


Single Member Cabinet Decision

Executive Forward Plan Reference	E3044
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Taking Action on Empty Homes - Adoption of the draft Empty Residential Property Policy 2018

Decision maker/s	Councillor Paul Myers, Cabinet Member for Economic and Community Regeneration
The Issue	<p>The current Empty Homes Policy was adopted in July 2013. This policy focussed on properties that had been empty for 2 years or more. Since the policy was adopted, 317 properties have been brought back into use (target 35 properties p/a).</p> <p>The emerging policy has been developed to reduce duplication of effort by different service areas of the council in their work on empty properties and to take advantage of changes to the statutory tools available to the council to deal with nuisance empty properties. Significant changes include the proactive involvement of the Empty Property Officer on homes empty from 6 months, more effective sharing of data, a stronger approach to fraud identification and a new approach to prioritising properties for significant action</p>
Decision Date	26 March 2018
The decision	To adopt the Empty Residential Property Policy 2018
Rationale for decision	The new policy builds on the 2013 Empty Homes policy, bringing new statutory powers into use, making more efficient use of Council resources and tackling empty properties sooner in a proactive manner to prevent properties becoming long term empties
Financial and budget implications	<p>1.1 The Empty Residential Property Policy has been developed with an emphasis on making more efficient use of Council resources by reducing duplication of effort across the different service areas that have an involvement in empty properties.</p> <p>1.2 Work on bringing empty properties back into use has a direct and positive bearing on the level of New Homes Bonus received by the Council. This is calculated on the basis of the net yearly change in the number of empty properties on the Council tax database. To date the work recovering empty properties has generated around £843k of income through the New Homes Bonus.</p> <p>1.3 In addition the identification of unregistered empty properties will enable the Council to ensure that the 150% Council Tax requirement is correctly administered and identify individuals claiming a 25% Single Person Discount on an empty property.</p> <p>1.4 Any purchases of an empty property required under this policy would be addressed on a case-by-case basis, including a</p>

	business case assessment to clearly outline costs and cost recovery.
Issues considered	Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Corporate; Legal Considerations, working in partnership across different Council Service areas and with external bodies.
Consultation undertaken	<p>Development of this policy relied on discussion and consultation with colleagues in Council tax, Environmental Protection, Building Control, Conservation, Private Housing and Client Finance as well as neighbouring Council's Empty Property Officers.</p> <p>This policy was discussed and supported by Informal Cabinet on 12 Feb 2018 and by Planning, Housing and Economic Development PDS on 13 March 2018.</p> <p>The Council's s151 and Monitoring Officers have had opportunity to review and input into this report.</p>
How consultation was carried out	Internal meetings, contribution of different service areas to policy, circulation of early drafts of policy for comment, presentations to Informal Cabinet and Planning, Housing and Economic Development PDS
Other options considered	No other options considered

Signatures of Decision Makers	
Date of Signature	27 th March 2018

Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision