

Community Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group 2014/15 Review of Empty Properties in Carmarthenshire

Action Plan

No.	Recommendation	Progress	Responsible Officer(s)	Target Completion Date
1.	Revitalise the Empty Property Action Plan in line with this report, its key findings, recommendations and Welsh Government funding pots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised action plan forms part of this report and update. 	Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	Complete
2.	Identify the appropriate Executive Board Member to champion and promote initiatives and successes in bringing empty properties back into use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr. Linda Evans & Cllr. Jim Jones the Executive Board members for Housing and Public Protection will jointly champion the initiatives and activities relating to empty homes in accordance with their relevant remits. 	Housing Manager – Jonathan N Willis	Complete
3.	Hold an all-member seminar to brief members on Carmarthenshire's approach, challenges and achievements in bringing empty properties back into use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A seminar has been planned in conjunction with Democratic Services for 22nd of September 2016 as part of members development programme. 	Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	30 th September 2016

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4.	Ensure that a clear terms of reference for the Empty Dilapidated Properties cross-departmental group and proposed membership of the group is included in the revised Empty Property Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of teams from different Departments may be involved in enforcement activity to tackle empty homes. • A Corporate Enforcement Forum has been recently set up involving the key officers to ensure a coordinated approach with regard to a range of enforcement issues that may be necessary. • Enforcement matters relating to empty homes and dilapidated properties forms part of the Forums work plan. 	Housing Manager – J N Willis Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	Complete
5.	Consider delegating Sections 77-79 of The Building Act 1984 (dangerous structures, ruinous and dilapidated) to the Head of Housing & Public Protection with guidance from the Legal Division.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 79 of the Building Act 1984 has been delegated to the Head of Housing and Public Protection. Consideration will be given to the delegation of Section 77 as part of a wider update of delegation of statutory powers. 	Housing Manager – J N Willis	30 th September 2016

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6.	<p>Consider opportunities to increase resources for bringing empty properties back in to use in light of the provisions under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 for imposing reduced Council Tax discounts / premiums and any associated additional income arising.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 allows local authorities to withdraw current Council Tax discounts provided to owners of empty homes and also impose additional charges. • It up to individual local authorities to introduce appropriate changes. Officers of the Resources Division have sought approval from Executive Board to undertake a public consultation exercise and impact assessment on making appropriate changes. A further report will be made later in the year. 	John Gravelle – Resources Manager	31 st December 2016
7.	<p>Create shared access to the databases held with information about empty, dilapidated and ruinous properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared data base is in place for Housing and Public Protection. • Information on problematic empty properties is shared via the newly formed corporate Enforcement Forum. 	Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	Complete

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8.	Investigate the possibility of creating a corporate pot for Works In Default through developing a detailed business case and linking with the work of the Empty Dilapidated Properties cross-departmental group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works In Default is a process initiated after serving a statutory notice where a local authority may undertake work themselves and recharge the cost to the owner. Having an identified budget is clearly important. • A new procedure utilising the Welsh Government Houses into Homes monies to fund Works In Default. • It is also proposed to set aside £50,000 from Private Sector Capital allocation for Works In Default. 	Housing Manager – J N Willis Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	Complete
9.	Investigate new ways of funding, including the potential to use HRA funding, to support bringing empty properties back into use as a means of increasing the provision of affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Homes Delivery Plan was approved last year with specific targets of turning 280 empty properties into affordable homes to rent. • We will be using HRA funding to undertake any necessary work on the basis the property is leased to the Council and managed by us for a minimum of 5 years. 	Housing Manager – J N Willis	Complete

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10.	Create an advice and guidance “toolkit” on the corporate website for owners of empty properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An advice pack has been developed and forms part of number planned improvements to our housing advice web pages. 	Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	30 th December 2016
11.	Create an interactive reporting form on the corporate website and i-Local.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with our IT Division has already taken place. The web pages are in the process of being designed and translated prior to going online. 	Empty Property Advisor – L Evans	30 th September 2016