been held at SNC at the Early Help Collaboration Hub where partners and staff were invited to share their thinking with us to inform the strategy production.

Below is a table which offers a proposed timetable for formulation and publication of the Homelessness Strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project group work period</td>
<td>January 2014 to May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft strategy and action Plan</td>
<td>January 2014 to October 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare a consultation plan</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of draft strategy and action plan</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation period for strategy and action plan</td>
<td>November 2014 to January 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out consultation events with stakeholder groups</td>
<td>November 2014 to January 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revisions carried out to strategy and action plan</td>
<td>December 2014 to February 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce response to Consultation document for appendix to strategy</td>
<td>December 2014 to February 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicise response to consultation document</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Consultation

The document will be consulted on for a period of twelve weeks as per Government guidelines as part of the ‘National Compact’. Officers from the three councils will be presenting the strategy at some of the following events:

- Greater Norwich Youth Homelessness Forum
- Greater Norwich Homelessness Forum
- Client user groups
- Countywide strategic partnership groups

As well as the above forums the following activities are proposed:

- The consultation document will appear on the three websites of the greater Norwich councils.
- A questionnaire will be sent out to key stakeholders in the voluntary and statutory sector.
- A joint press release will be published in the local press to encourage responses to the consultation document.

The responses from the consultation will be published alongside the final strategy which will be published in early summer 2015.

7. Housing and Public Health Policy Committee

It is proposed that the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee considers the progress and general direction of travel with the strategy. This will give Members the opportunity to comment on consultation arrangements, and to provide their views on the relevant issues. Councillor Sue Thomson, Chairman of the Licensing Appeals and Complaints Committee (which includes homelessness reviews), is also a Member of Policy Committee.

Potential future adoption by SNC would be a recommendation of the work of Policy Committee.

8. Recommendations

Housing and Public Health Committee is recommended to:

- Note progress on the homelessness strategy, and provide any further guidance
- Approve the homelessness strategy consultation timetable
The Right to Build Vanguard Project

The Council has been successful in becoming participant in the DCLG’s Vanguard project. This report sets out the principles and explains how the Council is considering options to extend the principle of custom build to the affordable housing sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cabinet member(s):</th>
<th>Ward(s) affected:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
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Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail:
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1. **Background**

1.1 The Government believes there is unmet demand from people who wish to build their own homes, and that meeting this demand could contribute significantly to the total number of homes built each year. It wishes to implement a policy (Right to Build) that would require each local authority to maintain a register of people interested and then use housing and planning policy to make serviced plots available to meet local demand.

1.2 In July 2014 the DCLG sought expressions of interest from councils wishing to participate in a Vanguard project to establish how the Right to Build might operate in practice. South Norfolk Council submitted an expression of interest, and is one of eleven local authorities selected. The Council will receive a payment of £25,000 during financial year 2014/14 towards the cost of the project. Most of this sum will be used to pay the salary of the Project Officer.

1.3 This report sets out the principles of the project and explains how the Council is considering options to expand the principle of custom build to the affordable housing sector.

2. **Current Position and Issues**

2.1 The Vanguard project is very much a field trial to establish how Right to Build might work in practice. There is limited experience nationally, so the DCLG
regards it as a 6 month project ending in April 2015, when findings and conclusions will be used to produce good practice guidance. Therefore the focus is on method and process, rather than the number of custom-build plots achieved. In any case, it is highly unlikely that any construction work can be generated within six months.

2.2. The selected local authorities are from a range of housing markets (from Greater London to depressed markets in northern England), and the majority have council-owned land that they can make available.

2.3. There are two aspects to the Vanguard project:
   - setting up and operating a register of people interested in custom build;
   - making available serviced plots of land to meet demand.

2.4. Most of the selected authorities own land that they can make available, and one has an adopted planning policy requiring a proportion of planning consents to be delivered through custom build. South Norfolk’s unique approach is to seek the co-operation of private landowners in making serviced plots available within sites that already have outline planning consent.

2.5. The first target is to have a register operating and publicised by 30 November. This will be the first priority of the Project Officer (Tim Durrell), and there will be extensive publicity before the end of November.

2.6. In seeking serviced plots, approaches will be made to landowners to establish their interest. In many instances the owners are housebuilders. Financial benefits will be relevant: exemption from CIL, improved cash-flow, and the availability of loan finance from the HCA. We will also investigate any other benefits that might make the proposition attractive.

2.7. The South Norfolk approach is likely to be significant for DCLG because our experience will influence good practice issued for local authorities that do not own suitable land.

3. Expanding Custom Build into the Affordable Housing Sector

3.1. In the expression of interest the Council committed to expanding its approach beyond the open market ethos of the Vanguard brief. We will investigate possibilities for delivering custom-built homes within the affordable housing sector. For the Council, this aspect of the project will last beyond the 6 month duration of the Vanguard part.

3.2. The first approach is to work in partnership with Saffron Housing Trust. Saffron have offered land in their ownership for perhaps 4-8 plots (depending on the level of interest). Details are still to be finalised, but at this stage the concept is to make the homes available for shared ownership or shared equity, with a discount based on the amount of ‘sweat equity’ achieved by the self-builder. The Council would identify suitable participants from the register, and Saffron would organise and supervise the project.

3.3. The second approach is to consider how plots offered by the private sector might be made available for people who cannot afford the immediate costs of buying the plot and building a home on it. Our intention is to seek ways that might defer some of the costs, and this might involve some public subsidy.
4. **Other Options**

4.1. The Council is committed to delivering this project, so there is no other option. Within the project a wide range of options will be assessed within the overall brief agreed with the DCLG.

5. **Relevant Corporate Priorities (delete the following as appropriate)**

5.1. Enhancing our quality of life and the environment we live in.
   - The intention is to enable residents to achieve quality homes that satisfy their wishes.
   - Development Management Officers will be closely involved to ensure a high quality of design.
   - There will be the opportunity for custom builders to achieve very high energy efficiency levels if they so wish.

5.2. Promoting a thriving local economy.
   - Housing activity makes a significant contribution to the economy. It has the potential to benefit the local economy more than developments by national housebuilders because local people are likely to source expertise and materials locally.

5.3. Supporting communities to realise their potential.
   - Custom build is a means of improving the skill base. This might include formal training qualifications to provide or improve participants’ potential in the jobs market.

5.4. Driving services through being businesslike, efficient and customer aware.
   - The project will seek to meet the realistic expectations of customers (custom builders).
   - If there was to be the possibility of the Council providing capital funding, there would be a thorough assessment of costs, benefits and risks.

6. **Implications and Risks (delete the following as appropriate)**

6.1. Financial
   - The DCLG will monitor how the Council uses its £25,000 funding. Only a limited amount can be rolled forward to 2015/16.
   - Within the expression of interest, the Council offered match funding to extend the affordable housing aspects well into 2015/16. The costs of this will be found within the overall resources agreed during the 2015/16 budgeting arrangements.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1. This project presents an opportunity for the Council to establish interest in custom build, to investigate how demand might be met, and to influence national good practice advice.

8. **Recommendation**

8.1. That the Committee notes the contents of this report.