



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 10th July 2017

Northampton Landlord Forum

On 13th June 2017, the Private Sector Housing Manager provided a well-attended Landlord Forum with a comprehensive overview of the Council's plans to update its Housing Enforcement Policy and adopt a Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy. Landlords and managing agents expressed strong support for the Council's approach to Civil Penalties and Rent Repayment Orders and the action the Council is taking to ensure that offenders meet the cost of enforcement.

Billy Gill (the Northamptonshire representative of the National Landlords Association) provided the Landlord Forum with an excellent overview of national developments affecting private landlords and managing agents, including the tax changes on mortgage interest payments and the potential implications of the Government's plans to impose a ban on charging letting fees to tenants.

Housing Strategy 2018-2021

On 6th July 2017, I will be attending a couple of workshops that have been organised to inform the development of Northampton's overarching Housing Strategy.

Multi Agency Rough Sleepers Workshop

On 13th July 2017, I will be attending a half day workshop that has been organised to support the implementation of 'TOGETHER we change lives', our multi agency strategy for ending the need to sleep rough in Northampton.

Northampton Partnership Homes

Since the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017, Northampton Partnership Homes has continued to work very closely with Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service and tenants and leaseholders to ensure that the fire safety arrangements it has put in place are appropriate and provide the necessary assurance.

All of the Fire Risk Assessments in the properties managed by NPH are complete and up to date.

There has been a lot of speculation regarding the refurbishment of St Katherine's Court, the Council's only high-rise block. The cladding that is being installed at St Katherine's Court is not the same as the cladding installed at Grenfell Tower; it is a layered composite enamel that is deemed to be a non-risk product, so was not required to be submitted for testing by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Whilst we are satisfied by the type of construction materials used, fire safety is also very much about the actions taken to pro-actively manage fire risk, such as testing alarms, detection systems and emergency lighting in blocks. Although the current law does not require us to do so, a sprinkler system will be installed in the fire exits and communal areas of St Katherine's Court, as part of the current improvements that are due to be completed in the Autumn.

Northampton Partnership Homes has kept the Council fully informed of the action it has been taking in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire. I feel assured by Northampton Partnership Homes' approach to fire safety and compliance, and I am grateful to its Officers for the considerable efforts they have gone to in reassuring residents at this difficult time.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing