



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

### **PRE SCRUTINY - DRAFT EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND DIRECTOR FOR REGENERATION, PLANNING AND HOUSING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER, CLLR R BEVAN.**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the Draft Empty Homes strategy following Pre-scrutiny by the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the comments and observations of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee attached as Appendix A of this report.
- 2.2 Subject to any further comment by Cabinet Members, endorse the recommendations outlined within the Empty Homes Strategy as attached as Appendix B of the report (and for ease of reference as listed below):

1. To approve implementation of the draft Empty Homes Strategy.

#### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The need for Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee prior to their consideration of the strategy as attached as Appendix B.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 At a meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee the Committee agreed to pre-scrutinise the report of the Director, Regeneration, Planning & Housing in respect of the Empty Property strategy prior to Cabinet's consideration.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Committee met on the [9<sup>th</sup> October](#) to pre-scrutinise the strategy and the draft minute is attached as Appendix A.

## **5. PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE STRATEGY**

5.1 At the meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Members discussed the strategy and provided comments in respect of:

- Awareness raising – raising awareness in respect of the work of the Council and the provisions available for residents to take forward.
- The introduction of a grant for landlords in order for them to buy empty properties to help with the supply of affordable housing in high demand areas.
- The affect empty houses have on the amenities of the neighbourhood – Potential of demolition of buildings.

5.2 In respect of Members comments in regards to Grants, Officers advised that the Council's Private Sector Renewal Policy already has provision for this type of grant which is funded via the Capital programme should the need arise. In recent years the Council has been providing an interest free loan to landlords to bring empty properties back into use which has been very popular.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The report contained within appendix B has been presented to scrutiny for pre scrutiny before consideration by Cabinet.

## **8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 Any financial implications are outlined within Appendix B of the report.

## **9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

9.1 Non applicable – the report is identifying the scrutiny arrangements that have taken place.

## **10 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

10.1 Making Best Use of Our Budget – Pre scrutiny can improve cost effectiveness.

10.2 The Empty Homes Strategy incorporates the following Wellbeing goals of the Future Generations Act as indicated below and outlined within Appendix B of the report.

1. A healthier Wales
2. A prosperous Wales
3. A Wales of cohesive communities

## **11 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness.
- 11.2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in this area will strength accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

### **Other Information:-**

#### ***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

#### ***Contact Officer***

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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Item: **PRE SCRUTINY**

**Background Papers**

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – [9<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.](#)

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