

Bolsover District Council

Growth Scrutiny Committee

15th July 2020

Empty Property Strategy 2021 - 2024

Report of the Joint Housing Strategy and Growth Manager

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To inform Scrutiny of the development of the Empty Property Strategy 2021 - 2024
- To agree to the timeframes and further Scrutiny consultation

1 Report Details

- 1.1 The Empty Property Strategy sets out the Council's objectives in relation to bringing empty properties back into use.
- 1.2 The previous Empty Property Strategy was written as a joint document and has expired this year. It has been agreed that this strategy be written solely for Bolsover District Council in line with the Council's visions and aims.
- 1.3 As at November 2019 there were approximately 750 properties that have been empty for more than 6 months in the District. These properties represent a wasted resource and are the main focus of the empty property strategy.
- 1.4 The strategy ties together the three main strands of Empty Property work, i) Advice, ii) Assistance and iii) Enforcement, and presents a framework for co-ordinated work moving forward in the shape of the Empty Property Action Plan. The strategy will also have a key role in helping to secure potential external funding for housing related projects across the district.
- 1.5 The table shows the potential timeframes for the development and implementation of the Strategy, however this may be subject to change at these unprecedented times due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Action	Involvement/Responsibility	Planned Date and Deadlines
Collating information and determining Housing Priority/Strategy contents	Portfolio Holder - Housing and Community Safety & Housing Strategy/ Councillors/Environmental Health Teams/Housing Strategy Team	July to August 2020

Action	Involvement/Responsibility	Planned Date and Deadlines
Development/writing of the Draft Strategy	Housing Strategy Team working closely with Portfolio Holder - Housing and Community Safety/Housing Strategy	September to October 2020
Scrutiny consultation	Housing Strategy Team	21st October
Final draft consultation	Stakeholder/partner/public /internal	1st November – 21st November 2020
Consultation analysis and strategy amendments where necessary	Housing Strategy Team	21 st November – 14 th December
Scrutiny after any final amendments (if required)	Housing Strategy Team	16 th December 2020
SAMT	Housing Strategy Team	18 th December 2020
Executive Report and Papers to Governance	Housing Strategy Team	6th January 2021
Executive Pre Meeting	Portfolio Holder - Housing and Community Safety/ Housing Strategy	13 th January 2021
Executive Meeting	Portfolio Holder - Housing and Community Safety/ Housing Strategy	25th January 2021
If Agreed – Implementation date – Circulate and publicise	Housing Strategy Team	1 st February 2021

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The previous Empty Property Strategy is due to expire in 2020, therefore this needs replacing.
- 2.2 This will enable the Council to implement a raft of measures to reduce the number of long term empty properties resulting in additional housing units, additional New Homes Bonus and greater community sustainability which contribute to the delivery of the Council's Growth Strategy

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Consultation will be carried out at various stages throughout the development process with internal and external organisations, including public, private and voluntary sectors.
- 3.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Not implementing the Joint Empty Property Strategy will seriously impact upon the Councils ability to reduce the number of long term empty properties within the districts and their ability to deal effectively with the problems associated with them.
- 4.2 A key element of the Empty Property Officer’s work is the development and implication of an Empty Property Strategy to co-ordinate all streams of empty property work.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 There are no risk implications.
- 5.1.2 Reducing the number of empty properties will help to increase the Council’s New Homes Bonus allocation (whilst this is still in place) and will also increase Council Tax income, particularly on properties that were previously derelict.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 The Strategy will have due regard to local and national policy and be compliant with legislation, including data protection laws.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 Existing employees will develop the Strategy, therefore there are no Human Resources implications.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 To agree to the timeframes and further Scrutiny consultation.

7 Decision Information

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><i>BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/></i> <i>Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/></i></p> <p><i>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/></i> <i>Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/></i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p>Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</p>	Yes

District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	All

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
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Report Reference –