

## SCRUTINY POLICY REVIEWS 2012/13: HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - FINAL REPORT

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Scrutiny Committee with the draft recommendations of the Health Housing and Adult Service's Policy Review looking at Empty Properties in Sunderland.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The new scrutiny operating commissioning model was introduced for the 2012/13 Municipal Year and is now well underway. As part of the new arrangements the Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Scrutiny Lead Members along with their respective scrutiny panels to undertake two short and focused policy reviews during 2012/13, the topics having been brought forward from discussions at the Annual Scrutiny Conference in May 2012.
- 2.3 Detailed evidence gathering for the second round of 'spotlight' policy reviews took place over a three month period, with each of the Scrutiny Panels agreeing the content, conclusions and recommendations of the final reports at meetings throughout March and April 2013. The final report of the Health Housing and Adult Services Policy Review is attached (**Appendix 7A**).

#### 3. POLICY REVIEWS 2012/13 – PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

- 3.1 The recommendations of the Empty Properties in Sunderland Scrutiny Policy Review 2012/13 are:-
  - a) To look at the increased involvement of elected members in all areas with the Empty Homes Team, including regular briefings and involvement in local walkabouts, as a means of further enhancing intelligence gathering by the team and developing relationships with ward members;
  - b) To investigate the development of an 'Empty Property – Council Aware' leaflet to provide local residents with reassurances that work is ongoing

in relation to an empty property and also to present further avenues for potential intelligence gathering;

- c) That the Housing Service and Empty Homes Team explore how to further support new and existing landlords to develop good practices, consistent approaches and strengthen relationships between private landlords and the local authority;
- d) That the Empty Homes Team investigates the potential for expanding the role of the team to incorporate commercial properties into their remit to provide an holistic approach to empty properties management; and
- e) That the Local Authority Housing Team look to monitor the impacts of welfare reform on both social and private housing across the City and look to provide area specific updates to Members through area committee arrangements.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee considers and endorses the Policy Review of the Health, Housing and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel presented at **Appendix 7A**, in particular the recommendations as outlined in Section 3 of this report, prior to submitting to the Cabinet at a future meeting.

#### **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Scrutiny Committee Agenda and reports: 14 June 2012

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