



CABINET: 10 January 2017

Report of: Director of Leisure and Wellbeing

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kevin Wright

Contact for further information: Mrs Laura Lea (Extn. 5196)
(E-mail: laura.lea@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2020

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider and agree the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2020.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2020; attached as Appendix 1; be approved and implemented.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a duty on local authorities to keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken under this and other specified legislation.

3.2 A review of the Borough's housing stock was carried out in 2015. The Building Research Establishment Ltd (BRE) were commissioned to undertake a series of modelling exercises to provide up to date detailed housing stock information in order to inform this strategy. A copy of the 'BRE Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for West Lancashire Borough Council April 2016' is attached at Appendix 2.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2020, as attached at Appendix 1, provides an updated picture of the condition of the private sector housing stock in the Borough and outlines the key objectives that will be addressed.

- 4.2 The Action Plan contained in the report outlines the actions that will be taken to meet the key objectives in order to improve housing standards in the Borough.
- 4.3 The strategy also provides an update on the progress made since the Strategy for Private Sector Housing in West Lancashire 2006-2009.

5.0 ISSUES

- 5.1 The main findings of the BRE report shows that there are over 8,000 dwellings in the private sector that have category 1 hazards, with over 7,000 being owner-occupied dwellings. The average cost of mitigating these hazards is £5,787 per dwelling.
- 5.2 The wards with the highest level of disrepair are Bickerstaffe, Scarisbrick and Scott.
- 5.3 The highest concentrations of fuel poverty are found in the wards of Digmaor, Moorside and Skelmersdale South whilst the wards with the highest levels of excess cold are Bickerstaffe, Newburgh and Scarisbrick.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As part of the process of updating the strategy, a period of public consultation has been allowed for any feedback or suggested improvements. To facilitate this, a copy of the draft strategy was posted on the Council's website. The consultation period closed on the 18 November 2016.
- 6.2 A summary of the feedback is attached at Appendix 3. The matters raised have been noted but no significant changes were required to the strategy.

7.0 PROPOSED ACTIONS

- 7.1 The key objectives of the strategy are:
- Continue to raise the quality of existing private sector housing stock
 - Make the best use of existing private sector housing stock
 - Deliver the Council's Sustainable Energy Strategy 2012-2020 residential and domestic sector objectives relating to private sector housing
- 7.2 In order to meet the key objectives, an Action Plan has been devised that will focus on enhancing the Council's enforcement powers and supporting private landlords and home-owners to improve the condition and energy efficiency of their properties.
- 7.3 The Council will improve its enforcement powers by implementing the relevant sections of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 in relation to banning orders for private landlords and maintaining a database of 'rogue' landlords and property agents.

7.4 The Council will assist private landlords and home owners to improve the condition and energy efficiency of their properties by providing advice and assistance on the works required and any grants or external funding that may be available.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

8.1 The actions contained in the strategy will help to improve the condition of the Borough's private sector housing stock and reduce fuel poverty. The strategy also links to the improved health for all and young and older people key objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are some financial/ resource implications arising from this report in respect of certain actions however these will be met using existing resources.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders; therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

1. Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2020
2. BRE Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for West Lancashire Borough Council April 2016
3. Consultation Feedback
4. Equality Impact Assessment