

**Bolsover District Council**

**Growth Scrutiny Committee**

**23rd October 2020**

**Empty Property Strategy 2021 - 2024**

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety**

This report is public

**Purpose of the Report**

- To consult with Scrutiny on the first draft of the Empty Property Strategy.

**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 August 2020 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. As a result of Covid19 the District has seen an increase in the number of empty properties, partly due to the restrictions on sales and letting transactions in the first part of the year.
- 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.

**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 aims and priorities.

### **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 Council's 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 That the Scrutiny Committee note the report.
- 6.2 That Scrutiny agree to the initial draft of the Empty Property Strategy.

**7 Decision Information**

<p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b>  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:  <i>BDC: Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/>  <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/>  <i>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/>  <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b>  (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p><b>Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</b></p>	Yes
<p><b>District Wards Affected</b></p>	All
<p><b>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</b></p>	All

**8 Document Information**

Appendix No	Title	
1.	Draft Empty Property Strategy 2021-24	
<p><b>Background Papers</b> (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)</p>		
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