

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET ON 27 JUNE 2017
TO COUNCIL ON 27 JULY 2017

CAB20: LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

Cabinet considered a report which reminded Members that the Council adopted a Long Term Empty Homes Strategy in 2013 which now needed to be reviewed and updated.

The report brought forward an updated Strategy which reviewed progress in the last 3 years and set out the Council's approach in the future. Most empty homes were short term and part of the normal housing market e.g. whilst being renovated, sold or relet. The Council's focus was on homes empty for more than 6 months, and it was noted that the average number of empty home was 850 at any time.

The Housing Services Operations Manager responded to questions explaining that the data was compiled using the Council Tax register and confirmed that the public could report empty homes. She explained the scheme which had been run working with Freebridge to bring empty homes back into use, along with the options available for officers to do so which included enforcement as an end resort.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope drew attention to the number of the empty properties belonging to Freebridge, and other Housing Associations. He drew attention to empty Freebridge properties within his ward which had been empty for years. The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that very few Housing Association properties were empty for more than 6 months, it was usually when they were awaiting redevelopment or work to them.

It was also pointed out that the Borough's figures were higher because it had more properties overall.

Cabinet endorsed the fact that ward Councillors played an important part in reporting empty homes and continuing to do so if no feedback was given.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Long Term Empty Homes Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

2) That delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Strategy be awarded to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for housing.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that appropriate advice, assistance and action is taken in relation to long term empty homes

CAB24: AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The report recommended an updated scheme of delegation for approval. The Scheme had been amended to take account of the changes in Portfolio responsibilities which would come into effect once the new scheme was approved by Council.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That Council approve the amended Scheme of Delegation.

2) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader be given delegated Authority to make minor amendments to the Scheme.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Delegation Scheme mirrors the decision making Structure.