



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

9th July 2018

Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter

I am very pleased to report that the Nightshelter has now been open for more than 500 nights and that, during this time, it has accommodated more than 200 people who might otherwise have spent, between them, a total of more than 5,000 nights sleeping rough in Northampton.

At Full Council in April 2018, Members approved a motion on homelessness that committed the Council to exploring the options for establishing a permanent emergency nightshelter that has the capacity and facilities to provide men and women with shelter and support. This work is underway and a Nightshelter Business Case will be considered by Cabinet in September 2018.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

As I have explained in previous reports, special arrangements were put in place, in 2017/18, to provide homeless people with emergency shelter, in the Hope Centre, during severe weather.

During the winter of 2017/18, SWEP was activated on three occasions and emergency shelter was provided for a total of 24 nights. As well as playing a co-ordinating role and assisting with the recruitment of volunteers, the Council provided the Hope Centre with funding of £9,100 to ensure that everything ran smoothly when emergency shelter was needed.

It is envisaged that, during the winter of 2018/19, SWEP will once again be managed and resourced by the Council with the support of a team of volunteers it has recruited and trained.

Additional Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Programme

On 26th June 2018, the Government invited local authorities to bid for a share of a £1 billion additional borrowing programme, designed to help local authorities build new council homes.

Local authorities in areas of high affordability pressure – including Northampton – will be able to bid for increases in their HRA borrowing caps in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. The deadline for submitting bids for the additional borrowing programme is 7th September 2018.

The Government has also invited local authorities and housing associations in areas of high affordability pressure to bid for a share of a £1.67 billion affordable homes programme, including investment for social rented homes.

Council Officers will be working closely with Northampton Partnership Homes and housing associations to develop and submit strong bids for the additional borrowing programme and the grant funding that is being made available through the affordable homes programme.

Northampton Partnership Homes

Building new council homes

I am delighted to report that, in addition to the 63 new council homes that are being built at Lakeview House and Little Cross Street, Northampton Partnership Homes is continuing to grow its pipeline of new development opportunities.

Planning permission has been secured for the construction of 30 new homes in Toms Close, Nene Drive, Eastfield / Northfield and Eden Close and, in addition to these homes, planning applications have been submitted for another 52 new homes.

Implementation of the Council Garage Sites Strategy is going well and a number of redundant garage sites have been evaluated for potential redevelopment with new family homes. These are being taken through the formal planning approval process and consultation is now taking place.

Neighbourhood regeneration

Work to regenerate Kings Heath and Spring Boroughs is progressing well.

The works include new play provision, raised vegetable beds for people to grow food, new drying and seating areas, increased and upgraded parking, new communal security doors, new bin and bike stores, upgrades to balconies, decoration of communal areas and the provision of CCTV.

The next neighbourhood to benefit from the 'whole neighbourhood' approach to regeneration is Thorplands. Planning permission has been secured to enable works to be carried out on 54 blocks of apartments, including new windows, roofline works and landscaping.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing