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

*Please note new time of meeting

If any member of the public wishes to speak on a non-confidential item, they may do so at the discretion of the Chairman
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 10 November 2014 (copy attached – page 6)

5. Good News Stories:

   a. Health & Wellbeing Week
   b. Funding Bids Update
   c. Affordable Housing Update

6. South Norfolk Housing Strategy; (report attached – page 11)

7. Early Help; (oral update)

8. Citizens Advice Bureau (Service Level Agreements); (oral update)

9. Update on the Green Deal; (oral update)

10. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA); (oral update)

11. The Right to Build Vanguard Project; (oral update)

12. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Consultation – "Stepping onto the property ladder" – Enabling high quality Starter Homes for first time buyers; (report attached – page 17)

13. Refusals by Housing Associations; (report attached – page 25)


15. Date of Next Formal Meeting

   29 June 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
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.
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

*Please note new time of meeting

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 23 February 2015

Time
*10.00 am

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

Contact
Sue Elliott tel (01508) 533943
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);

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13. - Refusals by Housing Associations; (report attached – page 25)

14. - Work Plan for 2015; (attached – page 28)

15. - Date of Next Formal Meeting
   29 June 2015 (10.00am)
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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>
</tbody>
</table>

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

| Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item. |

| Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting. |

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

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

YES

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

YES

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.

NO

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

NO

YES

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.

If you have not already done so, notify the Monitoring Officer to update your declaration of interests.
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 10 November 2014 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors L Neal (Chairman), N Legg, T Palmer, S Thomson and G Walden

Apologies: - Councillor N Ward

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Y Bendle

Officers in Attendance: The Housing & Public Health Manager (M Swann), the Housing Access and Standards Manager (T Cooke), the Early Intervention Manager (M Pursehouse), the Independent Living Team Leader (S Cayford), the Housing Options Senior Case Advisor (D Neville), the Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer (K Mitchell), the Project Manager Environment & Housing (T Durell), and the Housing & Public Health Partnerships Officer (K Gallagher)

47 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>Various</td>
<td>T Palmer</td>
<td>Board Member of Saffron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 9 June 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
GOOD NEWS STORIES

a. Gypsy & Traveller Site, Costessey
The Housing Access and Standards Manager provided members with a brief update on the Gypsy and Traveller site at Costessey, advising members that the site, which had been welcomed by residents, had shown a reduction in the number of queries relating to illegal encampments in the area and had proved an effective and useful tool for both the Council and the Police. He explained that, although there had been some issues at the site, it had been almost continuously occupied since opening, providing a controlled, spacious environment for the travelling community.

b. Empty Homes
Members were given an update on the current position regarding Empty Homes in the District. The Committee was informed that the number of empty homes as at 1 October 2014 stood at 338 and that the challenge for 2014/15 was to keep it at this level or lower as any increase would impact on the New Homes Bonus.

The Housing Access and Standards Manager reminded members that a forced market sale of a property in the District had been completed earlier in the year, and advised that further forced sales would be considered in the future to reduce the number of long-term, empty properties in the area. He added that forced market sales were only considered as an solution where all other options had been exhausted.

The Housing & Public Health Manager commented that the Empty Homes initiative was providing a financial benefit to the authority through an increase in New Homes Bonus and Council Tax monies.

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer informed members that the report of the Lyons Housing Review cited South Norfolk Council as an example of good practice in using New Homes Bonus to fund affordable housing.

HOUSING & PUBLIC HEALTH REALIGNMENT UPDATE

The Housing & Public Health Manager presented a structure chart to the Committee which sought to clarify the changes within the Housing and Public Health team, following a recent realignment.

Members were advised of the rationale behind the changes, which was to bring the structure of the team more into line with the focus and objectives of the Council, giving significance to the promotion of independent living and early help.

Cllr Bendle endorsed the changes, adding that she was pleased to see how the services were already linking together and that the team was making positive steps towards providing a more preventative approach.

Members noted the changes and requested that a structure chart be forwarded to the Committee which included officers’ names, and the telephone numbers for new members of staff.
51 EARLY INTERVENTION

The Early Intervention Manager presented members with an update on the work being carried out by the Council and its partners at the Early Help Collaboration Hub. He advised members that eleven partners were now signed up to the initiative, sharing information and working jointly, seven of which were located within the Hub.

The Committee was given information regarding the Family Connectors scheme which enabled representatives with local knowledge to make connections with vulnerable families and to bridge the gap in supporting and steering them towards obtaining the appropriate assistance required. Officers advised the Committee that two people had been appointed as Family Connectors and that funding of £20,000 had been obtained from Our Place Funding towards the project.

Members were advised that South Norfolk Council, together with Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Councils had reached a further stage in the Transformation Challenge Awards which focussed on how services joined and worked together.

The Early Intervention Manager advised members of the next steps planned in the development of the Collaboration Hub, and that the plan was to achieve a service where data sharing, local knowledge and the ability to build strong connections would ensure that residents would be able to access a full range of help following consultations with staff.

Members were presented with two case studies which demonstrated how officers had already put their knowledge into practical use by helping residents to find early assistance to improve their situations.

In response to a member’s question regarding safeguarding children, officers confirmed that staff in the Hub were working closely with Social Services to ensure that, in such cases, early help was achieved and assistance could be escalated where necessary. The Committee was also advised that local schools had been supportive with the project which meant that potential issues could be identified earlier.

The Committee was advised that promotion of the Independent Living Team was taking place in doctors’ surgeries and that cards advertising the services offered were available for distribution by members. The Early Intervention Manager and the Independent Living Team Leader agreed that they would distribute addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses for contacts, by email, to members of the Committee.

52 PEER REVIEW OF HOMELESS SERVICE

The Housing Options Senior Case Advisor provided members with an update on the Peer Review of the Homelessness Service and summarised the salient points contained in his briefing note, including the successes, outcomes and objectives for the team following the review. Cllr Bendle commented that she had been involved in the process and was impressed by the hard work of officers during and following the process.

In response to a member’s question, officers advised that as part of the Continuous Improvement Plan, there were key areas to consider and some areas of the Council’s work would be reviewed during the next stages of the process.
Members queried the usage of temporary accommodation in the District and whether this would need to be reviewed. Officers advised that this would be an area for review but that there was a need to balance the availability of emergency temporary housing with cost effectiveness. It was also noted that the current use of temporary accommodation had declined in the area due to the good provision of affordable homes.

53 HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Housing & Public Health Manager provided members with a verbal update on the Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The Committee was informed that since the approval of the Strategy, learning hours had been held which focussed on Health and Wellbeing priorities, and that a Year One Action Plan had been put into place.

Members were advised of some of the successes so far, including the accomplishments of Early Interventions work and the Collaboration Hub, and of the implementation of the HONOR Award scheme which had helped local businesses provide healthy food to customers.

The Committee was given details of the Fit for Work initiative being delivered by Active Norfolk which sought to support health and fitness in the workplace, and was pleased to note that although six districts were covered by the scheme, 50% of the activity would take place within South Norfolk.

The Housing Access and Standards Manager gave a brief update regarding excess winter deaths advising members that, following an event in South Norfolk, a multi-agency project group had been formed in May 2014 to tackle the issues raised. Members were advised that the group’s work would include simple measures such as training for helpers going into customers’ houses, the provision of winter packs, and advising residents and landlords on Green Deal funding.

54 GREATER NORWICH HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report on the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy which sought to attain the views of members regarding the proposals contained in the new joint Homelessness Strategy. The Housing & Public Health Partnerships Officer summarised the salient points in the report, including the priorities and vision of the Strategy and the proposed timetable for its formation and publication.

In response to a member’s request that the specific needs of those who had left the armed forces should be considered within the Homelessness Strategy, as specified in the Home Options Policy, it was agreed that this would be raised with the Homelessness Strategy development team and implemented within the document.

After a brief discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

1. to note the progress on the Homelessness Strategy with the addition regarding ex military individuals, as detailed above; and
2. to approve the Homelessness Strategy consultation timetable.
55. THE RIGHT TO BUILD VANGUARD PROJECT

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer presented his report which described the principles of the DCLG’s Vanguard project and explained how the Council was considering options to extend the principle of custom-build to the affordable housing sector. He introduced Tim Durell as the Project Manager of the Vanguard project and explained that the initiative was a six month field trial to establish how Right to Build might work in practice.

During discussion, members were generally supportive of the project but concerns were raised regarding the limited availability of land within the District, which might become available for custom build. The Project Manager agreed that it was not yet known how much land might become available, but stressed that the project was in a discussion stage and that the Council would shortly be opening a register for people wishing to build their own homes in the district, to gauge the interest in the scheme.

Following a brief discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

to note the contents of the Right to Build Vanguard Project report.

56. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of the current work programme for the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee was tabled at the meeting and members were asked to forward their views to the Housing & Public Health Manager by 31 December 2014.

57. DATE OF NEXT FORMAL MEETING

Members noted the date of the next formal meeting to be held on 23 February 2014, at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 11.32 am

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Chairman
South Norfolk Housing Strategy

SNC is statutorily required to produce a housing strategy. The previous strategy was produced sub-regionally with Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council.

Housing and Public Health Policy Committee members have previously been engaged in a workshop to share their views about housing in the district, and this work has been used to formulate the draft strategy’s vision and priority outcomes.

During 2014 a document called “Why is Housing Significant” was produced by officers and helped to build a wider understanding of housing and its impact on our residents and the growth of the district.

This report informs Housing and Public Health Policy Committee of the progress made in producing a housing strategy and key issues that have arisen. At the committee meeting members will receive a presentation about the strategy before seeking views on its proposals and commitment to consult with key stakeholders from 24\textsuperscript{th} February to 22\textsuperscript{nd} March 2015.

A copy of the draft strategy is provided with this report.

Cabinet member(s): Cllr 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

South Norfolk Council has a statutory responsibility as a strategic housing authority to consider the housing needs of residents across all housing tenures. Our role as part of this is to support effective place shaping and ensure delivery of sustainable communities. We meet this via various functions across the authority – such as the provision of benefits, building control, homelessness prevention, planning and bringing empty homes back into use.

This housing strategy builds on the achievements of its predecessor and fulfils the council’s duty to implement a Housing Strategy under the Local Government Act 2003.

2. Production of the strategy

The proposed priority outcomes and activities in the strategy are based on the following:

- trends and issues;
- national and local policy, current and proposed;
- analysis of the outcomes of the previous Housing Strategy Action Plan;

The strategy covers the period 2015-2018. It sets out how the council will deal with continuing themes and new challenges facing South Norfolk through four priority outcomes.

The strategy will be accompanied by an action plan which will be reviewed on an annual basis. The action plan will be used to identify the key actions which will deliver those priority outcomes. The involvement and support of our partners will be crucial in delivering this plan.

3. Current Position in South Norfolk

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

The council as a whole strives to make South Norfolk the best possible place to live, work and visit. We believe that all residents should have access to a home of a good standard which they can afford and are able to sustain and maintain. The council’s local plan will help to address the issues around the supply of housing in the district in the long term, including the provision of new affordable housing. This strategy forms the context for all housing related activity to meet the housing needs of those residents who are unable to afford or access a decent home.

A report by House and Elphick (2015) presents findings of a review, and state that local authorities could do more to play a central role in supporting the provision of new homes, across all housing tenures, by becoming housing delivery enablers and taking responsibility for making development happen in their area. We are ahead of the curve, and are an excellent example of how to use innovation to meet the needs of our local residents.
Key Successes

Key SNC Strategic Housing successes over the past three years:

- The promotion of an “Investment Ready” district that has enabled housing delivery, created a five-year supply of housing land, supported economic growth, given residents more housing choice and maximised New Homes Bonus revenue for SNC.
- Considering and instigating a new model of delivery through Big Sky to develop mixed residential and commercial property; and to maintain and rent residential property for market lets
- Developing the role of housing and wider services to support the health and wellbeing / public health agendas and having instigated better partnerships and more joined up ways of working – for example through independent living initiatives
- Creating an Early Help pathfinder for Norfolk to ensure that young people and families, and adults receive support from multi-agency partners to maximise their outcomes
- Delivering one of the highest performing homelessness services in the country as evidenced by the Independent Peer Review of the service

4. Identified vision and priorities for the new homelessness strategy

Housing has an impact on everyone; it is one of the basic foundations on which we build our lives. Within this strategy we have widened the traditional parameters for a document of its kind to look more widely at the determinants which impact on a person’s ability to access suitable housing.

The strategy considers the contribution which is made by the whole local authority and our partners to develop a good supply of sustainable homes within South Norfolk which are affordable, accessible, meet need and are sustainable in the long term. On top of this, we have considered how we will support our residents to live prosperous lives by offering easy access to help and support to assist them in times of adversity, at the earliest possible stage.

The table below summaries the proposed structure of the strategy, including detail of its vision, four priority outcomes and the detail which will sit underneath it in the strategy.
Vision
To ensure all residents have access to and are able to maintain good quality housing that meets their needs and aspirations. The housing secured, and the support provided where appropriate, will assist local people in maximising their life opportunities – that is, they will be opportunity ready for housing, jobs, healthy lifestyles, independent living and their community responsibilities.

Priority Outcomes

| A good supply of market and affordable housing within South Norfolk which meets customer needs and supports growth | Customers have access to a home that meets their requirements, that they can pay for and maintain | Customers live in warm, decent and safe homes within a strong community, and when needed they receive support to help them achieve independent living in their own home | Customers receive easily accessible advice and support which improves the life changes of them and their families, and which targets those households needing early interventions and support to get the most out of life. |

Priority Activities and Areas of Focus
These are found within the body of this strategy and provide the broad framework for how we, in conjunction with partners, intend to deliver our priority outcomes over the life of this strategy, including details of the areas that we will concentrate our focus on.

Annual Action Plan
An action plan will demonstrate how the Council intends to meet our obligations for each of the Priority Activities.
The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Council’s Housing and Public Health Policy Committee and the action plan will guide this work.
The action plan will be revised annually to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.

5. Development and implementation

The draft strategy has been produced by officers at South Norfolk Council. It is intended this group will oversee the strategy consultation. It is proposed that the longer term delivery of the strategy is overseen by a group consisting of both SNC staff and significant partner organisations who will help us deliver our priority outcomes.

This strategy will be developed with mindfulness to and active engagement with other relevant strategic documents such as the South Norfolk Local Plan, 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 where staff members were invited to share their thinking with us to inform the strategy production.
### Action Timing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval to take 1st working draft strategy to consultation with key stakeholders: Housing and Public Health Policy Committee</td>
<td>23rd February 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation period for communication with key stakeholders – gaining their input into the strategy to ensure that it incorporates the challenges faced by partners and documents the contribution they will make to meet the strategies vision and outcomes.</td>
<td>24th February – 22nd March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revisions carried out to draft strategy following stakeholder consultation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Housing Strategy out to 12 week public consultation</td>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce response to Consultation document; for appendix to strategy</td>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If no major changes, adoption at Cabinet</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of strategy and action plan</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6. Consultation

The aim of the consultation with key partners will be to:

- gauge views on the overall direction of travel we are taking, and our the document’s key aims and objectives in order to be confident that our decisions are properly informed.
- find out where partners and stakeholders can assist with achieving the vision, specifically by committing to actions that they undertake to achieve our priority outcomes

It is proposed that initial consultation with key stakeholders begins on 24th February and closes on 22nd March.

It is our intention to make all of our key stakeholders aware of this consultation period, so that necessary arrangements to contribute during that time can be made – we plan to organise workshops for partners to attend and actively share their thoughts, as well as an online survey for people to complete.

Public consultation will be over 12 weeks, (as per Compact guidelines which state this for all, without good reason for a shorter period) and would start in Summer 2015. The following activities are proposed for that period:

- The consultation document will appear on the SNC website
- A questionnaire will be sent out to key stakeholders in the voluntary and statutory sector, and will be available to all via a web-based format.
Any necessary further workshops to be held with key partners to collate their views on the draft document.

The responses from the consultation will be published alongside the final strategy in Autumn 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.

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 housing strategy, and provide any further guidance
- Approve the housing strategy consultation timetable
- Provide views and suggest any amendments to the attached draft strategy
DCLG Consultation – “Stepping onto the property ladder” – Enabling high quality Starter Homes for first time buyers

The Department for Communities and Local Government has issued a consultation paper which seeks comments on an initiative for the delivery of Starter Homes, utilising underused Industrial and other disused brownfield land as a means of introducing a subsidy into the land values so that the homes will be available at no more than 80% of their full open market value.

The deadline for comments was 9th February 2015, and the Environment, Regulation and Planning Committee considered a draft response on 26th January. That Committee commented on the draft, which officers amended to reflect the views expressed. The actual response is attached as Appendix A.

Cabinet member(s): Yvonne Bendle & Keith Kiddie
Ward(s) affected: All

Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail: Keith Mitchell 01508 533756 kmitchell@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1. - Background

1.1. - On 15th December 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government published an open consultation paper called “Stepping onto the property ladder” – Enabling high quality Starter Homes for first time buyers.

1.2. - The government is determined that more people have the opportunity to buy their own home, and is keen to ensure that first time buyers find it easier to take their first steps onto the property ladder. The Starter Homes scheme aims to provide more low cost, high quality starter homes for first time buyers – without burdening the tax payer. The paper proposes reform that will free up the planning system to help enable 100,000 starter homes to be built over the next 5 years so that more young people can buy their own home.

1.3. - To deliver this “ambitious package” the government intends working closely with developers, local authorities and land owners. The consultation sets out the government’s proposals for Starter Homes and seeks views about the proposed planning policy change and its implementation.
1.4. - The deadline for responses was 9th February 2015. On 26th January the Environment, Regulation and Planning Policy Committee considered a draft response, written by Planning Policy and Housing Officers. The consultation paper is available on the DCLG website: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/stepping-onto-the-property-ladder

2. - Current Position and Issues

2.1. - The ERP Policy Committee were informed that, in summary, the initiative proposes that local planning authorities should work in a positive and proactive way with landowners and developers to secure a supply of sites suitable for housing for first time buyers. In particular, they should look for opportunities to create starter homes on exception sites on under-used or unviable industrial and commercial land that has not been identified for housing. Where applications for starter homes come forward on such sites, they should be approved unless the local planning authority can demonstrate that there are overriding considerations in relation to health, safety or infrastructure that cannot be mitigated.

2.2. - Planning conditions or obligations should be attached to permissions for starter homes on Starter Homes exception sites, requiring that the homes are offered for sale at a minimum of 20% below normal market price, to people who have not previously been a home-buyer, and who are below the age of 40 at the time of purchase. They should also prevent the re-sale of the properties at market value for a five to fifteen year period. In view of their contribution to meeting housing needs, Starter Homes exception sites should not be required to make contributions to affordable housing or be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy. Starter Homes exception sites may include a small proportion of market homes, at the planning authority’s discretion, where this is essential to secure the required level of discount for starter homes on the site.

2.3. - To assist the industry and indicate the latent demand for starter homes the paper proposes a register of first time buyers who are interested in buying a discounted Starter Home, including where they would like to buy. This will enable developers, local planning authorities and land owners to gauge local interest, as well as informing registered first time buyers about the local Starter Homes schemes available.

2.4. - The Committee was keen for the Council to respond to the consultation, and that the response should stress the Council’s experience of low cost ownership tenures. These views were incorporated into the response, which is attached as Appendix A.

2.5. - The drafting of the response was a good example of the close working that exists between Housing and Planning Officers on matters which involve both housing and planning issues. The expertise and experience available provided a comprehensive understanding of the issues, enabling the Council to produce a well-informed response.

3. - Proposal and Reasons

3.1. - This Committee is asked to note the government proposal and the Council's response.

4. - Other Options

4.1. - None
5. - **Relevant Corporate Priorities**

5.1. - Enhancing our quality of life and the environment we live in – affordable housing is beneficial, but the response stresses the primacy of – planning guidance and policy.

5.2. - Promoting a thriving local economy – new homes create jobs and benefit the economy, but the response reflects the need to protect land allocated for employment use.

5.3. - Driving services through being businesslike, efficient and customer aware – the response recognises the potential conflicts created by the proposal.

6. - **Implications and Risks**

6.1. - None

7. - **Conclusion**

7.1. - The response to the consultation reflects the Council’s current position and provides a useful opportunity to influence the Government.

8. - **Recommendations**

8.1. - Housing and Public Health Policy Committee notes the contents of this report.
“Stepping onto the property ladder” - Enabling high quality Starter Homes for first time buyers

The South Norfolk Council response was considered by the Environment Regulation and Planning Policy Committee on the 26 January 2015.

The Members were keen to point out that the following comments are firmly based on a solid history of delivery and positive planning for new homes. The Council’s emerging Local Plan consolidates its commitment to the growth agenda set by the Greater Norwich Growth Board and the adopted Joint Core Strategy and a 5 year land supply has been achieved across the whole district. South Norfolk Council has extensive experience of delivering affordable housing through a range of tenures and this means that we are well-placed to provide comments based on that experience.

From their debate they wanted to emphasise three points from the following responses.

- (Q.6) Specific concern for the discriminatory nature of a policy which favours one age group over another, whether direct or indirect.
- (Q.7) Because of our experience of Discounted Market Sale (DMS) we urge the Government to ensure that there is a viable competitive mortgage market for the tenure proposed. Currently only Halifax is willing to provide DMS mortgages in South Norfolk, and this restricts the ability of potential purchasers (and owners wishing to re-mortgage) to obtain a mortgage. We would have serious concerns if the proposal was to be introduced without the full co-operation of several major mortgage lenders.
- With regard to the use of brownfield sites, the Council has concern that the possible cost of decontamination of some brownfield sites could deter developers from considering certain sites.
The Council’s responses are as follows:

**Q1: Do you agree in principle with the idea of a new national Starter Homes exception site planning policy to deliver more new low cost homes for first time buyers?**

**Answer**
We agree with the general principle – provided that the resulting guidance/legislation can be drafted to ensure a genuine exceptions policy approach. This would require that the grant of planning permission be accompanied by an agreement and subsequent controls to ensure that the affordable homes created by the initiative can be preserved as starter homes in perpetuity. The scheme as currently described would seem to offer the benefit of the reduced cost to the first owner only. This would conflict with the delivery of starter homes using the existing exceptions policy and affordable housing local plan policies which have previously been accepted.

**Q2: Do you agree that the Starter Homes exception site policy should focus solely on commercial and industrial brownfield land which has not been identified for housing?**

**Q3: Do you agree that the types of land most suitable for starter homes will be under-utilised or non-viable sites currently (or formerly) in commercial or industrial use?**

**Answer**
Yes, commercial and industrial brownfield land may offer opportunities to create additional land for Starter Homes (subject to the caveats above) but location should also be a key consideration to ensure that the locational guidance offered in the NPPF is not conflicted. The Council also has reservations about the potential loss of industrial land to the initiative.

**Q4: Do you consider it necessary to avoid Starter Homes developments in isolated locations, or where there would be conflicts with key protections in the National Planning Policy Framework?**

**Answer**
Yes, for the reasons outlined in 3&4 – existing policies already provide for affordable homes on the edge of rural settlements; whether as part of a planned allocation agreed in the emerging local plan or as an exception to policy contained in the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils, this principle should apply.

**Q5: Do you agree that the Starter Homes exception site policy should allow at the planning authority’s discretion a small proportion of market homes to be included when they are necessary for the financial viability of the Starter Homes site?**

**Answer**
No, the reduced value of the land and the restraint to the homes achieving full market value should enable these sites to be developed without the need for internal cross subsidy.

**Q6: Do you agree starter homes secured through the Starter Homes exception site policy should only be offered for sale or occupation to young first time buyers?**

**Answer**
Despite the clarifications set out elsewhere in the document – that people aged up to 40 are to be included in the proposed initiative – the wording of the document is considered potentially discriminatory. To ensure that all younger people can share access to the housing ladder, whatever the basis of their need, we would suggest that the initiative be available to anyone who is not an owner/occupier and who cannot afford to buy on the
open market. We advocate using the same criteria as Help to Buy (equity loan). This would also avoid yet another different set of eligibility criteria within the (already confusing) affordable housing sector. People without their own home, at whatever age, should be eligible to participate provided that they meet appropriate entry criteria. However, these should not be age based.

**Q7: Do you think there are sufficient existing mechanisms in place to police this policy?**

**Answer**

We feel that there should be consideration of whether the proposal is deliverable, as well as whether it can be policed. In this respect, we believe that the homes being affordable in perpetuity would make no difference.

Mortgageability is a key aspect. The tenure proposed is effectively Discounted Market Sale (DMS). Very few mortgage lenders are willing to lend for DMS. Therefore we strongly urge the Government to discuss mortgage availability with mortgage lenders. Unless there is a genuine market, the following risks arise:

- insufficient mortgages for the scheme to work;
- the ability of the few lenders to veto potential purchasers on unspecified grounds;
- lack of competition leading to high interest rates, possibly making the monthly cost little less than that a purchase at market value.

Please also see our response to question 8 concerning Mortgagee in Possession clauses.

**Policing –** We have reservations about a local authority’s ability to police price restrictions on resale. Unless the property is vested long term in a registered housing provider, the Council would not be in control at the point at which the property is marketed and the price restriction may only come to light later in the sale process.

**Q8: What is the most appropriate length for a restriction on the sale of a starter home at open market value? How should the sliding scale be set?**

**Answer**

We do not understand the implied link between the length of staircasing restrictions and mortgageability. Mortgagee in Possession (MIP) clauses are common in S106 Agreements, and mortgage lenders are willing to lend, knowing that they could sell a repossessed property at its full market value. In fact, based on our experience of exceptions sites, it is likely that no lender will lend without an MIP clause.

Therefore we believe that, subject to the availability of mortgages, the homes can be affordable in perpetuity, in which case a sliding scale would not be required. If the Government was to proceed with a sliding scale, any discussion of its detail should be based on balancing the tensions between being fair to the purchaser and protecting the affordability of the property for a reasonable period.

Several issues flow from this question. We urge Government to ensure that the project does not lead to a potential worst-case scenario in the medium term. In 6-10 years there could be:

- households trapped, unable to move on because they are waiting for the full market value to be available to them;
- high child density in a narrow age range because of inability to move;
- potential anti-social behaviour (linked to high child density in some research);
- lack of new schools places (because the development was exempt from education contributions) leading to possible disruption of existing standards;
- ‘blight’ of the development.

To counter this, we advocate:
- extending eligibility to households likely to have children so that there is a wide age-range (including former owner-occupiers);
- ensuring the availability of mortgages for households in a wide range of circumstances;
- including larger properties so that households can move within the tenure as they grow.

A sliding scale would not be required if the homes were to remain affordable.

**Q10: Do you agree that Starter Homes exception site projects should be exempt from the payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy?**

**Answer**

Only if the homes are affordable in perpetuity. However, if the Government decides to progress on the proposed basis, we believe that areas with CIL and areas without CIL should be treated equally. Guidance should make it clear that, where CIL has not been introduced, there should also be exemption from non-housing off-site S106 obligations.

To assist the industry and indicate the latent demand for starter homes, para 34 proposes a register of first time buyers who are interested in buying a discounted Starter Home, including where they would like to buy. This will enable developers, local planning authorities and land owners to gauge local interest, as well as informing registered first time buyers about the local Starter Homes schemes available.

**Q11: Do you have any views on how this register should work and the information it should contain?**

**Answer**

Primarily, the register should not be a bureaucratic or costly exercise required of individual authorities as these have been shown to be wasteful of Council time and unhelpful.

If the homes were to be affordable in perpetuity, we advocate evidence of local need being required to justify granting planning consent, in the same way as for rural exceptions sites. This would entail the local authority being responsible for keeping a register and for checking eligibility. It would also help in the control of resales.

For a concept without reference to local need, this Council believes that a formal register held at a national level and monitored at a sub-regional/district level - with information based on postcodes - may supplement market research already undertaken by developers (including registered social providers). Such a register might be publicised on social media to allow the target population groups the opportunity to register interest.

Consideration could be given to adding this register to the duties of Help to Buy agents.

**Q12: What kind of vanguard programme would be most helpful to support the roll out of Starter Homes?**

**Answer**

In the absence of any significant quantity of land of the type required for the delivery of a vanguard scheme the Council would welcome the vanguard schemes being focussed on...
those more urban / conurbation locations where a ready supply of industrial land may exist.

**Conclusion**

We agree with the general principle – provided that the resulting guidance/legislation can be drafted to ensure a genuine exceptions policy approach.

We have significant doubts about the viability and controllability of the proposal.

We also question the demand because of the availability of other products, especially “Help to Buy” (equity loan).

Thank you for the chance to comment on this consultation.

Yours sincerely

Adam Nicholls
Planning Policy Manager
Refusals by Housing Associations

Research has been undertaken into reasons why housing associations refuse to offer tenancies to applicants who have bid successfully for properties advertised through Home Options. This report provides the findings: that the issue became prominent when there were a lot of 2 bedroom flats available during 2013/14. It is concluded that, although there were valid grounds for undertaking the research, it is not a significant problem.

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

Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail:
Keith Mitchell 01508 533756
kmitchell@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1. - Background
1.1. - On 10 March 2014 an informal meeting of the Committee received a report reviewing the first year of the Council’s Tenancy Strategy. That report noted that there was one issue officers wished to investigate: reasons why successful bidders through Home Options were not being offered tenancies by housing associations.

1.2. - It was intended to establish whether housing associations’ policies and practices were preventing Housing Register applicants from meeting their housing needs through Home Options. The investigation was undertaken and this report informs Committee of the findings.

2. - Findings
2.1. - The report cited above noted that in the first 9 months of 2013/14 Saffron Housing Trust had refused 78 successful bidders. Data was requested from all housing associations for their refusals of bidders for general needs properties in South Norfolk for the whole of 2013/14, and the findings are reported below.

2.2. - Five housing associations did not respond to requests for data. However, the number of properties they advertised was small, so this missing data does not undermine the validity of the findings.
2.3. Responses were received from Broadland, Cotman, Hastoe, Orbit and Saffron. In summary the findings are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total refusals</th>
<th>167</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refusals by each housing association</td>
<td>Broadland – 0  Cotman – 8  Hastoe – 0  Orbit – 10  Saffron – 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing in 2013/14</td>
<td>Q1 (April-June) – 36  Q2 (July-September) – 64  Q3 (October-December) – 45  Q4 (January-March) – 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for refusal</td>
<td>Affordability and under-occupation – 104  No longer eligible for the property – 26  Unsuitable for adaptations or refused by bidder because of adaptation in situ – 22  Other – 10  Arrears with a previous social landlord – 5  Overcrowding – 0  Inability to pay rent in advance (where required) – 0  Lack of acceptable rent reference (where required) – 0  Past anti-social behaviour – 0</td>
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<td>62.9%  13.8%  13.2%  7.2%  3.0%  -  -  -  -</td>
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Note:
- ‘Other’ includes: sensitive lets, risk of domestic violence, and the applicant having been offered another property.

2.4. The main reason for refusal was a combination of inability to afford the rent and under-occupation. During the period from July to December 2013 there were a lot of 2 bedroom flats available for letting. Over the full year this property type (including multiple refusals) accounted for 102 (61%) of the refusals. This is understandable because following the introduction of Welfare Reform, couples and single people cannot claim Housing Benefit for the ‘spare room’. Housing associations permit under-occupation only if they are satisfied that household income suffices to pay the rent without a problem. Since then there have been fewer 2 bedroom flats available and it is no longer a significant problem.

2.5. The various other reasons for refusal do not raise any particular queries.

3. Conclusions from the Research

3.1. The research has raised the issue of why seemingly eligible applicants are found to be unsuitable at such a late stage in the bidding process. Obtaining a clearer
understanding for the reasons for this with the landlords and ensuring consistency between them is necessary if we are to put in place early help to applicants to ensure they are tenancy-ready.

4. - **Relevant Corporate Priorities**

4.1. - Supporting communities to realise their potential – applicants are not being treated unfairly.

4.2. - Driving services through being businesslike, efficient and customer aware – the temporary nature of the issue means that no fundamental problem for Home Options or housing associations has been identified.

5. - **Implications and Risks**

5.1. - Equalities – although some people on low incomes have had to wait longer to be housed, the reason is warranted and justified.

6. - **Conclusion**

6.1. - There were valid grounds for undertaking the research, but the findings have not identified a significant problem.

7. - **Recommendations**

7.1. - That the Committee note the contents of this report.
Work Plan for 2015

This work plan covers the three scheduled meetings for 2015, and shows the last meeting of 2014 for clarity of recent issues covered. It does not include the informal meetings. The work plan will include policy discussions and specific training/good practice sessions.

The work plan was discussed at the previous November 2014 meeting of Policy Committee and Members have had the opportunity to comment after the meeting. However, the Plan needs to be flexible and responsive to new policy issues and opportunities.

Priority focus areas for 2015/16
- Wellbeing and Early Intervention
- Commercialisation
- Place and Communities
- Economic Growth

10th November 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>What do we want to achieve?</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Help</td>
<td>Share progress with Members and to seek views on implementation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness Strategy</td>
<td>Share draft vision for a sub-regional homelessness strategy including consultation plans and present Peer Review headline findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>HWB Strategy</td>
<td>Progress report on HWB Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right to Build Vanguard</td>
<td>Share the initiative with Members, and to seek any initial views to inform roll out of the programme</td>
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23rd February 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>What do we want to achieve?</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Strategy</td>
<td>Member consideration of priority outcomes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Early Help  | Consideration of how vulnerable people and adults can also benefit from Early Help
---|---
Citizens Advice Bureaux  | Progress on the SLA arrangements for 2014/16
Green Deal  | Update on initiative to which Policy Committee has contributed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>29th June 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do we want to achieve?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWB Strategy</td>
<td>Review of progress to date</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare Reform</td>
<td>The impact of welfare reform to date, and how SNC’s approach has impacted on local residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empty Homes</td>
<td>Consideration of new opportunities to reduce empty homes further</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Help</td>
<td>Review of progress being made</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Options Scheme</td>
<td>Engagement on any revisions to the development of the scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military Covenant</td>
<td>Consideration of this initiative</td>
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<tr>
<th>2nd November 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do we want to achieve?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Strategy</td>
<td>Review progress to date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place and Communities</td>
<td>How can housing, HWB, and Early Help benefit and maximise the role of communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site</td>
<td>Review of the outcomes achieved from the scheme and consideration of any changes (if any) required</td>
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</table>
South Norfolk Housing Strategy 2015-18
INTRODUCTION

Vision

To ensure all residents have access to and are able to maintain good quality housing that meets their needs and aspirations. The housing secured, and the support provided where appropriate, will assist local people in maximising their life opportunities – that is, they will be opportunity ready for housing, jobs, healthy lifestyles, independent living and their community.

The council strives to make South Norfolk the best possible place to live, work and visit. All residents should have access to a home of a good standard which they can afford and are able to sustain and maintain. The council’s local plan will help to address the issues around the supply of housing in the district in the long term, including the provision of new affordable housing. This strategy sets out the council’s approach to meeting the housing needs of those residents who are unable to afford or access a decent home.

This housing strategy builds on the achievements of its predecessor and fulfils the council’s duty to implement a Housing Strategy under the Local Government Act 2003.

The strategy covers the period 2015-2018. It is accompanied by an action plan which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Strategy sets out how the council will deal with continuing themes and new challenges facing South Norfolk through four priority outcomes. The action plan will be used to identify the key actions which will deliver those priority outcomes. The involvement and support of our partners will be crucial in delivering this plan.

Purpose

Secure, suitable and affordable housing is a basic need on which many other outcomes depend. Housing has an important role in shaping healthy places, preventing ill health, supporting residents into work and tackling child poverty. We will support residents to access and live in good quality housing that improves opportunities for employment, educational attainment and health and wellbeing.

The Wider Impact of Housing

Housing impacts on all aspects of life; the absence of housing limits opportunities to life to even a basic standard. In South Norfolk we want to give customers the best possible chance to access sustainable housing, which meets their basic needs, and which goes on to help them build and sustain a prosperous life.
**SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
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<tr>
<td>To ensure all residents have access to and are able to maintain good quality housing that meets their needs and aspirations. The housing secured, and the support provided where appropriate, will assist local people in maximising their life opportunities – that is, they will be opportunity ready for housing, jobs, healthy lifestyles, independent living and their community responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>A good supply of market and affordable housing within South Norfolk which meets customer needs and supports growth</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority Activities and Areas of Focus</th>
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<tr>
<td>These are found within the body of this strategy and provide the broad framework for how we, in conjunction with partners, intend to deliver our priority outcomes over the life of this strategy, including details of the areas that we will concentrate our focus on.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Annual Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An action plan will demonstrate how the Council intends to meet our obligations for each of the Priority Activities. The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Council’s Housing and Public Health Policy Committee and the action plan will guide this work. The action plan will be revised annually to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONSULTATION

Here we will need to include details of how we consulted, and what the results meant for the strategy,
**CONTEXT: South Norfolk**

South Norfolk is a predominately rural district, with 78% of the area officially designated as ‘rural’. There are a small number of market towns, over 100 villages and some northern parts of the area fall into the suburban parts of Norwich - the closest city.

Local data provides the basis for the strategic outcomes sought in this Strategy. Some key points of note about our community are as follows:

**Our Residents**

South Norfolk is projected to be the fastest growing local authority area in the County, with the population increasing by around 13,100 between 2011 and 2021. South Norfolk does not have a high population density at 1.39 persons per hectare, compared to the average for England at 4.11.

48.8% of the South Norfolk population is male, 51.2% is female.

The population in South Norfolk is older than average. The number of residents aged 65+ is higher than the average for the East of England, and England at 30% of the population. However, it is similar to the population in other parts of Norfolk-with the exception of Norwich City. This proportion is projected to increase over the next 20 years, with the greatest increase being in those aged 75 to 84.

The numbers of residents BME groups is low, 95.2% of the population is white British; compared to the average for England which is 79.8%, the East of England at 85.3% and 92% for Norfolk.

**Health and Wellbeing**

In 2012, 22% of the adult population were considered obese and 61% having excess weight; both slightly below the national average.

460 residents claim Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance (3.6% of the population).

In 2011, 7.4% of the population had a long term illness that limited day-to-day activity ‘a lot’ and 10.5% ‘a little’.

In 2011-12, 33.6% of adults regularly participated in 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport; this is lower than the national average.

There are an estimated 2,480 children (11.9%) living in poverty in South Norfolk. *(HMRC Child Poverty 2010 statistics)*
The number of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs, including English and Maths (A+ to C) in South Norfolk is currently 67.5% (national average of 53%)

**Housing Stock**

Housing in the area is low in density and the tenure of housing was as follows at April 2013:

- Owner Occupation: 73.4%
- Private Rental Sector: 13.3%
- Shared Ownership: 1%
- Social Housing: 12.3%

On 1st April 2013 there were 56,234 properties in South Norfolk. Very few of these are second homes.

The council has taken a proactive approach to reducing the number of homes standing empty for long period of times. Using the government benchmark, the number of homes empty for more than 6 months has been reduced from 618 in 2007 to 338 in 2014, down by 45%

South Norfolk Council holds none of its own social housing stock (with the exception of some temporary accommodation for homeless households) since transferring it to Saffron Housing Trust in 2004.

The Council has commissioned research into housing need, and data will be available by the time the final version of this strategy is published.

The total number of properties owned and managed by Registered Providers on 1st April 2013 was 6,525.

20% of private sector households in South Norfolk experience fuel poverty.

Average house prices are about 7 times average earnings, making it very difficult for local people to become owner occupiers.

South Norfolk has the 5-year land supply required by the National Planning Policy Framework. It is 5.10 years in the Norwich Policy Area (Norwich plus parts of Broadland and South Norfolk), and 6.76 years in the South Norfolk Rural Policy Area.

Since April 2011:
- 2,534 homes have been built in South Norfolk;
- 954 additional affordable homes have become available – 553 new-build to housing associations plus 401 others (such as Help to Buy);
- The 553 to housing association comprised almost 22% of the 2,534 total.
CONTEXT: Nationally

Housing activity at the local level is affected by nationwide pressures and is crucial in addressing some national issues:

- **The shortage of housing nationally**, reflected in the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure the availability of a 5 year land supply throughout England. This has led to Greater Norwich embracing economic growth and a substantial number of new homes into the 2030s.

- **The increasing pressures on health services**. Homes should be safe, secure and suitable to enable people to live independently, and to facilitate discharge from hospital.

- National budget projections indicate *reducing public sector financial resources* over the next few years. This means that expenditure must be carefully prioritised and linked with private sector resources, especially those within the owner occupied sector.

- **The General Election in May 2015** might result in national policy changes with implications for housing activity. All organisations with a strategic role must respond and take advantage of new opportunities.
## Key Partners Who Play a Significant Role in the Housing Agenda and Their Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saffron Housing</th>
<th>Social Care Outcomes Framework</th>
<th>NHS Health Outcomes Framework</th>
<th>South Norfolk CCG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Build and maintain quality affordable homes</td>
<td>• Domain one: Ensuring quality of life for people with care and support needs</td>
<td>• Preventing people from dying prematurely</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide the optimum level of quality services</td>
<td>• Domain two: Delaying and reducing the need for care and support</td>
<td>• Enhancing quality of life for people with long-term conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure customers are involved in improving Saffron</td>
<td>• Domain three: Ensuring that people have a positive experience of care and support</td>
<td>• Helping people to recover from episodes of ill health or following injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Care about and work with local communities</td>
<td>• Domain four: Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm</td>
<td>• Ensuring that people have a positive experience of care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be prepared to find and implement innovative solutions</td>
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<td>• Treating and caring for people in a safe environment and protecting them from avoidable harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be an organisation that people want to work for</td>
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<td>• Promoting a culture of safety, continuous improvement and innovation through the commissioning of effective clinical services within a clear framework of quality standards</td>
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<td>• Avoiding reactive approaches to commissioning, replacing short-termism with a planned and sustainable approach to pathways of care</td>
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<td>• Working with key stakeholders on true collaboration and integration thereby delivering whole-systems approaches to clinical patient care</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Nurturing clinical engagement by way of on-going support, development and training</td>
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<td>• Utilising local patient experience to inform and challenge process. Embedding patient participation and engagement across all elements of the commissioning cycle.</td>
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<td>• Identifying hard to reach groups and looking to innovative approaches to achieve their involvement.</td>
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PRIORITY OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR SOUTH NORFOLK

Priority Outcome 1: A good supply of market and affordable housing within South Norfolk which meets customer needs and supports growth

Introduction
Overall, the housing market is working well in South Norfolk in terms of the number of new homes completed, a reduction in empty homes and the expansion of the private rented sector without rents rising excessively.

We recognise that in order to support growth, our housing supply will need to meet growing demands and be flexible to the requirements of those residing within our district.

What we know

- To meet housing need 193 new affordable homes are required per annum. (A new SHMA later in 2015 will provide up to date information)
- Since April 2011, the average number of affordable homes completed has been 254 per annum.
- Since April 2011, the Council has provided grant funding to enable housing associations to build 113 affordable homes
- We give priority to planning applications which are linked to employment and growth in the district
- 74% of our housing stock is owned, 13% belongs to the private sector, 12% is social housing and 1% is shared ownership
- We need general needs accommodation for small and newly forming households; two-bed houses are in high demand, as are all one-bedroom properties for singles and couples
- There are (at January 2015) 868 applicants on the Housing register:
  - 512 (59%) require 1 bedroom (including 140 – 16% needing sheltered housing
  - 245 (28%) require 2 bedrooms
  - 104 (12%) require 3 bedrooms
  - 7 (1%) require 4+ bedrooms
- Using the government benchmark, the number of homes empty for more than 6 months has been reduced from 618 in 2007 to 338 in 2014, down by 45%
- The fact that South Norfolk has a 5-year housing land supply means that there are no land supply barriers to building more homes.
- The Government’s Help to Buy (equity loan) scheme has enabled 403 households to become owner occupiers
- Every home built brings £97,866 into the region and creates 2.1 jobs (CEBR, 2013)
- For every £1 spent on housing, £2.41 is generated in the wider economy
The population in South Norfolk is older than average and a growing population of older people will require housing with care options to maximise their ability to live independently. There are currently no housing with care options for purchase available in South Norfolk. There is county-wide recognition that research is required into how much housing with care is needed.

South Norfolk is a prosperous area. In 2012/13, South Norfolk saw a drop in unemployment levels that were last seen in 2008/09. South Norfolk’s unemployment levels were at 4.1%, in 2013 which was 0.9% higher than 2007/08. South Norfolk has lower levels of unemployment when compared to the East of England and England average.

Long-term unemployment was at 0.47% in 2013.

What we will do to achieve our outcomes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Being “Investment Ready”   | Support an “Investment Ready” culture across the District to support economic growth  
|                            | Ensure the A11 corridor is a successful enterprise zone which seizes on the opportunities of dualling the road, supporting growth in businesses, infrastructure, housing and employment  
|                            | Develop housing initiatives that support the market towns across South Norfolk  
|                            | Ensure new housing developments maximise the chances offered to local people who are accessing employment, education and training.  
|                            | Maximise opportunities of all land in South Norfolk – particularly that which is surplus or underutilised i.e. Promote land supply and maintain a five-year supply of housing land. |
| Enabling Delivery          | Promote and deliver affordable housing (which includes First Time Buy), through a range of tenure types, to help meet; and to enable a further healthy future trajectory  
|                            | Investigate how demand for custom build might be met by seeking the availability of serviced plots  
|                            | Deliver an affordable housing grants scheme (through New Homes Bonus) to help deliver affordable homes where financial viability is challenging (the scheme is not set out to meet normal planning obligations).  
|                            | Examine the possibilities of private sector rent within new developments to improve quality and choice for residents  
|                            | Investigate housing need and developing, with partners, appropriate models of supported housing (and housing with care)  
|                            | Develop the concept of Lifetime Homes in the SN to avoid longer term costs of property adaptations and to promote independent living  
|                            | Implement actions following the results of the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment and preparing the |
| Maximising Existing Housing Stock | • Following the successful reductions in the overall numbers of empty homes in the District, target the empty homes work to maximise the benefits on local communities and environments. |
| Utilising Council Assets efficiently and effectively | • Delivery of the Big Sky SNC-owned company to develop mixed residential and commercial property; and to maintain and rent residential property for market lets. |
Introduction

If customers are in priority housing need in South Norfolk, they will be accommodated more quickly than in most other - if not all - parts of the country. This is because of our focus on supply and demand, our prevention work to avoid people falling off the universal pathway, an enhanced support package to meet need and a system which targets resources where needed.

What we know

- There is a huge appreciation of the need to secure outcomes for customers beyond accessing housing, to ensure that sustainable outcomes are achieved that enable people to remain in stable accommodation and prosper.
- The average age of a first time buyer in England is 36: the highest it has ever been
- Average income in South Norfolk is £30,900, and the average house price is £209,053
- Nationally, the average first-time buyer spends £147,000 on their first home, with a 20% deposit of £29,400 and a mortgage worth £117,600.
- The average income in South Norfolk is £30,900 making the average deposit 95% of income for a first time buyer, based on the national average amount paid for a first time buyer's home
- The rising age that people enter homeownership is of concern as it leaves people at risk of repaying a mortgage at the age of retirement.
- There are a growing number of potential purchasers who are unable to access owner occupation creating a need for low cost home ownership
- The low income levels of many households are important, and providing residents with opportunities to improve their income and life chances is vital to ensure that residents can achieve aspirations of home ownership
- There is demand for custom build, being registered through the Council’s status as a Right to Build Vanguard authority. Currently (January 2015) 18 people have expressed interest in building their own home, and this number is likely to increase.
- In 2013/14 we received 2919 new requests for housing advice
- In 2012/13 there were 651 new applications to the housing register. In the same year 607 applicants were housed through it
- Positive action was successful in preventing or relieving homelessness in 304 cases in 2013/14
• But, not all South Norfolk residents who need our help are benefiting from assistance via the housing register. We have an effective system, once customers are engaged with it, but not all of those in need are identified.

• 6,525 homes are owned and managed by Registered Housing Providers in South Norfolk. The largest of these is Saffron Housing Trust who acquired all South Norfolk Council stock via transfer in 2004
• In January 2014 there were 86 caravans on authorised sites and 7 caravans on unauthorised sites in South Norfolk

What we will do to achieve our outcomes?

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| Enabling the appropriate access to housing | • Develop services that are based on using the benefits of both transformational and transactional customer relationships. This approach can simplify the service for customers with lower level or standard needs and direct more resource to Early Help.  
• Further develop a more comprehensive support offer to service users that secures outcomes wider than housing ones e.g. Early Help, Enhanced Housing Options Toolkit, Handyperson Services, Employment and Benefits support  
• Offer advice to residents/potential residents which enables access across all tenure types, and embed this advice to benefit local businesses – and promote these services, especially to those residents in need but not currently known to SNC and partners  
• Enhance our approach to housing and give wider advice through the tools provided to us through the national Gold Standard for Homelessness services |
| Ensuring residents can pay for their home and manage their finances | • Provide opportunities to Housing Register applicants and recipients of housing options advice to take part in training and support which gets them “Tenancy Ready”  
• Support and encourage residents to maintain financial independence, through advice on employment, housing and welfare benefits, and council tax support |
| Enabling residents to manage their own home | • Explore our options to offer tenancy awareness sessions to both existing and future residents  
• Ensure the right support is provided at the right time through Early Help  
• Work with partners and gypsy and traveller communities to ensure gypsies and travellers have suitable provision and quality of life within communities and within a culture of rights and responsibilities. |
Introduction

South Norfolk Council has a positive track record of supporting vulnerable households - which is both people and property focused. The work includes the delivery of disabled facilities grants (DFGs), care and repair services and handyman services.

What we know

- 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.
- 15,414 private sector homes have category 1 hazards (32% - 25% excess cold and 7% fall hazards).
- 2,332 private sector homes in South Norfolk are in disrepair (5% of the total).
- The majority of the properties in poor condition are owned by people who are asset rich, but cash poor. Consequently their housing is becoming unsuitable to meet their needs, and they are seeking alternative accommodation - at a higher cost to wider services.
- The majority of the properties in poor condition are older properties in the area which are owned by older people who cannot afford to maintain them.
- Average cost of a fall related admission is £19,000 per patient. In South Norfolk it is predicted that there will be 624 hospital admissions from falls in 2015 = a total cost £11,856,000.
- Average cost of a cold related incident requiring intervention is £18,100. It is predicted that the number of cold related incidents requiring intervention in South Norfolk in 2015 is 127. The cost of this is £2,298,700.
- 1,054 properties in South Norfolk do not have central heating.
- Occupiers in 20% of the private sector stock in South Norfolk are in fuel poverty (this is owner occupation and private rental sector), this is in common with the rest of the county which experiences a level of fuel poverty higher than the national average. This is commonly attributed to a lack of mains gas, and a lack of knowledge about accessing the best deals.
- Data highlights that excess winter deaths are higher in some pockets of South Norfolk, further work has highlighted the reasons for this - where homes are especially cold, or factors external to the home are the cause.

Home Energy Efficiency - The council has successfully secured government funding to promote the flagship Greendale Energy Efficiency programme. By working with local communities we have developed exemplar schemes such as the energy improvements to Tasburgh Village Hall to demonstrate how energy costs can be reduced, comfort improved and use of facilities increased. We are on target to improve the energy efficiency of 60 hard to heat homes by October, targeting the over the next 6 months.
Community based services can help maintain older people in their homes for longer; reducing spend on more intensive support options. The average, annual cost of providing residential care for each person is £23,868. This compares to £7,696 for Domiciliary Care, £2,704 for Day Care, and £5,304 for Direct Payments.

Readmissions to hospital within 30 days costs the NHS £2.2 billion per year.

In 2012/13 – 611 benefited from the Handyperson scheme.

In 2013, 141 homes were adapted via funding from DFGs.

Older people are more likely to have their independent living needs met through housing with care, rather than sheltered housing.

There has been a fall in the reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) of around 16% over the last year. However, ASB suffers from under-reporting with national figures suggesting that 75% goes unreported. In Norfolk, Operational Partnership Teams have been set up in each district following a countywide review of how we tackle ASB.

Total crime in the area between July and September 2013 was 11.58 crimes per 1,000 population, this figure decreased to 8.11 crimes per 1,000 population in April – Jun 2014.

What we will do to achieve our outcomes?

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<th>Priority Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieving Independent Living</td>
<td>• Enhance independent living and support to vulnerable residents to reduce avoidable hospital admissions by ensuring homes are suitable to meet residents’ needs through joint working and funding with partners</td>
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<td>• Help to reduce the delay to patients leaving hospital through appropriate Handyperson services</td>
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<td>• Work with Norfolk County Council and other partners to ensure the changes to Supporting People funding have the best possible impact on South Norfolk residents in terms of support arrangements</td>
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<td>• Enhance the support for people (1) with mental health issues and (2) who can benefit from an Early Help approach by developing a project that utilises the opportunities from Care Farms</td>
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<td>• Support adults and vulnerable people referred by Early Help partners to achieve independent living.</td>
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<td>• Undertake greater profiling of savings achieved through Early Help</td>
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<td>• Dependent on the outcomes of the bid: working with Orwell to develop additional accommodation provision for victims of domestic abuse, including move on accommodation to support customers with reintegration into communities and to achieve independent living.</td>
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<td>• Develop independent living to achieve better interventions for people with dementia including raising awareness, partner understanding and community working.</td>
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</table>
| Creating Affordable Warmth                                                                 | Make homes more energy efficient by providing information and advice, and offering means tested/targeted loans and other support (including access to external funding) to help local residents to live in affordable warmth
|                                                                                       | Reduce Excess Winter Deaths through targeted promotional campaigns in high risk areas to help support older and vulnerable residents, and (through the multi-agency focus group) establishing a three-year plan with partners.
|                                                                                       | Review the financial assistance provided (for example through loans, grants and other support) to ensure residents without the required resources are able to live in affordable warmth |
| Enabling Decent and Safe Homes in Strong Communities                               | Manage and maintain intelligence on condition of the housing stock
|                                                                                       | Improve the quality of housing across all tenures by ensuring it meets legal standards, does not cause nuisance and does not present unacceptable risks to health.
|                                                                                       | Develop a training and support programme for private sector landlords to help them undertake their responsibilities and encourage their continued input into the sector as partners with SNC.
|                                                                                       | Work with partners to prevent and manage the effects of antisocial behaviour on our local communities. |
Introduction

South Norfolk Council has been proactive in reducing homelessness in the district in the last three years, following the implementation of a prevention approach. We have also worked closely with partners in implementing early intervention in other areas such as welfare reform in order to create sustainable futures for our residents.

What we know

- The total amount paid in benefits to working age people in South Norfolk was £22,244,738 in 2013/14.
- Around 10% of the population aged over 65 is lonely all or most of the time: this equates to approximately 2,650 people in South Norfolk.
- In November 2013, 154 16-18 year olds were not in education, employment or training. This equates to 3.9%, which is lower than the Norfolk-wide figure of 5.4%.
- Qualification levels of residents aged 16-64 are lower than regional and national figures, although Norfolk’s improvement since 2010 has been faster than nationally.
- In 2013/14 decisions were made for 70 homelessness applications: 31 of these were accepted. Of the 31 accepted cases of homelessness: 29 were placed in temporary accommodation - the S193 duty ended for the remaining.
- Homeless people have a rate of physical health problems two or three times greater than the general population. They face significant administrative barriers to GP registration and there is a lack of available outreach services.
- The main reasons for homelessness applications over the past 5 years are:
  - Violent relationship breakdown
  - Relationship breakdown
  - Termination of a tenancy
  - Parents unwilling to accommodate
- Homelessness is commonly experienced by single males and female single parents; focused work to prevent the causes of homelessness for these groups would reduce the number of homeless individuals in the district. This work would focus around building healthy and sustainable relationships.
- Although South Norfolk has lower levels of unemployment when compared to the East of England and England average, there is work to do in this area regarding the level on income that people achieve from employment.
- Campaign to End Loneliness tells us that the impact of loneliness on mortality is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, but we still know little about how the impact of housing with care on loneliness differs across resident or scheme types - suggesting there are other...
options to consider. Working with partners in health there is a role for housing in reducing the effects that loneliness has on the population.

What we will do to achieve our outcomes?

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| Maximising the opportunities of Early Help             | • Maximise the housing contribution of all partners to the Early Help Pathfinder project. The district collaboration hub provides multi-agency working which is transforming the approach of services that deliver help and improved outcomes for residents and communities.  
• Ensure the role of Councils and partners in delivering low cost early prevention work and thereby avoiding later high cost reactive work is recognised and maximised.  
• Develop a community-led project which combats the negative effects of loneliness through volunteering  
• Provide an appropriate range of temporary accommodation for homeless households – whilst maintaining an emphasis on keeping numbers of those accessing it as low as possible through early intervention work and ensuring good move-on arrangements |
| Working collaboratively to secure wider outcomes (on health and wellbeing and early interventions; economic growth; and communities) | • Contribute to the countywide review of SLAs with the Citizens Advice Bureaux to ensure the support they provide reflects the needs of customers and the strategic priorities of funding providers.  
• Review all SLAs to ensure they deliver strategically relevant outcomes  
• Work with partners to agree a Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy that places greater emphasis on wider outcomes and moves from prevention to early interventions.  
• Develop the Care and Repair Service to achieve greater input from community groups, the voluntary sectors and local volunteers  
• Prioritise partnership working that help secure outcomes |
| Delivery of Safeguarding arrangements                  | • Deliver a Designated Safeguarding Officer Group and review the SNC policy in line with changing national and local agendas and requirements  
• Support local strategic and operational joint working on safeguarding and the raft of related subjects |
WHAT NEXT

To be drafted following completion of previous sections where our intended activity will be stated, after consultation with key partners and stakeholders
IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY

The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Council’s Housing and Public Health Policy Committee and the action plan will guide this work. The action plan will be revised annually to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.

These new actions will be incorporated into future Directorate Business Plans and any individual initiatives will have a delivery plan which will set out a programme of activities and progress against each one.
APPENDIX A

Bibliography – to be completed