

Empty Homes & Park Homes

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Summary and Recommendation:

The Strategic Housing Improvement Plan has a group of actions leading to strategic assessments of empty homes and also park homes in the Borough. The Panel is requested to note progress and members comments are invited.

1 EMPTY HOMES

- 1.1 By August 2010 guidance on producing an empty homes strategy was examined and advice on best practice was received from the Empty Homes Agency. At the same time the number of empty private sector homes in the Borough were identified.
- 1.2 Goose Housing Research have been commissioned to assist in strategy development and in particular:
- establish the baseline extent and characteristics of vacant private sector dwellings
 - assess current conditions and repair issues
 - examine policy options and produce an outline strategy for consideration.
- 1.3 The commission provides a 14 week programme in 4 key stages. Stage 1 provides a scoping report, which will:
- outline the extent of long and short term vacant homes
 - provide the sample framework including both geographic and tenure distribution
 - include a survey form to assess property conditions
 - identify key stakeholders for interview and/or postal surveys.
- It is envisaged that this will be completed by 1 November 2010.
- 1.4 The remaining programme includes:
- stage 2 survey fieldwork, interviews and initial report with targeted completion by 1 December 2010
 - stage 3 completion of report after discussion with client
 - stage 4 presentation of final report.
- This to be completed by 14 January 2011.

2 Park Homes

- 2.1 Goose Housing Research have also been commissioned to undertake a Survey of park homes across the Borough, including within the Lake District National Park Authority area. The purpose is to:
- identify and determine the extent of park homes
 - report on physical attributes and environmental conditions of homes and sites
 - define the demographic attributes of resident households.
- The participation of residents is entirely voluntary.
- 2.2 Scoping the programme is completed with separate sites together with their ownership and management information: type of establishment (excluding holiday homes and the like): date of licensed approval: number of permitted residential units).
- 2.3 The survey comprises a 12 week programme in 5 key stages. The design framework includes 5 sites totalling 529 permitted residential units surveyed by a representative sample completed by site and individual homes visits.
- 2.4 The programme is as follows:
- stage 1 is to notify resident households, site owners and managers this was completed by 22 October 2010:
 - stage 2 is to complete fieldwork and interviews by 26 November 2010:
 - stage 3 is to complete input and data analysis by 18 December 2010:
 - stage 4 is completion of the initial report for client officers by 14 January 2011:
 - stage 5 is completion of the report for consultation by 30 January 2011.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 Officers prefer members of the Strategic Housing Panel to have the opportunity of commenting on the draft empty homes strategy before it is sent for consultation in January 2011. Following consultation it will then be reported with recommendations to the Council meetings cycle in March 2011.
- 3.2 Officers also prefer members of the Panel to have a similar opportunity of commenting on the park home findings before that too is subject to consultation with residents.

3 FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 3.1 There are no financial and human resource implications arising for the Council from this report that cannot be contained within existing Housing Services revenue estimates.

4. IMPACT ON THE CORPORATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 4.1 This report and recommendations are consistent with the corporate objective for 2010/11 of promoting a housing market that meets everyone's needs. It is also in accordance with the improvement plan adopted in response to the Audit Commission's housing inspection report published in 2010.