



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18th September 2017

Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter

On 6th September 2017, the Leader of the Council and I attended a very special event to express the Council's appreciation of the fantastic support that the local community (including hundreds of individuals and dozens of organisations and businesses) has provided to set up the Nightshelter and ensure its continued success in helping homeless people to rebuild their lives.

The Nightshelter has now been open for 224 nights and, during that time, it has been used by more than 100 men who had been sleeping rough or were at risk of having to sleep rough. Almost two thirds of these men have moved on, in a planned way, to more settled accommodation.

Volunteers play a vital role in the day-to-day running of the Nightshelter. More than 70 have worked regular shifts at the Nightshelter and, between them, they have already invested more than 5,000 hours of their time in providing guests with the help, support and encouragement they need.

Anyone wishing to support the Nightshelter should visit the Council's website:

www.northampton.gov.uk/northamptonnightshelter

Tackling Criminal, Rogue and Irresponsible Landlords

On 19th July 2017, the Cabinet approved a Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy that sets out how the Council will impose financial penalties on landlords and letting agents, as an alternative to prosecution, to improve standards in Northampton's private rented sector.

Next month, Cabinet will consider a Business Case for using the additional income received from civil penalties and rent repayment orders to establish a Housing Enforcement Team that has the expertise and capacity to tackle the criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords that are letting out properties that are substandard and unsafe or operating licensable HMOs without a licence.

Earlier this month, the Council successfully prosecuted a landlord for failing to comply with an Improvement Notice. I was delighted to hear that the Magistrates Court imposed a £10,000 fine on the landlord and ordered him to pay all of the Council's legal costs and a victim surcharge.

Reducing the Council's use of Temporary Accommodation

In response to a sharp rise in the number of homelessness applications and a corresponding increase in the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation, an ambitious action plan has been developed to reduce the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

It is hoped that, as a result of these actions – funded, in part, from housing reserves – the number of households living in temporary accommodation will be halved during the next 12 months and that, during the same timeframe, the Council's use of Bed & Breakfast

accommodation will be reduced by 90% and the Council will stop using out-of-borough temporary accommodation.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing