



REPORT OF: Principal Scrutiny Officer

REPORT TO: Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Scrutiny Committee.

ON: 29th January 2014.

RE: Committee work programme.

1. Purpose of the Report

For Members of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive an update to the 2013-2014 work programme.

2. Background

In June the Committee received the priorities, challenges and pledges of the Executive Members with a more detailed work programme being agreed by Committee on 17th July. The last update report being given to the Committee at its 20th November meeting.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Committees draft Empty Homes recommendations be noted and;

3.2 That the suggested timelines for outstanding reviews to be agreed.

4. Work Programme

Empty Homes

1. That the Council's Housing department ensures it has a complete list of empty properties in the borough at all times to ensure that the Council Tax Premium can be applied properly to discourage have properties vacant.

2. That Officers examine the options available to get the most meaningful information possible from the council tax system in respect of empty domestic property reporting.
3. That the Executive Member explore the possibility of receiving a financial contribution from TVH to help fund its partnership working in relation to HCA empty homes funding.
4. That the Executive Member encourages TVH to use local tradesmen to work along side THV to carry out improvements to properties under the Empty homes project.
5. That the Executive Member should look to were possible increase the staffing level in the Empty Properties Group to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.
6. That the Committee recommend the reprioritisation of empty properties (empty just over 6 months) to identify those that can be brought back into use sooner.
7. The Committee recommend increased publicity of successes when empty properties are brought back into use to assist tackling this issue.
8. The Environment portfolio design clear standards and criteria for when enforced sales; compulsory purchases or empty homes management orders procedures should commence.
9. That the Committee request the Executive Member consider changes to the length of time a property can be empty before landlords are charged the Premium Council Tax Rate.
10. That the Committee recommend the Council look to establish a facility whereby it is a landlords responsibility to make sure tenants have bins to enable them to recycle and any replacement bins are charged to the landlord.
11. That the Housing department work with the Council Tax Team to include leaflet / information about empty properties with next annual Council Tax bill to all residents. Also when owners register their vacant properties with Benefits & Local Taxation Team, information should be sent to them outlining the various options available, highlighting penalties to be imposed for failing to comply with the Council's requirements, concerning bringing empty properties back into use.
12. That the Environment Department continues to work closely with other departments and partner organisations to ensure sources of fly tipping in back allies and wards as witnessed by the Committee are further reduced.

Future Area of work

Shisha

A task Group has been formed and a date for the first meeting is being sort. A site visit has also been set up and will be raised at the Task Groups first meeting.

Scrape Metal

The Committee will monitor and review progress on tackling scrape metal theft in the Borough. A Task Group will be set up to meet in February.

Waste Procurement

The keep wish to be kept informed on the Council's progress on Waste Procurement, an update for Members has been requested for the Committee's March meeting.

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