



Reviewing the future  
of Northampton's housing



NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **Northampton Borough Council**

### **Housing Stock Options Appraisal Community Impact Assessment**

**December 2013**

**Author: Georgia Tait**  
**Housing Options Programme Project Support Officer**  
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## **Community Impact Assessment**

### **Name of matter assessed:**

Housing Stock Options Review

### **Who will make the decision:**

Full Council

### **Who has been involved in developing this matter:**

- Northampton Borough Council Housing Tenants
- NBC Housing Employees
- A Tenant appointed Independent Tenant Adviser
- the Lead Technical Adviser to the Programme
- NBC Senior Management
- Councillors
- external Financial, Legal and Surveyor specialists and others as required
- the Programme Director and Team

### **Date:**

December 2013

### **Proposal Name:**

Housing Stock Options Review

### **1. Aims/objectives and purpose of the policy/service/function**

#### **- aims and objectives:**

The Housing Stock Options Appraisal Programme was a review of the future options for the ownership, funding and management of the Council's homes.

The goal or Mission Statement of the review was to identify the most tenant focussed option for the future which:

- Secured tenants' rights
- Minimised tenants' costs
- Could meet the improved standards of home and environment which tenants wish to see
- Would be sustainable
- Assessed the potential for delivering affordable homes and regeneration

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- Looked at the issues for the affected employees and the Council

The options for the management and delivery of the housing stock were reviewed throughout the process. The tenants in the Tenants' Panel and employees in the Employee Focus Group scored 5 options against criteria they developed themselves.

### - key actions:

Governance structures and engagement structures were implemented in order to manage the process. The governance structures included:

- Programme Team
- Programme Board
- Member Board

These were attended by key stakeholders and senior management within NBC. Member Board was additionally attended by Councillors.

Engagement structures included:

- Tenants' Panel (TP) - all tenants were welcome to join the Panel at any point since the first meeting of the Panel in September 2012. This became a closed group in August 2013 due to the inability for anyone new to obtain the depth of knowledge gained by tenants who had attended over the previous year, in time to effectively complete the scoring process. The attendance at each meeting varied from 30 to 40 tenants.
- Employee Focus Group (EFG) – consisted of 12 employees initially, dropping to 11 employee volunteers mid-way through the Review. The employees were drawn from the two sections of the Housing service; Landlord Services and Strategic Housing.
- Housing Options Panel (HOP) - consisted of five tenants from the Tenants' Panel, five employees from the Employee Focus Group and five Councillors. The tenants and employees were elected by their respective groups to sit on the HOP.

The Tenants' Panel and Employee Focus Group examined some key areas of work during the review. This included:

- the development of the criteria that the 5 housing stock options were measured against
- the creation of a draft 'Northampton Standard' (contained in Key Doc 14) - the standard of service tenants receive and the standards of improvements made to homes and estates

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- consideration of the impact and implications of making a choice to change to one of the 5 models of delivery options outlined in relation to matters such as employee rights, tenant rights and governance
- the prioritisation of the Northampton Standard based on priorities identified by tenants through the Tenant Survey and the Tenants' Conferences
- reprioritising the Northampton Standard following financial analysis by Savills (Key Doc 22)
- examining possibilities regarding new build in Northampton
- drawing up the Scoring Framework (Key Doc 16)
- scoring the options against 46 criteria
- The writing of reports by both the TP and EFG detailing their recommendation of an option (Key Docs 1 and 2)
- The writing of a report by the HOP regarding their final recommendation to Cabinet (Key Documents 4). This will then be ratified at Full Council in December 2013.

### **- expected outcomes:**

There were five options that the tenants and employees could score against. These were:

1. **Retention** by the Council **with a service review**
2. An **ALMO** - the Council would **remain the landlord** but the management of the housing stock would be delivered via an Arms Length Management Organisation
3. **Transfer to a stand-alone Housing Association**. This would be the creation of a new HA which would solely focus on the stock transferred from NBC
4. **Transfer to a Mutual Housing Association**. The Mutual model allows tenants and employees to become members of the organisation
5. **Transfer as part of a Group Housing Association structure**. This would involve transferring to a new Housing Association which would be part of a bigger group for which there would be a Parent Board which would set the overall strategy, approve budgets and monitor performance.

The scoring exercise selected the ALMO as the highest scoring option for both the tenants and employees. The HOP received reports from both groups with their recommended option. The HOP has prepared its own report describing their recommendation which will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council. The next phase of the programme will implement the chosen option.

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The Tenants' Panel and Employee Focus Group also examined options around new build. The options were:

1. For new build to be accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The main implication of this is that the spend would need to be kept within the debt cap set by Government and would mean improvements in the draft Northampton Standard would need to be deferred to years 6-15 rather than 6-10
2. For new build to be considered outside of the HRA, potentially via a charitable subsidiary
3. For NBC to take a strategic role only and not partake in any new build

Tenants and employees made a decision to prioritise improvements to existing properties and estates and stated that they would like new build to be provided outside of the debt cap. This enabled tenants and employees to then reprioritise the draft Northampton Standard to be delivered in a shorter timescale than would have been possible if new build was to be delivered from within the HRA, and therefore within the debt cap. This decision was endorsed by the HOP.

**- who will be affected and how:**

The key stakeholders of the Programme were NBC tenants and employees within the Housing Service at NBC.

All NBC tenants will be affected by the outcome of the Housing Options Review. The aim of the review was to deliver a better service, meaning any changes should theoretically be positive, aided by the construction of the draft Northampton Standard. The draft Northampton Standard is a set of new standards that tenants feel they should receive. It covers the service tenants receive from the management organisation as well as the standard of improvements made to homes and estates. This draft Northampton Standard is higher than the Decent Homes Standard; a basic minimum standard of decency set by the Government. The Northampton Standard informed by tenants' views and priorities, builds on this to create modern homes which would better suit the needs of tenants.

Employees within the Housing Service at NBC will also be affected by the outcome of the process. Any option other than Council retention would mean that they may be subject to TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations), into the ALMO. If they are identified as affected, their employment would transfer to a new organisation under the ALMO and employees would form part of the new structure with the same terms and conditions of employment that they currently possess under the Council, including the protection of pensions. This forms part of

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the implementation phase and will be carried out in accordance with due process with consultation throughout.

Leaseholders could also potentially be affected by any change in management and service delivery of housing stock. Their concerns lie in service charge levels. Under the ALMO option, the Council would still be the Landlord as it would own the housing stock, but the management body would change. Their right to be consulted on service charges would not be affected under this option and the way in which service charges would be considered would not change.

This Options Review also has an impact on the wider community. The Review has included a decision to build the proposed HRA Business Plan without the specific inclusion of provision for new build initially. Tenants and employees wish to see new build continue, but would like this delivered outside of the HRA initially. This was decided after considering the impact of such a decision. New build is often delivered through various means and it would not mean that Northampton would not benefit from new build by the Tenants making this decision. The proposal was to have it addressed through different channels. The decision resulted in the Northampton Standard being capable of being implemented and delivered within ten years, rather than 15, whilst new builds could continue to be funded alongside this.

**- approximately how many people will be affected:**

There are approximately 13,800 tenants currently residing in a property owned by NBC who would be affected by the outcome of the process. There are approximately 300 employees in the Housing Service at NBC. Those employees affected by the Options Review will be identified once the implementation phase of the Programme is underway. There are approximately 700 leaseholders in the Borough.

**2. Expected date of decision:**

Full Council will make the final decision as to which option is to be implemented on December 9th 2013. The implementation phase will then begin in January 2014.

**3. Scope/focus of the Assessment:**

**- please outline the scope and focus of the assessment**

This Community Impact Assessment will focus on the activities of the Housing Options Review Team over the past 15 months in terms of engagement and consideration of stakeholders. This assessment will also look at factors to consider when undertaking the next phase of the programme, due to begin in January 2014.

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### **4. Community Screening Outcome:**

Will the proposal:	Yes	No
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to health improvements or inequalities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### **5. Relevant data and/or research:**

#### **- outline the information and research that has informed the decision:**

The 2012-2015 NBC Corporate Plan (Background Doc 3) included a commitment to look at the potential options for the future ownership, funding and management of its Housing Stock, to examine which option would best deliver long term improvements needed to both homes and estates as well as the quality of services provided to its tenants.

The outcome of the Options Review process was informed by key stakeholders throughout. A Tenants' Panel was formed, consisting of 30-40 tenants who attended meetings on a regular basis beginning September 2012. The invite to join the Tenants Panel was an open one, meaning any tenant could attend at any point. All documentation from these meetings was posted on the NBC website and all tenants were made aware that this information was available.

A comprehensive communication programme was implemented in order to publicise the Options Review process and to ensure all tenants were aware of the formation of the Tenants' Panel.

Vulnerable tenants were targeted to provide them with specific support to access information, if needed, particularly where tenants had requested large print information, stated that they had carer support, were not mobile etc. Home visits were offered to any tenant unable to attend meetings, via the regular newsletters and the ITA carried out the visits. Financial inclusion issues were considered and all tenants were given the opportunity to have expenses reimbursed, on the same day, for travel, carers or childcare costs, to support and encourage participation.

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Regular newsletters were sent, and three Tenants' Conferences were held; in December 2012, May 2013 and November 2013. All of these conferences included a day and an evening session to promote equality of access and a hearing loop, British Sign Language and interpreters were made available as required. These engagement methods encouraged tenants to share their views and concerns and for the review to understand the potential impact of any decision on the key stakeholders. These views were considered and incorporated into work during the review and in the decision making process.

An Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA) was appointed by a panel of tenants, resulting in the appointment of PS Consultants. The objective of the ITA was to ensure that there was no bias within the process, information was accurate and accessible tenants were supported to actively and effectively engage in the review. The ITA remained independent from the Council throughout. The ITA held ITA Development Sessions regularly for the Tenants' Panel, providing information in advance of Council run sessions so that content was understood and tenants had the opportunity to ask questions. The ITA produced their own newsletters which were sent to all NBC tenants, and provided a freephone number that they could be contacted on by any tenant or leaseholder. Home visits and telephone appointments were offered by the ITA to support those unable to attend meetings..

The appointment of a lead technical adviser provided specialist expertise to the Programme and the knowledge of this individual enabled the content of each engagement meeting to be tailored to meet the varied needs of attendees. This led to both tenants and employees being in a position to score each of the options in an informed manner against the criteria they had written.

Two key surveys were also carried out; a Tenant Survey (Background Document 1) and a Stock Condition Survey (Key Doc 14).

The Tenant Survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI and was designed to collect data on tenants' views, including satisfaction levels. This included satisfaction in relation to the Council's housing service, tenants' awareness of and desire to be involved in the Housing Options Review, and tenants' priorities for the Housing Service going forward. The survey was designed to give **all registered tenants, not just one per household**, the opportunity to provide their views and therefore the survey went out to all NBC tenants named on tenancy agreements. The survey could be completed either via post or online and produced a 26.55% response rate, which was considered by Ipsos MORI as excellent.

The second survey was a Stock Condition survey conducted by Savills. This evaluated NBC's housing stock with a view to assessing the current and future repairs and maintenance liability. This focussed on the work required to bring all

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properties up to the Decent Homes Standard and maintain that standard for 30 years, as well as modelling the costs to maintain the properties at a higher standard than decency brings, again over 30 years. In order to carry this out, Savills surveyed a representative sample of 25%.

Further specialists were utilised when necessary; for example, financial and external legal advice.

### **- sources and key findings:**

The Stock Condition survey key findings were that £96million needed to be spent over the next five years to meet the basic Decent Homes Standard. An additional £64million would be needed to bring the properties up to a modern standard.

The Ipsos MORI Tenant Survey key findings were that tenants' priorities focused on security, repairs and maintenance, quality of services and quality of home. Tenant satisfaction over time showed gradual improvement with older tenants and white tenants most likely to be satisfied, while younger tenants and those from BME backgrounds were less likely. Despite the gradual improvement, there was a clear decline in the satisfaction levels of tenants in relation to believing that their views were taken into account. When compared to similar authorities via Housemark benchmarking, NBC were in the bottom quartile across a number of criteria.

The Northampton Standard was drafted by the Tenants' Panel and Employee Focus Group. This draft standard was deemed by Savills to be a reasonable standard of what tenants could expect. The new standard was developed utilising the priorities identified from over 3,700 survey responses.

The tenants and employees also drew up a list of criteria that reflected what they would like to see from the organisation managing their homes and was based on what they felt was important, across a range of issues. The criteria was further developed into eight key themes and used as a basis to construct a scoring framework. The tenants and employees undertook a prioritisation exercise which prioritised each criteria based on their importance to tenants and employees. The weightings were kept separate for tenants and employees as their priorities differed. A scoring sheet was developed which translated the criteria into questions, allowing the options to be examined as to whether and to what extent they could meet the criteria (Key Doc 16). This scoring process also accounted for the prioritisation by incorporating a weighting that accounted for the importance placed on each criteria by both tenants and employees. To support this assessment, an Options Comparison Document (Key Doc 19) was developed. This document provided factual information on each of the criteria and for each of the options.

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Savills profiled the costs of each of the options to determine their affordability alongside the timescales in which each of the options could deliver the draft Northampton Standard items (Key Doc 22). This was delivered to the tenants and employees and also incorporated into the scoring sheet. This also led to the tenants and employees reprioritising the draft Northampton Standard, meaning some spend could be pushed back to years 6-10 ensuring the affordability of the Standard.

Following the scoring exercise by tenants and employees, the option that was selected was the ALMO. This meant the Council would still own the housing stock but the delivery of this would be through an Arms Length Management Organisation.

**- how will the decision affect people with different protected characteristics:**

The ALMO decision would mean that the Council would still be the landlord, but the delivery of service would be through a new organisation. The ALMO will aim to improve services for tenants and could, according to the scoring results, deliver what tenants and employees wish to see. This decision should see improved standards in tenants' homes and to their estates, as well as an improved standard in service from the organisation managing the housing stock. There would be no alteration to the way the needs of those with protected characteristics are considered currently, under the ALMO option.

Under the ALMO, tenants would maintain the same rights as they currently have under the Council, with some additional opportunities for involvement including the potential to sit on the ALMO's decision-making board in a decision-making capacity and the ability to be involved in an advisory role in discussions regarding rents and service charges.

For employees, the ALMO would build on what the Council delivers currently but additionally enable them to have the opportunity to sit on a decision-making board in a decision-making capacity.

There would be no specific impact of the decision for the ALMO to manage the housing stock on those with protected characteristics. There may be some initial confusion and concerns regarding who would continue to deliver specific elements of the Council's current housing services and this may lead to access to service problems, as certain services would continue to be delivered by the Council. The impact of this will be mitigated by the implementation of a comprehensive communication programme involving all stakeholders, supported by a Communication and Engagement Strategy, clearly identify communication methods and channels to meet the specific needs of those with protected characteristics.

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Employees' terms and conditions would be protected under TUPE legislation. The additional possibilities that the ALMO would bring would be open to all tenants and employees should they wish to become involved. The ALMO would develop its own Equality & Diversity Strategy, developed and approved by tenants and potentially employees sitting on the ALMO Board. This would be a requirement in order to comply with equalities legislation.

### **6. Current service provision:**

#### **- what are you doing now:**

Northampton Borough Council currently owns and solely the Housing Service. It manages a housing stock of over 12,000 properties and is responsible for helping to maintain the supply of low cost social housing in Northampton. Service performance measures and tenant satisfaction levels are historically low when comparing NBC's performance with others within the sector. Tenant expectations continue to rise, reflected in the demand for more modern facilities to be fitted as standard within homes. Significant investment is still required to maintain homes and make environmental improvements to estates, which cannot be funded through decency works.

Savills analysed NBC's financial position regarding the current day to day expenditure within the HRA and identified that, based on Government assessment of spending requirement, NBC is currently underfunding day to day services by over £2m per year.

### **7. Rationale for change**

#### **- what will you do if/when changes are agreed/introduced:**

The key drivers for undertaking the Review to deliver the proposed change were;

- Delivering improvements to the quality of housing services to customers
- Meeting rising expectations of customers
- Ensuring that the necessary investment can be provided to improve homes and the local environment on estates and;
- Meeting the increasing demand for social housing

The Review process developed a goal or Mission Statement for the Review to specify its objectives in carrying out the Review, detailed in . The scoring exercise

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completed by tenants and employees, identified the ALMO as the option that could deliver the most positive impact against all of the agreed scoring criteria. The TP and EFG constructed reports giving their recommendations. The Housing Options Panel considered both of these reports when making its final recommendation. This recommendation will be presented to Cabinet and then to Full Council in December 2013.

The result of the scoring has been communicated to the Tenants' Panel, Employee Focus Group, the wider tenant body, NBC senior management and NBC Housing Service employees. This included an approach comprising of face to face briefings, website updates, and newsletters.

Two Tenants' Conference sessions were held in November 2013. The aim of the Conference was to share the result of the scoring and to gather wider tenants views. Feedback from the November 2013 Tenants' Conference is detailed in Key Doc 21.

Two newsletters were also sent to all tenants in October 2013; one from NBC and one from the ITA. These shared the result of the scoring and let tenants know what this means for them.

If Full Council signs off the recommendation, there will be a further phase to the programme, to prepare for the implementation of the ALMO. This will again include full stakeholder engagement.

Once implementation has been undertaken, which is expected to take 12 months, the housing stock would be managed by an ALMO. The Council would remain the landlord and would continue to have a significant role in specifying what the ALMO would need to do in order to continue to deliver services and the Council would put forward representatives to sit on the ALMO decision making Board. The Council would oversee the performance of the ALMO, through a Management Agreement and supporting delivery plans.

### **8. Identification of affected groups/individuals**

#### **- list the groups/individuals that may be affected by the proposal:**

A stakeholder analysis was undertaken which identified potentially affected groups/individuals.

These are:

- Tenants
- Employees
- Leaseholders

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- NBC senior management
- Other NBC employees
- Councillors
- Key Partners/Contractors

### **9. Assess and/or undertake Consultation**

**- has there been specific consultation on this decision (if not, state why not and/or when this may happen):**

This Review has involved an extensive engagement programme which has been in place throughout the Review, since 2012. The consultation programme included:

- A Tenants' Panel, to which any tenant could join. Tenants involved contributed a combined total of over 5,000 hours of their time through meetings and other sessions
- An Employee Focus Group, to which any employee could volunteer (with line manager approval). Each employee involved contributed approximately 250 hours throughout the Review
- Newsletters from both NBC and the ITA were sent periodically to all tenants providing information on the Review, potential impacts and asking for views
- The ITA delivered over 160 outreach meetings at over 50 different venues to enable tenants not able to attend Tenant Panel meetings. These were often located in community rooms associated with the Council's Sheltered Schemes, recognising the needs of more vulnerable tenants.
- Leaseholders were communicated with via letter regarding updates to the Review and explanation as to potential impacts of any changes
- Three conferences were held; one in December 2012, one in May 2013 and one in November 2013. All sessions updated tenants on the progress of the Review, including proposals, key findings from main evidence used and collected views on potential impact
- Regular staff newsletters and briefings were provided, asking for views and providing information on potential impact. Trade Union representatives were also kept informed on a monthly basis.
- All documentation from Tenants' Panel and HOP meetings were published on the Council's website
- The forum on the website enabled anyone interested in the Review to ask questions

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### **- what were the results of the consultation:**

Tenants and employees were given the opportunity to understand the Options Review process and given the opportunity to identify the recommended option. The consultation programme resulted in a recommendation for an ALMO to be created as the chosen option for the future management of the housing stock. The Tenants' Panel and Employee Focus Group agreed on the same option and the ranking of the remaining options was also the same for both groups. Reasons for their selection were provided in their reports. The Housing Options Panel considered all of the evidence provided and also supported the recommendation for an ALMO to be created. Wider tenants' views, through feedback obtained were considered and taken into account as an integral part the decision making process.

### **- across the protected characteristics, what difference in views did analysis of the consultation reveal:**

The Tenants' Panel was reflective of the wider community and incorporated considerable diversity within its membership although the panel was marginally underrepresented by women and more so with those under 50 years of age. The ITA's report (Key Doc 3) provides analysis of how representative the Panel was and gives its view on the accessibility of the Review process and how its view correlated to that shared by the wider tenant community.

Protected characteristics were analysed throughout the process to ensure due consideration was given to specific needs and to ensure the process was inclusive. The Tenant Survey conducted by Ipsos MORI utilised both postal communications and communication via email. Responses were collected and analysed provided in multiple ways, such age, ethnicity, disability etc as well as location. The survey found that:

- Across a range of services, results showed that older tenants and white tenants were most likely to be satisfied, while younger tenants and those from BME backgrounds were less likely
- Those aged 29 or under were the least likely to be satisfied with the housing service provided by the council (63%), while those aged 75 and above were the most likely to be satisfied (88%)
- Disabled tenants were very positive about the housing service overall. They were significantly more likely to say they were satisfied with the housing service overall (80%) than the tenant population as a whole, and 33% were very satisfied, compared to 26% of the overall tenant population

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- 84% of tenants aged 75+ were satisfied with the value for money of their rent, compared with 58% of under 30s
- 71% of white tenants said that they were satisfied with the value for money of their rent, compared with 64% of BME tenants
- While nine in ten (91%) tenants aged 75 or over said that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home, just over a half (55%) of residents under the age of 30 were satisfied
- White tenants (73%) are more likely than BME tenants (68%) to be satisfied with the overall quality of their home. This was despite the fact that BME tenants (78%) were actually marginally more satisfied than white tenants (75%) with the housing service provided by the Council
- BME tenants (81%) were more likely than white tenants (72%) to agree that tenants should have a greater say in how the housing service was managed
- Communication with tenants appeared to be important to BME tenants. Keeping residents informed ranked as the third most important housing service among BME tenants while it was only the sixth most important for white tenants

**- what conclusions have been drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics:**

All of the extensive evidence, collected through this review, was fully considered in the decision making process.

Whilst the analysis suggested there was a difference in the satisfaction levels and priorities across all protected characteristics, any decision produced from this Review will potentially produce a higher level of service for all tenants, as well as a higher standard of improvements to their homes. The individual analysis obtained will be utilised by the Council and the future planning for services, to address specific issues highlighted through certain groups.

In terms of being able to communicate the decision across all protected characteristics, numerous options have been implemented. Home visits were offered, information was advertised as available in other languages and British Sign Language and interpreters were available and were utilised for the Tenants' Conference. Telephone access to information was provided on either Freephone numbers or 0300 numbers to ensure that cost effective communication methods were provided.

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### **10. Assessment of impact on staff**

**- please give details of impact on staff, including staffing profile if/as appropriate:**

If the ALMO is approved by Full Council, this will require identified staff to transfer to the new organisation. This occurs under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations and means employees terms and conditions would be protected. The TUPE process will determine which employees will transfer. When there is to be a transfer of undertakings, the employer is required to inform and consult with employees through Trade Unions. This review process included regular consultation with the relevant Trade Union groups and this would continue, if the option is approved.

There may be an impact on the residual NBC organisation in terms of process and approval of the option may result in the need to restructure the services remaining within the Council's responsibility. The Council has an agreed Restructure Policy and this policy would apply to any restructure proposals made by the Council following the decision.

### **11. Assessment of impact on wider community**

**- please give details of any impacts to the community as a whole:**

The draft Northampton Standard incorporates a considerable programme of improvements to estates rather than purely improvements to homes, which will be a positive benefit to the wider community. These improvements will take place throughout the life of the 30 year Business Plan but will take 10 years to initially implement. Improvements proposed include, additional parking provision, improved security lighting, improved drying areas, improved bin stores and refurbishments to play areas. Improved service standards relating to management of Anti- social behaviour, repairs and maintenance and grounds maintenance, will potentially positively impact on how individuals experience life within their communities. The effect of ineffectively managed anti- social behaviour, the quality of housing, cleanliness of estates etc, all have a fundamental impact on peoples' lives.

The draft Northampton Standard will also look at the provision of new build outside of the HRA. This would enable environmental and physical property improvements to be carried out sooner than if new build provision was to be delivered within the HRA.

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### **12. Analysis of impact on protected characteristics**

**- please summarise the results of the analysis:**

The outcome of the Options Review would be the same for all tenants whereby it is intended that they would see an increase in service standards and property standards. Tenants would continue to receive services, albeit through an alternative provider. There would be additional opportunities for more involvement for both tenants and employees. This involvement would have no bias in terms of protected characteristics, if the option is implemented as the Equality policies developed for the new organisation would state how involvement should involve equality of opportunity. The outcome of the Review would have a positive impact with no detriment to the provision of service.

### **13. Assess the relevance and impact of the decision to people with different protected characteristics**

	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Age	High	Positive
Disability	High	Positive
Gender reassignment	High	Positive
Marriage and civil partnership	High	Positive
Pregnancy and maternity	High	Positive
Race	High	Positive
Religion or belief	High	Positive
Sex	High	Positive
Sexual orientation	High	Positive
Other socially excluded groups (include health inequalities)	High	Positive

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### **14. Mitigation of adverse impact on staff/service/people**

**- where any negative impact has been identified, please outline the measures taken to mitigate against it:**

No negative impacts were identified for the implementation of the options, mainly due to extensive consultation programme taking views and impacts into account throughout the process and decisions made had the benefit of such impacts.

For tenants, there was the potential for the final selected option to not meet their requirements, leading to a reputational risk for NBC and potential lack of buy in to the next stage of setting up the ALMO. This was mitigated throughout the process, by tenants and affected employees leading the process of drafting the draft Northampton Standard and drawing up the criteria against which the scoring was undertaken. All tenants had access to the ITA, offering impartial advice to tenants. There was regular communication, through the Council's website, newsletters and conferences. Wider tenant views gathered from the conferences were incorporated into work undertaken by the Tenants' Panel and Employee Focus Group. Information was provided for tenants in the way they wished to receive it, and communications will continue throughout the next phase of the Programme.

In regard to employees, there was a potential lack of buy in to the ALMO and a reputational risk for NBC. This was mitigated by comprehensive communications with employees, where clear messages were delivered to all employees within the Housing Service and wider Council services, on a regular basis. The Employee Focus Group had extensive input into work completed under the Review.

There was the potential for distrust regarding service charges for leaseholders. To mitigate the possibility of this, leaseholders were communicated with throughout the process offering opportunities for any questions to be answered. Leaseholders also received copies of newsletters sent to tenants and there was a leaseholder presence at the Conference in November 2013.

There was the potential for the period of change to impact negatively on the delivery of services. This would be mitigated through robust planning, strong leadership and accountable processes.

### **15. Publication of results**

This CIA will be posted on the Council website

### **16. Monitoring and Review**

**- please give details of how the changes will be monitored and when the next review is due:**

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The implementation phase will be thoroughly planned using the same tight programme management processes adopted for this Review. Engagement structures will be refreshed and tenants and employees will continue to be centrally involved and the process. The change will be closely monitored to ensure it is on track through effective governance processes. The ALMO would be subject to requirements contained within a Management Agreement and Service Level Agreements between NBC and the ALMO to ensure service delivery occurs at an agreed standard. The performance of the ALMO will continue to be monitored and the management and delivery of the housing stock could be brought back 'in-house' if the ALMO is underperforming, subject to certain requirements. Safeguards will be put in place to ensure a full options appraisal with full stakeholder engagement is undertaken if there is a call for either a future stock transfer or for the ALMO to be brought back in-house, except in for in certain circumstances defined within the Management Agreement.

### **17. Conclusion**

**- Please state how due regard has been taken to the equality duty, and public health considerations:**

The Options Review process was designed to be inclusive, with consideration given to potential negative impact across the protected characteristics. The outcome of the Review will potentially have positive implications for tenants and employees. The Review was undertaken in a way to allow flexibility in meeting the needs of tenants and employees.

**- please advise on the overall equality implications that should be taken into account in the final decision, considering relevance and impact:**

The process undertaken was designed to be inclusive. Barriers were removed where possible, and access to information was available at all possible opportunities. There is no adverse impact for stakeholders and the Council will continue to monitor this, should the recommended option be implemented. Specific consideration would be given to the landlord function to ensure due regard is evidenced.

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### **References**

Sources of evidence referenced throughout this document are detailed below. This Community Impact Assessment is part of a series of reports compiled in relation to the Housing Options Review. The series comprises:

1. Tenants' Panel Report
2. Employee Focus Group Report
3. Housing Options Panel Report
4. NBC Final Report

The following Key Documents and Background Documents are held centrally and feature in more than one report within the series. All documents are available on the Council's website or available from the Housing Options Review team on 0300 330 7004.

Tenants' Panel Report	Key Document 1
Employee Focus Group Report	Key Document 2
Housing Options Panel Report	Key Document 4
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