

Decision Schedule

Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Housing

TO ALL MEMBERS OF NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

Decision Schedule published on 5 August 2019

The Cabinet Member took the following decisions on 1 August 2019. They will become effective at Noon on 8 August 2019 with the exception of any particular decision, which is the subject of a valid "call-in".

The deadline for submission of a 'Call-in' request form is 4.00 pm on 7 August 2019.

Information relating to the 'Call-in' process can be found via [Democratic Services](#).

Reports relating to staffing issues/Confidential reports are not circulated to all members of the Council as part of the consultation/call-in processes.

R&H 08/19

Empty Homes Strategy

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

There were many reasons to be concerned about the number of long-term empty private homes. Leaving homes empty reduced the supply of available housing and, given the current housing shortage, increased the pressure for development on green space.

Properties that looked unoccupied and neglected tended to attract antisocial behaviour or even criminal damage and, when clusters of empty homes occurred in the same area, they reduced its vibrancy.

Neighbours living next to empty homes could be affected by environmental health hazards such as penetrating damp and overgrown gardens that provided harbourage for rodents. Complaints about empty homes had to be investigated and, often, follow-up action was required, so there were costs to the council and the local taxpayer. High numbers of long-term empty homes could undermine two of Newport's well-being objectives: that people felt good about living, working and investing in Newport and that Newport had a healthy, safe and resilient environments.

In 2010, Newport City Council adopted a comprehensive five-year Empty Homes Strategy but the number of long-term empty private homes in Newport has continued to rise, by 16% since 2010. This was a lower rate than for Wales as a whole (24% over the same period) but still meant that Newport had many homes remaining unoccupied for long periods. In April 2017, there were almost 1,200 private residential addresses in the city that had been empty for more than six months. This included some addresses which would not be suitable for rental without substantial change, such as flats over shops where the only entrance was through the retail premises, but there was still considerable scope to try to reduce the number of unoccupied properties.

This report proposed a new strategic action plan for empty homes, which focused on improving the collaboration between services to tackle problem properties, increasing the resources to deal with empty homes and taking enforcement action where appropriate.

Decision

To approve the revised Empty Homes Strategy & Action Plan.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance and Head of People & Business Change

All members were consulted and provided with an opportunity to comment. Any comments received and responses thereafter are set out in the report.

Implemented by: Head of Regeneration and Housing
Implementation Timetable: Immediate

COUNCILLOR J MUDD, CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND HOUSING

5 August 2019
