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## Housing and Wellbeing Service Plan 2018-23

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<b>Head of Housing &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<b>Service Area Managers</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder</b>
Phil Harris	Housing Options and Advice Manager Debi Waite – Private Sector Housing Manager Housing Strategy Officer Community Wellbeing Officer	Councillor Stephen Hibbert

## The council's ambition is to be one of the best councils in the country

### 1. Service Overview:

The Housing and Wellbeing Service is responsible for discharging the council's statutory obligations in relation to private sector housing, homelessness and its role as the local strategic housing authority. It supports the council's strategic agenda, acts as the client for Northampton Partnership Homes and plays a pivotal role in encouraging organisations to work collaboratively together to deliver better, joined-up services that improve residents' life chances, safeguard vulnerable people and promote community wellbeing.

The primary purpose of the Housing and Wellbeing Service is to:

- Improve the quality of private sector housing
- Improve the housing, health and wellbeing of residents
- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Discharge the Council's statutory homelessness obligations
- Ensure the Council's housing stock is managed and maintained to the required standard
- Make best use of Northampton's social housing stock
- Encourage and support the provision of good and well managed private rented housing
- Maximise the supply of new affordable housing

The Housing and Wellbeing Service is responsible for:

- **Private sector housing conditions** – responding quickly to complaints about serious disrepair, hazards and housing-related nuisance, and taking appropriate action – including prosecutions, the imposition of civil penalties and carrying out works in default – to improve housing conditions and ensure that accommodation is made safe and habitable.
- **Tenancy relations (harassment / illegal eviction)** – investigating, on the Council's behalf, tenants' complaints about harassment and illegal eviction, helping tenants to apply for rent repayment orders and, where a criminal offence has been committed, pursuing the prosecution of the landlord and/or their agent.
- **HMO licensing** – ensuring that all licensable Mandatory and Additional HMOs are licensed, well managed, safe and habitable and that, where it is necessary to intervene or take enforcement action, prompt action is taken to improve housing conditions, eliminate any health and safety hazards and prosecute, or impose civil penalties on, offenders.
- **Empty homes** – developing and delivering a risk-based programme for bringing empty homes back into use, using enforced sales and compulsory purchase as a last resort, in order to improve the appearance of neighbourhoods, increase housing supply and, where possible, support the work of the social lettings agency.

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- **Social lettings agency** – operating a not-for-profit social lettings agency that leases, manages and lets an extensive and varied portfolio of private rented accommodation in order to tackle substandard housing, bring empty properties back into use, prevent homelessness and help meet the demand for rented housing.
- **Disabled facilities grants** – promoting take-up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and ensuring that grant applications are assessed and approved as quickly as possible and that the annual DFG budget is fully utilised.
- **Housing advice, money advice and homelessness prevention** – providing expert, comprehensive advice on all aspects of housing, budgeting and debt – and, where possible, intervene early and promote effective multi agency working – in order to prevent homelessness, improve housing conditions, reduce rough sleeping and achieve settled housing solutions.
- **Homelessness and temporary accommodation** – meeting the Council's statutory obligations under the homelessness legislation and ensuring that its duties are discharged in accordance with the legislation and the policy of the Council.
- **Emergency nightshelter and street outreach service** – working with volunteers, groups and organisations (as part of a multi-agency approach) to tackle and prevent homelessness and end the need for people to sleep rough in the borough.
- **Housing-related strategies and policies** – ensuring that all of the Council's housing policies and strategies, including the housing allocations policy, are fit for purpose and that they contribute positively to the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives.
- **ALMO client** – working with LGSS Finance and the Council's Chief Executive to monitor the performance of Northampton Partnership Homes in order to ensure that it is complying with the Management Agreement and is continuing to manage and maintain the Council's housing stock to the required standards
- **Affordable housing programme** – developing an affordable housing programme, in partnership with Northampton Partnership Homes, Registered Providers and the Homes & Communities Agency, to deliver new affordable homes for rent and purchase.
- **Northampton Wellbeing Partnership** – championing, supporting and facilitating the integration of housing, health, social care and wellbeing services through multi agency working, the transformation of services and the development of the Partnership.
- **'Hospital 2 Home' scheme** – ensuring that, through effective multi agency working, patients are successfully discharged from Northampton General Hospital and Berrywood Hospital in a planned and timely manner
- **Safeguarding** – ensuring that the Council's approach to safeguarding (including child sexual exploitation) reflects good practice and is fully understood and complied with.

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### 2. Service Achievements 2017/18:

#### Private Sector Housing

- The Home Adaptions Team approved 162 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), completed 146 DFGs and paid DFGs worth £1.143m.
- The Private Sector Housing Manager contributed positively to a small working group of local authorities that helped the DCLG to develop the government guidance for the 'rogue landlords' elements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, including the framework for determining the appropriate levels of civil penalty that can be imposed for a range of housing offences.
- A Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy was developed and approved, enabling the Housing Enforcement Team to impose civil penalties, as part of the Council's 'offender pays' approach to tackling criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.
- As a result of its intelligence-led, targeted approach to housing enforcement, the Council is now well placed to competently detect and investigate possible housing offences and, where appropriate, to impose a civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution.
- 285 HMO licence applications were processed, bringing in a total of £163K in licence fees.
- Intelligence work identified 495 properties that are suspected of being licensable HMOs but operating without an HMO licence.
- A Business Case was developed and approved, expanding the Housing Enforcement Team by eight Officers (including four additional Housing Enforcement Officers) in anticipation of their costs being met from the extra income that is generated from civil penalties.
- The Social Lettings Agency was established with the successful recruitment of a Social Lettings Agency Manager, an Empty Homes Officer, a Lettings Negotiator and a Housing Management & Lettings Officer.

#### Housing Options and Advice

- The Housing Options and Advice Team continued to implement 'TOGETHER we change lives', the multi agency strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton.
- Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter – which opened in February 2017 – grew from strength to strength.
- 158 men stayed at the Nightshelter during the year, and 96 men were helped to move on successfully into settled accommodation.
- 20 women were provided with emergency housing as part of a plan to help them leave the streets or stay off the streets.
- 96 Volunteers donated a total of more than 7,000 hours of their time at the Nightshelter.
- Additional shelter was provided, as part of the SWEP severe weather arrangements, by the Hope Centre (overnight) and by the Nightshelter, Hope Centre and One Stop Shop (during the day) in order to keep people safe.

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- The Street Outreach Team investigated, and responded to, 162 reports of people sleeping rough during their twice-weekly (early morning and late night) street outreach sessions.
- Continued to work in partnership with a broad range of organisations and services to ensure a joined-up approach to the assessment and mitigation of risk and tackling, preventing and reducing homelessness. This included MARAC, VARAC and MAPPA.
- Led on the implementation of Northamptonshire's Housing Protocol for Care Leavers, including a series of multi-agency training sessions for frontline housing and social care staff, in order to provide young people with the best start in life.
- Provided 2,450 households with housing advice and 277 households with money advice.
- Prevented 808 households from becoming homeless
- Assessed 818 homelessness applications with the help of a contractor, RMG; this was an increase of 26% compared to 2016/17.
- Implemented an action plan for reducing the Homelessness Officers' caseloads, reducing the time it takes to make homelessness decisions and reducing the amount of time that homeless households spend in temporary accommodation.
- Appointed a Home Visiting Officer to support the Homelessness Team by verifying applicants' circumstances and, through intervention and negotiation, minimise the number of households that are made homeless by parents, relatives and friends.
- Outsourced the homelessness review process to RMG to ensure that all reviews are completed within the 56 day deadline.
- Accepted a rehousing duty to 579 households under the homelessness legislation; this was an increase of 21% compared to 2016/17.

### Housing Strategy and Community Wellbeing

- Led on the development and implementation of the NRDA Cascading Nominations Agreement with Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council and Northampton Partnership Homes in order to ensure that all new affordable rented homes that are built within the Strategic Urban Extensions (SUEs) of the NRDA are offered to applicants on Northampton's Housing Register.
- Undertook statutory consultation on the proposed changes to the definition of 'Local Connection' in Northampton's Housing Allocations Scheme – which were necessary to ensure that applicants who do not have a local connection with the Northampton Borough are able to establish a local connection with the NRDA and join Northampton's Housing Register – as part of the NRDA Nominations Agreement.
- Obtained Cabinet approval of a 3-track approach to maximising the supply of new homes which includes the creation of a charitable Community Benefit Society and the expansion of Northampton Partnership Homes' role in acquiring and building new homes.
- Ensured that a plot of land at Southbridge East – which was the subject of an outstanding historical transfer of land – was transferred to the Council for the development of affordable housing.

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- Negotiated with Persimmons, RentPlus and Wellingborough Homes to develop Northampton's first s106 Rent to Buy Scheme, comprising 48 new homes in Kingsthorpe, that will be directly marketed to qualifying applicants on Northampton's Housing Register who are in employment or training, with priority being given to those applicants in temporary accommodation or in housing need. (The same arrangement was subsequently agreed with EMH Homes for its Rent to Buy scheme).
- Concluded negotiations with Persimmons for the spot purchase of six brand new 2-bedroom flats in Princess Marina Drive, at a 45% discount, as a replacement for homes sold through the Right to Buy.
- Continued to work with Northampton General Hospital and Berrywood Hospital to ensure that patients are discharged from hospitals in a planned and timely manner through Northampton's Hospital 2 Home scheme.
- In 2017/18, the Hospital 2 Home scheme helped a total of 204 patients and, of the 366 patients that have been helped since the start of the scheme, only 15 patients (4%) have been readmitted to hospital.
- Homeless Link's publication of an article on the Hospital 2 Home scheme prompted 30 enquiries from local authorities, and the Community Wellbeing Officer gave a presentation on the scheme at a Homelessness and Inclusion health seminar in London.
- Negotiated with Northamptonshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust to fund a pilot scheme to supply 10 bedspaces that will provide suitable accommodation for people who are ready to leave hospital but need somewhere to stay until their settled housing is available.

### 3. Corporate Plan Priorities:

The corporate plan priorities are cascaded through all that we do and deliver.

<b>Corporate Plan Priority</b>	
<b>Northampton Alive</b>	A vibrant successful town for now and the future
<b>Safer Communities</b>	Making you feel safe and secure
<b>Housing for Everyone</b>	Helping those that need it to have a safe and secure home Ensuring that a buoyant market provides a wide choice of homes for all ages
<b>Protecting Our Environment</b>	A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors
<b>Love Northampton</b>	Enhancing leisure activities for local people and encouraging participation
<b>Working Hard and Spending your Money Wisely</b>	Delivering quality modern services
<b>Improving Our Governance</b>	Implementing the Governance Action Plan

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**4. Service Plan Objectives:**

M Ref.	Corporate Plan Priority	Objective / Project	Expected Outcomes	Risks to the Outcome	Responsible Officer
	Housing for Everyone	Maximise the supply of affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 1-4-1 RTB receipts reinvested in the provision of new affordable rented housing</li> <li>• NBC to exercise its full nomination rights to all affordable rented housing within the NRDA</li> <li>• Maximum investment in sub-market / affordable rented and low-cost home ownership</li> <li>• NPH to acquire and build new affordable housing outside Housing Revenue Account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay in establishing Community Benefit Society (CBS)</li> <li>• Further delays in DDC / SNC approval of NRDA nominations agreement</li> <li>• Viability / delivery of affordable housing</li> <li>• Delay in confirming NBC's funding and support for homes</li> </ul>	Phil Harris
	Housing for Everyone	Improve standards in private sector housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased amount of housing enforcement activity undertaken</li> <li>• Increased number of empty homes brought back into use</li> <li>• Increased number of HMOs that are licensed</li> <li>• Increased proportion of licensable HMOs that are licensed on time</li> <li>• Increased number of accredited landlords</li> <li>• Reduced number of homes that contain a Category 1 hazard</li> <li>• Reduced number of homes that have been empty for more than six months</li> <li>• Reduced number of licensable HMOs that are operating without a licence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity, training and experience of Land Tribunals Service (and how this affects their attitude to civil penalties and rent repayment orders)</li> <li>• Number of appeals against civil penalties</li> <li>• Ability to recruit an Empty Homes Officer</li> <li>• Impact that NBC's approach to housing enforcement has on landlords / managing agents' compliance with their housing management and licensing obligations</li> </ul>	

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M Ref.	Corporate Plan Priority	Objective / Project	Expected Outcomes	Risks to the Outcome	Responsible Officer
	Housing for Everyone	Tackle, prevent and reduce homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full compliance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</li> <li>• New 5 year Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>• Reduced number of people who are homeless and/or sleeping rough</li> <li>• Reduced number of homeless households in temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Increased number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless</li> <li>• Continued success of the 'Hospital 2 Home' scheme</li> <li>• Permanent nightshelter for men and women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient staffing to deal with the extra work involved</li> <li>• Technical problems interacting specialist software with NBC's existing IT systems</li> <li>• Impact of Housing Options &amp; Advice restructure on team morale / performance</li> <li>• Effectiveness of local services in preventing homelessness</li> <li>• Nightshelter Business Case is not approved</li> </ul>	
	Housing for Everyone	Minimise the use and cost of temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced number of households placed in temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Reduced number of households living in temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Reduced length of stay in temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Reduced average net cost of temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Reduced overall net cost of temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Reduced void turnaround times in council-owned / leased temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Improved collection rates for rent and service charges in temporary accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More homelessness</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing for move-on</li> <li>• Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 increases the amount of time that homeless households spend in temporary accommodation</li> <li>• NBC is unable to procure adequate supply of lower cost accommodation</li> <li>• Collection rates for rent and service charges are reduced by Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap</li> </ul>	Phil Harris

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M Ref.	Corporate Plan Priority	Objective / Project	Expected Outcomes	Risks to the Outcome	Responsible Officer
	Housing for Everyone	Develop Guildhall Residential Lettings into a financially sustainable social lettings agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mixed portfolio of at least 300 properties that are leased and/or managed by the social lettings agency, at sub-market rents, on behalf of the owners and/or the Council</li> <li>• Terms of business that encourage landlords and investors to work with the social lettings agency to substantially increase the supply of good quality, well managed, affordable private rented accommodation in the borough</li> <li>• A year-on-year increase in the number of homes that are let and managed by the social lettings agency and the income that it generates in fees and commission</li> <li>• A service that contributes positively to the Council's success in preventing and reducing homelessness, improving housing standards and, where necessary and appropriate, taking control of unsafe and/or badly managed private rented housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact that management of NBC's increased stock of temporary accommodation is having on the capacity of the Social Lettings Agency to secure new business and procure PSL accommodation</li> <li>• The inflationary impact that the demand for housing and temporary accommodation is having on the rents that landlords and investors ask for PSL accommodation</li> <li>• The impact that the suppliers of nightly purchased temporary accommodation are having on the supply of rented housing</li> <li>• The importance of avoiding a situation in which the Social Lettings Agency 'fuels' the increase in rents by agreeing market rents rather than sub-market rents</li> <li>• Lack of investment in publicity / marketing, the Agency's website and the integration of the software with the Council's IT systems</li> </ul>	Phil Harris

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5. Performance Measures for 2018/19:

M Ref.	Measure	Frequency (M / Q / A)	Target
<b>Housing Enforcement</b>			
	Number of successful criminal prosecutions	Q	Although it is not possible to accurately predict a value at this stage, it is useful to report the numbers
	Number of civil penalties imposed	Q	
	Number of civil penalties that are appealed	Q	
	Number of civil penalties that are upheld on appeal	Q	
	Number of civil penalties that are set aside or reduced on appeal	Q	
	Number of rent repayment orders that are obtained	Q	
	Number of unlawful evictions that are prevented	Q	
	Total value of civil penalties successfully imposed	Q	
	Number of investigations carried out by the Housing Enforcement Team	Q	Although it is not possible to accurately predict a value at this stage, it is useful to report the numbers
	Number of HHSRS Category 1 hazards that are eliminated or improved following the intervention of the Housing Enforcement Team	Q	
<b>HMO Licensing</b>			
	Number of Mandatory HMO licence applications received in the quarter	Q	25
	Number of Mandatory HMO licences processed in the quarter	Q	25
	Total fee income received for Mandatory HMO licences in the quarter	Q	£12,000
	Number of Additional HMO licence applications received in the quarter	Q	90
	Number of Additional HMO licence applications processed in the quarter	Q	90
	Total fee income received for Additional HMO licences in the quarter	Q	£50,000
<b>Disabled Facilities Grants</b>			
	Number of DFG grants approved	Q	40
	Number of DFG grants completed	Q	40
	Average value of DFGs approved during the quarter	Q	£7,500
	Total DFG expenditure in the quarter	Q	£300,000
	Total DFG fee income received in the quarter	Q	£39,000

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M Ref.	Measure	Frequency (M / Q / A)	Target
<b>Assessments and assistance under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</b>			
	Number of households that are assessed as eligible and homeless/threatened with homelessness within 56 days (resulting in an Application, Assessment and PHP)	M	Although it is not possible to accurately predict a value at this stage, it is useful to report the numbers
	Number of these households (see above) that are single people or couples	M	
	Number of households whose homelessness is prevented	M	
	Number of households whose homelessness is relieved	M	
	Number of households that secured an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) to prevent or relieve homelessness (with or without a landlord incentive)	M	
	Number of new cases that are opened by the Money Advice Team (including Application, Assessment and PHP, and general advice / assistance)	M	
<b>Households in temporary accommodation</b>			
	Total number of households living in temporary accommodation	M	Although it is not possible to accurately predict a value at this stage, it is useful to report the numbers
	Number of households living in temporary accommodation that are being accommodated under the Homelessness Reduction Act	M	
	Number of households living in B&B accommodation	M	
	Number of households living in council-owned temporary accommodation	M	
	Number of households living in other self-contained temporary accommodation	M	
	Number of 'vulnerable households' that have been living in B&B for more than 6 weeks	M	
<b>Households for whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty</b>			
	Number of households for whom a full homelessness duty is accepted (Legacy cases)	M	Although it is not possible to accurately predict a value at this stage, it is useful to report the numbers
	Number of households for whom a full homelessness duty is accepted (HRA cases that are accepted after the 56 day duty to relieve their homelessness has ended)	M	
<b>People who are sleeping rough</b>			
	Total number of people who are sleeping rough	A	Less than 10
	Number of referrals that are accepted by the Nightshelter	M	15
	Number of people moved on successfully from the Nightshelter	M	8

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M Ref.	Measure	Frequency (M / Q / A)	Target
<b>Affordable housing</b>			
	Number of affordable homes delivered	Q	200
	Percentage of affordable rented homes in the Strategic Urban Extensions of the NRDA let to housing applicants on Northampton's Housing Register	Q	At least 95%
	Percentage of new Rent to Buy homes let to housing applicants on Northampton's Housing Register	Q	At least 80%
	Percentage of s.106 commuted sums funnelled back into affordable housing	Q	At least 90%
	Percentage of retained 1-4-1 RTB receipts that are returned to Central Government	Q	0%
<b>Planned discharge from hospital</b>			
	Percentage of patients who are re-admitted to hospital or become homeless again due to service failure	A	2018/19: No more than 7% 2019/20: No more than 11% 2020/21: No more than 15%

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6. Financial Resources:

Revenue Housing:

Expenditure Description	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
Employees	1,553,942	1,568,836	1,583,769	1,598,825	1,614,046
Premises	283,495	283,726	283,967	284,220	286,002
Transport	9,100	9,100	9,100	9,100	9,100
Supplies and Services	1,790,096	1,712,617	1,718,119	1,718,012	1,717,890
Agency & Contracted	267,000	267,000	267,000	267,000	267,000
<b>Service Expenditure</b>	<b>3,903,633</b>	<b>3,841,279</b>	<b>3,861,955</b>	<b>3,877,157</b>	<b>3,894,038</b>
Income	-2,909,386	-2,576,582	-2,626,582	-2,676,582	-2,676,582
<b>Service Income</b>	<b>-2,909,386</b>	<b>-2,576,582</b>	<b>-2,626,582</b>	<b>-2,676,582</b>	<b>-2,676,582</b>
<b>Total Net Budget</b>	<b>994,247</b>	<b>1,264,697</b>	<b>1,235,373</b>	<b>1,200,575</b>	<b>1,217,456</b>

Revenue HRA:

Expenditure Description	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
Employees	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Premises	289,301	289,301	289,301	289,732	289,854
Supplies and Services	861,850	859,200	865,750	857,950	858,100
Agency & Contracted	26,171,478	26,165,252	26,290,737	26,345,424	26,445,833
<b>Service Expenditure</b>	<b>27,392,629</b>	<b>27,383,753</b>	<b>27,515,788</b>	<b>27,563,106</b>	<b>27,663,787</b>
Income	-52,102,474	-52,821,102	-53,208,054	-54,243,059	-55,385,622
<b>Service Income</b>	<b>-52,102,474</b>	<b>-52,821,102</b>	<b>-53,208,054</b>	<b>-54,243,059</b>	<b>-55,385,622</b>
<b>Total Net Budget</b>	<b>-24,709,845</b>	<b>-25,437,649</b>	<b>-25,692,266</b>	<b>-26,679,953</b>	<b>-27,721,835</b>

Capital:

Scheme Description	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
DFGs Owner Occupiers	1,475,000	1,475,000	1,475,000	1,475,000	1,475,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>1,475,000</b>	<b>1,475,000</b>	<b>1,475,000</b>	<b>1,475,000</b>	<b>1,475,000</b>

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**7. People:**

