

Inquiry into Private Rented Sector Housing

Report published April 2012

Last update October 2013

	Recommendation	Stage	Complete
1 (i)	That the Executive Board supports the principle of adopting a more proactive and targeted integrated management approach in addressing those areas of the city that have greater housing and environmental needs.		
	<p><u>September 2014 update</u></p> <p>The Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA) has been successful in meeting its targets for the first year and securing continuing funding. Further initiatives have been developed to tackle "Rogue Landlords".</p> <p>Subject to performance of the initiative as a whole, there is an in principle agreement to fund the approach for a further 3 years as of April 2014/5. The service is just completing its first area in the Nowell's, is working in Armley and currently preparing the third area in the Recreation's Leeds 11. The approach has targeted 254 properties, totalling 356 units of accommodation so far, returned a total of 51 long term empty homes and has resulted 325 hazards being removed. Working with partners such as the Police, West Yorkshire Fire Service (WYFS), Leeds Credit Union, Jobs and Skills, and Care and Repair a total of 519 referrals have been made to assist occupiers with issues which affect their well-being.</p> <p>A joint bid with WYFS for £125k from CLG's Rogue Landlords fund was successful. The funding runs from January 2014 to March 2015. The project is to target accommodation above shops in 3 areas of the city, namely Harehills Lane, Armley Town Street and Dewsbury Road. These were identified as high risk areas by WYFS and having poor accommodation. The bid was for 200 properties to be inspected by March 2015. So far 104 flats have been inspected out of the 200 to be targeted. 67 referrals to partners have so far been made with 67 hazards being removed.</p> <p>So far the enforcement action has resulted in £9650 in charges against landlords who have failed to come forward and work with the Council and partners on the approach.</p> <p><i>Formal response July 2012</i></p> <p><i>The principle of a more proactive targeted approach to address private sector housing has been agreed in principle as a way forward. Under the current restructure of Statutory Housing this approach is being considered as part of the proposals. Adoption of the proposals will depend upon additional resources being found. Negotiations with Corporate Finance are occurring around this issue.</i></p> <p><i>The Scrutiny Board on 30th October 2012 received a report on the locality approach to the private sector housing and regulation and empty homes and welcomed the progress in implementing recommendation 1 of this inquiry.</i></p> <p><u>October 2013 update</u></p> <p><i>In Sept 2012 the Executive Board agreed in principle to fund the new Leeds Neighbourhood Approach and empty property initiatives for 3 years commencing in April 2013 up to £1m per annum.</i></p>	2 (achieved)	

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	Recommendation	Stage	Complete
1 (ii)	That the Executive Board requests the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods to work closely with the Housing Regulation Team and Locality Managers to begin developing this approach based upon the existing locality working model and neighbourhood planning principles of working collaboratively with other key council services, partners and landlords to maximise and target resources effectively.		
	<p><u>September 2014 update</u> See 1 I above</p> <p><i><u>Formal response July 2012</u></i> Discussions are occurring between Housing Partnerships and the Locality Managers regarding how to integrate services around this approach to service delivery. The key will be the identification of additional resources to deliver any such working model. Identification of additional resources is currently being considered with the Director of Finance.</p> <p><i><u>October 2013 update</u></i> The Leeds Neighbourhood Approach has now been developed and implemented. The initial area being the Nowells in East Leeds. The Approach involves the targeting of a neighbourhood to improve their overall condition and sustainability. The Service is working with partners such as the Fire Service, Police, Jobs and Skills, Health, the third sector and the landlords associations to improve the area. All properties have been targeted, with offers of help and assistance. Where owners do not come forward to work with partners then full enforcement action is taken involving all agencies as appropriate. Current work is on-going to identify the second area for this approach to improving neighbourhoods.</p>	2 (achieved)	

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1 (iii)	That the Executive Board requests the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods to identify potential ‘hot spot’ areas of the city in which to undertake a pilot of this approach.		
	<p><u>September 2014 update</u> Following on from the work in The Nowells, work is now well under way in the second target area, The Edinburgh’s in Armley. The next area to be targeted will be in Holbeck. Subject to funding being agreed for 2015/6 further areas will be identified for the approach. For the “flats above shops” initiative the three target areas chosen are three of the busiest arterial roads into the city, namely Harehills Lane, Dewsbury Road and Armley Town Street.</p> <p><i><u>Formal response July 2012</u></i> <i>There are potentially a number of hot spots around the city which could benefit from this approach. These will be identified as part of the ongoing discussions with the Locality Managers. Currently under consideration are Beeston Hill and Holbeck, Headingley and Richmond Hill</i></p> <p><i><u>October 2013 update</u></i> <i>The initial area identified was the Nowells in East Leeds. Officers are currently considering the 2 proposed area based on stock condition, empty homes, crime, ASB, fire incidents etc. These potential areas include Armley, the Bellbros, Woodviews and Holbeck.</i></p>	2 (achieved)	

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2 (ii)	That as part of the drive to recruit and retain landlords to the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods works closely with the Housing Regulation Team, Locality Managers and the Chair of the Residential Landlords Association to explore the development of local landlord forums, particularly within identified 'hot spot' areas of the city, to share ideas on how to address their needs.		
	<p><u>September 2014 update</u> Following constructive discussions with RLAAS Ltd who operate LCC's accreditation scheme it has been agreed that they will take a lead on creating and running local forums, It is proposed to undertake a pilot forum linked to the LNA work. It is proposed to work up the details to implement a pilot forum linked to the next target area in Holbeck.. This will also involve discussions with local managing agents to determine how they can be involved in this process.</p> <p><i><u>Formal response July 2012</u></i> <i>Work on models of engagement are currently being developed for working more closely with landlords on an area basis. These will be developed based on previous schemes in Beeston Hill and Holbeck and for selective licensing in Cross Green. It is proposed to develop these forums when an area is targeted as part of the proposed new way of working, once resources are identified.</i></p> <p><i><u>October 2013 update</u></i> <i>Officers are working with a National Landlords Association in the Nowells to develop free help and advice. They are looking to have a forum for local landlords and are offering free associate membership of the association to any landlord.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 (achieved) Or 4 Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)</p>	

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3 (i)	That the Housing and Regeneration Partnership Board continues to drive forward the aims of the Empty Properties Project and explores how the council and its partners can work together in delivering the desired outcomes set out within the Empty Properties Action Plan.		
	<p><u>September 2014 update</u> Work continues to develop actions to bring empty properties back into use. We are continuing to work in partnership with Leeds Empties and now have a formal data sharing agreement with them covering postcodes within the outer areas of the city. Whilst the National Empty Property Loan has been discontinued, the Leeds City Council Empty Homes loan is still available and work is well advanced towards offering a new interest free loan product to help owners of empty homes. The HCA homes funding to buy 20 long term empty properties to refurbish for Council stock and to convert under used community centres to new housing is on track for completion in March 2015. The successful HCA 2015/8 bid includes a further 100 empty homes to be brought back into use. We continue to work with third sector organisations to help them deliver their empty homes programmes and they are all currently on track to do so.</p> <p><i>Formal response July 2012</i> The Empty Property Project is now well established and new ways of bringing back empty properties are being developed, including use of new homes bonus/commuted sums to support the third sector, developing partnerships with all interested partners in the field –third sector, RSL & private sector</p> <p>2012 -15 Empty Homes Strategy has now been completed and is awaiting sign off for publication. To be published in June. Call to Action Day 16th May 2012 – supported the Social Enterprise Brokers day on empty homes. To work on development of ideas and partnerships following on from the day</p> <p><u>October 2013 update</u> Work has continued to develop actions to bring properties back into use. Leeds is a pilot authority for the National Empty Property Loan. In Sept the Director of Environment and Housing agreed Leeds City Council's own Empty Homes Loan</p> <p>Following the call to action day in May 2012, Leeds Empties has now been developed. They have created and implemented the Empty Homes Doctor Service and the Leeds Empties website. They are working to develop offers to empty home owners and increasing the capacity of the third sector.</p> <p>HCA Empty Homes funding – LCC was successful in obtaining a £440k bid to help address empty commercial and right to buy properties. This is a £2.2m overall programme of initiatives to be delivered by March 2015</p> <p>By supporting partners in the third sector the city has been successful in obtaining a total of £1.3m from the HCA to address empty homes. This will be delivered by LATCH, Canopy and GIPSIL.</p>	2 (achieved)	

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4	<p>That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on undertaking an analysis of current housing market trends within the Leeds 6 postcode areas and for this to then be used to predict empty property trends within these areas over the next 2-3 years.</p> <p>That the findings from this work is brought back to Scrutiny by January 2013 for consideration.</p>		
	<p><u>September 2014 update</u> Void rates continue to be monitored but remain at a low level compared to the city wide average. Following the workshops to consider the issues in Leeds 6 and students in general a number of proposals were considered in relation to new developments. These formed part of the proposals for the core planning strategy which was put to the Planning Inspector.</p> <p><i>Formal response July 2012</i> The "student" area has now been mapped and the level of empty properties can be tracked as of May 2012. Initial investigations revealed there to be currently 333 properties within this area empty. This equates to 1.34% of the total private sector housing stock within the area (city average =2.4%).</p> <p><i>Renew have recently undertaken research into the current and likely trends for the Leeds 6 area for Unipol. Once completed this research will be shared with LCC to help inform future housing needs and issues for the Leeds 6 area. Unipol are just agreeing their final report and will share it with the Council in the near future.</i></p> <p><u>October 2013 update</u> In August 2013 the void level was 0.34% which is significantly below city average</p> <p><i>The Council has held a number of workshops with stakeholders in LS6 to consider the existing planning policies and core strategy. A report went to Executive Board in relation to purpose built developments to ensure they demonstrate a need for such accommodation in the city</i></p> <p><i>Further work will now consider the impact on existing student areas.</i></p>	2 (achieved)	