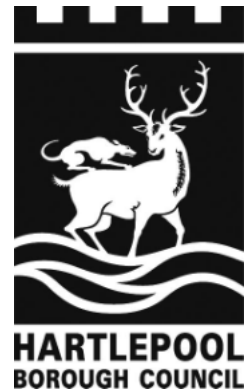


HOUSING AND TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

DECISION SCHEDULE



Wednesday 21 December 2011

At 4.00 pm

In Committee Room C, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Councillor J Brash, Cabinet Member responsible for Housing and Transition will consider the following items.

1. **KEY DECISIONS**

No items

2. **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

2.1 Empty Homes Pilot Scheme Eligibility Criteria – *Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning*

3. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

No items

HOUSING AND TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

21st December 2011



Report of: Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning

Subject: EMPTY HOMES PILOT SCHEME ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval from Portfolio Holder to implement the revised eligibility criteria for the previously approved Empty Homes Pilot Scheme (Cabinet 01.08.2011).

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report provides details of the currently approved eligibility criteria and provides recommendations to revise this eligibility criteria.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The report has relevance to the housing portfolio.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key Decision

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Housing and Transition Portfolio meeting December 21st 2011

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

It is recommended that the eligibility criteria for the empty homes pilot scheme be refined to allow applications to be accepted from

Employees, Elected Members, and their close relatives, provided they are eligible to apply. Applicants must disclose any such relationship at the time of applying.

Report of: Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning

Subject: EMPTY HOMES PILOT SCHEME ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from Portfolio Holder to implement the revised eligibility criteria for the previously approved Empty Homes Pilot Scheme (Cabinet 01.08.2011).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The empty homes pilot scheme which aims to bring long term empty properties back into use within Hartlepool was approved by Cabinet on the 1st August 2011. The incentive scheme currently being implemented within Hartlepool aims to target the key long term empty properties within the town through a grant and loan package to fund improvement works. Ongoing management of the properties will be provided by Housing Hartlepool through a long term lease agreement.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Currently the scheme is available to owners of properties that have been empty for 6 months or more. In light of the aim of the scheme, to bring long term empty properties back into use it is recommended that the eligibility criteria be revised and allow applications to be accepted from Employees, Elected Members, and their close relatives, provided they are eligible to apply. Applicants must disclose any such relationship at the time of applying. As a safe guarding measure it is recommended that the following principles be followed in circumstances where an employee or elected members are involved in this scheme, this will ensure transparency and impartiality. Employees and Elected Members must not attempt to apply any undue influence in the handling of their application or an application from friends or close relatives to the empty property scheme.
- 3.2 It is important to note that any future incentive schemes should consider the impact of involvement of Council Employees, Elected Members or their close relatives when developing eligibility criteria to ensure that any scheme is open and transparent.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the eligibility criteria for the empty homes pilot scheme be refined to allow applications to be accepted from Employees, Elected Members, and their close relatives, provided they are eligible to apply. Applicants must disclose any such relationship at the time of applying.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To ensure that the empty property pilot scheme can meet its objectives as comprehensively as possible to bring long term empty homes back into use and to ensure transparency and openness.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 There are no background papers.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

- 6.1 For further information please contact: -

Nigel Johnson (Housing Services Manager)
nigel.johnson@hartlepool
01429 284339

or

Amy Waller (Principal Housing and Regeneration Officer)
amy.waller@hartlepool.gov.uk
01429 523539.