

BUDGET & PERFORMANCE PANEL

Empty Houses, Voids and why Properties are in need of Repair

10 September 2013

Report of Chief Officer (Environment)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide information requested by the Budget & Performance Panel.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) **The information in this report is noted**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At the meeting on held on 11 June 2013 Members discussed the briefing note regarding 'Empty Houses, Voids and why Properties are in need of Repair'. The Panel agreed that a further report providing more detail be requested to cover a number of very specific questions asked by panel and that it be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

2.0 Details

2.1 The specific information requested is provided in the appendix of this report.

2.2 A significant amount of the time spent on void properties is taken undertaking repairs and maintenance of the property. Over the last 18 months or so much work has taken place to improve the working practices and processes involved. Something that is difficult to manage is the number of voids that become available at any one time. As this cannot be forecast it will always present a problem in terms of managing resources.

2.3 Relet times are used as an indicator of performance. There are clearly many other things that need to be considered in terms of monitoring and managing performance. Focussing solely on improving relet times means that other areas of activity would suffer when there are peaks in the number of voids.

2.4 The figures show that the focus on improving working practice and processes is having a positive impact and improvements in relet times are taken place.

The view of officers is that the action that is already taking place will ultimately produce the desired results without the need for more fundamental intervention.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 This report provides the information requested.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

This report is provided to cover specific questions raised by B&PP members.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of managing void properties is attributable to the responsive repairs budget and they are a high priority in workload terms due to the direct link between void levels and HRA rental income.

Whilst the level of voids has increased from 1.5% to 1.7% between March and the end of June, this is due to an overall increase in the number of voids. Therefore, whilst relet times may be improving, increases in the level of voids create resource issues and therefore the voids can also increase.

The HRA rental budget assumes a void level of 1.5%, therefore if the current level were to continue for the remainder of the year, there would be a shortfall of circa £27K in rental income.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

As outlined in the report

Open Spaces:

None

DEPUTY SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NA

Contact Officer: Mark Davies

Telephone: 01524 582401

E-mail: mdavies@lancaster.gov.uk