

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To agree the extension of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2013 – 2017 until end of March 2019

2. Date of decision

21 May 2018

3. Reasons for decision

The purpose of the extension is to enable a review of the Empty Homes Strategy in the context of the structural changes that are being implemented across the Council. It is necessary to have an adopted and current Empty Homes Strategy to progress any proposed Compulsory Purchase Action with solicitors.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The alternative of carrying out a full revision of the Empty Homes Strategy during 2017 was considered and discounted pending the structural changes that are being implemented across the Council. A full revision of the existing strategy will be undertaken during 2018/19 to allow its adoption when the proposed extension has expired.

5. How decision is to be funded

The Empty Homes programme forms part of the overall capital programme. Capital receipts from the disposal of empty properties are recycled and utilised within the scheme. Members of staff are funded from the revenue budget, and there is sufficient S106 funding for 2018/2019 (to cover 20 additional Housing Strategy Officer hours per week).

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).
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The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

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Signed Colleen Atkins Date 21/5/18 Name of Decision Taker Mr C Atkins

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 21/5/18

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 30th May 2018

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....~~YES~~ or NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Date – March 2018

Report by - Chief Officer Planning and Highways

Subject – Extension of Empty Homes Strategy 2013 - 2017

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report recommends extending the Empty Homes Strategy 2013-17 to the end of March 2019.

2. Recommendation

That the Empty Homes Strategy 2013 – 2017 be extended to the end of March 2019.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 A review of the Empty Homes Strategy is in progress .The purpose of the extension is to enable a review of the Empty Homes Strategy in the context of the structural changes that are being implemented across the Council.

4. Key Implications

(a) Policy

The Empty Homes Strategy 2013-2017 includes the following Key Objectives:

- (i) Reduce the number of long-term empty homes in the Borough
- (ii) Raise awareness of empty property as a wasted resource
- (iii) Improve the supply of decent affordable private sector rented homes available to people in housing need.
- (iv) Consider whether initiating a Compulsory Purchase Order is appropriate and value for money

(v) Maintain the data collected on empty homes

(b) Legal Issues

As a housing authority, the Council has an obligation to assess the housing conditions in its area and to formulate strategies to address any issues that are identified.

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 confers a general power of competence on Local Authorities.

Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 empowers the Council, as local housing authority, to compulsorily acquire houses for the provision of housing accommodation.

(c) Resource Implications

The Empty Homes programme forms part of the overall capital programme. Capital receipts from the disposal of empty properties are recycled and utilised within the scheme. Members of staff are funded from the revenue budget, and there is sufficient funding for 2018/2019.

(d) Risk Implications

Long term empty homes are frequently in poor condition and cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties. Without intervention there is a risk of further decay and greater nuisance to neighbourhoods.

There are no additional risks arising from the CPO programme over and above those identified in the 25 June 2014 report.

(e) Environmental Implications

Long-term empty properties generally have a negative environmental impact on the neighbourhood due to deterioration and attraction for anti-social behaviour, crime and vandalism.

(f) Equalities Impact

An Equality Analysis on the Empty Homes Programme was completed in December 2015. It concluded that the Programme has a neutral impact on equality. The factors that led to that conclusion have been reviewed and remain the same so the extension of the Strategy to cover the period to the end of March 2019 will have the same neutral impact.

5. Details

The continued relevance of the strategy and its action plan for the extension period has been demonstrated through regular reports to the Housing Committee which considers a report on the empty homes programme at each alternate meeting.

Housing Committee endorsed the extension of the Empty Homes Strategy at its meeting on 31st January 2018.

The Empty Homes Strategy 2013 – 2017 is available here:

<http://www.bedford.gov.uk/housing.aspx>

6. Summary of Consultations and Outcome

6.1 The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Management Team
Legal
Finance
Housing Committee

7. Ward Councillor Views

7.1 Not applicable for this report.

Report Contact Officer: Tracey Barrett

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File Reference: Empty Homes

Previous Relevant Minutes: None.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None