# North Norfolk District Council invests in new temporary accommodation to tackle housing crisis



Cabinet members of North Norfolk District Council have taken a significant step towards addressing the local housing crisis by approving funding for six new homes designated as temporary accommodation. The decision, made at a council meeting this week, is underpinned by a £588,000 government grant as well as £900,000 raised through a new premium on second homes. This council tax premium, which takes effect this month, imposes a 100% surcharge on properties that are not permanently occupied.

Wendy Fredericks, the portfolio holder for housing at North Norfolk District Council, highlighted the urgent need for such initiatives, stating, "It has been desperate times for many in recent years. These homes will improve residents' lives tremendously while they wait to find a permanent home." The council, which has been facing increased demand for temporary housing amid a cost of living crisis, has been spending approximately £1 million annually on temporary accommodation. The financial strain has been exacerbated by a shortage of social housing, compelling families to be placed in more expensive lodging types, including hotels, and sometimes even outside the county.

Currently, North Norfolk District Council operates 11 temporary homes situated in North Walsham, with additional properties located across various towns including Holt, Fakenham, and Cromer, among others. In total, the council has acquired 31 homes aimed at assisting those facing homelessness, a figure that is particularly concerning given reports of nearly 400 homeless children in Norfolk.

The new properties planned for purchase will be distributed across the district, with one specifically set aside to assist Afghan households newly resettled in the area.

In a contrasting scenario, Brent Council in North London has come under fire for the £530,000 acquisition of a house that has remained unoccupied for nearly two years. The property, which was divided into two flats, was purchased in April 2023 through a council-owned company aimed at tackling the borough's housing shortage. Opposition councillor Paul Lorber has been vocal in his criticism, labelling the situation as indicative of ‘financial incompetence’ and urging an investigation into the purchasing process and the assessment of properties prior to acquisition.

Families in Brent have increasingly approached the council in search of assistance, with reports indicating that around 150 families seek help weekly at the Civic Centre. Approximately 33,000 individuals are currently on the local housing register, with 2,266 housed in temporary accommodation that costs the council £100,000 a day.

Cllr Lorber asserted that maintaining properties in the council’s portfolio without utilisation is depriving families of adequate housing, estimating that the council has lost at least £50,000 due to this inaction. Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, he stated, “No responsible and efficient Council Administration would spend over £500,000 only to keep it empty for so long. The Labour Leadership running Brent should be ashamed of this incompetence.”

A spokesperson for Brent Council responded to these criticisms, asserting that the property was acquired as part of a broader initiative to provide safe and decent homes for homeless residents. They noted that the house requires significant refurbishment, which has turned out to be more extensive and lengthy than originally anticipated. They confirmed that the first of the two flats is nearing completion and will soon be ready for residents on the housing waiting list. The council aims to deliver 899 affordable homes by April 2026 through its housing initiatives.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)