

## **REPORT OF THE JOINT WORKING PARTY ON EMPTY HOMES**

### **DECISION**

- (a) The council seeks to reduce the number of long term empty homes within the borough through a mix of proactive work conducted as part of the WDWP partnership, and responsive investigation;
- (b) The council adopts a policy based on 'Incremental intervention', commencing with the provision of advice and assistance made widely available, progressing to the provision of tailored support and assistance to individual property owners, with redress to enforcement of legal provisions where appropriate and if necessary;
- (c) The council develops the Communications Plan outlined in Appendix 1 of the report designed to support a programme of action to address the issue of empty homes within the council area, producing bespoke literature and advisory documentation. The advice and information will be available in leaflet and electronic format, providing general advice and information about empty property, specific information regarding the council's services, and enabling notification of empty homes;
- (d) The council promotes its loan scheme, which is available to owners of empty homes to assist in the financing of works necessary to bring an empty home back into use. The loan scheme will be as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (e) The council commit to working with its partners and stakeholders to continually review schemes and initiatives that might be effective in reducing the number of empty homes within the district and to support such schemes and initiatives as appropriate. In particular the council will seek to support initiatives that may benefit households in housing need;
- (f) The council confirms the intention to use the full range of enforcement powers available to bring empty property back into use in accordance with the adopted scheme of delegation, if all reasonable efforts to resolve the issue by negotiation have failed or if there is a need for expediency;
- (g) The policies and procedures adopted with regard to Empty Homes be incorporated into the emerging Housing Strategy which will be the subject of wider consultation during 2013, and subject to a process of annual review.