



Cabinet Member Report for Housing

Northampton Borough Council

19th January 2015

Northampton Partnership Homes

The Management Agreement between the Borough Council and Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) came into effect on 5th January. NPH will operate independently as an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and is responsible for the day to day management of the town's Council housing stock as well as delivering a financially sustainable way to improve these homes in the future. Under the new structure, tenants will play a direct part in making decisions about the housing service and how money is invested to improve their homes.

Although management responsibility for the housing stock and service pass to the new company, Northampton Borough Council will still own the housing stock and be responsible for some housing functions as well as wider, strategic issues related to housing. Tenants will also remain as tenants of the Council, with all their existing rights protected.

Housing and Wellbeing Service

A review of the structure of the housing service which remains with the Borough Council has been carried out, and a draft structure and business plan for the Housing and Wellbeing Service has been developed which should:

- Provide the Council with sound strategic advice on housing matters
- Ensure there is capacity to work in partnership with NPH
- Focus the work of the housing options service more clearly on preventing homelessness, and reducing the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Build on the work with private sector landlords, to both create new initiatives to support them, and to carry out enforcement where required.

The new structure includes a permanent Head of Service, and managers to lead on Private Sector Housing and Housing Options. This post will be advertised in January, with the appointment made by the Appointments and Appeals Committee. The new structure is expected to be in place by March 2015.

Landlords' Forum

The Borough Council hosted a Landlords Forum at Franklin's Gardens last year. The event was attended by more than 70 landlords and was well received by private landlords and lettings agents who own or manage private residential lettings across the town. There was a very full agenda with speakers on a wide range of subjects of

interest to local landlords. The event included external speakers who advised landlords about property management issues, energy efficiency and financing for private rental property. There was a guest speaker who spoke about Oxford's experience raising HMO standards and officers from the Borough Council spoke about planning policies and HMO licensing.

Councillor Mary Markham
Cabinet Member for Housing