

8 September 2021

Minute Extract

59/21 Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2021-2026

The Council Cabinet considered a report which sought approval for the adoption of the new Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy.

The Executive Scrutiny Board resolved to recommend to Council Cabinet that the Empty Homes Policy should make clear that Council grants or loans would not routinely be provided to support the creation of more Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Options Considered

An option was to do nothing and allow the current strategy to expire, without replacement. This would however leave the Council without strategic direction for tackling empty homes and vulnerable to challenge when considering enforcement to bring empty homes into use.

Decision

1. To agree the adoption of the new Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2021-2026.
2. To refer the recommendation from Executive Scrutiny Board to the Regeneration and Housing Board for consideration.
 - that the Empty Homes Policy should make clear that Council grants or loans would not routinely be provided to support the creation of more Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Reasons

1. Derby's current Empty Homes Strategy required updating and refreshing. The draft new strategy sets out the Council's position from 2021 onwards. It provided the basis for action to bring empty homes up to a suitable standard and into beneficial use and/or tackle environmental and community issues associated with empty homes.
2. The strategy had been reviewed and updated to ensure it continued to contribute to the Housing focus within the Council Plan's Theme of a City of Health and Happiness. This underpinned the Derby Recovery Plan 2021/22, which formed the Council's strategic response to tackling the impacts of Covid-19 upon the city. This included:

- a) The delivery of four key priorities to improve the housing offer for Derby.
- b) A new action plan, which would aim to respond to the four key priorities, which were:
 - Increase the number of empty homes brought into use.
 - Increase the number of empty homes that are used for affordable housing.
 - Ensure thermal efficiency is improved in empty homes brought into use.
 - Maximise income opportunities including debt recovery and funding opportunities that arise.